Entering the European market for Arabica coffee

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European requirements for Arabica coffee are strict, and they are mainly the same as those for Robusta coffee. Though there are some country-specific requirements, most legislation comes from the EU and applies to all member states.

Large trading companies buy most green Arabica and ship it to Europe. A lot of Arabica goes into lower-quality blends. Higher-quality Arabicas are used in 100% Arabica coffee products. Part of the Arabica finds its way to the premium or specialty coffee market, offering opportunities for exporters of high-quality Arabicas. Brazil, Colombia and Honduras are Europe's main Arabica-supplying countries. These countries differ highly in terms of strengths, weaknesses and reputation.

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1. What requirements and certifications must Arabica coffee meet to be allowed on the European market?

The EU is a single market. It sets most of the rules for coffee imports. These rules apply to all member states. EU legislation is generally more important to Arabica exporters than country-specific legislation. Next to EU regulations, there are also country-specific regulations. Some European countries are not part of the EU, for example Switzerland and the United Kingdom. For non-EU countries, EU regulations do not apply. However, most of these countries have requirements very similar to the EU's. There are no specific legal requirements for Arabica. The legal requirements that apply to Robusta coffee also apply to Arabica coffee.

In this section, we focus on requirements for exporting Arabica coffee to the EU. The requirements can be divided into:

1. Mandatory requirements (like food safety and hygiene, traceability, environmental and social due diligence);
2. Additional company requirements (to succeed in the market);
3. Niche market requirements (like specific certification).

The mandatory, additional and niche-market requirements are described below.

What are mandatory requirements?

Most mandatory requirements are legal requirements that come from the EU, for food safety, labelling, payment and delivery terms, sustainability and quality. These are the same for all European countries.

Requirements for food safety and hygiene

Exporters must follow the EU food safety laws applicable to coffee. These rules primarily address food safety, with traceability and hygiene as top priorities. Special attention should be given to specific sources of contamination of pesticides and mycotoxins/mould, particularly Ochratoxin-A (OTA).

Generally, your buyer will ask for a phytosanitary certificate. This certificate is provided by your country's plant protection authorities. A phytosanitary certificate guarantees that the coffee is:

- Properly inspected;
- Free from pests;
- Meets all plant health requirements.

Labelling requirements

Labels on green coffee exported to Europe should be written in English and include the following information to ensure the traceability of individual batches:

- Product name;
- International Coffee Organisation (ICO) identification code;
- Country of origin;
- Grade;
- Net weight in kilograms;
- For certified coffee: name and code of the inspection body and certification number.

Figure 1: Example of green coffee labelling

Source: commodity.com

Payment and delivery terms

You usually get paid for your coffee when the buyer receives it, or within 30–45 days, depending on your contractual terms. Cash Against Documents is the most common payment method when exporting coffee to Europe. You provide documents proving shipment, such as a bill of lading or invoice, and get paid in return. This ensures you receive payment for your goods.

It is crucial to examine these terms carefully. Generally, you will get paid sooner if you sell your coffee to a trading company than if you sell it directly to a coffee roaster.

Packaging requirements

Green coffee beans are traditionally shipped in woven bags made of jute or hessian, a natural fibre. Jute bags are robust. Some specialty coffee suppliers also use other materials inside jute bags to protect the beans. These materials have added value over traditional packaging. They preserve bean quality, prevent post-harvest loss, reduce solid waste, reduce farmers' net carbon footprint and facilitate chemical-free storage. Note that these innovative materials are mostly used for the high-end and upper-end segments. Popular brands are GrainPro and Videplast.

Other packaging for transporting coffee are:

- Polypropylene super sacks for 1 tonne of coffee
- Polyethylene liners for 21.6 tonnes
- Vacuum-packed coffee

These techniques increase efficiency and maintain and preserve quality.

Figure 2: Examples of coffee packing, from left to right: jute bag, container-sized flexi bag, GrainPro and Videplast liner

Sources: Raad, Bulk Logistic Solutions and GrainPro

Stricter sustainability requirements

In recent years, the EU has led a global change by passing strong new sustainability regulations. This set of EU regulations builds upon international soft laws like the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct. EU regulations require coffee companies to check for human rights and environmental risks in their supply chains.

