SVSYSTEMS

From a farm in Uganda to an espresso in Trieste

Uganda is landlocked, and Italy is its biggest coffee customer. This is the route a robusta bean takes from a smallholding near Masaka, overland to the Kenyan coast, through the Red Sea and Suez, into a cup on the Adriatic.

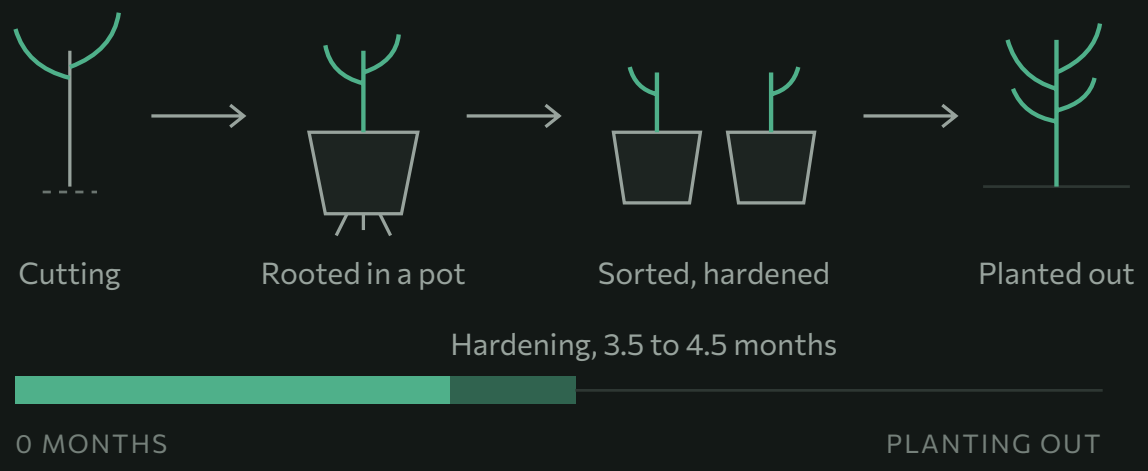
Scroll to follow it. Figures are from public records, dated October 2026. An asterisk (*) marks a claim that still needs a source; a dagger (†) marks a calculated figure.

STAGE 1 OF 10

The nursery

Central Uganda

Uganda's robusta is grown from cuttings of selected high-yield, disease-resistant trees, rooted in small plastic pots in a nursery.



Source: clonal robusta nursery manual, Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda.

TIME	Sorting and hardening off begin at 3.5 to 4.5 months, once a cutting has roots and at least 2 pairs of leaves
CONDITION	A clone of the parent tree
WHO	A licensed nursery operator

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Robusta is indigenous to Uganda, along the Lake Victoria crescent. Nurseries clone selected high-yield, disease-resistant trees.
COST	No public price per seedling
NEXT LEG	Potted plants go to the farm by road*

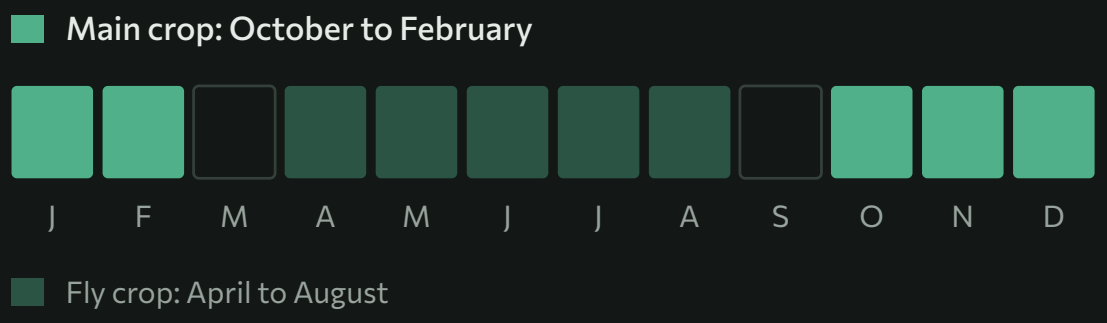
Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda, Uganda Coffee Exporter

STAGE 2 OF 10

The farm

Masaka, central Uganda

Most of Uganda's coffee comes from smallholdings, often under a hectare, with coffee grown among bananas and other crops. The farm's location is now part of the paperwork.



