

Beat: Lifestyle

Just US! Coffee Roasters

Fair Trade & Organic Coffee

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USPA NEWS - It seems in today's fast paced world, a coffee shop can be found on nearly every street corner to provide an often needed caffeine boost to help get us through the day. Most coffee shops are filled with patrons meeting for social engagements, business meetings, catching up on work or just unwinding with a comforting caffeinated beverage. With coffee engrained into the fabric of our society, do we ever stop to think about where our beloved comfort beverage comes from? Here is some food(or drink) for thought.

On a recent visit to Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley, I had the chance to visit the Just US! Coffeehouse and Roastery Museum in Hortonville. When I arrived, I was greeted by a Just US! manager. He explained that Just Us! Coffee Roasters is a worker owned Co-op and he is just one of the managers. He went on to tell me that each employee has the opportunity to become an employee member.

Though the museum was closed, it was still an informative visit with signs throughout explaining the principals of Fair Trade Coffee along with the core values of their organization.

From the information on display, I was able to learn that the Just Us! specialty brand of fair trade organic coffee is produced in-house using antique German made roasting equipment.

What is the process for coffee to be classed as Fair Trade? (As explained on informational signage on display in the Coffeehouse) "When accompanied by the Transfair logo, it means that the coffee meets a set of explicit standards certified by the independent organization, Fair Trade Labelling Organizations International. These standards include a guaranteed fair price for producers, democratically owned coffee co-ops, safe/ respectful treatment of workers, and adhering to the a high level of environmental standards. These environmental standards are not as stringent as organic certification standards.

Organic Coffee meets very stringent environment standards with independent certification through the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements(IFOAM)."

Many of the other popular coffee chains such as Starbucks, Second Cup, and Dunkin state that they use Fair Trade and ethically sourced coffee, but it may come as a surprise to many that Tim Hortons does not. That said, Tim Hortons insist that they deal with there own network of coffee growers which adhere to criteria similar to the Certified Fair Trade standards.

The Just US! Roastery Museum and Coffeehouse is definitely worth a visit when traveling through the picturesque Annapolis Valley. There is something for the serious and casual coffee drinker alike. Great coffee, informative conversation and a relaxing atmosphere.

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