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## The rebirth of the soil

Once rich and fertile, today much of the world's soil is exhausted, impoverished by centuries of extractive and short-sighted agricultural practices. However, all is not lost: we are seeing the birth of a new chapter of agricultural renaissance.

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## Red and green cherries

An extraordinary journey begins in the very heart of Brazil, where the sky seems to merge with the earth in an infinite embrace. It is an odyssey that travels through lives, continents and cultures and culminates in the daily ritual that millions of people around the world share: a cup of coffee.

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## Traditional innovation

In the complex panorama of modern agriculture, technological innovation is advancing in leaps and bounds, and it may look like everyone is happy with this. But a counter-current is emerging which is just as powerful as it is unexpected: a return to our roots.

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Culture  
& Nature

FOCUS

The loss of agricultural production capacity

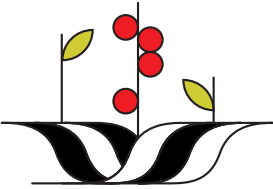
Sources: Status of the World's Soil Resources, FAO 2015



ANNUAL LOSS

0,3%

Every year we lose 0.3% of our agricultural production capacity due to land consumption



LOSS IN 100 YEARS

30%

0.3% might look like a small number, but it isn't when you consider it over a longer period: in 100 years it adds up to 30%.

The Rebirth of the soil



Under our feet, silent and often forgotten, an epic drama unfolds. It is the story of the thin layer of earth that supports life on this planet. Once rich and fertile, today much of the world's soil is exhausted, impoverished by centuries of extractive and short-sighted agricultural practices. However, all is not lost: we are seeing the birth of a new chapter of agricultural renaissance. Regenerative agriculture is an approach that promises not only to stop soil degradation, but also to regenerate life within it

Imagine you're walking in a forest. Imagine then bending down to collect a handful of soil: it might look like just simple, single-coloured soil, but on closer examination this is one of the richest and most complex places on Earth. Perhaps it is no surprise that our planet shares a name with the earth we have in our hands. Billions of microorganisms, fungi and bacteria work interconnectedly to make the true beating heart of our planet. For millennia, human civilizations have lived and thrived thanks to soil fertility. The great civilizations of antiquity – Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, Ancient Greece, and the Roman Empire – flourished in the floodplains, where the soil was rich and productive. It is no coincidence that these lands, blessed with generous rivers and fertile soils, were the cradles of agriculture and, consequently, of human civilisation as we know it today. Let's take Mesopotamia, the fertile crescent between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. Here, over ten thousand years ago, our ancestors began to cultivate wild wheat and barley, giving rise to what historians call the "Neolithic Revolution": the large-scale shift of so many of the cultures of the time from a lifestyle of hunting, gathering and nomadism to one of agriculture and a settled lifestyle. The alluvial soil, enriched by the periodic flooding of the rivers, provided the ideal conditions for this revolution. Moving westwards and considering a later period in the timeline, it is clear that in ancient Egypt too, soil was at the root of everything. The floods of the Nile deposited a layer of rich silt on the surrounding fields, a fertile land that the Egyptians cultivated for millennia, developing one of the longest-lasting civilisations in history. When we think of Ancient Egypt, we now remember them for their pyramids, hieroglyphics and majestic temples, but the name the Egyptians called their country, Kemet means fertile "black earth", distinct from the Dsrt, the "red earth" of the desert. We find stories like this all over the world, from the civilisations of the Indus Valley, to present-day Pakistan, to the Mayan and Aztec civilisations, to the Roman Empire and Ancient Greece: for millennia, these civilisations lived in a delicate balance with the soil that supported them. They developed sophisticated agricultural practices, such as crop rotation, controlled irrigation, and the use of natural fertilizers, which made it possible to maintain and even improve soil fertility over time.

But as time passed, this balance fell out of harmony.

