Ka Momona O Ka ʻĀina

The Bounty of the Land

PUBLISHED BY
Hawaii Child Nutrition Programs
12th Edition
APRIL 2025

Kona Coffee: Hawaii's Premier Brew

Renowned for its exceptional flavor and quality, Kona coffee is one of the world's most sought-after and expensive coffees. Grown exclusively in the North and South Kona Districts of the Big Island of Hawaii, true Kona coffee must originate from this region to bear its name.

Kona coffee's journey began in 1828, when Reverend Samuel Ruggles introduced coffee plant cuttings from Brazil to Hawaii. However, it was Henry Nicholas Greenwell, in the late 19th century, who established Kona coffee as a recognized brand.

While large coffee plantations flourished across Hawaii, the 1899 world coffee market crash forced plantation owners to lease land to workers brought in for sugarcane labor. These workers cultivated coffee on small, leased plots of 5 to 12 acres, transforming the industry into a family-run business model that continues today.

Currently, there are approximately 800 Kona coffee farms, with the average farm spanning less than 5 acres. In 1997, Kona had 2,290 acres dedicated to coffee cultivation, producing over two million pounds of green coffee beans.

The Ideal Growing Conditions

Kona coffee thrives in a unique terroir on the slopes of Hualalai Mountain and Mauna Loa, at elevations ranging from 500 to 3,200 feet above sea level. The region's well-draining, slightly acidic volcanic soil, coupled with sunny mornings, cloudy afternoons, and over 60 inches of annual rainfall, creates ideal conditions for coffee cultivation.

The Coffee Growth Cycle

1. Blooming (February – March): Small, fragrant white flowers known as "Kona snow" cover the coffee trees.
2. Berry Formation (April): Green berries begin to develop.
3. Ripening (August – January): The berries, called "cherries," turn red and are ready for harvesting. Each tree produces about 15 pounds of cherry, yielding approximately two pounds of roasted coffee.

Traditional Processing Methods

Once harvested, Kona coffee undergoes meticulous processing to ensure its high quality:

1. Pulping: Within 24 hours, the outer cherry layer is removed, exposing the coffee beans.
2. Fermentation: Beans ferment for 12 to 24 hours, enhancing their flavor profile.
3. Washing: Fermented beans are washed to remove any residual pulp.
4. Drying: Beans are sun-dried on hoshidanas (traditional drying racks with rolling roofs) or mechanical dryers. Drying takes 7 to 14 days to reach the optimal moisture level.

5. Hulling: The dried beans are hulled to remove the parchment layer, revealing the green coffee beans.
6. Grading & Sorting: Beans are graded by size and shape, ensuring only the best make it to market.

The Legacy of Kona Coffee

Kona coffee remains a symbol of Hawaiian agriculture and heritage, its small farms continuing the traditions established over a century ago. From its unique growing conditions to its meticulous hand-harvesting and processing, every cup of Kona coffee carries a story of dedication, craftsmanship, and aloha.

Kabocha Bean Dip

Our Kabocha Bean Dip is prepared from local grown produce. It features garden fresh winter squash from the fields with tender beans, tahini and aromatic, flavorful ingredients.

Ingredients

8.50 oz.	Kabocha squash	tt.	White pepper
3 3/4 T.	Garlic clove	3 T.	Curly leaf parsley
1 1/2 T.	Lemon juice	tt.	Cinnamon
1 1/4 c.	Cannellini beans	tt.	Cumin
3 T.	Tahini paste	tt.	Paprika
2 1/2 T.	Salad oil	4 1/4 T.	Water
1/4 t.	Salt		

Directions

1. Place cut kabocha in pot and steam or simmer in water until fork tender with (CCP) internal temperature of 135 F/57 C or higher for 15 seconds.
2. Place whole garlic cloves in mixing bowl and toss together with extra oil. Remove from bowl and place on 18″ x 13″ x 1″ oven baking sheet pan then bake in the oven at 375 F/190 C until tender with light brown color. Remove from oven and (CCP) properly cool to 41 F/5 C or below.
3. Place beans and garlic in food processor and puree together until mashed consistency.
4. Add kabocha into food processor and continue to puree until smooth then add 1.05 oz. salad oil and remaining ingredients. Blend together until incorporated.
5. Remove mixture into a pan no more than 2-inch depth of food and (CCP) properly cool to 41 F/5 C or below then place mixture into serving dish.

Note: (CCP) stands for Critical Control Point.

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Written by JM

Choosing to eat healthy foods while on a budget might seem impossible these days. But it doesn't have to be so difficult. With some smart shopping tips, you will be able to buy budget-friendly and healthy food options from each of the food groups! Buy "in season" produce, which often costs less and is at peak flavor, but remember to buy only what you can use before it spoils. Canned and frozen fruits and vegetables last much longer than fresh and are a quick way to add fruits and vegetables to a meal.

Make half your grains whole grains. Types of whole grains include whole wheat, brown rice, oatmeal, whole oats, and whole rye. Rice and pasta are budget-friendly grain options.

Some low-cost protein foods include beans, peas, eggs, and lentils, such as kidney beans, lima beans, split peas, and chickpeas. Lower meat costs by purchasing the family-sized or value pack and freezing what you don't use. Seafood doesn't have to cost a lot; opt for items that store well and are a low-cost option like canned tuna, salmon, or sardines. Choose low-fat or fat-free milk; they have just as much calcium with fewer calories than whole or 2% milk. Buy the larger size of low-fat plain yogurt instead of single-flavored yogurt. Then add your own flavors by mixing in fruits.

Drink water instead of sodas or other high-sugar drinks. Save time, money, and calories by skipping the chip and cookie aisles.

To learn more smart shopping tips, visit this website: https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget/shop-smart