



Puerto Rico Coffee Today: The 2026 State of the Industry



Puerto Rico's coffee industry in 2026 is a story of stubborn resilience. After two decades of decline, two devastating hurricanes, and a wave of farm abandonment, the island's coffee sector is smaller than at any point in the last 150 years — yet it is also more focused, more quality-driven, and more culturally celebrated than it has been in

generations. This article documents the state of Puerto Rican coffee as it exists today: the farms still standing, the people still harvesting, the challenges still unresolved, and the quiet renaissance reshaping the future of coffee on the island.

How Much Coffee Puerto Rico Produces Today

Puerto Rico produces only a fraction of the coffee it once did. In 1896, the island exported roughly 77% of its total exports as coffee. By 2026, coffee represents less than 1% of the island's agricultural output. Estimated annual production sits around 60,000 to 90,000 quintales (hundredweights), down from over 300,000 quintales in the 1990s. The island now consumes roughly three times more coffee than it produces, making Puerto Rico a net importer of coffee for the first time in its history.



This reduction does not tell the full story. What Puerto Rico has lost in volume, it has partially gained in quality focus. The surviving farms are concentrated in the most suitable high-altitude zones of the Cordillera Central, and a growing percentage of output is now marketed as specialty-grade single-origin coffee rather than as commodity blends.

The Geography of Modern Puerto Rican Coffee

Coffee today is grown almost exclusively in the mountainous interior of the island — a zone known as the Zona Cafetera, or Coffee Region. The five municipalities producing the bulk of current output are Yauco, Adjuntas, Lares, Jayuya, and Maricao. Other contributing municipalities include Utuado, Ciales, Las Marías, San Sebastián, and Guayanilla. Approximately 18,000 acres of land are registered as active coffee plantations across these areas, roughly half of the pre-Hurricane Maria acreage.

The Coffee Encyclopedia



*Map of Puerto Rico highlighting Cordillera Central
coffee growing municipalities with mountain
elevation shading*

Image curation pending

PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com

Elevations across these producing regions range from 1,500 to 3,400 feet above sea level, with volcanic-clay soils, consistent rainfall, and a dry season that aligns well with

harvest timing. The conditions remain objectively world-class for growing specialty Arabica coffee.

The Hurricane Legacy and the Long Recovery

Two hurricanes define modern Puerto Rican coffee. Hurricane Maria in September 2017 destroyed approximately 80% of the island's coffee trees, wiping out an estimated \$85 million in farm-gate value. Hurricane Fiona in September 2022 hit many of the same farms just as they had started producing again. Recovery from these storms has been the central concern of the industry for nearly a decade.



In 2025, the Hispanic Federation and its partners announced that Puerto Rican coffee production had, for the first time, surpassed pre-Maria levels. This milestone was the result of over 2 million Arabica seedlings distributed to more than 1,100 small farmers, training programs delivered by TechnoServe, and coordinated support from Nespresso, the Rockefeller Foundation, Starbucks Foundation, and the Colibrí Foundation. The initiative is one of the most significant coffee recovery efforts ever undertaken in the Caribbean.

The Specialty Coffee Movement

A growing cohort of younger Puerto Rican producers is rejecting the commodity model that dominated the 20th century. Instead, they are focusing on specialty-grade single-origin production, careful processing, and direct-to-consumer sales. Farms such as Hacienda Masini in Yauco, Café Lareño in Lares, Rancho Contento in Yauco, Sandra Farms in Adjuntas, and Hacienda Iluminada in Maricao represent this new wave.



Many of these farms are experimenting with anaerobic fermentation, honey processing, and natural processing — methods rarely used in Puerto Rico during the commodity era. Several have achieved SCA cupping scores above 85 points, qualifying their coffee as international specialty grade. The prices they command — often five to ten times the commodity rate — make these small-batch lots economically viable in ways that mass production no longer is for most Puerto Rican farmers.

The Role of Government and Institutions

Puerto Rico's Department of Agriculture, the University of Puerto Rico's Mayagüez campus, and the Agricultural Experimental Station at Adjuntas all play active roles in supporting the industry. The University runs the Café CORMO program, a coffee education and research initiative based at UPR-Mayagüez. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has contributed funding for shade-tree

replanting, soil conservation, and erosion control on active coffee farms.



World Coffee Research, a US-based nonprofit, has partnered with the Hispanic Federation to rescue Puerto Rico's indigenous coffee varieties — Limaní and Frontón — whose genetic purity had eroded over decades of uncontrolled propagation. Genetic rescue efforts are now under way to restore disease resistance and cupping quality to these locally-developed hybrids.