The European Green Deal (EGD) is the EU response to the global climate emergency. It is a package of policies that define Europe's strategy to reach net-zero emissions and become a resource-efficient economy by 2050. The EGD's four instruments are:

- European Deforestation Regulation (EUDR);
- European Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD);
- Forced Labour Regulation;
- Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition (EmpCo).

The EUDR prohibits coffee that leads to deforestation

As part of the European Green Deal, the EU has developed the EUDR. The EUDR requires companies to prove that the products they import do not come from deforested land and have not contributed to forest degradation. Only deforestation-free products can be placed on the EU market.

In December 2024, the EU postponed the implementation by a year, to 30 December 2025. In November 2025, the EU decided to postpone the regulation again, to 30 December 2026. Micro and small enterprises are granted an additional six months. This law makes traceability and technology crucial for exports to the EU market. This will have implications for the coffee-producing industry. The EU provides a guidance document and an information sheet that address frequently asked questions.

Certification can be one of the tools that help demonstrate that your company is EUDR-compliant. This may involve certification schemes with strict environmental criteria promoting sustainable farming practices, such as Organic and Rainforest Alliance. However, while providing relevant infrastructure, certification alone is not sufficient.

The CSDDD will increase the requirements for traceability and human rights

Under the new CSDDD regulations, European corporations must improve their sustainability performance across their global supply chains. They must also prevent damaging effects on human rights and the environment. Businesses are required to take the following actions:

- Integrating due diligence into their policies;
- Identifying actual or potential adverse impacts;
- Preventing and mitigating potential adverse impacts;
- Establishing and maintaining a complaints procedure;
- Monitoring the effectiveness of their due diligence policy and measures;
- Publicly communicating on due diligence.

The directive forces European companies to take responsibility for their full supply chain. Because of this, the directive may force your buyers to ask for proof that you act socially and environmentally sustainably. It will apply from July 26 2029.

The Forced Labour Regulation bans coffee produced with forced labour from the European market

The objective of the Forced Labour Regulation is to ban the production or export of any product made using forced labour. Based on risk assessments, companies based in the EU will be forced to ensure that no forced labour occurs within their supply chain. In April 2024, the EU Parliament gave its final approval to the legislation. Companies should be prepared to comply with the Regulation's requirements from 14 December 2027. Non-compliant European companies will be fined.

Companies must audit their supply chains for exploitative labour practices, since any link to forced labour triggers market exclusion and reputational damage. Coffee is explicitly recognised as a high-risk commodity under the regulation. The full effect of the Forced Labour Regulation on exporting companies is still unclear. However, it will mean that European buyers will require more information from their suppliers.

What additional requirements and certifications do buyers often have?

Some buyers may demand extra food safety requirements for processing, additional quality standards, certification or verification.

Additional food safety requirements

Some buyers may request extra food safety guarantees from you. Regarding production and handling processes, you should think of:

- Good Agricultural Practices (GLOBALG.A.P.): The main standard for good agricultural practices; a voluntary standard for certification of agricultural production processes that provide safe and traceable products. Certification organisations like Rainforest Alliance often incorporate GAP into their standards.
- Quality Management System (QMS): A system based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). This QMS is required by buyers more and more often as a minimum standard for green coffee production, storage and handling. The implementation of regular checking of residue levels in your green (and roasted) coffee is an example of what could be part of this system. Especially monitor Ochratoxin-A

(OTA), polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and glyphosate contamination.

Quality requirements

Generally, coffee grading combines a physical evaluation and a sensory (cup quality) evaluation to determine quality.

The physical quality assessment includes the following criteria:

- Density
- Moisture content
- Water activity
- Colour and smell
- Bean size (often called screen size)
- Uniformity
- Number of defects and imperfections

The sensory quality assessments are determined by cupping the coffee. For specialty coffee, key quality indicators for determining cup quality are aroma, flavour, aftertaste, acidity, body (feeling in the mouth), uniformity, clean cup, sweetness and overall rating.

In the conventional coffee market, sensory assessment is usually less detailed and focuses more on the absence of defects and consistency than on positive sensory complexity.

Certification and verification requirements

Many traders and roasters require some form of certification or verification. The main certification bodies are Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, 4C and Organic. Verification standards, sometimes called second-party standards, are issued by the buyer. One verification system is NKG Verified. These systems may require sellers to meet certain criteria, but they normally do not involve formal certification of the seller. While the use of certification systems has stabilised, the use of company standards and other verification systems is growing.

