



Editorial Standards

The Coffee Encyclopedia is a free reference work on coffee, with particular depth on Puerto Rico. This page sets out how it is written, how claims are checked, and what readers can expect from it.

It exists because a reference work is only as good as its method, and readers deserve to see the method.

What This Encyclopedia Tries To Be

A reference source that a farmer, a student, a researcher, or a government officer can rely on. That means being right in preference to being interesting, and saying plainly when something is not known.

Coffee writing has a particular weakness: heritage claims. Stories about prestigious customers, ancient founding dates, and exclusive classifications circulate from packaging to retailer to article to article until repetition begins to resemble evidence. This encyclopedia treats such claims as claims until they can be traced.

How Claims Are Handled

Every factual statement falls into one of three categories, and articles say which.

Documented. The claim can be traced to a primary source, a government record, a peer-reviewed work, or a published scholarly history. These are cited by name in the article's Sources section.

Tradition. The claim is long-standing and widely repeated but has not been traced to a primary record. Articles label these as tradition. They are not deleted — cultural memory is itself part of the record — but they are not presented as documented fact.

Untraced. The claim appears in published material but no source could be located. Articles say so explicitly, in a Sources subsection headed "Claims this encyclopedia could not source."

A phrase like "historical records confirm" is not used unless the record is named.

Source Preferences

In descending order of weight:

1. Government records, statutes, and official statistics — census returns, laws, agency publications, archival surveys
2. Peer-reviewed scholarship and published academic histories
3. Institutional archives and museum collections, where holdings can be specified
4. Established journalism, identified by publication and date
5. Programme reporting by participating organisations, labelled as such — an organisation describing its own work is a legitimate source for what it did, and a weak one for how well it worked
6. Trade and commercial material, cited only to establish what a company claims, never as historical evidence

Retail promotional copy is not historical evidence. This applies to every company, including this encyclopedia's sponsor.

When Sources Disagree

Articles report the disagreement rather than choosing silently.

Where two credible sources give different figures — for a harvest volume, a death toll, a wind speed, a founding date — the article gives both, names each source, and explains what each is measuring where that is the cause of the difference. Readers are better served by an honest range than by a confident number they cannot verify.

A single figure is used only where the sources agree or where one is clearly stronger, and the article says which.

Images

Images are held to the same standard as text.

Every image is verified by examining the file itself, not its filename. Filenames and captions are frequently wrong; an image named for a Puerto Rican coffee town has, on inspection, turned out to show a naval vessel, and one named for a hurricane relief effort has turned out to show a coffee estate in India.

For historical articles, images must be period-appropriate. A modern photograph illustrating a nineteenth-century event is an accuracy failure, not a design choice. Where no period image can be found, an article says so rather than substituting a modern stand-in.

Provenance must be verifiable. Images used to illustrate Puerto Rico must be traceable to Puerto Rico through the source record, not merely plausible.

Most images are drawn from public-domain government collections — the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the USDA, and the Historic American Engineering Record — and from Wikimedia Commons under open licences.

Commercial Independence

This encyclopedia is sponsored by **PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com**, a Puerto Rican coffee retailer. Sponsorship funds the work. It does not direct it.

The rules that follow from that:

1. The sponsor is never cited as a source for any historical or factual claim
2. Articles do not rank or recommend coffee brands
3. Where an article discusses a brand the sponsor retails, that relationship is disclosed
4. Brand ownership is disclosed wherever it bears on a claim — if several "heritage" brands belong to one company, articles say so
5. Marketing language is identified as marketing, including the sponsor's

Applying these rules has meant removing claims that were commercially convenient. That is the point of having them.

Corrections

Errors are corrected in the article and recorded publicly in the [Corrections Log](#).

Corrections are not made quietly. A reference work that hides its errors gives readers no way to judge its reliability; one that records them gives readers something to judge it by.

Readers who find an error are asked to report it to

Encyclopedia@PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com. Corrections with a source attached are especially welcome.

Limitations

Stated plainly, because a reference work should know its own boundaries.

This is a small operation. The encyclopedia is written and maintained without a research staff. Archives that would settle several open questions have not been visited in person.

Some questions remain open. Where a claim could not be resolved, articles say so and describe what evidence would settle it. Several such questions are recorded in the Corrections Log as open items.

Coverage is uneven. Puerto Rican coffee is treated in the greatest depth. Other subjects are covered more briefly, and are being improved.

Sources are dated. Each Sources section carries a verification date. Figures change, links move, and organisations reorganise.

Contact

Encyclopedia@PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com

Researchers, growers, agencies, and institutions holding material relevant to Puerto Rican coffee history are particularly encouraged to write. Several questions recorded here could be closed by someone with access to the right collection.

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