SCAA, speciality coffee is that which scores 80 points or above out of a possible 100 when graded by a qualified coffee taster. Coffee that scores between 60 and 80 points is graded as commodity coffee – certainly still drinkable, but destined for the supermarket shelf or jars of instant. At these tasting sessions – a rigorous process known in the business as a ‘cupping’ – points are awarded for categories such as sweetness, flavour, balance and mouthfeel. To achieve such a high score, speciality coffee is generally grown in optimal soil, climate and altitude conditions, is harvested and processed at the right time and is roasted to perfection. In short, we’re talking about very fine coffee – the cream of the crop.

Interest in speciality coffee has recently undergone a rapid expansion. The SCAA reports that in 1993 there were just 2850 speciality coffee shops in the whole of the USA. By 2013 the number was hovering around 30,000. As consumers become more demanding and palates more sophisticated, coffee producers, roasters and baristas are upping the ante with speciality coffee, and taking the so-called third wave to a possible fourth.

From its discovery in Ethiopia, coffee has well and truly conquered the planet. Worldwide we drink around two billion cups a day, and for centuries it has shaped the way we live, driven national economies, kept us awake and some say even instigated artistic movements and helped win wars. And yet, ask any barista or coffee professional working today and they will tell you that in terms of flavour, we are living in a golden age of coffee. Farming practices have improved, coffee roasters have never before been so knowledgeable, and on high streets from Cape Town to Tokyo a new breed of coffee shop has arrived, serving only the best speciality coffee prepared with care. In the USA this revolution in producing high-quality coffee has been described as the third wave. Elsewhere it is known as the speciality coffee movement. Whatever you call it, most coffee experts agree: the best is yet to come.

WHAT IS SPECIALITY COFFEE?
The coffee shops and roasteries in this book are largely purveyors of speciality coffee. But what does this mean? According to the Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA), speciality coffee is that which scores 80 points or above out of a possible 100 when graded by a qualified coffee taster. Coffee that scores between 60 and 80 points is graded as commodity coffee – certainly still drinkable, but destined for the supermarket shelf or jars of instant. At these tasting sessions – a rigorous process known in the business as a ‘cupping’ – points are awarded for categories such as sweetness, flavour, balance and mouthfeel. To achieve such a high score, speciality coffee is generally grown in optimal soil, climate and altitude conditions, is harvested and processed at the right time and is roasted to perfection. In short, we’re talking about very fine coffee – the cream of the crop. Interest in speciality coffee has recently undergone a rapid expansion. The SCAA reports that in 1993 there were just 2850 speciality coffee shops in the whole of the USA. By 2013 the number was hovering around 30,000. As consumers become more demanding and palates more sophisticated, coffee producers, roasters and baristas are upping the ante with speciality coffee, and taking the so-called third wave to a possible fourth.
INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THIRD WAVE COFFEE?
Love it or hate it, the term ‘third wave’ is useful in understanding where we are in the history of coffee making and appreciation. But what about the first and second waves? In countries such as the USA, the UK, New Zealand and Australia, the first wave of coffee usually describes the era when coffee became widely available to consumers as instant coffee, and better coffee became desirable. The second wave was when espresso drinks arrived on the high street (helped along by chains such as Starbucks) and better coffee became desirable. The third wave was coined in the USA in the late 1990s and describes a focus on coffee as a complex and artisanal food product, like wine.

Third wave coffee makers are innovators who are interested in how the whole journey from seed to cup affects the final outcome. They want to tweak and improve those steps to achieve better coffee. They value more than ever the relationship between the coffee farmer and the coffee roaster, and typically want to maintain the distinct flavours of the coffee’s origin and variety, something they achieve with light roasting techniques. The role of the barista is also a key component. Precise control over coffee’s preparation – the grinding, brew ratio, heating of milk or latte art, for example – is something to be honed and celebrated.

While most of the cafes and roasteries in this book will serve speciality coffee, they are not all third wave in style. In Italy, excellent dark-roasted shots of coffee have been served since the invention of the espresso machine in the late 19th century, while in Istanbul you can sip a drink which dates from the age of Suleyman the Magnificent: the wonderfully sweet and sludgy Turkish coffee. Third wave coffee pioneers are hardly responsible for all the great coffee in the world, but what they have introduced is a widespread sharing of knowledge about coffee. Through tasting notes, cupping sessions, barista classes, talks, festivals and sheer infectious passion, they have given us a language and understanding for what makes great coffee.