Certification and verification are not equally important for all buyers. Most large buyers, including traders and roasters, aim to have a large share of their coffee verified or certified. These companies usually do not have a single-label strategy: instead, they use a combination of certification and verification systems. For smaller companies, certification and verification are often less important, although there are many exceptions. There are also regional differences: certification is more important in Northern and Western European countries.

It is very important for coffee exporters to know the requirements of their potential buyers. Certification comes with additional costs, and if a buyer is not interested in your certification, your investment may not be rewarded. You can read much more about the pros and cons of certification in our study Exporting certified coffee to Europe.

What are the requirements for niche markets?

Exporting organic coffee and specialty Arabica comes with additional requirements. Most Arabica is exported through international trading houses, which arrange both export and import.

Requirements for organic coffee

Exporting organic Arabica to the EU comes with extra requirements. To market your coffee as organic in the European market, it must comply with EU regulations for organic production and labelling. Regulation (EC) 2018/848 covers organic production and labelling rules. Regulation (EC) 1235/2008 covers imports of organic products from outside the EU.

Organic coffee is checked at the EU border. To import organic coffee into the EU, the shipment must include an electronic certificate of inspection (e-COI). The certificate should be set up in the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES), and must be signed by a control authority in your country before export.

Buyers of organic Arabica will generally also require a glyphosate test. Glyphosate is an herbicide used to kill weeds. It is not allowed in organic production. The test is used to ensure no glyphosate is used.

Requirements for specialty coffee

Specialty coffee is defined by the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) as a coffee or coffee experience that is recognised for its distinctive attributes. This is generally Arabica coffee. Green specialty coffee is graded and classified for quality before export. There is not one universal grading and classification system for coffee. The Specialty Coffee Association's (SCA) coffee standards are the most-used grading scale. While the SCA sets the leading standards, some producing countries use their own grading systems.

Based on the SCA standards, the evaluation of specialty coffee is done via the Coffee Value Assessment (CVA). The CVA gathers four types of information:

- Physical bean quality (such as colour, physical defects, moisture and bean size);
- Sensory/descriptive traits (aroma, flavour, body, acidity, aftertaste);
- Affective assessment (impression of quality, defects and uniformity)
- Extrinsic factors (variety, processing, origin, sustainability).

You can read much more about the valuation of specialty coffee on the SCA website. Learn more about the new Coffee Value Assessment system by watching the video below.

Figure 3: Theory of the SCA Coffee Value Assessment

Source: SCA, 2024

If you export speciality coffee, it is important for buyers to know your coffee's cupping score. The cupping score is relevant information to document when exporting your coffee. The score can also provide feedback to the producers. This allows everyone in the supply chain to know the coffee's quality. Cupping evaluations are done by professionals, called graders. Although this grading score is replaced by the Coffee Value Assessment, most specialty coffee buyers still work with coffee grading scores.

Many specialty coffee buyers require extra information next to the cupping score. This information may include:

- Growing conditions such as elevation, climate, soil health and farming techniques;
- Post-harvest processing methods such as washed, natural, honey, or more experimental methods;
- Information about the producer such as name, personal story, number of workers, etc.;
- Photos of your farm and workers that roasters can use to market your coffee.

Figure 4: Coffee assessment in Rwanda

Source: Ethos Agriculture, 2023

Tips:

Learn more about exporting certified coffee by reading our studies on organic coffee, certified coffee and multi-certified coffee.

Increase your traceability. European sustainability requirements will become ever stricter. You can only provide proof of your sustainable behaviour if you know where your coffee comes from.

Depending on market interest, certification could be an interesting tool to improve this.

Some of the EU regulations described in this section, which are not yet in force, are constantly debated and changing. It is important to check the current status. Check the European Commission website on the EUDR and the Forced Labour Regulation. For example, in May 2026 a simplification to the EUDR was proposed.

Learn about green quality assessment. The Specialty Coffee Association is an important source. You can also read about other ways to assess coffee quality.

Inform yourself on artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to improve the process of coffee grading. These are promising to enhance the efficiency of the grading process. Programmes already available in the market include Demetria, Csmart, Agrivero, ProfilePrint and Avercasso. You can read more about this on the Digital Coffee Future website.

