



The Craft of Precision

WORDS
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PHOTOGRAPHS
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From slow-pulled espresso in Little Italy to cheap deli coffee, from to-go cups at chain cafes on every street corner to the hidden, hipster cafes of the Lower East Side, there's a coffee for everyone in Manhattan.

If you only had one phrase to describe New Yorkers, it'd be "always in a hurry." And this is most evident in the morning coffee rush. It surprised Yuki Izumi, the coffee program designer at the *kissaten*-style cafe Hi-Collar Coffee, the first time she saw it in action in 2013.

"In the morning, people buy their coffee at the deli. Then, after adding milk and sugar, they hold the top and bottom, stretch their arm out far away from their shoes and clothes and shake with one hand."

"Amazing skill," she remarks. "The more I serve coffee to New Yorkers, I realize that many people add milk not only for the taste but also to cool down the coffee."

This caffeine-craving ingenuity coupled with perpetual impatience is what makes New York's coffee scene one of a kind.

But in a city of fast walkers and equally fast talkers, there's still space for a slower slice of life.

As latte art champion Hiroshi Sawada, founder of Sawada Coffee, located in the lobby of Au Cheval in TriBeCa, observes, "people in New York City are busy on weekdays and tend to like quick, espresso-based drinks rather than pour-over coffees that take some time to make."

From his experience, he sees more people opting for pour-over coffee while relaxing at cafes on the weekend. And to serve this growing crowd, an increasing number of Japanese-style coffee shops are staking their claim in Manhattan's coffee scene. The newest to Manhattan will be %Arabica, a coffee chain that announced in May 2020 plans for its first U.S. cafe.





It might be surprising to learn that many hallmarks of the third wave coffee movement and the craft coffee industry—like the Hario V60, the siphon, the Kalita Wave, matcha tea, gooseneck kettles, and single-origin beans sourcing—have their origins in Japanese culture. Even much of the modern cafe experience has roots in *kissaten* coffee culture (traditional Japanese tea/coffee shops), known for its warm hospitality and cozy charm.

But this high-quality approach to coffee is just one of many such cultural imports from Japan. New Yorkers also love their sushi. Found everywhere, from Michelin-starred restaurants to bodegas, sushi is more than a cuisine—here, it's a lifestyle. It's a date night dinner; it's a grab-and-go lunch; it's a 2-a.m. bodega craving. If you're looking for arguably the best sushi outside of Japan, it's in New York City.

"Foodies from all over the world come here," says Yuri Igata, general manager of Sushi Ginza Onodera. And as such, "the level of chef skills and availability of ingredients is very high and the guests, who typically have traveled around the world, have developed an appreciation for high-end cuisine and special techniques."

Sushi Ginza Onodera focuses on traditional Edomae methods, with fish flown in from Tokyo's Toyosu market. Its care for ingredient quality and sourcing is not unlike that which you'd find in the coffee industry. Like coffee, sushi requires great dedication to quality and a skill that's honed over time to truly perfect the end product. It seems like New Yorkers sense this, and that's why they seek out Japanese-style coffee and sushi—despite being so rushed.

Perhaps it's not the Japanese brewing methods and tools that have impacted the craft coffee scene the most. Instead, maybe it's the care in bean origin, roasting, and the customer experience that have more profoundly influenced how we experience coffee today.

When you compare Japan's largest city, Tokyo, to the largest city in the United States, they couldn't be more different. However, there's no question that the inhabitants of both of those cities seek out the finer things in life, like excellent dining, impeccable ingredients, and a freshly roasted, drip-brewed cup of coffee.

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