WHY GO COFFEE TOURING?
This book includes a huge range of coffee experiences, from the traditional coffee ceremonies of Ethiopia and kissatens of Japan, to vanguard studios that have more in common with a chemist’s laboratory than a cafe. We’ve included both independents and coffee pioneers that have grown into corporate chains. What matters to us is the quality of the coffee and the visitor experience. In every place included you should learn something about coffee.

And why go coffee touring in the first place when great coffee is so widely available? There are a few reasons. The first is simple: time is the enemy of coffee; it tastes best when it has been freshly roasted and ground. You can buy speciality coffee online easily enough, but you are never going to get the same result as having it prepared for you by expert hands close to where it was roasted.

The second is that the story of coffee is intertwined with the history, economy and culture of so many different countries, that to understand it fully requires a coffee tour – whether that’s to sip a flat white in Wellington or a bicerin in Turin. Excitingly, more coffee-producing countries are now enjoying the fruits of their best plants, meaning you can drink speciality coffee close to the field where it was grown.

Lastly, the world of coffee is filled with passionate people eager to share their obsession with you. To learn the most about coffee, you’re just going to have to go and meet them.

And if you think you know a lot about coffee, we challenge you to tour one of the more unusual destinations in this book. Venture to Norway, Sweden or Hungary and you’ll find exquisite coffee being prepared to the highest standards. Take a trip to Nicaragua or Colombia and you’ll discover plantation owners keen to show you the possibilities of coffee grown in their countries. Elsewhere we reveal exciting cafes in Iceland, Cuba, Vietnam and Japan.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK
For each of the 37 countries in this book we’ve included a profile of what you can expect from the coffee scene in that country. We have then organised the best coffee shops and roasteries to visit by city, or, in the case of the plantations, by region. In each entry we’ve suggested the coffee you should taste or buy while there, and have also recommended local sights and things to do so coffee tourers can make a day (or weekend) of their visit. There is a world of great coffee to try, now go and enjoy it! Dora Ball.

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Types of Coffee

Americano  Espresso and hot water
Cafe au lait  Equal parts brewed coffee and steamed milk
Cafe mocha  Espresso blended with chocolate syrup and topped with steamed milk or microfoam
Cappuccino  One part espresso, one part milk and one part foam
Cold brew  Coffee brewed using water at room temperature or colder. Usually steeped for 10 to 24 hours
Cortado  From the Spanish verb ‘to cut’, a cortado is equal parts espresso and steamed milk
Crema  A thin and desirable layer of foam found on top of an espresso
Doppio  Or ‘double’ in Italian. Two shots of espresso pulled through the same filter and served as one
Drip/filter coffee  Mechanized brew method using gravity to pull hot water through a bed of coffee grounds and a paper filter
Espresso  A small, concentrated, syrupy shot of coffee that is achieved when pressure is used to force water through finely ground coffee
Flat white  One part espresso to two parts steamed milk/microfoam
Latte  One part espresso and three or more parts steamed milk
Latte art  A design made in a drink using steamed milk/microfoam
Long black  Espresso and hot water, a term popularised in Australia
Lungo  Or ‘long’ in Italian. An espresso which is pulled longer or uses more water than a typical shot
Macchiato  Or ‘marked’ in Italian. Is an espresso topped or – marked – with a small amount of steamed milk
Nitro cold brew  Cold brew coffee infused with nitrogen and served on tap for a thicker, creamier texture
Piccolo  Similar in espresso-to-milk ratio as the cortado, the piccolo is a drink made popular in Australia
Pour over  A manual brew method that uses gravity to pull hot water through coffee grounds and a paper filter
Ristretto  Or ‘restricted’ in Italian. An espresso that is pulled short or uses less water than a typical shot
Turkish coffee  Brewed in a copper cezve or ibrik, Turkish coffee is unfiltered and made by boiling finely ground coffee beans in water

