

## **JavaMan**

*by John Farrow*

Caffeine has a long history of use in athletics, and at 100 mg per cup, brewed coffee is your best source short of No Doz. And there is just nothing like a strong cuppa Joe to get you up and out the door on your next run.

One recent study also found that moderate amounts (2-4 cups of brewed coffee) taken an hour before running or cycling allowed participants to exercise up to 50% longer than a control group that consumed no caffeine.

There are two theories for caffeine's effectiveness. One is that its stimulation of the brain reduces fatigue, allowing exercise to seem easier. Another is that it promotes the release of fatty acids from muscle and fat stores, allowing the body to conserve glycogen and keep working at high levels for longer periods.

Like any self-induced chemical stimulant, moderation is the key. Too much caffeine can impair sleep and make you as jittery as a crazed Chihuahua. These same symptoms can also appear if caffeine use is cut back. Also, caffeine is a diuretic and dehydration can be a problem, especially in warm weather.

But when all is said and done, drinking good coffee, if it's done right, can be something not unlike a religious experience. Life is just too short to drink bad coffee. While coffee is grown all over the world (mostly in the tropics), not all coffee beans are created equal. The best come from mountainous, volcanic soil, and while there are many good coffees, you can't go wrong with any of the following.

To fill my tooth, Kenya AA is just the thing. Grown at 7,000' in the volcanic soil of Mt. Kenya, it is strong, robust, and very dominating. It grabs you by the shirt, slams you up against the wall and booms

"Time to run!"

Have a cup or two of Kenya AA and that tempo run will be over before you know it. No wonder those guys run off and leave us. But if you can't beat'em, at least you can enjoy their coffee.

Right up there with Kenya AA is coffee from the South Pacific islands of Sumatra, also grown in hilly, volcanic soil. Very rich and full-bodied, it is perhaps a bit smoother and more subtle than Kenya AA, but no less robust.

When I first mentioned this coffee to a friend a few years ago, he thought I was talking about one of his former girlfriends, Sue Mothra. He was crazy about that girl and couldn't get her melodious voice and willowy legs, as he put it, out of his mind.

Well, a melodious voice that reverberated like a foghorn and legs like willows that had been generously watered and fertilized for years. She ate enough in a week to feed the entire population of Sumatra for a year. No, there was nothing subtle about Sue Mothra.

Finally, you might want to head out to the Caribbean home of many of the world's best sprinters and try Jamaica's Blue Mountain coffee, one of the most unusual (and expensive) in the world.

Grown above 3,000' in the Blue Mountains of eastern Jamaica, its aroma is deep and rich, with an elegant, somewhat spicy, bouquet. Once you try it, you'll know why it is one of the world's most expensive coffees, and well worth it.

Of course, it tastes best after a meal of fresh marlin with mango sauce under the stars and palm trees on the patio of the Hibiscus Lodge overlooking the water on the north shore near the little town of Ocho Rios.

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