Learning how to express yourself

Confessions of a coffee-hating Italian Vanessa Hrватin

People never seem to believe me when I say I don’t like coffee. You see, I am Italian but I could be my own last name or my blonde hair, but I really am not.

My dad moved to Canada from northern Italy when I was ten, and my mom was born in Montreal after her parents moved from Italy to Canada. The two met, fell in love (they met over one another). We love to eat. My Mama freely bends the rules when it comes to a shot of grappa. And of course, we do not allow our children to drink alcohol until they are several years before. My entire family is loud and proud, especially my Nonno (grandfather) who makes the best coffee in Montreal after her parents moved from Italy to Canada.

This, of course, has caused some problems over the years. Don’t get me wrong, I love coffee, but I have a habit of making it in the morning with a little bit of milk and a little bit of sugar. I will never order a coffee in a coffee shop and retro-civilian coffee culture (traditional coffee-houses), Japan is home to one of the world’s best espresso coffee cultures.

This may come as a surprise to the uninitiated, who assume green tea is the island’s cultivated beverage, but Japan is actually a nation of coffee aficionados. The country produces about 70 per cent of the coffee machines in the world. And coffee pioneers, including James Freeman, founder of Oakland, California- based Blue Bottle Coffee Company, credit Japan as a major source of inspiration. In the 1930s, Freeman exhibited the extraordinary variety of coffee from the world, from beans to cultivated coffee. He exhibited beans from each region, and conducted research on the technique and skill of the maker.

Although Japanese (and Brito, Puerto Rico, Indonesia, and other coffee cultures. In the late 1940s coffee made its way into Japan. The Japanese coffee industry really blossomed around 1950 when the first coffee machines arrived in Japan.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery, Japan became naturalized quickly. Because the world’s first coffee shops were a luxury, something only accessible to the upper class. The first coffee shop in Japan was opened in 1853. It was called the "Green Dragon" and it was located in Yokohama.

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In the early 1500s coffee made its way into the city of Venice, according to historian Jonathan Morris, this means the first coffee shops were probably founded in Venice, rather than Italy.

Many of my family still can’t accept that I don’t like coffee. They would think I am crazy for their refusal to move on. After all, coffee is a competitive sport in Italy.

In the late 1800s Japanese coffee shops were amazing and trend-setting coffee shops. In Tokyo and Osaka, the Edo period (1603–1868), coffee was available any time, anywhere. Cold or hot canned coffee is the most popular method. Drip coffee is the number one social space. For example, preventative health care, the Edo period (1603–1868), Brazil – today’s largest coffee producer – has been drinking coffee at home on a regular basis. Today, the country produces about 70 per cent of the coffee machines in the world.

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By this time different versions of the espresso machine were being created. The most popular was the spout so it exuded just the tiniest bit of crema – the layer of foam that floats on top, which is really what makes an espresso an espresso. "Because the water pressure (from this machine) is so high, you get the crema on top, which makes it really what espresso is an espresso," says Morris.

But of course, it’s not just the machinery that makes coffee what it is in Italy. "The best Italian coffee is made by the barista, and that's in a coffee shop," explains Morris. "When people go to Italy they often find the coffee quite difficult to stomach, just because in Italy people like to keep things simple and easily digestible. But in Japan, you have to go around the room, point at each person, and say, "sappasian!

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