



Coffee Culture

A BREW-TIFUL EVOLUTION

By Nelia Raposo

Discover how Canada's coffee scene has transformed from humble beginnings to a diverse landscape of trends and local favorites, reflecting a deepening passion for the perfect cup.

Years ago, North American tourists ordering coffee in Italy would ask, "What is this foamy stuff on my coffee?" when they received a frothy espresso instead of a cup of slow drip. In response, Italian baristas added more water to the espresso, creating the Americano.

This was long before Starbucks and Tim Hortons could be found in cities and towns across the continent. Now, the coffee market in Canada employs about 160,000 people in coffee shops, and an additional 5,000 people work in the coffee roasting and manufacturing sector. There are also thousands of indirect jobs linked to the coffee market in packaging, cup manufacturing and other related industries.

Canadians' desire for coffee has come a long way since Statistics Canada began tracking coffee availability in 1966, when there were 88.51 litres available per Canadian. By 2022, this was up to an all-time high of 111.76 litres.

Canada ranks at number ten for the most coffee consumption in the world. The average Canadian consumes 6.5 kg of coffee per year and spends about \$36 on average per month on coffee, according to a survey by Time2Play, which includes spending on both takeout coffees and wholesale coffee bags.

Despite Starbucks increasing its presence in Canada, Tim Hortons still has the most coffee shops in the country. As of June 2023, there were 3,520 Tim Hortons in Canada,

with shops in every province and every territory. Starbucks is the second-largest coffee shop chain in Canada, with 1,423 stores.

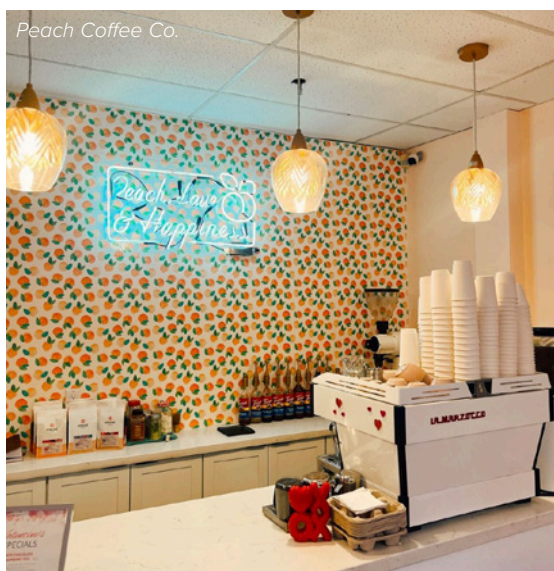
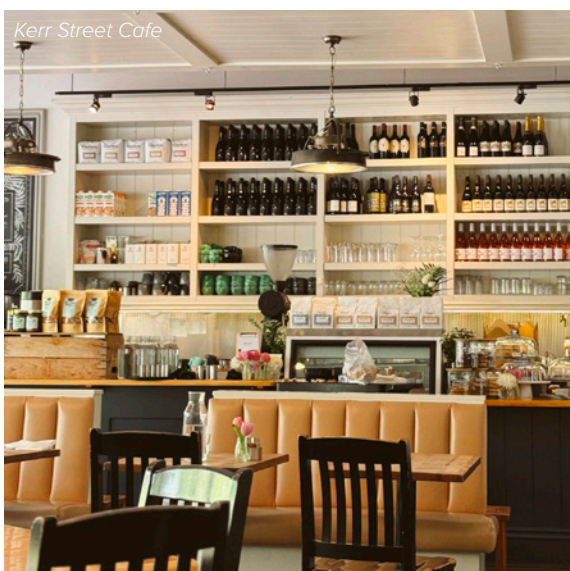
The 1990s sitcom "*Friends*" contributed to the cultural ideal of buying expensive coffee and hanging out at coffee shops with its depiction of character Rachel Green, played by Jennifer Aniston, who worked as a barista at Central Perk, the café and meeting spot for her group of friends.

These days, coffee connoisseurs can try the latest trends in caffeine consumption at many nearby spots – like independent specialty coffee bar **Tamp Coffee Company**. With two locations in Burlington, Tamp is owned and operated by barista Jimmy Zereneh. Tamp is one of more than 7,000 independent coffee shops in Canada, according to Statista, a global data and business intelligence platform.



"We have an insatiable passion for coffee, paying attention to the smallest detail in coffee brewing, and a love to educate others about the world of coffee," Zereneh says on his store's Yelp profile.

Neil Madden, coffee expert and president of **ECS Coffee**, thinks every coffee business in North America owes a debt to former chief executive officer of Starbucks Howard Schultz, who revolutionized the way people think about coffee. "He saw that people in Italy went to the coffee shop every day before and after work. It's the third place: there is home, work, and the café is the third place. Schultz saw this as an opportunity."



Madden's Burlington-based company boasts the country's "largest online coffee and espresso gear store, state-of-the-art retailing, coffee roasting and distribution, and office coffee services."

"We really have Schultz to thank for the romanticizing of coffee (in North America)," Madden believes. "Italy doesn't grow coffee, yet everyone likes Italian coffee. It's the romance of it."

ECS roasts coffee daily, importing its coffee from all over the world. The top coffee-producing countries exist along the equator, with Brazil, Columbia, Ethiopia and Indonesia being top producers. Coffee is a billion-dollar industry in Canada, Madden says.