The main crop gives about 70 to 80% of the year's coffee. Source: Fluna.

TIME	Main crop October to February, a smaller fly crop April to August. Time from planting to first harvest*
WHO	About 1.7 to 1.8 million households grow coffee
PAPERWORK	The farmer is registered, with the plot's location, in the national coffee farmer database

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Masaka sits in the robusta belt near Lake Victoria. Smallholders grow coffee among bananas and other crops.
COST	No public figure for growing costs
NEXT LEG	Picked and dried on the same farm.

Sources: World Coffee Research, Fluna, Coffee Geography, Uganda Coffee Exporter

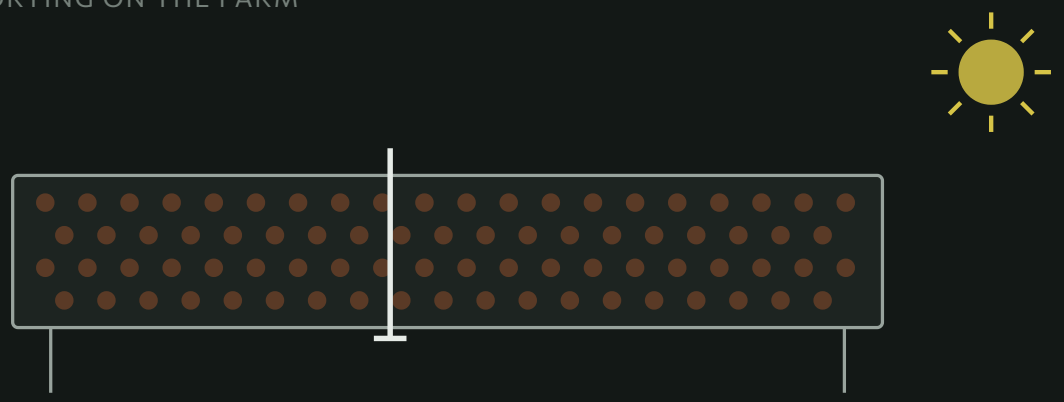
STAGE 3 OF 10

Picked and dried

On the farm

Ripe red cherries are picked and spread in the sun to dry whole.
Dried cherry is called kiboko. It must not be rewetted while drying.

DRYING ON THE FARM



Raised drying bed
raked and turned through the day

Kiboko: 13 to 14% moisture

Animated. Still frame when motion is reduced. Sources: Uganda Coffee Merchants; Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda.

UGX 5,000 to 6,000 per kg of kiboko, about $1.30 to $1.50

Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda, primary processing guide and June 2026 report.

CONDITION	Dried to 13 to 14% moisture
PRICE	UGX 5,000 to 6,000 per kg of kiboko, about $1.30 to $1.50 (June 2026)
WHO	The farmer

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Drying whole on the farm is the simplest method and needs no water or machines; the farmer can sell the kiboko whenever prices suit.
COST	UGX 5,000 to 6,000 a kg of kiboko, about $1.30 to $1.50

NEXT LEG Sacks of kiboko go to a hullery nearby*

Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda, Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda, Africa API, Uganda Coffee Merchants