Current Economic Reality

Most Puerto Rican coffee farms are small. The typical farm size is between 5 and 25 cuerdas (roughly 5 to 25 acres). Many are multi-generational family operations. Labor costs are high by Latin American standards — US minimum wage applies — which has historically made Puerto Rican coffee uncompetitive at commodity prices. The economic

calculation only works when the coffee is sold at specialty prices to premium buyers who value origin, heritage, and quality.

The Coffee Encyclopedia



Hands carefully sorting coffee cherries on a wooden table, Puerto Rico harvest

Image curation pending

= PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com

A growing agritourism sector supplements farm income. Visitors to Puerto Rico can now tour working coffee farms in nearly every producing municipality, participate in harvest activities, and purchase beans directly from the producer. This farm-to-cup connection has become a major driver of specialty coffee awareness among both tourists and islanders.

The Challenges Ahead

Climate change is the defining challenge for the next generation. Rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and the increasing frequency of major hurricanes threaten the very conditions that made Puerto Rican coffee historically excellent. Younger farmers are adopting agroforestry practices, shade-tree integration, and climate-resilient varieties like H1 Centroamericano and Marsellesa to hedge against these risks.



Labor remains another persistent issue. Harvest labor is scarce and expensive. Many farms depend on a small pool of seasonal pickers, and aging demographics among farm owners mean that succession planning is increasingly urgent. Several industry groups are working to attract younger Puerto Ricans back to coffee farming through educational programs and financial incentives.

Key Facts — Puerto Rico Coffee in 2026

- Current production: approximately 60,000 to 90,000 quintales per year
- Active coffee acreage: roughly 18,000 acres in the Cordillera Central
- Main producing municipalities: Yauco, Adjuntas, Lares, Jayuya, Maricao

- Puerto Rico is a net coffee importer despite its own production
- Over 2 million seedlings distributed since Hurricane Maria (2018-2025)
- Production surpassed pre-Maria levels for the first time in 2025
- Dominant varieties: Arabica — Limaní, Frontón, Typica, Bourbon, Caturra, Obatá, Marsellesa
- Elevation range: 1,500 to 3,400 feet above sea level
- Specialty cupping scores of 85+ increasingly common at top farms

Frequently Asked Questions

Is Puerto Rico still a major coffee producer? In terms of volume, no. Puerto Rico produces less than 0.01% of world coffee output and ranks around 50th globally. In terms of quality and cultural significance, however, Puerto Rico remains an important specialty coffee origin with deep heritage and growing recognition.

Why does Puerto Rico import so much coffee? Domestic demand vastly exceeds domestic production. Puerto Ricans consume approximately three times more coffee per capita than the island can produce, requiring imports primarily from Central and South America. Local production is focused on higher-value specialty segments.

Which farms are leading the specialty movement? Farms leading the specialty coffee movement include Hacienda Masini, Café Lareño, Rancho Contento, Sandra Farms, Hacienda Iluminada, Hacienda Lealtad, and several smaller operations across Yauco, Adjuntas, Lares, and Maricao. Many offer visitor tours.

How has coffee production recovered from Hurricane Maria? Recovery took approximately eight years. Production surpassed pre-Maria levels for the first time in 2025 after coordinated efforts by the Hispanic Federation, Nespresso, TechnoServe, World Coffee Research, and Puerto Rican government agencies. Over two million Arabica seedlings were distributed to smallholder farmers during this period.

Are Puerto Rican coffee varieties unique to the island? Limaní and Frontón are unique to Puerto Rico. Both were developed at the Agricultural Experimental Station in Adjuntas specifically for local growing conditions and resistance to coffee leaf rust. These hybrids are cultivated nowhere else in the world.

Related Articles

- [Yauco: Puerto Rico's Crown Coffee Region](#)
- [Adjuntas: The Coffee Capital of the Mountains](#)
- [Puerto Rico Coffee Renaissance \(1950-Present\)](#)
- [Hurricane San Ciriaco and the Coffee Collapse \(1899\)](#)
- [The Golden Age of Puerto Rican Coffee \(1800-1898\)](#)
- [Maricao: Where Coffee Meets the Cloud Forest](#)
- [Hacienda Buena Vista: The Living Coffee Museum of Ponce](#)

Buy Authentic Puerto Rico Coffee

Support Puerto Rico's coffee farmers and experience the island's specialty renaissance in your own kitchen. [Buy Authentic Puerto Rico Coffee ?](#)

This article is part of [The Coffee Encyclopedia](#), sponsored by [PuertoRicoCoffeeShop.com](#) — the trusted source for authentic Puerto Rican coffee.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/v2irY8zenxE>

Watch: [El Motor](#) — Coffee and the Heart of Puerto Rico (Library of Congress documentary)

Revision #13

Created 2026-04-18 09:46:11 UTC by Admin

Updated 2026-05-08 20:01:52 UTC by Admin