

How We Cup Your Coffees

[A Visual Guide To The SCA Cupping Protocol]



1.

Blind cupping

We cup every sample blind. But to know which coffee we cupped and assessed, we code every inner lid of the sample boxes. Once roasted and boxed, we place the samples in random order to ensure blind cupping. Sample codes remain hidden for us until the scoring is complete. We do this to avoid any unconscious bias.



2.

Checking quality

Before we cup, we measure moisture levels, density, and water activity for every incoming sample.



3.

Sample roasting a day ahead

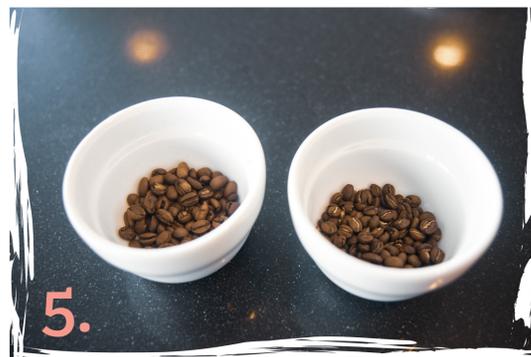
We roast samples one day before we cup, giving the beans 8 to 24 hours to rest and degas. And because the coffee rests, we avoid oxidation of the beans.



4.

Taste buds are for mornings

Cuppings always happen in the mornings, starting at 10 a.m. latest. This is because our taste pallets are at their best in the early hours of the day.



5.

Washed first, then naturals

Although we cup the coffees blind, we do have a specific order. We put the washed coffees at the beginning of the table, and the naturals at the end. As a result, we avoid tasting the intense flavors of naturals before sipping the more delicate washed coffees.



6.

Five cups

We always cup five cups per sample to:

- Check for taints and faults.
- Measure uniformity from one cup to the next.
- Verify if profiles and traits of the cups evolve in the same wake as the cup temperature drops.



7.

Twelve grams

We use 12 grams of coffee beans per 200 ml. This is because we found that 12 grams, with the right grind size and TDS, gives the best and most round result for each coffee.



8.

900 micron

The grind size is pivotal. That is why we have specific specs: 70 to 75% need to fall within 900 micron, 20 mesh sieve size.



9.

Less than 15 minutes

We ground coffees right before cupping, never having more than 15 minutes between grinding and pouring water.



10.

93 degrees Celsius

Just after grinding the coffee, we use 93 degrees Celsius water and pour it in until the brew reaches the edges of the bowl. A reverse osmosis system filters the water, with the ppm being above 100 and below 250. We found that a ppm of 150 gives the best cup results in Amsterdam.



11.

SCA cupping form

We use the SCA cupping form, and we taste each coffee two to three times during cupping. First, we cup while the coffee is hot. Then we evaluate all attributes on warm. And when cold, we go back to the cups that were not uniform or that have possible defects. But we never return to our notes once we identify the coffees by their code.