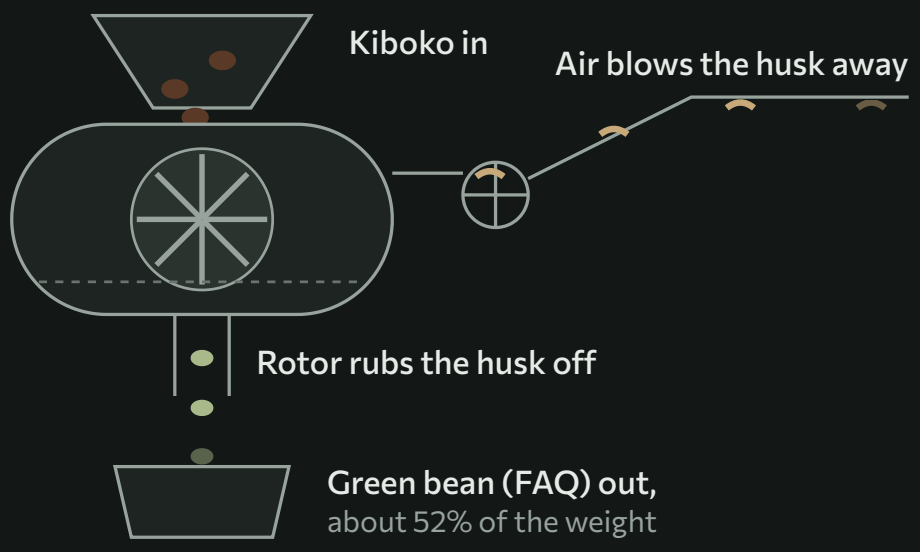
STAGE 4 OF 10

Hulled

A hullery near Masaka

The dried cherry is taken to a hullery, which strips the husk off for a fee. What comes out is a mixed green bean called FAQ, fair average quality. About half the weight is left behind as husk.

INSIDE A HULLER



Animated. Still frame when motion is reduced. Sources: CGK; PesaScope.

1 KG OF KIBOKO AFTER HULLING

FAQ green bean, about 520 g	Husk, about 480 g

PRICE PER KG

Kiboko: UGX 5,000 to 6,000
about $1.40

FAQ: UGX 11,500 to 12,500
about $3.06

Out-turn varies by lot; 52% is a worked example. Sources: PesaScope; Ministry of Agriculture price update.

CONDITION	Green bean, mixed sizes, some defects
PRICE	UGX 11,500 to 12,500 per kg of FAQ, about $3.06 (14 September 2026)
WHO	A hullery, a trader or a farmer group

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Hulleries are local, so the husk, almost half the weight, does not travel far.
COST	Hulled for a fee per kg. FAQ sells at about $3.06 a kg

NEXT LEG	FAQ in sacks, by truck to an export mill in Kampala, about 120 km†

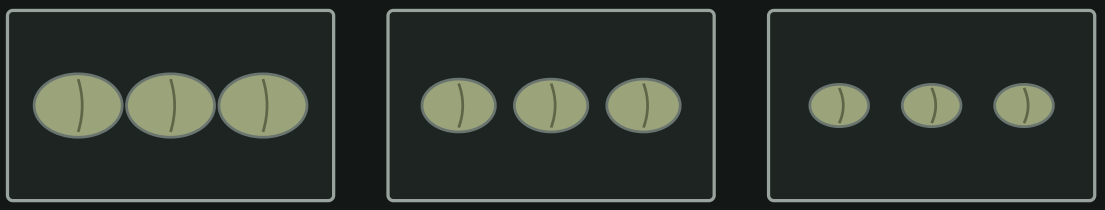
Sources: PesaScope, Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda, Africa API, Farming Uganda

STAGE 5 OF 10

Export grading

Kampala

An export mill cleans the FAQ, sorts out defects by weight and colour, and sizes the beans through perforated screens. The largest beans become Screen 18.



Screen 18	Screen 15	Screen 12
Beans over 7.1 mm	Beans over 6.0 mm	Beans over 4.8 mm
173.73 US¢/lb	168.73 US¢/lb	165.73 US¢/lb

Exports are counted in 60 kg bags

Screen sizes are 64ths of an inch. Prices are Kampala grades on 12 September 2026. Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda; Uganda Coffee Prices.

PRICE	Screen 18 at 171.01 US cents a lb, $3.77 per kg (30 September 2026)
WHO	An export processor
PAPERWORK	Export licence, registered sales contract, pre-shipment inspection and quality certificate, certificate of origin, phytosanitary certificate, export declaration

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Export mills, licensing and quality inspection are in Kampala, close to the start of the corridor.
COST	Screen 18 at about $3.77 a kg
NEXT LEG	In a container by truck to Mombasa, about 1,170 km.

