



## **ETHIOPIA GUJI 2 WASHED KERCHA GRAINPRO**

Notes: LEMON, SWEET BLACK TEA, CHOCOLATE, SYRUPY

### **ORIGIN INFORMATION**

Grower	500 farmers organized around the AZTAD Birbirsa Edera Wash Station
Variety	Indigenous landraces and cultivars
Region	Birbirsa Koguwa, Kercha, Guji Zone, Oromia Region
Harvest	November - December
Altitude	1800– 2200 masl
Soil	Luvisols
Process	Fully washed and dried on raised beds
Certification:	Conventional

### **BACKGROUND DETAILS**

There are few entrances to Guji--a remote and heavily forested swath of land stretching southeast through the lower corner of the massive Oromia region--and none of these routes are short, or for the queasy, in any way. Guji is heavy with primary forest thanks to the Guji tribe, a part of Ethiopia's vast and diverse Oromo nation, who have for generations organized to reduce mining and logging outfits where they can, in a struggle to conserve the land's sacred canopy. Compared to other coffee-heavy regions, large parts of Guji feel like prehistoric backwoods. Oumer Abdu's processing station, called Kercha, is in Deribadiya town, in western Guji. Deribadiya is in the greater district of Hambela Wamena, which starts at the border of Guji and Gedeo zones and runs southeast toward Shakiso, one of Guji's central urban hubs. Historically even this part of Guji could be a



full day's walk from the nearest trading centers of Gedeb or Dilla to the west, which left many coffee farmers debilitated by lack of access to market, and cherry prices often less than half of neighboring Gedeo or Sidama zones. Coffee farms in this part of Guji begin at extremely high elevations for arabica and tend to climb upward from there. To exit Hambela Wamena district to the west, as nearly all the coffee must do to begin the trek north to Addis Ababa, one regularly reaches heights of 2400 meters or higher, and yet the scenery remains as fertile and bustling as anywhere. The highland farming communities in this part of the country can be at turns Edenic in their natural purity, and startlingly remote. The gorgeous arabica genetics of this area, blessed by some of the country's healthiest biodiversity, could be easily ruined in transit, or commodified and blended into lower grades as a result of the difficult geography. One way for farmers to survive these disadvantages was by having larger, more diversified parcels, sometimes 20 acres or more, with equal emphasis on livestock or other crops for local markets as on coffee. But the vast majority have always been small—2-4 acres only. Notably as well, cooperative unions, Ethiopia's hallmark exporter organizations for small farmers, have scarce presence in Guji. Were it not for private washing stations like Kercha, local growers would have as their only option the sporadic, rogue coffee collector from Gedeo or farther, bringing challengingly low prices and a take-it-or-leave-it attitude. The Kercha processing station in Deribadiya is most definitely an exception to the status quo for small farmers in Guji and is an important island of commerce in the remote Hambela Wamena district.