But as time passed, this balance fell out of harmony. Agriculture became increasingly intensive, extractive and disconnected from natural cycles. The pressure of growing populations, combined with increasingly aggressive agricultural practices, began to erode the natural capital on which these civilizations were based. In Mesopotamia, over-irrigation led to the salinisation of soils, making large areas impossible to cultivate. In the provinces of the Roman Empire, deforestation and intensive ploughing caused massive soil erosion, turning once-fertile landscapes into barren, unproductive hills, forcing emperors to expand their domains in search of new, fertile territories. In Ancient Greece, the same thing happened: this is how the philosopher Plato described the hills of Attica, the region around Athens in the fourth century BC: "What remains today compared to what existed then is like the skeleton of a sick man: all the fat and soft earth has been consumed, and only the bare bones of the earth remain." he added that such erosion limited the country's ability to sustain large armies as it had done in the past. Civilizations that had prospered thanks to the bounty of the earth began to decline, victims of their own success and their inability to understand and respect the natural limits of the ecosystem that supported them. Soil is the basis of civilization, but it is also a fragile and finite resource. When we consider it inexhaustible, when we exploit it without regard for the time it needs to regenerate, we risk undermining the very foundations of our existence. These are not stories from the ancient past that will never be repeated: the same thing is happening today. Every year we lose 0.3% of our agricultural production capacity due to land consumption. It might look like a small number, but it is not if you consider it over a longer period: in 100 years this 0.3% becomes 30%. It should be one of the central political issues of the next decade, and yet it struggles to get the attention it deserves because

Under our feet, silent and often forgotten, an epic drama unfolds. It is the story of the thin layer of earth that supports life on this planet.



the soil is hidden under our feet, it is a resource that we take for granted and it seems impossible it might somehow end. The main cause behind soil loss today is the same as it was for the ancient civilisations and it is also, ironically, the sector that most depends on healthy soil. Agriculture has often gone too far in its demand for an increase in production from a finite resource like soil, which has meant it has ended up being ruined. Substances like chemical fertilisers and pesticides, that in the 60s allowed us to significantly increase agricultural yields, helping to reduce world hunger, are now being used in massive amounts, and are creating the opposite effect, causing soil impoverishment and biodiversity loss.

But a wind of change is coming.

But a wind of change is coming. There is a famous quote from the anthropologist Margaret Mead that beautifully describes the rise of a new approach to agriculture over the past 20 years: "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. In fact, it's the only thing that ever managed to do it." In recent decades, a movement of farmers, agronomists and activists has grown, and they are rediscovering and reinventing ancient practices,

combining them with modern knowledge to revitalise impoverished soils. This movement once again puts agriculture's most important asset at the heart of cultivation. It's called regenerative agriculture, and it doesn't have a standard definition, in the same way as it doesn't have a set of specific techniques. It is a holistic approach that aims to regenerate the health of the entire ecosystem based on a number of fundamental principles: minimising soil disturbance, maintaining constant vegetation cover, diversifying crops, integrating animals into the agricultural system, and above all understanding the specific context of each terrain. It is an approach that aims to demonstrate how, by working with nature and not against it, we can ensure abundant harvests by regenerating the resource that provides them. This transformation is not without challenges considering the fundamental nature of the change in approach to cultivating the land. But despite these challenges, the movement is gaining more and more traction. An ever-increasing number of consumers are aware of the importance of soil health and are willing to support regenerative farming practices. Companies are starting to incorporate soil regeneration into their supply chains because they have understood the centrality of this ecosystem to their own health. Regenerative agriculture reminds us that we are not separate from nature, but an integral part of it. It encourages us to see ourselves not as conquerors

of the earth, but as its custodians and co-creators. As the sun rises over a regeneratively cultivated plot, the scene looks more like what we will find in a forest than in a conventionally cultivated field. The air resonates with the buzzing of insects and the chirping of birds. The soil is covered with a variety of plants, some in bloom, others producing seeds. Beneath the surface, billions of organisms continue their silent but vital work, building soil fertility. This is the promise of regenerative agriculture: a future in which food production does not deplete the earth's resources, but regenerates them. A future in which every act of cultivation is also an act of healing, of restoration, of rebirth. And as we reach down to pick up a handful of this regenerated soil, we can't help but see a glimmer of hope. Because there's more than just dirt in your hand. There is the key to tackling some of the most urgent challenges of our time: from climate change, to food security, to biodiversity loss. Regenerative agriculture reminds us that the solution to many of our problems could literally be under our feet. It invites us to bend down, to get our hands dirty, to reconnect with the land that supports us. To drive forward a vision of vibrant ecosystems, and resilient communities. This is a vision of a future in which humanity not only survives, but thrives in harmony with nature. And it all starts with a handful of soil. A handful of living soil, rich and full of possibilities. A handful of soil that holds the promise of regeneration.🔴