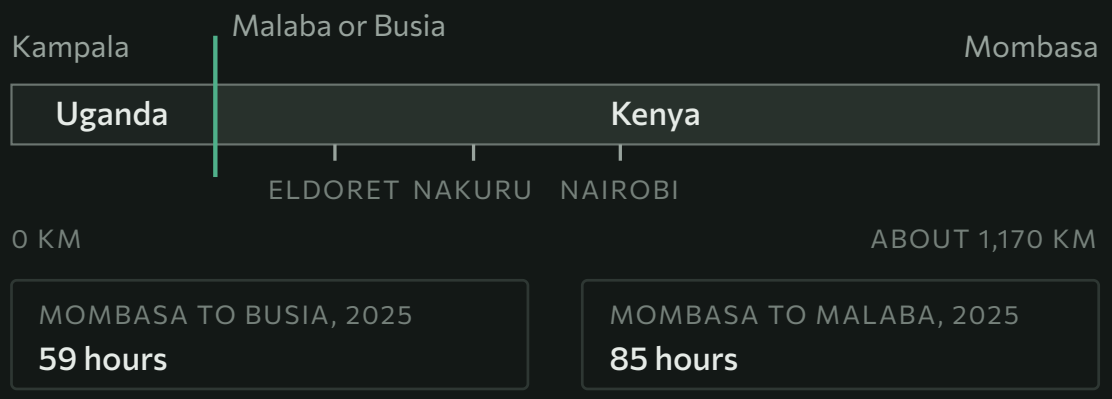
Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda, Virgin Coffee, Uganda Coffee Prices, Uganda Trade Portal, Uganda Coffee Exporter

STAGE 6 OF 10

The road to the coast

Uganda and Kenya

Over 95% of Uganda's coffee exports leave by this corridor. Trucks cross into Kenya at Malaba or Busia and run through Eldoret, Nakuru and Nairobi to Mombasa.



MOMBASA TO BUSIA, 2025
59 hours

MOMBASA TO MALABA, 2025
85 hours

Country shares are measured along the route drawn. Sources: Uganda Coffee Exporter; Northern Corridor Authority; Uganda Revenue Authority.

DISTANCE	About 1,170 km from Kampala
TIME	The Kenyan leg alone averaged 59 hours via Busia and 85 hours via Malaba in mid-2025
PAPERWORK	Cleared once under the East African single customs territory, with an electronic seal tracked to the port

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Uganda is landlocked; over 95% of its coffee exports use this road to the coast.
COST	The truck rate is not public*
NEXT LEG	Delivered to the container terminal at Mombasa.

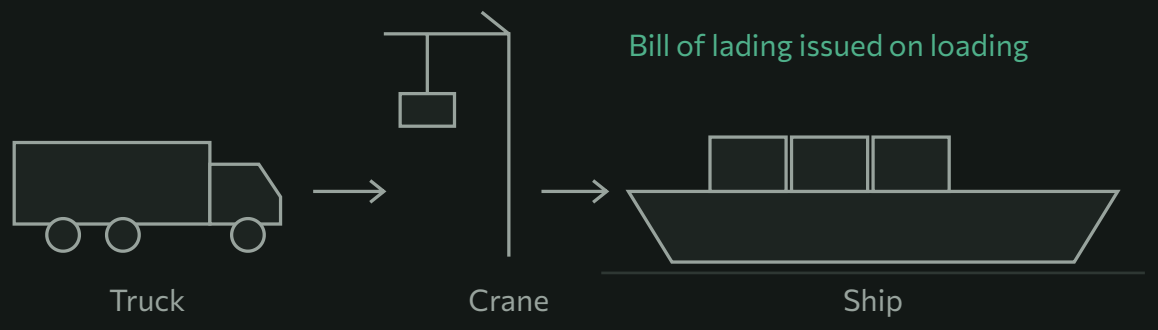
Sources: Uganda Coffee Exporter, Northern Corridor Authority, Uganda Revenue Authority, Clearon Logistics

STAGE 7 OF 10

The port

Mombasa, Kenya

The container is loaded onto a ship. The shipping line issues the bill of lading, which travels separately to the buyer.



How long the coffee waits at Mombasa is not published.

CONDITION	Green coffee keeps for months; it does not ripen
WAIT AT THE PORT	*
PAPERWORK	Bill of lading

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Mombasa is where the Northern Corridor meets the sea.
COST	Port charges are not public
NEXT LEG	By container ship via Suez, about 7,900 km and 10 to 12 days †

