



CENCOIC

Cauca, Colombia

Partner since: 2018

Traceable to: 1059
Smallholders across three
communities: Caldono,
Tacueyo, Mercedes

Altitude: 1500 - 2200 MASL

Varietals: Bourbon, Typica,
Caturra, Castillo

Processing: Home pulped and
fermented under water for 13-28
hours in tanks of cement and
ceramic then dried on parabolic
beds for 8-15 days before
resting in a silo.

Harvest: November December January April May June

Booking: February May June July

Arrivals: January February March June July August



CENCOIC is a collection of 1059 smallholders located around Cauca in Southern Colombia. Together, this group boasts just over 1000 hectares of coffee under cultivation, but as individuals, farms are small and yields are too.

This area was previously controlled by FARC interests, and has only recently opened back up for business. To-date CENCOIC's major competition is the decision to grow coffee or other illicit crops.

CENCOIC has been active for many years, but was organized as an exporter in 2018 to represent the Nasa indigenous community to the international market. There are an estimated 60,000 people who still speak the Nasa Yuwe language, and they are located across Tacueyó, Caldono and Las Mercedes (all departments within Cauca).

Their motto is "unity, earth, culture and autonomy", all of which are expressions of their unique identity and history. Their focus is on preserving cultural traditions, social ties, ancient knowledge and their local environment in the context of a country that is quickly commercializing.

They describe their farming as 'traditional practices enhanced by advanced training'. Activities include training in the field and in the classroom, collection of plastics for recycling into flotation tanks, the construction of bio-factories, and ongoing sensitization on environmental protections. Coffees are processed at home; but farmers have been taught how to treat the 'honey water' used during fermentation and return it to their fields as fertilizer.



Colombia and coffee are nearly synonymous. For decades, US specialty has looked to Colombia to source the entire spectrum of coffees, from all-day approachable blenders to unique and experimental competition lots. This range speaks to the diversity to be found within Colombia—diversity in climate, coffee, and culture. Colombia harvests coffee nearly year-round from the northern mountain ranges in the Sierra Nevada to the Rezuardos in the South. Some farmers negotiate directly with roasters on cup scores and track international prices. Others come from remote communities and sell to the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation (FNC) – a setter of standards and buyer of last resort for communities that have access to no other customer.

It can be most fulfilling to comb through collections and drill down past the bodega level. All that is possible within a single collection can often be scaled up if you just ask, that is if you find the right partners who care to listen. Earning trust, calibrating on coffee, and getting into a good cadence for communication are more important here than in other parts of the world.

In Colombia, quality can be found from estates at the container-load or from smallholders 1-2 bags at a time. The key is finding the right partners who can help you to cut through the noise and get to the best coffees every harvest.