# Red and



Stories  
& Flavours



*An extraordinary journey begins in the very heart of Brazil, where the sky seems to merge with the earth in an infinite embrace. It is an odyssey that travels through lives, continents and cultures and culminates in the daily ritual that millions of people around the world share: a cup of coffee. This is no ordinary journey: it is the journey of a special type of coffee that is born from the union of respect for the earth and a vision of the future. It's a journey that begins in the verdant rows of crops in a region in Brazil and ends in our homes. It invites us to rethink our place in the world and reminds us that every sip of coffee can be an act of awareness, a choice that goes beyond personal pleasure to embrace a broader responsibility towards the Planet that hosts us.*

Cerrado Mineiro wakes up to the morning song of the Bem-te-vi, a yellow-breasted bird whose name in Portuguese means "I have seen you well". And indeed, here, everything seems to be seen and experienced with crystal-clear clarity. The sparkling morning air brings with it the unmistakable aroma of coffee, mixed with the scent of moist earth and lush vegetation. The rolling hills, once bare and beaten by a relentless sun, now sway in every shade of green. Coffee plantations are no longer sterile monocultures, but complex and vibrant ecosystems. Among the neat rows of coffee plants, wild herbs and colourful flowers grow. The soil, once arid and dusty, is now dark and damp and full of life.

**Each bean is a microcosm of biodiversity, an ambassador for a new way of conceiving agriculture.**

Harvesting is a sacred moment, a ritual that is repeated year after year. Each cherry (or drupe, as the fruit that contains what will be the coffee bean is

called) is harvested precisely at the moment it is ripe. This meticulous attention is not romantic or contrived, but a conscious choice. Selective harvesting makes it possible to obtain a higher quality coffee, while preserving the health of the plants and the integrity of the surrounding ecosystem thanks to a significant improvement in mechanical harvesters in recent years. The harvesting is selective because, by using only the "brushes" at the top, the machine collects only the cherries that are in the upper two thirds of the plant: being more exposed to the sun they ripen earlier and more uniformly. It is a slow, tiring process, but it embodies the entire philosophy of regenerative agriculture: respect for the rhythms of the soil, care for the ecosystem, and a long-term vision. After harvesting, the beans begin their transformation. The processing is a delicate balance between tradition and innovation. The techniques handed down from generation to generation come together with the most modern practices. The water used to wash the beans is filtered and reused to transport the cherries to the de-pulper. The by-products of processing, which were considered as problematic waste before, have now become resources to enrich compost, that in turn feeds the soil. Nothing is wasted, everything is part of a virtuous cycle of production and regeneration. But our coffee journey is only just beginning. From the fields of Cerrado Mineiro, the green beans (not yet roasted) embark on a long journey across the ocean. They are loaded onto ships that sail the Atlantic carrying not only that precious cargo, but a vision, a different way of conceiving the relationship between human beings and natural ecosystems. During the journey, the beans rest in the holds, protected from humidity and temperature variations. It's a little bit like they're meditating, preparing for the next phase of their transformation. Every time the ship rolls, every wave that crashes on the hull, seems to cradle these precious seeds, whispering to them ancient stories of distant lands and peoples united by a passion for coffee. When they finally reach their destination - ports, such as Trieste, the beans are carefully transported to the roasting warehouses, where expert tasters evaluate their quality. Each batch is examined, smelled, tasted. It is a process that requires years of experience and an extremely well-trained palate. The tasters are a bit like translators: they have the task of deciphering the language of the beans, understanding what they say about the land they have come from, the climate that fed them, the hands that cultivated them. Roasting is the moment when coffee finally reveals its true nature. It is an alchemical process, a transformation that requires scientific precision and artistic sensitivity. The green beans are

exposed to heat, which causes them to swell and change colour. The aroma of coffee is released, filling the air with notes reminiscent of the tropical ecosystem that gave birth to it: fruit, chocolate, flowers and spices. Once roasted, the beans are packaged and distributed, but their journey doesn't end there. From coffee-shop counters to supermarket shelves, from restaurant kitchens to our homes, regenerative coffee brings with it not one, but a multitude of stories. Each can of coffee is like a book waiting to be opened and enjoyed to reveal its secrets. This is the moment we have all been waiting for: the preparation of a cup of coffee. Whether it's a moka on the stove at home, a professional coffee machine in a downtown coffee shop, or an elaborate ceremony in a specialist store, this is the moment when coffee's long journey comes to fruition. The hot water flows through the ground coffee, extracting aromas and flavours that have been jealously guarded for months. The scent spreads in the air, evoking memories, stimulating the senses, preparing the palate for the experience that is about to come. It is a moment of pure magic, an explosion of sensations that runs through the body like a wave. The tongue deciphers the aromatic notes: perhaps a hint of caramel or a touch of dried fruit. The palate registers the bright acidity, the velvety body, the persistent aftertaste. But there's more to this cup.