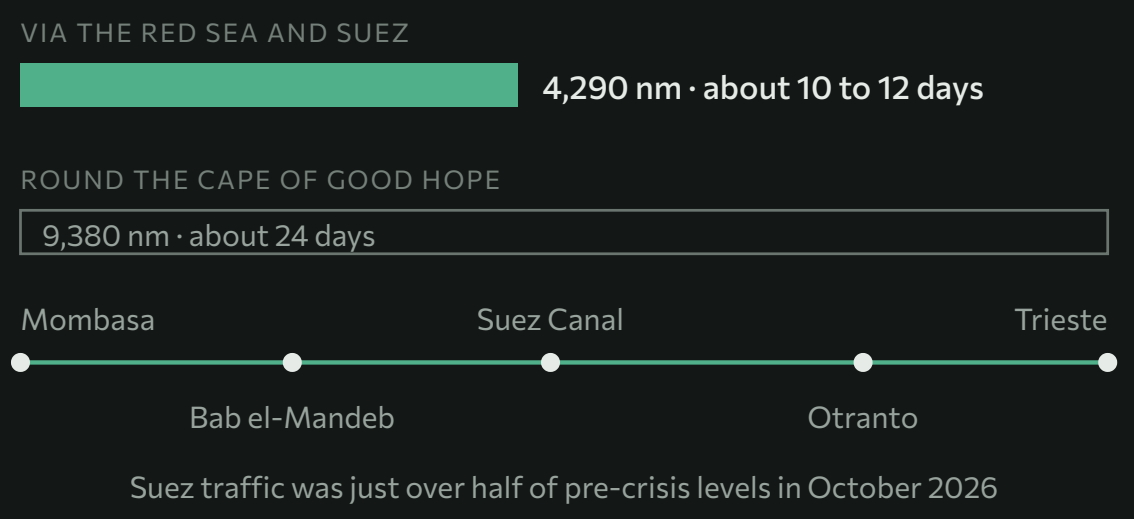
Sources: Uganda Coffee Exporter, Uganda Coffee Exporter, Reuters

STAGE 8 OF 10

The sea

Gulf of Aden, Red Sea, Suez Canal, Adriatic

The ship rounds the Horn of Africa, enters the Red Sea through the Bab el-Mandeb, transits the Suez Canal and crosses the Mediterranean into the Adriatic. Carriers only began returning to this route in 2026.



Suez traffic was just over half of pre-crisis levels in October 2026

Calculated along the routes drawn, at 16 to 18 knots. Sources: Reuters; Container News.

DISTANCE	About 7,900 km (4,290 nm) via Suez, against about 17,400 km (9,380 nm) round the Cape†
TIME	About 10 to 12 days at 16 to 18 knots via Suez, about 24 days round the Cape†
WHO	A container shipping line

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Italy is Uganda's largest coffee buyer, and the return of ships to Suez in 2026 cuts the voyage to less than half of the route round the Cape.
COST	Sea freight is not public*
NEXT LEG	Unloaded at Trieste and cleared free of duty.

