

A HISTORY OF COFFEE

Coffee is probably the most popular drink in the world.

How did coffee drinking begin? How did café culture develop?

The discovery of coffee

We don't know for sure how coffee was discovered. Here are two possible stories.



Coffee berries

☕ An Ethiopian boy called Kaldi discovered coffee by chance. He noticed that his goats became lively after eating some red berries from a tree. He tried the berries himself and felt the same. The berries were the fruit of the coffee tree.

☕ A man from Yemen called Gemaleddin was in the port of Aden when some Chinese ships arrived. He saw the Chinese drinking tea and watched carefully as they made it. Tea didn't grow in Yemen so he tried the leaves of other plants. Nothing worked so he went to Ethiopia and brought back the leaves and fruit of the coffee tree. The leaves weren't successful but Gemaleddin noticed a great change



A coffee house in Constantinople

By the early seventeenth century, Italian traders had introduced coffee to the West. Other countries soon followed

Italy's example. As the coffee trade grew, traders moved nearer to the coffee-producing countries. Mocha on the coast of Yemen became the centre of the world's coffee trade for 150 years.

Coffee in Europe

In 1645, Italy became the first European country to open a coffee house. Soon other countries were doing the same. In England, the first coffee house opened in Oxford, in 1651. A year later, an Armenian called Pasqua Rosée opened the first coffee house in London. By 1739, London



London's first coffee house

had 551 coffee houses. For the English, a coffee house was much more than just a place to drink coffee with friends. Scientists, writers, artists and politicians all met there to discuss important subjects.

Café culture today

Many countries today still have their own café culture, but there is also now a world coffee-shop culture. It began in North America and its home is the city of Seattle in the USA. These modern coffee shops are generally owned by large international companies like Starbucks.



They are friendly, comfortable places that usually offer a very wide choice of coffees. Many do now offer Fair Trade coffees, but are the big chains really doing enough to help coffee farmers in developing countries?

**Do you ever go to coffee shops?
Why do you think they are so popular?**

**What do these words mean?
You can use a dictionary.
goat berry port culture**