



ETHIOPIA GUJI 1 NATURAL ORGANIC KAYON MOUNTAIN LOT 17 GRAINPRO

Notes: MANGO, NECTARINE, ORANGE BLOSSOM, MILK CHOCOLATE, CREAMY

ORIGIN INFORMATION

Grower Kayon Mountain Coffee Farm PLC
Variety Indigenous cultivars 74110 and 74112
Region Odo Shakiso District, Guji Zone, Oromia Region
Harvest October – January
Altitude 1800 – 2100 masl
Soil Sandy loam
Process Full natural and dried on raised beds
Certifications

BACKGROUND DETAILS

There are few entrances to Guji--a distant 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 and legislated to reduce mining and logging outfits in their area, in a struggle to conserve the land's sacred canopy. Compared to other coffee-heavy regions, large parts of Guji feel like prehistoric backwoods. Coffee farms in many parts of Guji begin at 2000 meters in elevation and tend to climb from there. The highland farming communities in this part of the country can be at turns Edenic in their natural purity, and startlingly remote. Near the town of Taro in the Odo Shakiso district is Kayon Mountain, founded by Ismael Hassen, a native of Kercha district who was born and raised surrounded by Guji's coffee culture. Kayon Mountain is a massive coffee estate with 500 planted hectares (well over 1000 acres) of select



Ethiopian arabica cultivars. The coffee genetics were originally isolated and bred by the Jimma Agricultural Research Center, whose coffee agenda includes studying and distributing select indigenous cultivars of Ethiopian coffee to help domestic farms renew and remain disease resistant as they evolve. 74110 and 74112 are some of the Center's oldest and are both descendants of heirloom varieties of coffee isolated from the Illubabor Zone, an historic coffee region in the West of Ethiopia—also a part of the Oromia Region. Kayon Mountain is a standout, in many ways, among the broader landscape of Ethiopian coffee. To begin with, estates this large are rare in a country defined by its smallholder systems: there are over four million coffee farmers in Ethiopia and the average cultivation is a few hundred trees each. Next, Kayon Mountain exports its own coffee—a rare standing for farms of any size in Ethiopia—and as a result can bypass the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange auction entirely. Third, the estate was founded in 2012, when the Guji Zone government began carefully approving land grants to groups with ambitious organic farming plans that included the preservation of primary forest among their areas. So not only is the estate extremely young by Ethiopian standards, there is an environmental mandate built into their grant. The Kayon Mountain team has increased production over the past seven harvests and is currently applying for an additional land grant to further expand their operation. In addition to their own planted land, the farm buys and processes cherry from 12 other local, larger farms which are also organic, and Rainforest Alliance certified. Throughout the harvest the estate is picking from 9am-5pm. Naturals are produced simply and carefully, by sorting for imperfections and slowly drying on raised beds in the sun. Drying cherry is constantly rotated and sorted by hand at the tables by a large staff. After dry-hulling the finished coffee, which Kayon Mountain also oversees, a final hand-sorting occurs prior to bagging. Naturals produced here tend to be delicately floral and sweet with dried rose, raspberry, strawberry, and milk chocolate. Ethiopia's Guji zone in many ways feels like the next generation of Ethiopian coffee. We see the marketplace itself evolving constantly in this country--the very exciting new wave of direct exports for one, the rise of private washing stations and boutique domestic buyers for another, and the foundation of modernized, large estates with quality and social justice equally at the forefront, setting management examples for producers worldwide. Guji itself however, as a place, a people, and a coffee, is like a newly emerged origin altogether. The forest-heavy zone with a conservationist spirit and uniquely candy-like coffees is getting its break now, and the world is better for it.