

# Robusta Revolution



The Arabica coffee species, used to produce most of the world's high-quality coffee, is now under serious threat due to climate change. Studies suggest that within 30 years half of the land used to grow Arabica coffee will no longer be arable. This represents a crisis for both grower and consumer.

The sturdier Robusta coffee bean is being hailed as the potential solution. Although they have a harsh and bitter taste, they are able to grow in higher temperatures, at lower elevations and are drought resistant - meaning they will grow in situations where Arabica won't.

More brands have been using Robusta beans over the past several years, and we predict this trend will only accelerate.

By 2050, half of the land used to grow Arabica coffee will be unusable. (TFP, 2022)

Robusta coffee beans offer 50% more yield for the same amount of carbon emissions as Arabica beans. (TFP, 2022)

Brands are being held to higher sustainability standards by consumers. (Mintel, 2021)

Launches using Robusta beans are growing significantly in APAC and beyond. (Mintel GNPD, 2022)



## On the Shelves



Costa Coffee Caramel Latte Double Espresso Shot. Said to be made with the perfect blend of delicate Arabica and strong Robusta beans, and to have a smooth caramel flavour. (UK, 2021)



Dare Caramel Latte. A caramel flavoured iced coffee made with Robusta and Arabica coffee beans. Calls out its Robusta content on front of pack. (AU, 2022)



Black Insomnia Coffee Cold Brew. This company recently announced they were switching to only using Robusta beans because of their 'higher caffeine content, natural nutty aftertaste and lower acidity'. (UK, 2022)



Merlo Coffee Roasters Forza Blend. Features big flavours and a little extra caffeine. The Robusta beans are said to add oomph and intensity. (AU, 2022)



# Dining Out and Social Media



FatMilk Coffee The Blue Roast. Made of 100% Robusta beans, it is said to have a nutty and bold flavour profile. Beans are ethically sourced directly from local farmers. (Vietnam, 2022)



Horiku Coffee Palm Sugar Ice Coffee. Said to have roasty and creamy notes, and be made with strong and premium Robusta coffee beans. (Indonesia, 2022)



Nguyen Coffee Supply Berry Espresso Martini. A classic coffee cocktail with a fruity twist, featuring a dark roast Robusta and Arabica blend. The coffee notes are said to complement the berry flavours and coffee liqueur. (USA, 2022)



Black Sheep Coffee Robusta Revival. Single origin speciality coffee sourced from the Bhadrariver belt in India. Features double the caffeine, richer crema and lower acidity compared to Arabica beans. Said to be perfect for espresso or milk-based coffees. (UK, 2022)

With environmental pressures making Arabica coffee beans harder and harder to source, we are lucky that Robusta beans can fill the gap! Not only this, but with their higher yields they also fit the 'sustainability' focus that many brands are prioritising. However, while Arabica coffee beans are characterised by smooth, chocolatey overtones, Robusta beans are better known for tasting rubbery and bitter. Hardly an ideal flavour combination! So while Robusta beans will likely become more common in the next several years, brands face a significant challenge in maintaining the smooth and delicious coffee taste consumers know and love. As well as this, for many years Robusta beans have been scorned by coffee aficionados as the 'poor relation' of Arabica, meaning some consumers will need extra convincing to take a chance on Robusta-forward products.

By formulating with smart flavouring systems that mask the bitterness of Robusta beans, brands should be able to ensure a familiar and positive taste experience. And wary consumers may also be won over by products that embrace the unique flavour, superior sustainability credentials and better environmental footprint of Robusta coffee.



## Hawkins Watts Offerings

- Taste Modulators
- Complementary Flavours & Essential Oils
- Sweetener Systems
- Coffee Powders



Images courtesy of Mintel, TFP and brand websites/socials.

Please contact Hawkins Watts for more information.

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