



## Red de Cafeticultores 5 de Diciembre

La Cañada, Oaxaca, Mexico

**Partner since:** 2020

**Traceable to:** 1,420 smallholders

**Altitude:** 1750 MASL

**Varietals:** Typica and Bourbon (60%), Caturra (30%), Mundo Novo (10%)

**Processing:** Selective harvesting separates cherries from the farm, which are floated, pulped and fermented for 24 hours before final washing and drying

**Harvest:** December January February

**Booking:** March April May June

**Arrivals:** May June July



The Red 5 de Diciembre network is the largest organization of producers in the La Cañada, and itself made up by 13 first-level organizations to represent 1,300 small indigenous producers. They formed

as an independent group on the 5th of December, 2014, after La Roya devastated crops in region and chased away international buyers. Over the past six years this group has been working to improve selective harvesting, specialty processing, and marketing of these higher value lots. They've succeeded in growing membership and obtaining organic certification, but it was not until 2020 that they were able to achieve and significant premiums for exporting specialty. This was the year they partnered with the cupping team at Ensembles de Café, who worked with this group to separate out their very best and set the model for years to come.



Mexico is for coffee lovers. Few origins offer such variety, such competency, and such short flights to the farm. While often overlooked by their neighbors to the north, Mexico is the world's 7th largest coffee producer, the largest exporter of organic coffees, and a fast-growing consumers of specialty coffee.

Seventy percent of Mexico's crop comes from larger estates, concentrated around Veracruz, with the remaining thirty percent coming from 2 million smallholders, spread around the country but mostly in the Southern States of Chiapas and Oaxaca.

This is also where we find most of Mexico's indigenous population, communities who moved higher and higher up-mountain, onto smaller and smaller plots of land, first to get away from colonial Spain, and later pushed by larger landowners during decades of highly political land reforms. In this way Mexico's agrarian, coffee and Puebla movements are intertwined.

Though coffee arrived into Mexico two centuries earlier, it did not take off until the late 20th century. In the 1970s a farmer friendly government came to power and encouraged smallholder production. Coffee exports skyrocketed nearly ten-fold over the next two decades. However, in the middle of this growth the government had to default on debt, cut back programs, and end a decade of federal support for smallholders. Price, markets and credit dwindled to drips – and on top of that – we got some Roya too. Oh, and did we mention the condition of the peso?

Into this distressed situation we see the rise of the coyote; middle-men who build truckloads of coffee up from 1-5 bag household level. Still today, buyers look for points of aggregation that can cut out middle-men but still give them access to volumes.