Sources: Reuters, Container News, ChimpReports, Tarific

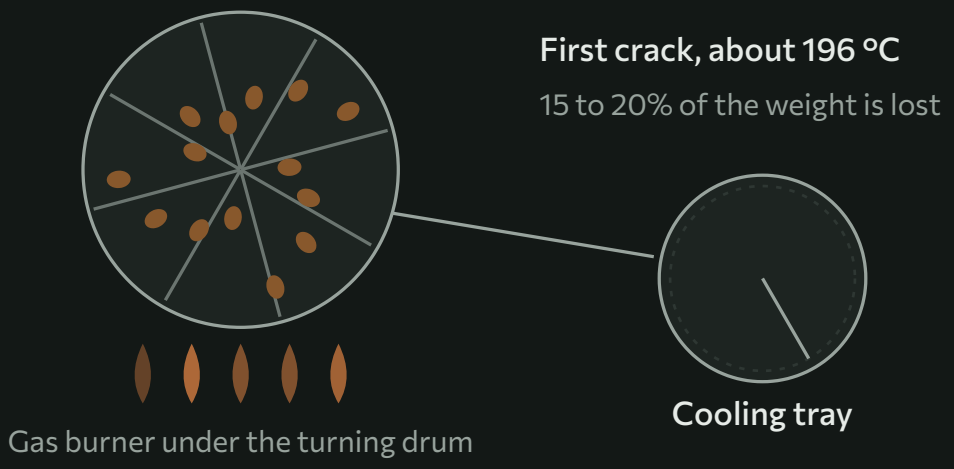
STAGE 9 OF 10

The roaster

Trieste, Italy

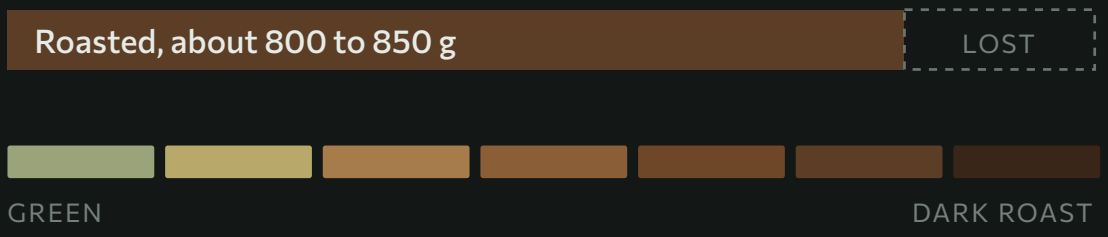
In Trieste the coffee clears customs, free of duty, and goes to a roaster. Robusta usually goes into a blend. Water and gases cook off and the beans turn brown.

INSIDE A DRUM ROASTER



Animated. Still frame when motion is reduced. Sources: All-Coffee; Coffee Tower of Records.

1,000 G OF GREEN COFFEE IN THE ROASTER



A 7 g espresso needs about 8.5 g of green coffee

at a 17.5% roast loss †

Source: Coffee Tower of Records; dose from the traditional espresso rules.

CONDITION	15 to 20% of the weight is lost in the roaster
PAPERWORK	Import declaration; from 30 December 2026, a due diligence statement under the EU deforestation rule
WHO	An importer and a roaster

WHY HERE, WHAT IT COSTS, HOW IT MOVES ON

WHY HERE	Trieste has been a free port since 1719 and grew into Italy's coffee capital, with traders, roasters and testers in 1 district.
COST	The roasted price is not published; 15 to 20% of the weight is lost in roasting
NEXT LEG	Roasted coffee goes to bars across the city*

Sources: Tarific, Coffee Tower of Records, European Commission, We the Italians

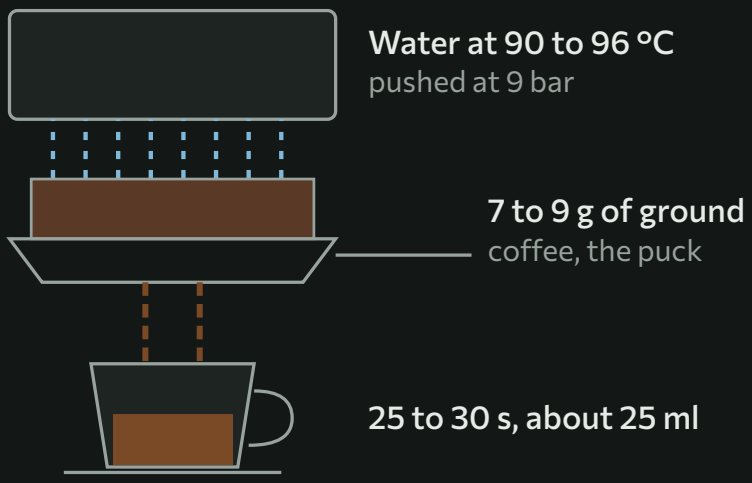
STAGE 10 OF 10

The espresso

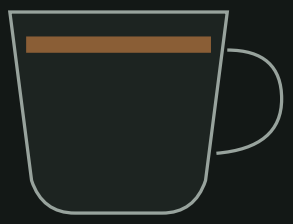
A bar in Trieste

At the bar, 7 to 9 g of ground coffee makes about 25 ml of espresso.
In Trieste a plain espresso is called a nero.

PULLING AN ESPRESSO



Animated. Still frame when motion is reduced. Sources: Coffee Tower of Records; Istituto Espresso Italiano.



About 25 ml
from 7 to 9 g

€1.44

average in Trieste, 2026

About 2 US cents
to the farmer, if the dose
were all Ugandan robusta

VAT AT THE BAR: 10%

Sources: Istituto Espresso Italiano; Sky TG24; Comunicaffè.

