



Rwanda

Macuba FW Farmgate Initiative

The warm days and cool nights of the farms in Nyamasheke District that sit at 1,600+ meters above sea level and deliver to Macuba washing station helps cherry mature slowly and amass more sugars to create the notes of berries and a maple syrup sweetness that we love in this coffee.

Details

Coffee Grade:

FW Scr. 15

Farm/Coop/Station:

Macuba washing station

Varietal:

Bourbon, Jackson

Processing:

Fully washed

Altitude:

Washing Station — 1,685 meters above sea level

Owner:

465+ growers working with RWACOF

Subregion/Town:

Macuba, Nyamasheke

Region:

Western Province

Farm Size:

<1 hectare on average

Harvest Months:

March - June

About This Coffee

Every bag purchased contributes to a [Farmgate Initiative](#) project. [Learn more.](#)

Macuba washing station lies in the high-altitude hills of the Nyamasheke District. The station, which sits at 1,685 meters above sea level, receives coffee grown as high as 2,100 meters above sea level. The warm days and cool nights afforded by such high altitude helps cherry mature slowly and amass more sugars. The prime location is combined with exceptional agricultural practices, allowing Macuba to produce some of the best coffee in Rwanda.

Cultivation

Rwacof's farmer training program focuses on empowering smallholder farmers by fostering sustainable, high-quality coffee production.

Harvest & Post-Harvest

Cherry is selectively handpicked by farmers and delivered to Macuba washing station. At intake, the station floats all cherry to remove any that are low-density. Then, the high-density cherry is hand sorted to remove any visible defects.

After intake, cherry is pulped on a disc pulper before being placed in fermentation tanks to dry ferment for 20 to 24 hours.

Following fermentation, wet parchment is washed in clean water and placed in thin layers on tables to sundry. Here, it is sifted regularly to ensure even drying. The parchment will be covered during the hottest times of the day and periods of rain. On average, it takes 22 days for parchment to dry.

RWACOF (Sucafina in Rwanda)

In concert with our sustainability partner, [Kahawatu Foundation](#), RWACOF invests heavily in yield improvements, farmer training, quality improvement projects, environmental sustainability and other ways to increase farmer livelihoods.

RWACOF's Farmer Development Program in partnership with the London School of Economics (LSE) supports farmers with training in Good Agricultural Practices and access to loans, farm inputs and farm services. A new soil health initiative uses soil analysis data that RWACOF collected to identify farms where soil is too acidic. Lime, along with education about application, is distributed to these farmers to help improve soil quality. Additionally, seedling nurseries provide up to 4 million seedlings per year to help farmers renovate their rootstock.

RWACOF also has many projects that are designed to support farmers' overall livelihoods. They focus on gender equality and support several women's cooperatives by helping them access land, seedlings and reach a market for their coffees. They offer trainings on financial literacy and alternative income-generating activities.

The Farmer Hub program built retail shops that buy other crops from farmers and sell them to families and schools at fair prices. These retail shops help promote income diversification by creating

a market for other crops and they supply nutritious foods at competitive prices. The Farmer Hub program also offers loans to farmers as part of the farm management program.

On the environmental side, RWACOF has worked with partners to help install solar panels at 2 washing stations that are off the electrical grid. RWACOF's dry mill already have a 50 kilowatt-per-hour solar panel set up on their roof. They've also mapped carbon emissions in their coffee supply chain and are starting projects to half their emissions per kg of coffee. Two ways they're accomplishing this is by facilitating a transition from inorganic to organic fertilizer and further improve waste (water and pulp) management at the wet mills. They're also working with Trade in Space to map deforestation in the supply chain so that they can begin to work with farmers to reduce deforestation and improve forested areas in the supply chain.

Above all, RWACOF's exceptional attention to detail during post-harvest activities ensures the best quality coffee possible. From the moment cherry enters the washing station until it is milled and bagged for export, RWACOF keeps stringent quality controls in place. They know, as we do, that high-quality coffee is crucial for delivering benefit all along the supply chain.

Coffee in Rwanda

Despite its turbulent history, today Rwanda is one of the specialty coffee world's darlings – for good reason! Our sister company in Rwanda does an amazing job of bringing the best that Rwanda has to offer to roasters around the world.

German missionaries and settlers brought coffee to Rwanda in the early 1900s. Large scale coffee production was established during the 1930 & 1940s by the Belgian colonial government. Coffee production continued after the Belgian colonists left. By 1970, coffee had become the single largest export in Rwanda and accounted for 70% of total export revenue. Coffee was considered so valuable that, beginning in 1973, it was illegal to tear coffee trees out of the ground.

Between 1989 and 1993, the breakdown of the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) caused the global price to plummet. The Rwandan government and economy took a hard hit from low global coffee prices. The 1994 genocide and its aftermath led to a complete collapse of coffee exports and vital USD revenue, but the incredible resilience of the Rwandan people is evident in the way the economy and stability have recovered since then.

Modern Rwanda is considered one of the most stable countries in the region. Since 2003, its economy has grown by 7-8% per year and coffee production has played a key role in this economic growth. Coffee has also played a role in Rwanda's significant advancements towards gender equality. New initiatives that cater to women and focus on helping them equip themselves with the tools and knowledge for farming have been changing the way women view themselves and interact with the world around them.

Today, smallholders propel the industry in Rwanda forward. The country doesn't have any large estates. Most coffee is grown by the 400,000+ smallholders, who own less than a quarter of a hectare. The majority of Rwanda's coffee production is Arabica. Bourbon variety plants comprise 95% of all coffee trees cultivated in Rwanda.