2. Through which channels can you get Arabica coffee on the European market?

Arabica is used in all price segments, from the low end to the upper end. Often, traders are both importers and exporters, buying coffee from farms and cooperatives in the producing country. In the Arabica value chain, options for direct or more direct trade are limited. However, there are some options in the high-end and upper-end market. Online marketplaces may help you reach more buyers.

How is the end market segmented?

The coffee end market can be segmented into four categories: low-end, mid-range, high-end and upper-end.

Figure 5: Coffee end-market segmentation by quality

Source: based on Profound

Low-end segment

This is the largest market segment for Arabica. Arabica is much used in lower-quality blended coffee. These blends usually consist of Arabica and Robusta coffees. They are commonly sold in supermarkets. According to experts, the low-end market segment was shrinking for several years. However, it is currently rebounding due to the increased global green coffee prices.

Some important traders in this segment are Neumann Kaffee Gruppe, ECOM, Volcafe, Louis Dreyfus Company (LDC), Sucafina (Switzerland) and ofi. Note that most traders in this segment are also active in other segments. This applies especially to the large trading houses.

Important roasters in this segment include JDE Peet's (Douwe Egberts blends use Arabica), Lavazza (offers lower-priced blends like Lavazza Crema e Gusto), Tchibo (Germany) and private-label supermarket brands like Lidl and Aldi.

Middle-range segment

The middle-range market is a large segment, representing a significant share of the continent's coffee consumption. That segment was growing, but high prices put pressure on it.

For Arabica, this segment is just as important as the low-end segment. Most Arabicas in this segment are sold as 100% Arabica. Some coffees in this segment are certified, especially in Northern and Western European countries. They have a Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade or organic label.

Like the low-end segment, the middle-range segment is dominated by large multinational companies. Most players active in the low-end segment are also active in the middle-range segment.

Some roasters very active in this segment:

- Lavazza, based in Italy, has several middle-range blends;
- Segafredo Zanetti, based in Italy, is the world's largest espresso roaster;
- Tchibo, based in Germany.

High-end and upper-end segments

The high-end and upper-end market segments are growing in Europe. The demand for specialty coffee increases, due to consumer preference for higher quality. This is particularly evident in Northern and Western Europe, where consumer awareness of coffee quality and traceability is rising.

The high-end and upper-end segments are dominated by Arabica coffee. Nevertheless, fine Robusta is marketed as a unique or premium alternative to Arabica more and more often. Specialty-grade Robusta (with an SCA cupping score of 80-85) represents a niche but growing market share. The higher the cupping score, the better the coffee's quality.

Some roasters use it for boutique blends and single-origin coffee offerings. It is also used by roasters experimenting with innovative espressos, cold brews or lighter roast profiles. Traders include Sucafina (Switzerland), Falcon Coffees (UK), The Coffee Quest (Netherlands) and Mare Terra Coffee (Spain).

Tips:

Be aware of the quality of the coffee you sell. Higher quality may bring higher prices. Very high-quality beans, if processed well, can also offer opportunities for direct trade.

Visit the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA). On such websites you can learn more about the high-end coffee segment, quality criteria, market trends and main players.

Explore ways to enhance the quality of the coffee you produce. Certification, good agricultural practices and post-harvest processing can improve the actual or perceived quality of your product and help raise its market value.

Through which channels does Arabica coffee land on the end market?

Arabica generally follows the same channels to land on the end market as Robusta coffee. Figure 6 lists the actors in the Arabica supply chain. Most coffee flows through all actors of the chain.

Figure 6: The Arabica coffee supply chain

Source: based on Counter Culture Coffee

The Arabica coffee market chain is composed of various actors, each playing a critical role in the production, roasting and distribution of Arabica coffee.

Exporters are major actors

Exporters are major actors in the Arabica coffee supply chain. Most exporters source green Arabica beans directly from coffee producers in major producing countries like Brazil and Colombia. Some producers or cooperatives are exporters themselves. They then supply these beans to international importers or roasters.

Roles of exporters:

- Purchase Arabica beans from coffee farmers, cooperatives or washing stations;
- Ensure quality control by sorting, grading and processing the beans to meet export standards;
- Manage logistics and shipping to deliver green coffee to importers or buyers abroad.

In the Arabica coffee supply chain, the exporters and importers are mostly the same companies. Some large companies that are both exporters and importers are ECOM (Switzerland), Volcafe (Switzerland) and Neumann Kaffee Gruppe (Germany). These companies usually have many warehouses in coffee-growing areas. This makes it easy for a farmer, cooperative or washing station to sell their coffee.