**There is the taste of the red earth of Cerrado Mineiro, the warmth of the Brazilian sun, the humidity of the rainforest.**

There is the effort and hope of the growers, the expertise of the tasters, the passion of the roasters. There's a whole world in this simple cup of coffee. A world of invisible but powerful connections, linking the Brazilian farmer to the Italian, German or Japanese consumers. A world where every choice that has been made, from the field to the cup, has an impact on our planet and our future. Drinking a cup of regenerative coffee becomes an act of awareness, a daily gesture that goes beyond mere personal pleasure. It is a way to

**IN THE PHOTO**  
Plantations in the Brazilian region of Cerrado Mineiro, the first to achieve regenagri® certification for coffee 100% from regenerative agriculture.

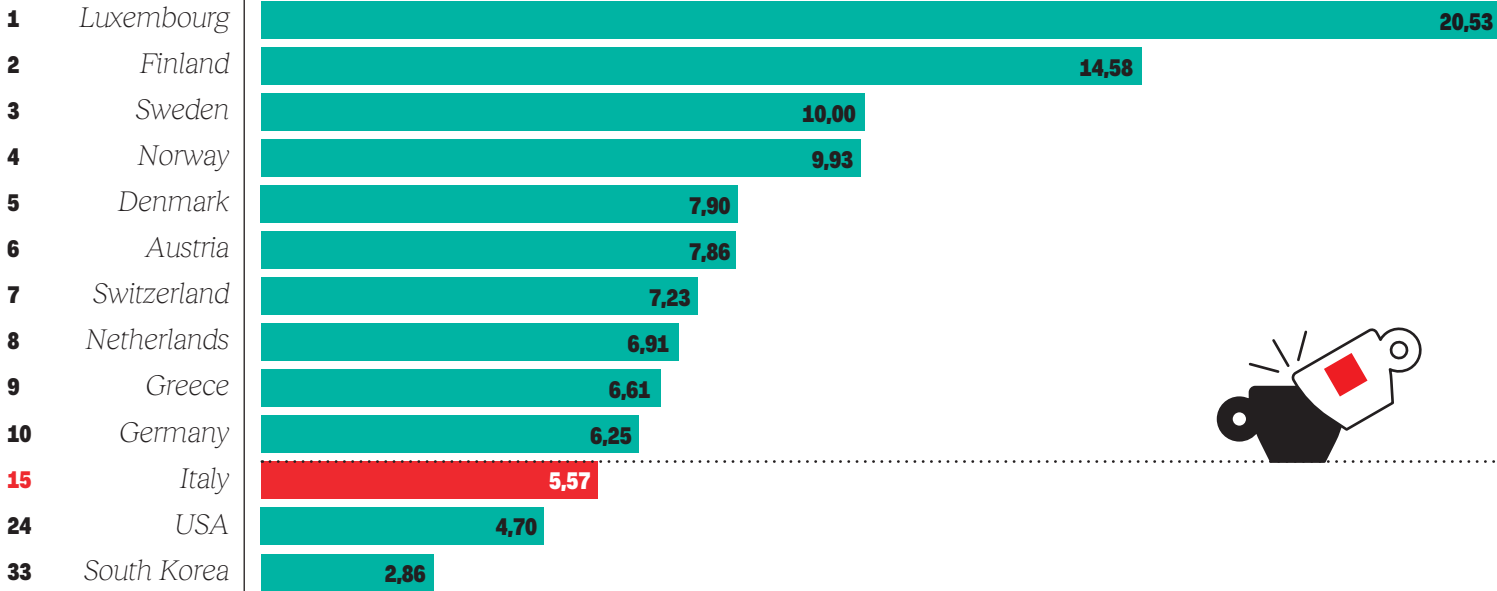
**IN THE PHOTO**  
A moment of sharing between coffee producers and illycaffè experts.



