

## Coffee Consumption around the World

If you greet the morning with the aroma of freshly brewing coffee, you are one of billions of people worldwide who indulge in the daily grind of coffee consumption. According to the latest coffee statistics from the International Coffee Organization (ICO), we pour about 1.4 billion cups of coffee a day worldwide. That's a lot of coffee, and about 45 percent of it (400 million cups a day!) is drunk in the United States. The United States is the single biggest consumer of coffee in the world - but that does not mean that the typical person in the U.S. drinks more coffee than the typical person in any other country.

In fact, when you look at per capita coffee consumption, the U.S. is #22 on the list with only about 4 kilograms of coffee per person per year. The Scandinavian countries are nearly all at the top of the coffee-drinking cohort. The Finns average an amazing 11 kilograms of coffee per person per year, but the Norwegians and the Swedes are not far behind, with just under 11 and just about 10 kilograms per coffee per year each. The Danes drink their share of coffee as well, with about 10 kilograms of coffee per year.

For the people of Finland, coffee is more than just a morning pick-me-up. The major cities feature dozens of cafes, and many of them are now offering a wide variety of coffee varietals for the drinking pleasure of their patrons. In the early days of the country, alcohol was forbidden, so coffee served as a social lubricant. When alcohol was legalized, it did not replace coffee. According to one Finnish coffee importer, "Coffee and alcohol go well together."

Despite the amount of coffee that is consumed in Finland, some major importers are concerned. Coffee is so important to Finnish culture that it is the main loss leader in supermarkets and groceries. Also, home coffee consumption is slowing, and as coffee consumption in cafes and restaurants has increased, home coffee consumption has decreased. Many "traditional" coffee drinkers in Finland are the older generation, who grew up in times when coffee was often the only social beverage. Younger folks, more and more, are turning to other beverages and caffeine drinks.

The situation in Finland has been emerging in many other coffee consuming countries worldwide. For more than a decade now, coffee has been visibly rising in popularity, with prices for gourmet coffees subsequently increasing. However, in the late 1990s and early 2000s coffee production worldwide regularly outweighed coffee demand. That fact drove coffee prices down on the international market, to the point where many coffee farmers have been driven out of business completely or are barely staying afloat.

The entry of Vietnam into the world coffee market has also had serious economic implications. Vietnam had been a major contender in the world coffee market before the Vietnam War. The war and its aftermath devastated the Vietnamese economy, along with Vietnamese coffee production. In the late 1990s, however, the Vietnamese aggressively re-entered the coffee market. In the space of just a few years, Vietnamese coffee exports moved the tiny Asian country up to second place among the nations that export coffee. Since the Vietnamese climate is ideal for growing Robusta beans, which are far less costly to grow than the more delicate Arabica beans, Vietnamese coffee farmers could sell their crops for far less. The re-emergence of Vietnam as a major force in the world coffee market drove prices down and nearly collapsed the market.

The world's coffee industry has responded to the crisis by working tirelessly to increase coffee consumption worldwide. The ongoing effort to increase coffee consumption has included identifying market saturation points, developing quality control mechanisms, encouraging farmers to maintain high standards and rewarding coffee roasters for developing new varieties and blends of coffee.

The efforts of the International Coffee Organization to raise coffee consumption around the world are paying off. Despite the fact that coffee prices have risen, there is more coffee traded, sold and enjoyed each year. Marketing thrusts by the ICO have turned coffee drinking into a fine art and encouraged people to think of coffee as an affordable luxury.

This is especially true in countries like India, Japan and China. Asian countries, traditionally bastions of tea drinkers, have been drinking more and more coffee. In countries that have already reached 'saturation level', brand awareness has helped nearly eliminate the bottomless cup of coffee. Instead, we drink gourmet coffees and think nothing of paying \$20 a pound for Hawaiian kona or Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee and \$3 a cup for specialty coffees served up with whipped cream, mocha or flavored coffee syrup.

## About the Author

About Author: Stephanie Larkin is a freelance writer who writes about topics pertaining to the food and beverage industry such as [Keurig Coffee](#)