Some companies are only based in producing countries and sell their coffee to European importers. Muzuzu Coffee Planters Cooperative Union is one company exporting Arabica to the Netherlands, the UK and Belgium.

Is sales to exporters the most interesting channel for you?

If you are a farmer, washing station or cooperative with small volumes of average quality Arabica coffee, it is essential to work with several exporters. Without experience, exporting directly to Europe is costly and difficult. If your coffee is high or very high quality, you can still use exporters.

You can also try to export the coffee directly to Europe. Selling straight to European buyers might raise your profit margin by cutting out the middle actor, but it also means more work, higher (financial) risk and the need to invest in export know-how.

Importers are mostly the same companies as exporters

Importers act as the middle link between exporters and roasters. They purchase Arabica coffee in bulk and sell it to other European traders or to roasters.

Roles of importers:

- Source (Arabica) coffee from exporters;

- Handle supply chain logistics, such as customs, storage and quality control;
- Supply green coffee beans to roasters;
- Sometimes: repackage or blend smaller lots for resale.

A large share of Arabica coffee is imported by the same company groups that also operate as exporters.

There are also independent coffee importers:

- Dr. Wakefield (UK)
- This Side Up (Netherlands)
- Belco (France)

Is sales to importers the most interesting channel for you?

If you are an exporter of green Arabica, you will very likely sell to importers. In most cases this is also the best way, as it requires the least expertise so you can focus on your core business. It is essential to connect with multiple importers, as it gives you more leverage and may help you get better deals.

Roasters may be targeted directly

Roasters purchase green Arabica coffee beans from importers and process them into roasted coffee products for consumption. They play a vital role in determining the flavour profile and branding of Arabica coffees.

Roles:

- Roast, blend and package coffee for retail and commercial sales.
- Supply B2B customers such as cafés, restaurants and hotels.
- Sell directly to consumers through retail stores, including supermarkets, online channels or specialised outlets.

Large-scale commercial roasters still represent the majority of Arabica processing volume, supplying chain supermarkets and cafés. Some large roasters operate under their own brands (Lavazza, Kimbo, JDE Peet's, Illy, Hausbrandt). Private label roasters also roast a large share of the Arabica coffee (Co.ind, Gruppo Gimoka, Daroma).

Are sales to roasters the most interesting channel for you?

If you export conventional coffee, supplying roasters directly is usually only viable if you can export large quantities and can offer a consistent quality for a longer period of time. In the specialty segment it may be worthwhile to target roasters directly. Note that this requires a lot of expertise and marketing efforts.

Online marketplaces offer opportunity for direct trade

The European coffee market is slowly changing. Some farmers and cooperatives have direct relations with roasters. This gives roasters more control and transparency. In some cases, roasters also take steps to shorten the supply chain. Illy Caffé, for instance, is one of Italy's best-known coffee companies; they work directly with farmers. Most of their coffee, however, still comes from large trading companies.

Online marketplaces are helping facilitate this change and promote direct trade. Marketplaces are platforms that connect actors in the chain, mainly linking farmers to roasters directly. Using marketplaces allows farmers, cooperatives or washing stations to cut out parts of the chain. This may allow you to increase profits and to tell the story about your coffee. Some of these marketplaces are:

- Algrano
- Raw Material
- Beyco

Although these marketplaces initially focused on specialty coffee, more and more conventional coffee traders focus on this as well. Online marketplaces are rarely used as a sole sales channel; instead, they serve to diversify market channels and help sellers reach new buyers.

Moreover, these platforms can provide a first step towards engaging in direct trade. Beyond the online marketplace itself, they offer support and guidance in establishing business relationships. Algrano also provides education to help producers prepare for exporting their products. Both Beyco and Algrano can additionally assist producers with pre-financing.

Tips:

> Talk to different buyers to find the best deal but also work on long-term relationships. Having a good relationship with a good buyer is a great asset.
>
> Build your brand by telling a story using photos, videos and clear messaging. Share this on your website and social media to attract European customers. Highlight the farmers, location, vision and methods behind your coffee. Also, share your core values. A part of the consumer base that buys specialty coffee likes to know where their coffee comes from and how it is made. It helps them feel more connected to the product.