Lyla's House takes the concept of café as third place to the next level. The furniture and decor are so homey, it looks like you could be in someone's house. Wait! You could be – each piece of furniture at this unique coffee shop is a floor model available for purchase.



Co-owner Alex Ratcliffe says the shop, located on Main Street in Georgetown, is inspired by the European cafés he visited during his time living abroad.

Peach Coffee Company, with locations in Burlington, Oakville and Waterdown, markets itself as a gathering place for in-person connection post-pandemic.

Established in 2021, Peach Coffee Company "was founded to provide exceptional specialty coffee and baked goods to a community seeking a unique, uplifting experience. As the world emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic, our vision was to create a welcoming space for people to reconnect," according to the company's website.

More people want to know where the coffee beans in their coffee come from. To that end, **Carvalho Coffee's** roasterie and store on Pacific Road in Oakville is unique, in that all its product comes directly from a family plantation in Brazil. "The history of this farm began when the great-grandmother of Fazenda Cachoeira's present owners bought the first coffee farm near Poços de Caldas, bordered between São Paulo and Minas Gerais," its website indicates. "The plantation was made in the valley of São Sebastião da Gramma, 1,200 metres above sea level, with rich volcanic soil and unique climate, both ideals for Specialty Coffees. The family's traditions are kept alive today by its fifth generation of coffee growers who produce over 200,000 bags of the finest Brazilian Arabica on several farms located in the choicest areas of the country: the very best out of the Brazilian Coffee."

As more people are working from home post-pandemic, the appeal of having quality coffee and gear at home has increased. This has led to a surge in demand for coffee machines, coffee pods, and capsules. In fact, the demand is so high, the global market for coffee pods and capsules is expected to nearly double by 2025.



"There is coffee standard drip, Keurig coffee for convenience and there is single-serve espresso. Coffee shops in the last 10 years have gotten away from drip brew and now offer more pressure brew options. Even Tim Hortons has espresso on the menu these days," ECS' Neil Madden says.

ESC focuses on the home market; Madden says his business aims to please "people who just want a good cup of coffee." Indeed, instant coffee has come a long way; with micro grind, there are a lot of people developing new ways of making instant coffee, he says. (Although he still thinks of Nescafé instant as grandma's coffee.)

In whichever way one enjoys their coffee, Madden says he doesn't judge. He used to be a double-double coffee drinker, and now he has his coffee black. It all has to do with the quality and freshness of the coffee beans. "Fresh beans are best. It does make a difference. You can buy beans at local grocery stores, but it's not the same," he insists. "You don't know how many years it's been sitting on the shelf." He goes on to say that stale coffee can be masked with cream and sugar.

But in the end, coffee preference is as unique as the person drinking it. "Coffee has more flavour profiles than wine, and lends itself to people with refined taste," says Madden.

"What makes a good cup of coffee? If you like it, then that's a good cup of coffee. That is my answer."

Celebrate National Coffee Day in Canada on September 29.

Did you know that, according to the Coffee Association of Canada's 2022 Canadian Coffee Drinking Study, Canadian coffee drinkers consume an average of 2.7 cups per day? The study also showed that 73 per cent of Canadians who took the survey had drunk a coffee the day before.



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1) A Mug to Hug

Enjoy your hot cuppa in Le Creuset style. Available in various colours, each stoneware mug will hold 13.5 oz of your favourite brew. EcsCoffee.com

2) Brew Crew

The Chemex CM-6A Classic Series 6-Cup Coffeemaker makes perfect coffee every time. Enjoy a clear, pure, flavourful coffee without bitterness or sediment and brew as strong as you like. Perfect for iced coffee and coffee flavouring for gourmet recipes. TampCoffee.com

3) Roast with the Most

Looking for a new brew? Based in Toronto, Hale Coffee is an independent coffee roaster providing coffee beans carefully sourced from direct trade relationships. Various blends available. WetCoffeeCommunity.com

4) Made to Measure

An accurate measuring tool that's a must-have for any coffee fan. This is the perfect espresso shot glass for single espresso shots or ristretto shots. EcsCoffee.com

5) For Sweeter Sips

Kvas Northern Old Fashioned Simple Syrup's Northern Maple Old Fashioned features warm winter spices of cinnamon, clove, vanilla, oranges and hickory to liven up each cup. FlourishAndBask.ca

6) Punch It Up

Detour Punch Buggy Beans are rich and balanced with loads of sugar browning aromatics, a syrupy texture and sweet flavours of deep chocolate, nut and cherry. This coffee is said to give Reese's Peanut Butter Cup vibes. PeachCoffeeCo.com

7) Adapting Nicely

Harmonic Art's 5 Mushroom Powder provides the combined benefits of the world's top mushrooms. Support whole-body harmony and immune system intelligence with this antioxidant-rich 5 Mushroom Powder blend. Enjoy mixed into a cup of coffee any time of day. SchoolCoffee.ca

8) It's Five O'Clock Somewhere

TAG No.5 Double Espresso is fuelled with Arabica beans and ultra smooth vodka, perfect for perking up any cocktail like an espresso martini. Or, forget the coffee and enjoy on the rocks, or serve cold in a shot glass. MaverickDirect.ca