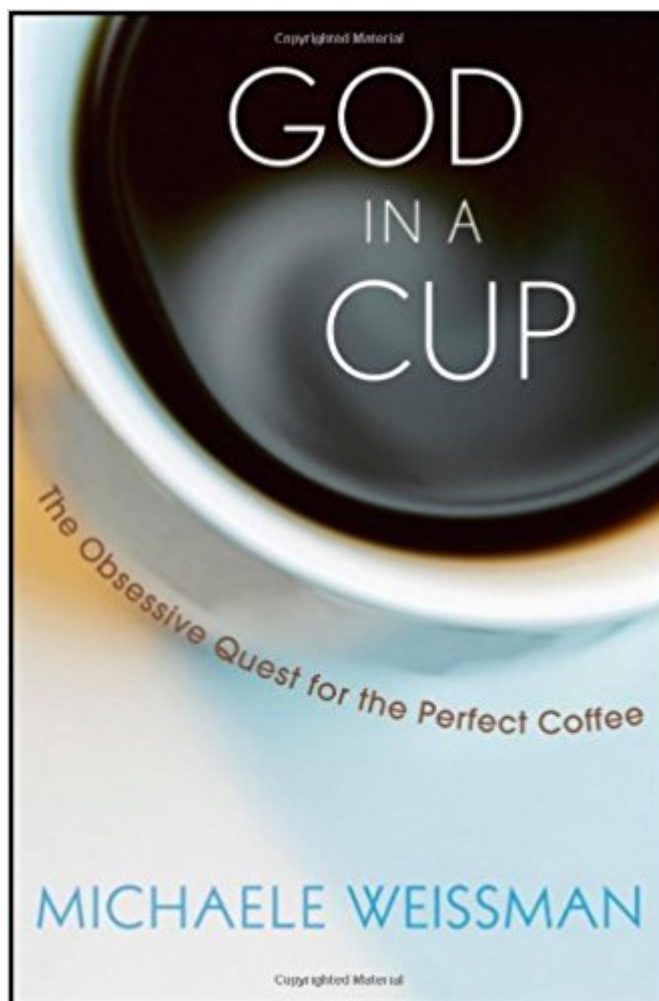


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# God In A Cup: The Obsessive Quest For The Perfect Coffee



## Synopsis

Can a cup of coffee reveal the face of God? Can it become the holy grail of modern-day knights errant who brave hardship and peril in a relentless quest for perfection? Can it change the world? These questions are not rhetorical. When highly prized coffee beans sell at auction for \$50, \$100, or \$150 a pound wholesale (and potentially twice that at retail), anything can happen. In *God in a Cup*, journalist and late-blooming adventurer Michael Weissman treks into an exotic and paradoxical realm of specialty coffee where the successful traveler must be part passionate coffee connoisseur, part ambitious entrepreneur, part activist, and part Indiana Jones. Her guides on the journey are the nation's most heralded coffee business hotshots—Counter Culture's Peter Giuliano, Intelligentsia's Geoff Watts, and Stumptown's Duane Sorenson. With their obsessive standards and fiercely competitive baristas, these roasters are creating a new culture of coffee connoisseurship in America—a culture in which \$10 lattes are both a purist's pleasure and a way to improve the lives of third-world farmers. If you love a good cup of coffee—or a great adventure story—you'll love this unprecedented look up close at the people and passions behind today's best beans.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

From Ethiopia to Panama to Portland, journalist Weissman shadows today's vanguard coffee guys in their pursuit of the perfect, caffeinated beverage. With increased demand for specialty roasts superior to the mass-marketed offerings at Starbucks, Weissman illustrates how the origin, flavor compounds and socioeconomic impact of a cup of coffee are relevant now more than ever.