PRICE	€1.44 on average in Trieste, against €1.29 across Italy (2026)
TAX	VAT at 10% when drunk at the bar
WHO	The bar

Sources: Piacere Espresso, Istituto Espresso Italiano, Sky TG24, Food & Wine Italia, Comunicaffè

SUMMARY

The whole trip

1 kg of dried cherry makes about 45 to 65 espressos

THE FARMER	UGX 5,000 to 6,000 for that kg, about $1.30 to $1.50
THE BAR	About €65 to €95 for the espressos it makes, at €1.44 each†
DISTANCE	About 1,290 km by road from Masaka to Mombasa, and about 7,900 km by sea to Trieste
WEIGHT	About half is lost at hulling and a further 15 to 20% at roasting

PRICE

What the same coffee is worth along the way

Dried cherry at the farm, per kg	$1.40
Hulled FAQ, per kg	$3.06
Export grade, Screen 18, per kg	$3.77
1 kg of green coffee, sold as espressos	About €170

1 kg of green coffee roasts to about 800 to 850 g, enough for about 118 espressos of 7 g at €1.44†. Shilling prices are converted at UGX 3,925 per dollar. Bars are roughly to scale. The cost of the trip, the roasting and the bar itself sit between the last 2 rows and are not published.

MONEY

Who gets what from an espresso

If the whole 7 g dose were Ugandan robusta, the farmer's share is about 2 US cents of a €1.44 espresso, under 2%†. Most Italian espresso is a blend, so a real cup holds less Ugandan coffee than this.

€1.44 in Trieste

Farmer, about 2 cents · VAT at 10%, about 13 cents · Hulling, export, freight, roasting, the bar: not published

COFFEE

Cherry	FAQ	Green	Roasted	Espresso
Farmer	Hullery	Exporter	Roaster	Bar
$1.40 per kg	$3.06 per kg	$3.77 per kg	Not published	€1.44 a cup

MONEY Payment terms between exporter and roaster are not published

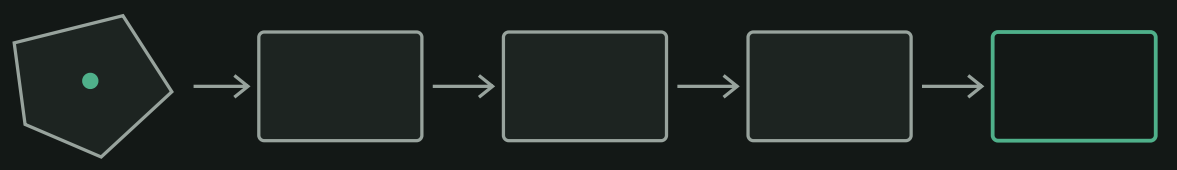
Sources: Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda; Virgin Coffee; Sky TG24.

DEFORESTATION RULE

The deadline on 30 December 2026

From 30 December 2026, large and medium companies selling coffee in the EU must prove it was not grown on land deforested after 31 December 2020, with the location of every plot it came from. Small companies follow on 30 June 2027. For Uganda that means tracing beans from each smallholding through hulleries and exporters to every shipment. Uganda has registered about 1.7 million coffee farmers in a national database to meet it.

EACH LINK MUST BE ON RECORD



Plot and coordinates	Farmer registered	Hullery lot	Export shipment	Due diligence statement, EU

Sources: European Commission; EY; Coffee Geography.

LEGS

How each piece reaches the next place

Every leg of the chain, from the nursery to the bar.

LEG	FROM	TO	WHAT	HOW	PACKED	DISTANCE OR TIME	COST
1	Nursery	Farm	Seedlings	Road*	Pots	Not published	Not published
2	Farm	Hullery	Kiboko	Road*	Sacks	Nearby	UGX 5,000 to 6,000 a kg
3	Hullery	Kampala export mill	FAQ green bean	Truck	Sacks	About 120 km†	About $3.06 a kg
4	Kampala	Mombasa	Graded green coffee	Truck	Container	About 1,170 km	About $3.77 a kg
5	Mombasa	Trieste	Graded green coffee	Container ship, via Suez	Container	About 7,900 km, 10 to 12 days†	0% EU duty
6	Roaster	Bar	Roasted coffee	Van*	Bags	Within Trieste	€1.44 a cup

PAPERWORK

The documents that move with the coffee

DOCUMENT	ISSUED BY	WHEN	WHAT IT PROVES
Farmer registration	Uganda's national coffee farmer database	Before sale	Who grew the coffee, and where
Coffee export licence	Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda	Yearly	The company may export coffee
Registered sales contract	Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda	At sale	The deal, its price and its quantity are on record
Quality certificate	Ministry of Agriculture, after pre-shipment inspection	Before shipment	The grade matches what was sold
Certificate of origin	Authorised body in Uganda	Before shipment	The coffee was grown in Uganda
Phytosanitary certificate	Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda	Before shipment	The lot is free of regulated pests
Export declaration	Exporter, with Uganda Revenue Authority	In Kampala	The goods have left Uganda legally
Transit under the single customs territory	Uganda and Kenya customs, with an electronic cargo seal	Kampala to Mombasa	The truck crosses Kenya without being cleared again