## FOCUS

### Countries that drink the most coffee per capita

Ranking of countries by Kg of coffee per capita consumed in 2024, according to Cafely LLC



connect with the soil and with the Earth, to support forward-looking agricultural practices, to contribute to the fight against climate change. It is a vote of confidence towards a future where pleasure and responsibility are not in conflict, but feed into each other. The journey of our coffee is not yet over: even after the last drop has been drunk, its story continues. Coffee grounds, once seen as organic waste, now find new life as a fertiliser for plants, as a natural exfoliator, as a substrate for growing mushrooms, or as a raw material for the production of bioplastics. Once again everything is transformed, everything is regenerated. And so, the cycle begins again. While we savour our cherished cup of coffee, in Cerrado Mineiro a new generation of plants is growing, nourished by soil which is alive once more. This is the transformative power of regenerative coffee. Not a just a drink, but a bridge connecting people, cultures and ecosystems. An invitation to rethink our role in the world, to consider the impact of our daily choices, and to become an active part of a global movement towards a healthier, more sustainable and more equitable future. Each of these cups is a small revolution. A silent but powerful revolution, which grows and expands through our consumption choices, influencing agricultural practices, commercial policies and business strategies. It's a way to vote every day for the world we want to live in. Next time you're about to have a cup of coffee, stop for a moment. Close your eyes and imagine the long journey that coffee has taken to reach you. Feel the sun of Cerrado Mineiro on your skin, the scent of the rich and fertile earth, the song of the birds among the branches of the coffee plants.

**Because there's not just a drink in that cup. There's a whole world.**

A world of possibilities, of connections and of hope. Sip after sip, we are contributing to building that world. A world where the pleasure of a cup of coffee comes together with the awareness of our role as stewards of the planet. And perhaps, just as we take a moment of pause and reflection, as the coffee slowly cools in the cup, we can hear the distant echo of the song of the bem-te-vi. "Can you see me?" it seems to ask us. And maybe we will finally start to look carefully. To look beyond the cup, beyond the present moment, towards a future where every coffee bean tells a story of regeneration.



# Green





I

*In the complex panorama of modern agriculture, technological innovation is advancing in leaps and bounds, and it may look like everyone is happy with this. But a counter-current is emerging which is just as powerful as it is unexpected: a return to our roots.*

This is by no means a nostalgic rejection of progress, but rather a bold synthesis of ancestral wisdom and the most advanced frontiers of science. It is a dialogue between the past and future, where ancient agricultural practices handed down from generation to generation, are intertwined with the latest discoveries in biotechnology and computer science. This union of tradition and innovation is not so much a theoretical exercise, but rather something urgently needed in a world facing unprecedented challenges.

This revolution is taking place in Cerrado Mineiro, the heart of coffee production in Brazil, creating a model of agriculture that is not only productive, but also regenerative; that not only takes what the soil has to offer, but also nourishes it in return. A story of rediscovery and reinvention.

Human beings learned to cultivate the land in the shade of primeval rainforests and along the banks of ancient rivers. The first agricultural practices were not simple acts of production, but intricate dances with nature, reciprocal rituals with the soil that supported life. From the Inca terraces in the Andes to Aztec chinampas on the lakes of Mexico, from Banaue rice paddies in the Philippines to Dutch polders, our ancestors developed farming methods that not only produced food, but also dovetailed

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# Traditional innovation



Stories  
& Conversations



With excerpts from  
the interview with  
**Glaucio De Castro**

seamlessly into the surrounding ecosystem. These ancestral practices, rooted in a deep understanding of natural cycles and the interconnectedness of all living things, were largely forgotten in the era of industrial agriculture. The Green Revolution of the 20th century, with its promise of higher yields through the intensive use of chemicals and monocultures, led to a temporary boom in food production – but this came at a devastating cost to our soil, biodiversity and climate.

## Creating a bridge between traditional knowledge and modern science.

In the face of the present global challenges of climate change and environmental degradation, we are finally rediscovering the wisdom of ancient practices by creating a bridge between traditional knowledge and modern science. Regenerative agriculture is not merely a set of rules and techniques, but a philosophy that requires a profound change in mentality. As Glaucio De Castro, a regenerative farmer from Cerrado Mineiro and a partner of illycaffè, puts it, it means “not just thinking about nutrition or fighting pests and diseases, but considering the entire ecosystem where coffee is grown.”

It is a new vision that encompasses a synergy of interconnected practices, each of which resonates with echoes of the past and projects into the future. The soil between the rows of coffee plants, that was once exposed to erosion and the scorching sun, now hosts a living carpet of diverse plants. This polychromy is not just aesthetically pleasing, but is a sophisticated strategy to nourish and protect the soil.

Each species in this plant ecosystem plays a unique role. Some, such as legumes, fix atmospheric nitrogen, turning air into nourishment for plants. Other plants, with their deep roots, bring precious minerals from the depths of the soil to the surface. Together they create a diverse habitat for beneficial insects, acting as a natural barrier against parasites. Mulching, a practice as old as agriculture itself, is now being reinvented for the 21st century. When the so-called cover plants complete their cycle, they are cut and left on the ground, forming a protective layer that retains moisture, prevents erosion, and nourishes microbial life in the soil as it slowly decomposes. This cycle of life and death, growth and decomposition, mimics the natural processes of a forest and makes the soil healthier and more resilient. Alongside this rebirth on the surface of the soil, another silent revolution is taking place underground: compost.