Alongside industry leaders from some of the U.S.'s top roasters—Counter Culture, Intelligentsia and Stumptown—Weissman treks to the birthplace of coffee, remote plantations, and international competitions where the best coffees in the world are cupped (or tasted), scored and where winners like Panamanian grower Hacienda La Esmeralda's revered Geisha coffee earn \$130 per pound. Visiting both ends of the producer-consumer spectrum, she sheds light on the partnership between those who sell premium coffee and the impoverished who farm it—examining how specialty standards enable improved production, exceptional beans, fair prices and fatter pockets across the board. On the imbibing end, Weissman penetrates today's amped-up coffee culture: its sleek coffee bars, tattooed coffee-geeks behind the counters, fiercely competitive roasters working alongside champion baristas. Tagging along behind the main characters in today's specialty coffee scene, Weissman travels from the exotic to the expected to artfully deconstruct the connoisseur's cup of coffee. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Ethiopia to Panama to Portland, journalist Weissman shadows today's vanguard "coffee guys" in their pursuit of the perfect, caffeinated beverage. With increased demand for specialty roasts superior to the mass-marketed offerings at Starbucks, Weissman illustrates how the origin, flavor compounds and socioeconomic impact of a cup of coffee are relevant now more than ever. Alongside industry leaders from some of the U.S.'s top roasters—Counter Culture, Intelligentsia and Stumptown—Weissman treks to the birthplace of coffee, remote plantations, and international competitions where the best coffees in the world are cupped (or tasted), scored and where winners like Panamanian grower Hacienda La Esmeralda's revered "Geisha" coffee earn \$130 per pound. Visiting both ends of the producer-consumer spectrum, she sheds light on the partnership between those who sell premium coffee and the impoverished who farm it—examining how specialty standards enable improved production, exceptional beans, fair prices and fatter pockets across the board. On the imbibing end, Weissman penetrates today's amped-up coffee culture: its sleek coffee bars, tattooed coffee-geeks behind the counters, fiercely competitive roasters working alongside champion baristas. Tagging along behind the main characters in today's specialty coffee scene, Weissman travels from the exotic to the expected to artfully deconstruct the connoisseur's cup of coffee. (May) (Publishers Weekly, March 31, 2008)

Like some of the other low star reviews said, this book was more like a fan writing about these

"coffee guys" and not much else. I can see it being interesting on some levels about the history of third wave coffee, but I couldn't get over it just sounding like she was gushing about them. Unfortunately, it was to the point where I couldn't finish it.

This is a good introduction to the third wave coffee scene. More up to date if a bit narrower than previous books. Must reading for someone with a serious interest in the topic.

Oh if only a book like this could replace coffee table books! The author of *God in a Cup* does a superb job relating the growth of the specialty coffee world to the reader in a work that holds an accessibility few other books devoted to the topic can claim. We join her right as she begins to elevate her palate, affording a non-indoctrinated reader the opportunity to investigate and grow while reading along. Of course, few have the opportunity to tag along with a couple of the industry's buyers as they head off to origin, but I feel that is where this work shines. Weissman does a superb job relating the humor, confusion, joy, and frustration of making dealings with growers and middlemen and jumping into the fray at conventions held by and for the professionals so deeply steeped in their world that it can be simultaneously exhilarating, alienating, and exhausting to try and join in. This book is a case where the entire title must be given its due. This is a work that conveys the obsession of coffee geekdom in such a way that those involved really must admit that it is indeed obsession. But it is infectious, joyous obsession and here it is written well enough to spread that enthusiastic sense of discovery to the reader. I could not help but pull a shot of espresso on my day off at the cafe I work at after reading one chapter and the descriptions of some coffees really do demand accompaniment with a cup of Panamanian coffee. I am personally not a fan of the Clover coffee brewing system (vacpot and presses for life), but still felt excitement reading about their use to highlight flavors. You should know that this is a book about the quest for great coffee, not a book about great coffee. It is about the people involved, not the product, and does not pretend to be about the beverage that results from so many people's work despite the wonderful descriptions of coffee that filter in and out throughout the book. The author's and our two primary featured buyers' journeys are the focus here. A must read for coffee enthusiasts.

I was so drawn into the mystery of the Gesha coffee tree presented in this book that I read most of it in one sitting. What is it about coffee from this tree that commands such an absurdly high price? The intriguing thing about it is that we never get a definitive answer to the question of where it came from, but instead are taken on an extensive journey behind the scenes of the third wave coffee

movement and get a peek at the companies, personalities, and machinations that drive the modern specialty coffee industry. In other words, while the origin of the tree is still a mystery at the end of the book, we get a very complete picture of who the companies/people are that are willing to pay such exorbitant prices. *God in a Cup* is an important addition to the existing literature on coffee and one that I will whole-heartedly recommend to anyone with questions about how the industry works in practical terms.

This book almost reads like a novel - it is exciting and takes you all over the world where coffee is grown. You will learn about how coffee is grown, how it is processed, sold, roasted, and prepared by people who love coffee so much they are willing to pay farmers \$100/pound for the absolute best specialty coffee.

Gave this as a gift to a coffee lover in my life and the good news is he LOVED it! The bad news is it convinced him to seek out some kind of special coffee that is \$100 a pound. I think it could become a habit.

I wasn't expecting much out of this book, as it's about a very trendy topic, but it's a wonderful snapshot of the "Third Wave" era of coffee and how it came about. The book greatly benefits from the fact that the writer is actually, well, a writer. Lots of familiar figures from now-well-known coffee powerhouses like Intelligentsia and Stumptown. I had to run out and try a cup of geisha after reading this.

beautiful stories surrounding the green buying process and industry leaders in the coffee industry. Also gives a snapshot of different coffee hot spot cities in the states.

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