

## "Java Kings!" Who Ruled The Coffee World?

Coffee was discovered in Ethiopia by a goat herder named Kaldi who while watching his goats noticed that they were acting very bizarre. As he investigated this peculiar behavior he noticed that the goats were dancing from one bush to the next eating cherry colored berries. He started partaking of the berries himself and was soon dancing with his goats. It became an aid for him and fellow goat herders to help them stay alert through out the night as they watched their herd.

Coffee moved north to the Arabia's where it flourished and transcended from raw (green beans) to roasted beans that were ground and brewed. To gain control over this magical crop Arabians would boil their export beans making them infertile. For almost 600 years from about 1000 A.D. to the 1600's coffee only grew in North Africa the Eastern Mediterranean, and India. This crop was dominated by the nation of Islam for literally centuries. It was when a smuggler named Baba Budan finally opened the coffee market by smuggling live coffee seeds into Europe. This made the coffee empire shift hands in 1615 A.D.

The Turks were at this time known for having a magical drink of black color. A few of their merchants introduced the drink to the Italians. The merchants of Venice introduced coffee to the rest of Europe. In 1616 the Dutch did what was thought to be impossible. They grew what is known as the first coffee plant in Europe. In 1696 they started the first European owned coffee empire in an area called Java, which is now part of Indonesia.

The Dutch soon after their Java conquest moved forward to other areas. Amsterdam, was now growing coffee? This seems to be the case. The Dutch were very prosperous in their coffee conquest. It was in 1714 that King Louis the XIV received his first coffee tree for his royal courtyard the Jard des Plantes. A few years later while on a French expedition to the Caribbean's a Naval Officer petitioned the king for some of the seed from the Jard des Plantes, but his request was denied. Several days later the Naval Officer and a few of his shipmates raided the Jard des Plantes and took a shrub, which later yielded 18 million coffee trees in a fifty-year period.

In 1727 Brazil wanted to have a piece of the coffee empire, but had to find a way to smuggle some seeds from a coffee country. Colonel Palheta was sent to settle a border dispute in France. This smooth talking Officer found the coffee fortress impregnable, so he found a road of least resistance. That road was none other than the Governor's wife. His plan paid off. At a fair well dinner she presented him with a bush with seedlings. From these seed sprang forth the largest coffee empire ever. By the 1800's Brazil's coffee was no longer a drink for the elite. Everyone was able to partake from this magical drink.

How fortunate we are today that coffee has been made accessible to the Millions who love it. Our history lesson has taught us that coffee was meant to be share the world around. No King can rule the coffee empire!

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### About the Author

Don is the owner of several free information websites and the sole proprietor of Java Jakes Gourmet Coffee Co. Visit <http://www.megainfosource.com> <http://www.javajakes.com> <http://www.egolfplace.com> Visit these sites today and become informed.