3. What competition do you face on the European Arabica coffee market?

As a coffee supplier you operate in a global and highly competitive market. For producers and exporters, it is important to understand both your market segment and your production scale. By identifying these factors, you can determine which other countries you are competing with.

By understanding the quality, quantity and position of your coffee, you can better assess your competition and develop strategies to differentiate yourself in the global market. This knowledge is essential for effectively positioning yourself and competing successfully.

Which countries are you competing with?

The producing countries exporting most Arabica coffee to Europe are Brazil, Colombia, Honduras and Peru. Note that India's coffee exports to Europe exceed Peru's. However, Peru's exports are dominated by Arabica, whereas around three-quarters of Indian production consist of Robusta.

Source: Eurostat and ITC Trademap, 2026

Brazil: World's largest green coffee supplier

Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer and exporter, producing both Arabica (around 70%) and Robusta (around 30%), although almost 80% of exports consist of Arabica. In 2025, Brazil exported 1.13 million tonnes of green coffee to Europe. Our estimate is that around 80% (900,000 tonnes) of this volume consisted of Arabica.

Over the past years, imports from Brazil have varied from year to year based on their production levels. However, there is no structural growth or decline. Imports in 2025 are only 0.3% less than in 2021. For 2026, the Arabica production is expected to decline by 14%. The main causes for this decline are the drought and high temperatures in Minas Gerais.

Brazil's coffee-producing areas are relatively flat, which allows for mechanical harvesting. The use of mechanical pickers has reduced labour costs in Brazil's coffee production. Because mechanical harvesting cannot distinguish ripe from unripe cherries, it often results in lower average quality.

Economically, Brazilian coffee farmers are relatively successful. Factors contributing to their success are:

- Large-scale operations;
- Mechanised harvesting;
- Efficient infrastructure;
- Government and private sector support;
- Generally favourable climate (though some regions are struggling with climate change).

Brazil is the only large producer where the average farmer can earn a living from coffee farming.

Brazil is known for exporting large volumes of standard quality. The country also has a strong reputation as a producer of speciality (Arabica) coffees. The sector receives considerable institutional support through the Brazil Specialty Coffee Association, which aims to elevate quality standards and enhance value in the production and marketing of Brazilian coffees.

Table 1: Competitive country profile of Brazil

Strengths	Weaknesses	Image on the coffee market
• Largest coffee producer and exporter globally, ensuring economies of scale. • Diverse climate and geography suitable for various coffee types. • Established infrastructure and expertise in coffee cultivation and processing. • High level of automation. • Vast domestic market for local consumption. • Consistent volumes of low-acidity coffee.	• Environmental concerns related to deforestation and sustainability practices. • Climate change is expected to severely impact major producing regions in the country. • Inconsistent quality control across large production areas.	• Known for its consistent supply of coffee beans, often associated with volume and affordability. • Known for many specialty coffees. • Positions itself as a reliable source for commodity coffee.

Colombia: Largest supplier of washed Arabicas

Colombia is the world's third-largest coffee producer, after Brazil and Vietnam. In 2025, Europe imported 228,000 tonnes of green coffee from Colombia. Imports from Colombia have fluctuated year by year due to changing production volumes; for Europe there is no clear upward or downward trend. For 2026, lower imports are expected due to a 7% decrease in production.

Colombia is the world's largest producer of washed Arabica. It has a strong coffee industry with advanced technological development. The country has an established image and brand for high-quality coffees. Colombian coffee is known for its chocolate, nuts, herbs, fruit and citrus notes. Its main processing technique is washed processing. The country's most well-known coffee varieties are Typica, Bourbon, Caturra and Castillo.

The Colombian Coffee Growers Federation strategically promotes and markets Colombian coffee. 'Café de Colombia' is a protected trademark and is registered in eAmbrosia, the register for protected trademarks in Europe. A registration in eAmbrosia is unique among coffee-producing countries, and it protects the rights of more than 550,000 small-holder families in the country.

The Colombian coffee industry is continuously developing. Coffee companies are more and more involved in capacity building and product quality. Colombian producers can follow coffee quality and tasting programmes to get certified.

The country's coffee has ongoing success in competitions, such as the World Barista Championships. Successful Colombian cooperatives or private organisations exporting coffee to the international market include Red Ecolsierra and La Maseta.