In dedicated corners of the fazendas, mountains of organic material slowly ferment. Coffee bean husks, fruit pulp, manure and trimmings from plants are continuously mixed in carefully calculated proportions. Sensors monitor temperature and humidity and microorganisms are introduced to accelerate and direct the decomposition process. The result is a rich and complex compost, a natural and circular fertilizer for the soil. This compost is not merely a substitute for chemical fertilisers, it's a miniature ecosystem, brimming with microbial life. When it is incorporated into the soil, it triggers a cascade of beneficial effects: it improves the structure of the soil, increasing its ability to retain water and nutrients, and nourishes a vast network of microorganisms that in turn support the health and growth of coffee plants.

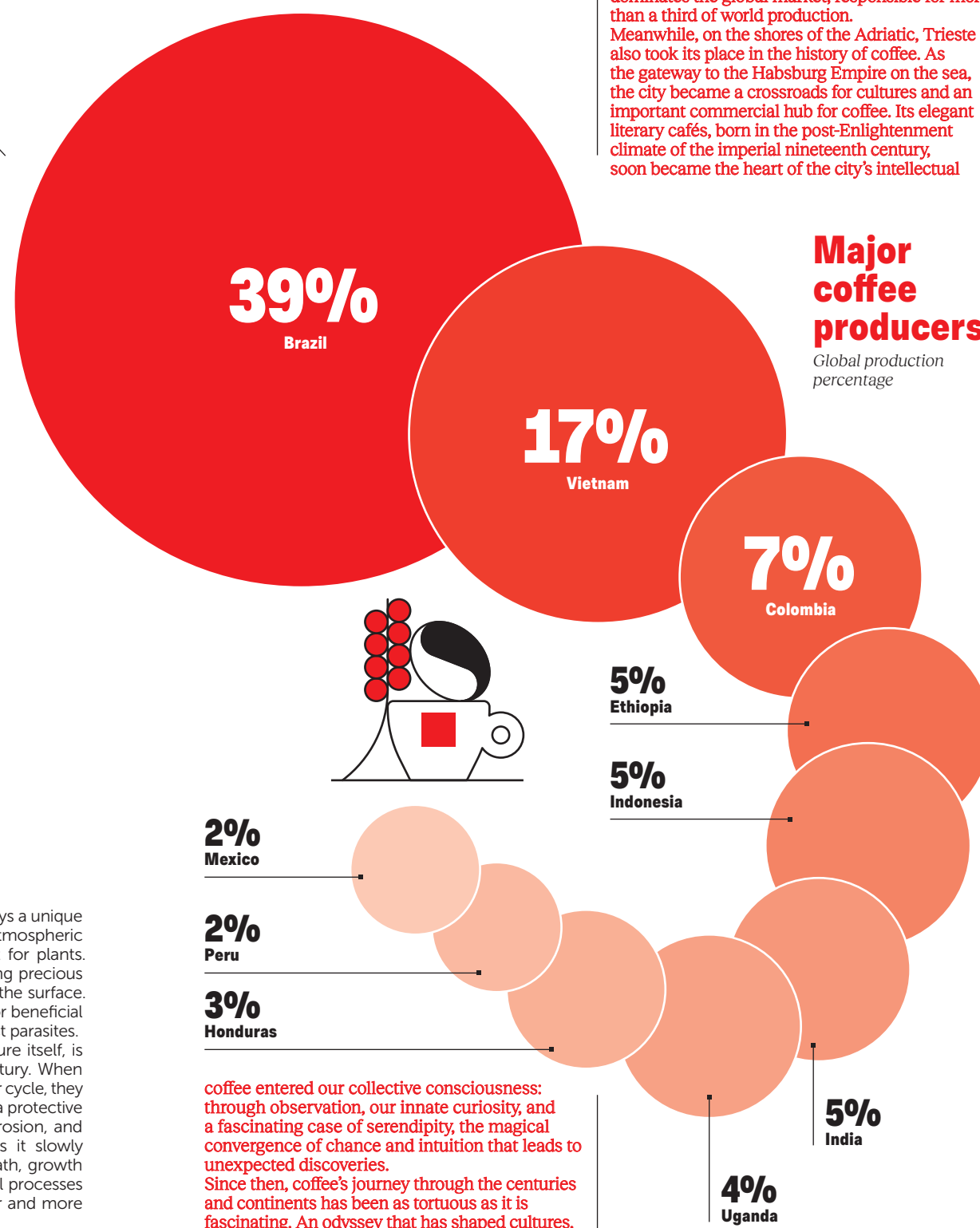
Going even deeper, we enter the microscopic world of fungi and bacteria. Mycorrhizal fungi, which form symbiotic associations with plant roots, are now cultivated and deliberately introduced to coffee