DOCUMENT	ISSUED BY	WHEN	WHAT IT PROVES
Bill of lading	Shipping line	On loading at Mombasa	The coffee is on board; whoever holds the original can claim it
Import declaration	Importer, with Italian customs	In Trieste	Duty (0% on green coffee) and VAT assessed
Due diligence statement	Importer, in the EU system	From 30 December 2026	The coffee is traced to its plots and is deforestation-free

RISK

What can go wrong, and where

WHERE	RISK	WHAT HAPPENS
Farm	Price	The export price follows the London robusta market. In June 2026 Uganda's coffee exports were worth 37.4% less than a year earlier, on 24.2% lower volume
Farm	Tracing	A lot that cannot be traced to registered plots cannot be sold into the EU after 30 December 2026
Road	Delay	The Kenyan leg averaged 85 hours to Malaba in mid-2025, up from 77 a year earlier
Sea	The Red Sea	Container traffic through Suez was just over half of pre-crisis levels in October 2026. If the route closes again, ships go round the Cape: about 9,380 nm instead of 4,290

CARBON

The carbon cost of a kilogram

Published studies put green coffee at 0.38 to 15.33 kg CO_2 equivalent per kg, depending on the country, the farming and how much of the chain is counted. No study of this route was found.

GAPS

What the public record does not show

- How long a clonal robusta tree takes to its first harvest in Uganda.
- How many bags go in a container from Mombasa, and how long the coffee waits at the port.
- Freight cost, and the margins of the hullery, the exporter, the roaster and the bar.
- How much Ugandan robusta is in a typical Trieste espresso blend.

- Payment terms between Ugandan exporters and Italian roasters.

SOURCES

Where the figures come from

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda: clonal robusta nursery manual
2. World Coffee Research: Uganda, 1.8 million coffee households
3. Fluna: Uganda harvest calendar, main crop and fly crop
4. Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda: primary processing, drying kiboko to 13 to 14%
5. Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda: monthly coffee report, June 2026
6. Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda: price update, 14 September 2026
7. PesaScope: hulling kiboko to FAQ, a 52% out-turn
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10. Uganda Coffee Prices: Kampala grades, Screen 18, 15 and 12
11. Ministry of Agriculture, Uganda: monthly coffee report, July 2026
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13. Eunews: EU coffee imports in 2025 by country
14. Uganda Coffee Exporter: the Kampala to Mombasa corridor, 1,170 km
15. Northern Corridor Authority: performance dashboard, July to September 2025
16. Uganda Revenue Authority: single customs territory
17. Clearon Logistics: transit through Kenya and electronic cargo tracking
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20. Reuters: Maersk and Hapag-Lloyd return more services to Suez, 14 September 2026
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23. Istituto Espresso Italiano: certified espresso, about 25 ml
24. Piacere Espresso: 7 to 9 g of coffee per espresso
25. Sky TG24: espresso prices by city, Trieste €1.44
26. Food & Wine Italia: Italian average €1.29
27. Comunicaffè: VAT on coffee in Italy
28. Tarific: EU duty on green coffee, 0%
29. European Commission: the deforestation rule delayed to December 2026
30. EY: deforestation rule dates, 30 December 2026 and 30 June 2027
31. Coffee Geography: Uganda registers 1.7 million coffee farmers
32. Sunrise: June 2026 coffee exports
33. Africa API: UGX 3,925 per US dollar, October 2026
34. CBI: carbon footprint of coffee, 0.38 to 15.33 kg CO_2e per kg

35. Uganda Coffee Exporter: robusta is indigenous to the Lake Victoria crescent
36. We the Italians: Trieste's free port, 1719, and its coffee district
37. Uganda Coffee Merchants: sun drying kiboko, 2 to 3 weeks
38. CGK: how a coffee huller works
39. Farming Uganda: hulling for a charge per kg
40. All-Coffee: first crack at about 196 °C
41. Coffee Tower of Records: espresso at 9 bar, 90 to 96 °C, 25 to 30 seconds

Land and borders from Natural Earth. Routes are drawn through planning points and are not exact tracks.