The History of Coffee

The origin of coffee as a drink or a plant dates back to the middle of the 15th century in the Sufi Muslim monasteries around Mocha in Yemen. It was in Arabia that coffee seeds were first roasted and brewed, in a similar way to how it is now prepared. By the 16th century, it had reached the rest of the Middle East, Persia, Turkey, and northern Africa.

The first coffee smuggled out of the Middle East was by Sufi Baba Budan from Yemen to India in 1670. Before then, all exported coffee was boiled or otherwise sterilized. Portraits of Baba Budan depict him as having smuggled seven coffee seeds by strapping them to his chest. The first plants grown from these smuggled seeds were planted in Mysore, in the state of Karnataka, India. Coffee then spread to Italy, and to the rest of Europe, to Indonesia, and to the Americas.

When coffee reached North America during the Colonial period, it was initially not as successful as it had been in Europe as alcoholic beverages remained more popular. During the Revolutionary War, the demand for coffee increased so much that dealers had to hoard their scarce supplies and raise prices dramatically.

Coffee was introduced to Brazil in 1727, although its cultivation did not gather momentum until independence in 1822. After this time massive tracts of rainforest were cleared for coffee plantations, first in the vicinity of Rio de Janeiro and later São Paulo.

Today, approximately 1.2 billion cups of coffee are consumed every day in the world, and for many countries has replaced tea as the drink to wake up to.

Answer these questions in your notebook

1. The origin of coffee dates back to the 16th century. True or false?
2. Coffee was first smuggled from Yemen to India. True or false?
3. During the Colonial period coffee was more popular than alcohol. True or false?
4. Coffee plantations first appeared in Brazil near Rio de Janeiro. True or false?
5. 1.2 billion = 12,000,000,000 True or false?

Match the meanings

1. monastery a) 密輸 (みつゆ)
2. beverage b) 飲み物 (のみもの)
3. cultivation c) 修道院 (しゅどういん)
4. smuggle d) 付近 (ふきん)
5. vicinity e) 栽培 (さいばい)