## FOCUS

## Ethiopian Shepherds and the French Enlightenment

In ancient Ethiopia, where the mountains rise to an infinite sky and deep valleys hide thousand-year-old secrets, we find the legend of a drink that is now the second most traded commodity in the world. Here, in the Kaffa region – which is believed to be the origin of the word ‘coffee’ – lush forests guard the wild ancestors of *Coffea arabica*, the coffee plant. The story goes that it was in this primordial environment that a young shepherd named Kaldi was grazing his goats, when one day he was amazed to see that his normally tranquil animals were dancing and jumping around with surprising energy after eating the red berries of an unknown shrub. Intrigued, and perhaps a little worried, Kaldi decided to taste those mysterious fruits, and found himself filled with a vitality he had never experienced before. This story is more of a myth than historical fact, but it captures the essence of the way

tasting this exotic drink for the first time, his eyes lighting up as the intense, bitter taste spreads across his tongue. It was the start of a new era. The aroma of coffee quickly spread throughout Europe. In London, coffee shops became known as “penny universities”, places where, for the price of a cup of coffee, you could participate in animated discussions about politics, literature and science. In Paris, the Café Procope became the vibrant heart of the Enlightenment, frequented by some of the most famous names in the movement, including Voltaire and Diderot. In Italy, too, coffee became central to this movement: Il Caffè was the name of an Italian periodical, published in the middle of the 1700s, which spread Enlightenment ideas throughout the country. But coffee did not stop in Europe: it crossed the Atlantic and reached the Americas, where it found new, fertile lands and a new destiny. In Brazil, coffee plantations transformed the landscape and the economy, giving birth to an empire that still dominates the global market, responsible for more than a third of world production. Meanwhile, on the shores of the Adriatic, Trieste also took its place in the history of coffee. As the gateway to the Habsburg Empire on the sea, the city became a crossroads for cultures and an important commercial hub for coffee. Its elegant literary cafés, born in the post-Enlightenment climate of the imperial nineteenth century, soon became the heart of the city's intellectual



coffee entered our collective consciousness: through observation, our innate curiosity, and a fascinating case of serendipity, the magical convergence of chance and intuition that leads to unexpected discoveries. Since then, coffee's journey through the centuries and continents has been as tortuous as it is fascinating. An odyssey that has shaped cultures, economies and social rituals. From the highlands of Ethiopia, coffee began its migration northwards, crossing the Red Sea to reach the Arabian Peninsula. Here, in the mystical port city of Mokha (hence the name of the coffee maker), in present-day Yemen, coffee found its first real home away from its birthplace. The Sufis embraced coffee to help with their long nights of prayer and meditation, turning coffee consumption into an almost sacred act. But the journey of coffee had only just begun. Like a whisper carried on the desert wind, the fame of this dark and aromatic drink spread throughout the Islamic world. The first coffee shops, known as “qahveh khaneh”, appeared in Constantinople, Cairo and other major cities of the time, quickly becoming centres of social and intellectual life. From a simple drink, coffee had become a catalyst for conversations, debates and creativity. It was the Republic of Venice, with its merchants and a trade network that extended to the Far East, that introduced coffee to Europe in the seventeenth century. Imagine the scene: a foggy morning in the lagoon, a Venetian merchant

life. A century later, these same cafés saw the birth of new currents of thought, including psychoanalysis, which found fertile ground in the animated discussions across the tables. Now our journey reaches the 2000s, when Trieste embraced the science of coffee, with cutting-edge research centres such as Aromalab, illycaffè's laboratory, which study and innovate this thousand-year-old drink, mixing tradition and the future in every cup. From an Ethiopian shepherd to dancing goats, from enlightenment-seeking Sufis to Enlightenment philosophers, from Venetian merchants to modern baristas, it's hard to find a product that better encapsulates the globalisation and interconnectedness of the world. And so, as the steam rises from our morning cup of coffee, let's remember that that is not just a drink, but also represents centuries of history, culture and human connections. With every sip, we savour the legacy of brave explorers, astute merchants, and passionate lovers of a drink that changed the world more than any other.