Table 2: Competitive country profile of Colombia

Strengths	Weaknesses	Image on the coffee market
• Very strong branding. • Strong support structure, providing technical assistance and infrastructure. • Strong focus on high-quality coffees. • Many different landscapes at high altitude, leading to a great variety of high-quality coffees. • Year-round coffee production.	• Limited economies of scale, due to mostly small farms. • The harvest is more labour-intensive, leading to higher costs. • Shortage of workers in some regions.	• Has cultivated a very strong brand, well-known for its high-quality coffees and unique flavours.

Honduras: A main supplier of organic coffee

In 2025, Europe imported 153,000 tonnes of green coffee from Honduras. European imports from Honduras have seen an average year-on-year decline of 8% since 2021. While coffee production has slightly grown since 2021, an increasing share of Honduran coffee flows to the United States. The coffee production is expected to slightly grow in the 2025-2026 season.

The Honduran Coffee Institute IHCAFE has been promoting the production of value-added coffees, either through certification or by actively improving quality. The country has grouped coffee production and quality specifications into six regions with different microclimates and soil composition.

Honduras has a growing reputation as a high-quality coffee supplier. The country is Europe's number-1 organic supplier globally. According to FiBL & IFOAM The World of organic Agriculture 2022, about 24,000 hectares were dedicated to organic coffee farming in Honduras. In 2024, this has grown to 64,346 hectares, representing about 25% of all Honduran coffee production. Among successful exporters in Honduras are Cafico (organic coffee) and Aruco (specialty coffee).

Table 3: Competitive country profile of Honduras

Strengths	Weaknesses	Image on the coffee market
• Main producer of organic coffee.	• High volatility due to bad weather conditions, such as leaf rust.	• Producer of organic and high-quality coffee.

Peru: Takes a top position in the production of sustainable coffee

In 2024, Peru exported about 96,000 tonnes of green coffee to Europe. Over the past years, Peruvian coffee exports to Europea have remained stable.

According to UNDP, coffee is one of Peru's main agricultural products, accounting for around 25% of its agricultural income. As much as 40% of farmland is destined for coffee production. In the highlands, this figure rises to 70%. Peruvian exporters are especially important in the specialty market segment. Peru counts as the global leader in specialty coffee production. One Peruvian specialty exporter is RainForest Trading.

Next to specialty coffee, Peru also has a dominant position as a supplier of organic coffee. It is the second-largest organic coffee exporting country. It had 90,000 hectares dedicated to growing organic coffee in 2022. By 2024, this had grown to 120,000 hectares, representing 39% of the land dedicated to coffee production.

The flavour profile of Peruvian coffees is usually nutty, chocolaty and mildly citrusy. The country's varieties include Catimor, Pache, Bourbon, Typica and a small amount of Pacamara. The main processing method is wet processing.

Peruvian coffee is known for its consistent quality and sustainable production. Peru is one of the leading countries trading with Fairtrade-certified coffee, and 75% of the coffee is produced by smallholders. In 2018 Peru introduced a national coffee brand, Cafés del Peru, to the international market.

Table 4: Competitive country profile of Peru

Strengths	Weaknesses	Image on the coffee market
• Strong focus on organic and high-quality coffees. These coffees generally have high margins. • Has many different landscapes at high altitude, leading to a great variety of high-quality coffees.	• Limited infrastructure. • Changing weather conditions leading to inconsistent quality.	• Becoming well-known as a source of ethically produced and high-quality coffee.

Tips:

- Identify your potential competitors. To be successful as an exporter, it is important to learn from them too.
- Identify and promote your unique selling points. Give detailed information about your coffee-growing region or origin, the varieties, qualities, post-harvesting techniques and certification of the coffee you offer. You can also tell the history of your organisation, your coffee-growing farm, and the passion and dedication of the people working there. These are all elements that make your company unique.
- Actively promote your company on your website and trade fairs. Quality competitions also provide good opportunities to share your story, such as the auctions organised by the Cup of Excellence.

Work with other coffee producers and exporters in your region if your company size or product volume is too small. As a group, you can promote good-quality coffee from your region and be more attractive and competitive.

Develop long-term partnerships with your buyers. This means always complying with their requirements and keeping your promises. For more information, see our tips on doing business with European coffee buyers.

Molgo Research carried out this study in partnership with Ethos Agriculture on behalf of CBI.