

HEZA

GITWE+MIKUBA+NKONGE+MUTANA+GISHUBI

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KAYANZA PROVINCE

OWNED BY LONG MILES COFFEE

Switch-backing up mountainsides and across small, hand-built log bridges, visiting Heza Washing Station at 1960 masl can be likened to an off-road adventure. To say Heza Washing Station is 'remote' would be an understatement and yet the community that lives in the surrounding hills is a special one, comprised mostly of coffee farmers. Heza means 'beautiful place' in Kirundi, the local language of Burundi. With panoramic views and an ever-changing East African sky, this washing station lives up to its name.

Heza is the second washing station built by Long Miles Coffee and has been operational since April of 2014. The fantastic conditions in the Kayanza Province and the amount of ripe, dense cherries brought to the station have led the Long Miles team to focus on pioneering a sundried natural coffee initiative. Heza is also home to Burundi's first honey processed coffees.

Heza was built in January of 2014 at the foot of Gitwe hill, and has now been producing coffee for six seasons. From here, the Rwandan border and the tips of the Kibira, Burundi's only indigenous rainforest, can be seen looming in the distance. The exceptionally high altitude, moderate climate and close proximity to the Kibira bring out the best in the coffee, both growing on the trees and being produced at the washing station. The individual micro-climates of each hill combined with the station's ideal conditions guarantee unique and exquisite notes in every cup.

MANAGER Pamphile Mpawenayo **ASSISTANT MANAGER** Hervé Irankunda

QUALITY CONTROL MANAGER Seth Nduwayo

WATER SOURCE Heza processes its coffee by pumping spring water from a nearby natural spring.

PROCESSING STYLE During the fully washed process freshly harvested cherries are delivered by coffee farmers to the Long Miles Coffee Washing Station, then floated and hand-sorted for ripeness upon arrival. The cherries are pulped and undergo a double fermentation process. Parchment spends around twelve hours dry fermenting, then undergoes a twenty-four hour wet fermentation. The parchment is sometimes 'footed' after fermentation. A team will agitate and dance on the slippery coffee parchment by foot, helping to loosen any remaining mucilage clinging to it. It is then rinsed in fresh water, graded by density and left to soak for another four to six hours in the final rinse tank.

PRE-DRYING AND DRYING The parchment is carried to covered drying tables where it spends between six to forty-eight hours pre-drying. During this time, it is hand picked for underripeness, overripeness, insect damage and visual defects. It is then moved to traditional African raised tables where it spends

between sixteen to twenty days slow drying (depending on the weather) reaching the desired 10.5% moisture level.

During the natural process coffee cherries are floated and then hand-sorted, then taken straight to the drying tables. The whole coffee cherry spends between twenty-five to thirty days drying in its skin, slowly turning from deep red to a prune-like purple-black color when fully dry, reaching the desired 10.5% moisture level.

EMPLOYEES Nine Coffee Scouts, lead by Asterie Nimbona, are responsible for farm-level quality control, farmer education, quality control during cherry selection and organic composting at the washing station. There are three farmer reception and cherry collection officers, a team of ten women responsible for organic composting, fifty-four seasonal workers responsible for coffee fermentation and coffee production, and fifteen women devoted to extensive quality control and curation of the coffee parchment.

FARMER CARD SYSTEM During the peak of harvest, farmers bring their cherries to the station and each person's contribution is recorded using the Long Miles farmer card system. This system ensures that Long Miles can trace the best quality coffee and the farmers who grow it right down to hill-level.

HARVEST PERIOD Coffee collection usually begins in April and by the end of June the last of Burundi's best cherries arrive at the station, although the 2020 harvest started rather slowly and will continue well into July. Heza usually begins its harvest roughly two weeks after Bukeye has begun.