

FAQ - The SWISS WATER® Decaffeination Process

These questions and answers are designed to give you more insight into what the SWISS WATER® process offers and how it results in a decaffeinated coffee that we believe is superior to others.

Does the SWISS WATER® decaffeination process use anything other than water to remove the caffeine?

No, the process uses only water that is passed through a carbon filter. The water removes the caffeine from the coffee and the carbon removes the caffeine from the water.

How does the carbon filter work?

The carbon is very porous. These pores are approximately the size and shape of a caffeine molecule, and therefore the caffeine attaches to the pores.

How is the carbon activated?

Careful regeneration in a blast furnace activates it. This burns off the caffeine but does not damage the carbon.

Can the flavor-saturated water transfer origin taste from one batch to the next?

No. Because the flavor-saturated water or green coffee extract has the same percentage of soluble solids (23-24%) as the green coffee itself, there is no resulting osmosis. Only caffeine flows out of the green coffee because that is the physical difference between the water and the coffee.

I have seen your green coffee product in the past and it looks different in comparison to other decaffeinated coffees. Why is that?

Chemical processing methods cause a very different reaction in the coffee than pure water. Chemical methods cause a reddish tone to appear primarily because chemical residue is now on the bean.

How are the beans polished?

The beans are polished in a drum type polisher. They are sprayed lightly with water and tumbled in the drum that cleans the surface.

Are all water processes the same?

No, there are some processes where water is used to remove the caffeine from the bean, however, many of these use a chemical solvent to remove the caffeine from the water, which is then reintegrated with the beans to preserve the flavor. To ensure that you are drinking decaffeinated coffee without the use of chemical solvents, look for the SWISS WATER® process designation.

I heard that decaffeination processing is harmful to the environment. Is it?

The environment and its surroundings are not harmed in the processing of SWISS WATER® decaffeinated coffees since no chemicals and only pure water are used. Other decaffeination methods use chemicals such as Ethyl Acetate and Methylene Chloride – Methylene Chloride is known to be an ozone depleting substance.

How much caffeine is removed in the decaffeination process?

97% of the caffeine is removed. The trace amount of caffeine remaining should have no effect.

Why do the green beans turn brown during decaffeination, even before roasting?

Color changes occur during processing due to the heated water used in all decaffeination processes. These same beans roast to a rich chestnut brown or full city depending on the roaster's preference.

Do you toll or custom decaffeinate?

We do toll decaffeinated coffee. In toll decaffeination the roaster supplies the beans and we decaffeinate them for a fee.

How does it work?

It is simple. You have your beans delivered to our plant, we decaffeinate them and return them to you.

Is there a minimum quantity to have decaffeinated?

Yes. In order to ensure top quality processing and to enable a 97% caffeine removal guarantee, we require a minimum of 100 bags, or 13,000 lbs, per origin or blend.

Can you decaffeinate a blend?

Yes. In most instances we will do that by blending the coffee prior to processing. Our computerized bulk blending capabilities are very advanced and in a world-class realm.

How much does toll decaffeination cost?

The cost of tolling decaffeination has three components: Firstly, a processing charge which your green coffee supplier can provide you with; Secondly there is transportation to and from Vancouver, as well as a 5% shrink, both of which are the roaster's responsibility.

How long does toll decaffeination take?

In general, it takes two weeks to process the coffee once it reaches our facility. It is important to note that we need advance notice of three to four weeks in order to schedule production at our facility.

Is there any restriction on what origins of coffee you will decaffeinate?

We decaffeinate a wide range of coffees. The only restriction is that we currently do not toll decaffeinate any robusta coffees. Speak to a representative for more information.