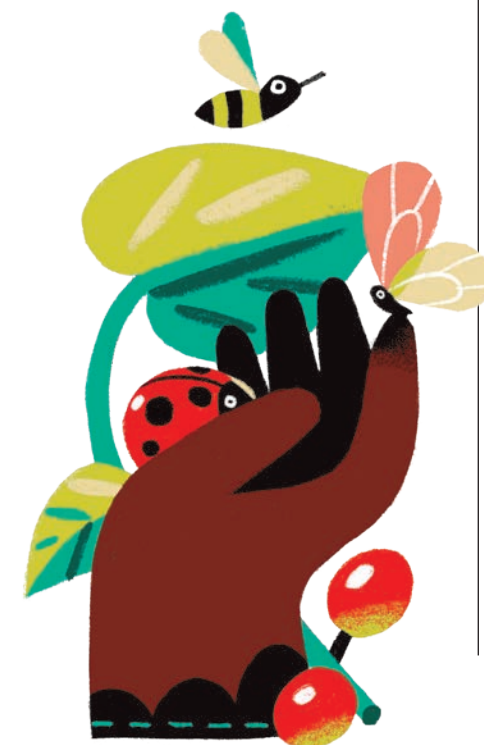
## FURTHER READING

### At the roots of knowledge

**“The Nation of Plants”**  
by **Stefano Mancuso**  
a book that explores the intelligence and complexity of the plant world, offering a new perspective on the role of plants in the terrestrial ecosystem.

**“How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds, and Shape Our Futures”**  
by **Merlin Sheldrake**  
An adventure into the realm of fungi that reveals their fundamental and often underestimated importance in maintaining the balance of the Planet.

**“Growing a Revolution”**  
by **David R. Montgomery**  
An invitation to discover innovative agricultural practices that regenerate the soil, while improving the productivity and sustainability of the agricultural industry.



**We have shifted the focus from the plant to the soil, seeking the best natural solutions to nourish, strengthen and make it fertile.**



plantations. These fungi greatly extend the reach of roots, allowing plants to access nutrients and water that would otherwise be beyond their reach. At the same time, nitrogen-fixing bacteria are proliferated, creating a genuine “internet of plants” that connects and feeds the entire ecosystem, known in jargon as the Wood Wide Web. Even water, a vital element for every agricultural system, is managed in a regenerative system with a wisdom that blends ancient practices and modern technology. Rainwater harvest systems are enhanced, inspired by age-old techniques developed in arid regions, and precision irrigation, driven by satellite data and soil sensors, ensures that every drop of water is used as efficiently as possible. Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of this approach is the way it reframes the role of the farmer. No longer a simple producer, but now a custodian of the ecosystem. It is no longer a competition with nature, but a collaboration with it. It means a return to the ancestral role of farmers as stewards of the land, but now equipped with 21st century knowledge and tools.

This union of ancient and modern is producing surprising results: from reducing the exploitation of natural resources, to soil regeneration, from increasing the resistance of plants to diseases, to safeguarding biodiversity. De Castro is witness to these advantages, but adds that there is a social dimension too: “I believe that the greatest social benefit has been the use of fewer chemicals, which, as a result, has meant that our workers are exposed to these products much less.” However, the transition to regenerative agriculture is not without its challenges. One of the biggest challenges is convincing producers of the virtue of the practices and the advantageousness of investing

in them. And, De Castro adds, the challenge for farmers is being able to “balance the plant's nutrient demand with productivity.”

**One of the biggest challenges is convincing producers of the virtue of the practices.**

De Castro also suggests that spreading these practices requires more sharing of ideas “about the regenerative practices that are yielding positive results, and recognition of producers who are using these practices by highlighting their products.” As another day draws to a close, tinting the coffee fields with shades of gold, it is impossible not to experience a moment of peace of mind: in these regenerative plantations we can see a microcosm of what could be the future of agriculture. A future in which food production does not conflict with the health of the planet, but becomes an integral part of it. A future of rediscovering ancient wisdom through the lens of modern science, to build bridges between ancestral knowledge and the challenges of our time. It is a fundamental process to relearn what our ancestors instinctively understood: that the health of the soil, plants and animals, and our health are all interconnected in profound and wonderful ways. Through this process, every cup of coffee becomes not only a pleasure for the palate, but also an act of regeneration for our planet.





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