Glossary

Technical Terms

Arabica  Originally from Ethiopia, Coffea arabica is the world’s most desired species of coffee plant
Blend  When different coffees from different origins are mixed together to achieve a specific flavour profile
Coffee cherry  The fruit surrounding the coffee bean or seed
Cupping  A method of coffee tasting used to determine quality, flavour attributes, and potential defects
Cup score  A system of evaluating arabica coffee by assessing aroma, flavour, aftertaste, acidity, body, balance, sweetness, cleanliness, uniformity and defect each on a scale of 1-10. Coffees receive a total cup score out of 100
Green coffee  After picking, processing, drying and before roasting, coffee seeds are known as green coffee
Microfoam  When milk is steamed to a texture consisting of tiny bubbles
Natural/dry process  Picked cherries are set out to dry naturally on raised beds or patios. As the fruit dries it imparts fruity flavours into the bean
Pulped natural or honey process  After cherries are picked the skins are removed and beans are dried on beds with their sticky outer layer intact
Robusta  Robusta or Coffea canephora is a species of coffee that is less desirable in flavour than arabica, has more caffeine, and is easier to grow
Single origin  Coffee sourced from one geographic growing region which usually reflects the flavour attributes produced by a particular terroir
Speciality coffee  Any coffee that achieves a cup score of 80 and above
Third wave  Describes the overall trend of cafes and purveyors that source, prepare and serve speciality coffee
Washed or wet processing  Picked cherries are hulled and put into fermentation tanks to remove the sticky outer layer. The beans are then washed before being set out to dry
What’s in a bean? Quite a lot as it happens. These chemically complex little nuggets contain a whopping 1000-plus different aroma compounds (that’s flavours and fragrance to you and me). Get to know your beans better by considering these four major factors in a coffee’s flavour.

ORIGIN
Do you know your Kenyan from your Nicaraguan? Coffee is a fussy plant and only grows in countries found in the so-called Bean Belt, a strip around the globe between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, with rich soil, warm temperatures and distinct rainy and dry seasons. Within these countries, a region’s altitude, shade and soil make-up will dictate the varieties that can be grown and how delicious the outcome will be.

VARIETY
There are more than a hundred species and thousands of varieties of the coffee plant, of which only a few dozen are grown for consumption. In the speciality coffee world, the favoured species is Arabica (as opposed to the inferior quality Robusta), and – excitingly – varieties of this plant are being cultivated, cross-bred and discovered all the time. Some varieties, such as Java and Yirgacheffe, are only grown in their namesake regions, whereas varieties like Caturra are grown in many regions and produce different qualities and flavours depending on growing conditions.

PROCESSING METHOD
Look out for terms such as ‘natural’ or ‘washed’ on your next bag of beans. This refers to the method used to remove the fruit from the coffee seed. The natural method involves letting the coffee cherries dry in the sun before removing the dried fruit and outer husk. This process lends the coffee a fruity flavour. During the washed method, the fruit is removed in water before the bean is dried, giving the coffee a cleaner taste and increased complexity. Another hybrid method popular in Central America is the honey process: beans are dried with some of the fruit pulp attached. This process enhances the final product with notes of brown sugar.

ROAST PROFILE
After the coffee beans are processed, your local roaster can make their mark. Roasting coffee is a subtle art that transforms flavourless green beans into something (potentially) incredible. The roaster uses the heat, drum speed and airflow of the coffee machine to coax the inherent flavour from the beans and produce the desired level of acidity, bitterness and sweetness, also known as a ‘roast profile’. Light and medium roasts allow the flavours of the beans’ origin and variety to be more distinct. Dark roasts typically taste smoky and bitter.
Measure out around 100g of green beans. Raw coffee beans are small, hard and have no discernible coffee flavour. Add them to a dry frying pan or wok on a medium heat and stir with a wooden spoon.

After just a couple of minutes the beans will start to colour as they lose moisture content. Acids are developing, but there is still no coffee aroma.

At some point, any serious coffee hobbyist should try roasting beans at home. Raw beans can be sourced easily online or from a speciality coffee shop. Timings given here are a guide.

Snapping! The beans will crack for a second time. Oils are forced to the surface and the beans will become very dark brown, glossy with oil and brittle. They will also emit a pungent smoke.

Congratulations, you have reached the first crack! Your beans should be nearly double in size and will be leaving a flaky skin in the pan. Turn the heat down to low.

At just a couple of minutes after the first crack you have reached a light roast. Brewed coffee will taste fruity or tangy with acidity. A light roast also emphasises the intrinsic flavour of the beans. You can stop roasting at any point from now on, or carry on to develop sweetness and body.

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Keep stirring as the coffee beans turn yellow through to light brown. Some toasty smells and steam will be coming off the beans as they continue to lose moisture. They will also start to swell with a build-up of gas.

Pop! Around this time the coffee will start to pop or crack like popcorn due to the pressure of gas building up inside. Congratulations, you have reached the first crack! Your beans should be nearly double in size and will be leaving a flaky skin in the pan. Turn the heat down to low.

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GLOBAL COFFEE TOUR

GLOBAL COFFEE TOUR