

two Chimps

Colombia – Las Galeras, Nariño

Farm:	Various Farmers from Nariño Dept.
Varietal(s):	Caturra, Castillo & Colombia
Processing:	Fermented for between 12 to 48 hours and dried on open or covered patios
Altitude:	1,700 to 2,200 metres above sea level
Owner:	Various small holder farmers
Town:	Pasto
Region:	Nariño – regions surrounding the Galeras Volcano: La Florida, Sandona, Consaca
Country:	Colombia
Total size of farm:	Average size 1 hectares
Area under coffee:	Average .75 hectares



Additional information:

The Department of Nariño is located in the southwest of Colombia, just above the equator and on the border with Ecuador. The region is strikingly mountainous and boasts no fewer than five volcanoes: Chiles (4,718 metres), Cumbal (4,764 metres), Azufral (4,070 metres), Doña Juana (4,250 metres) and Galeras (4,276 metres). This coffee was, indeed, grown on the slopes of the latter - 'Las Galeras'.

Las Galeras, as a volcano, has an interesting peculiarity: it had been active for at least a million years before going through a period of 10 years of dormancy up until 1988, when it became active again. Since then it has been fairly active, with the last eruption in 2013, when it affected some of the settlements at the base of the volcano. It sits looming over the region's main city of Pasto, and coffee is grown on all of the surrounding hillsides, in which the soils have benefited from the volcanic compounds that have been produced over time.

The regions of La Florida, Sandona and Consaca sit on the north and western side of the volcano. Coffee is grown at altitudes that reach 2,200 metres, some of the highest at which coffee is grown in the world. The high altitude of cultivation allows for a slow, development of the coffee bean, which gives the cup profile of Nariño its unique characteristics.

Producers in this region are overwhelmingly small-holders, who manage their own self-sufficient wet-mills and patios (open or covered) for drying. Every family does their own harvesting - usually with the help of neighbours. After the red and ripe cherries are picked, they are pulped by passing them through a manual pulper at the family farm (usually located close to the main house). The waste from this process will be used later as a natural fertilizer for the coffee trees. Depending on the conditions fermentation can range between 12 up to 48 hours. Some producers will add several layers of wet parchment over the course of a few days, which is thought to add complexity to the fermentation process and final cup profile. Luckily, Nariño is blessed with some of the best drying conditions in the country due to the micro-climate and high altitude of the region, providing lower relative humidity, more wind and more sunny days than other areas of the country.

Mercanta's exporting partner for this lot works in this area in an effort to pioneer the commercialization of specialty coffee throughout the region, resulting in some stunning coffees from this area of optimal natural conditions for coffee farming and making the most of the group's efforts to improve quality. Feedback on the coffee is provided by an expert team of cuppers and 'liquidation' payments (sort of 'top up' payments) are made if the producers' coffee is sold at a higher margin. Support also is given with regards to social well-being.