

Bean there, brewed that

A Lot Can Happen Over, To, And With Coffee

Jiya Arora, AIS Gurugram 43, X B

“Life begins after coffee!” “Coffee makes everything better!” “Coffee is the fuel of life!” and so much more. My name, and my taste, has not left people’s mouth since the modern-day version of me appeared in southern Arabia in the 15th century, though legend has it that I was first brought into limelight in the ninth century when goat herders noticed the effect coffee plant had on goats. So, dear coffee lovers and drinkers, let me regale you with the whimsical tale of my existence as shining star(bucks) of this world – Madame Coffee herself! Born in the lush lands of Ethiopia and mainly having two types (arabica and robusta), I embarked on a journey that would tickle the tastebuds of billions around the world, primarily due to my caffeine content. Little did I know that my destiny would lead me to become the lifeline of countless sleep-deprived souls and the arch-nemesis of snooze buttons everywhere. Why else would I have the highest sales in the world market for hot drinks? As I ventured into the bustling world, it wasn’t long before I encountered Starbucks in 1971, a hipster haven where every drink comes with a side of pretentiousness. With their syrupy concoctions and fancy names that sound like

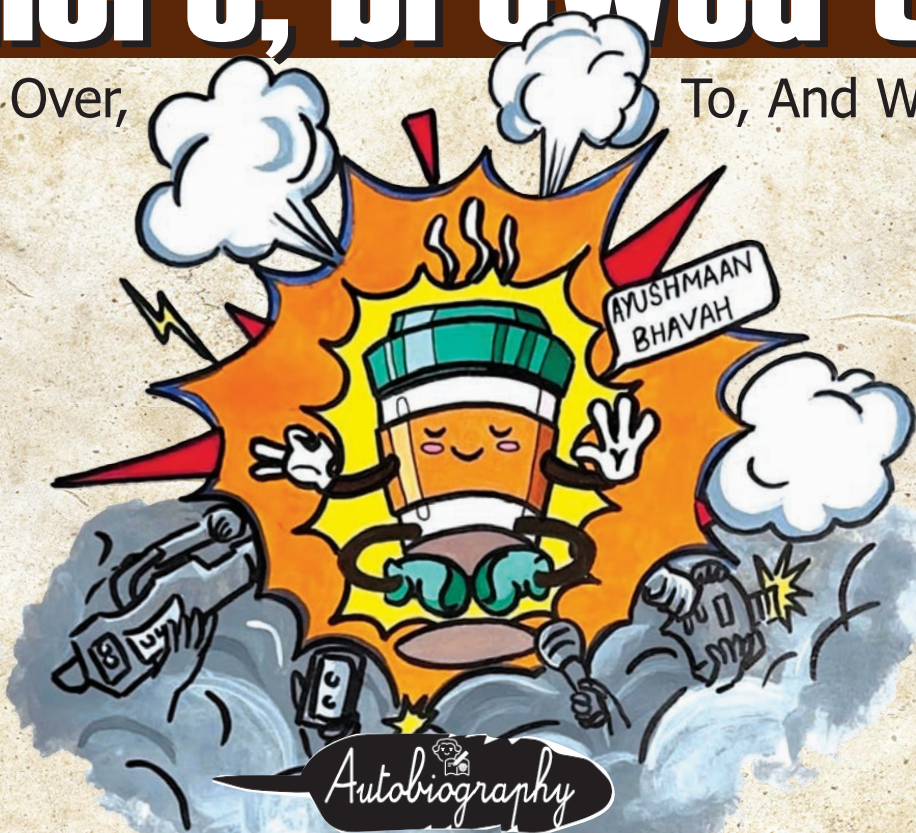


Illustration: Myiesha Malik, AIS Gurugram 43, XII D

a Shakespearean monologue (a quad long shot half calf salted caramel mocha latte with pumps of white chocolate, hazelnut, whole milk, half brew, whipped cream, and caramel salted drizzle, anyone?), they made me the protagonist of every Instagram post, perhaps adding a lot to my worldwide attachment with the posh culture. I mean, my most expensive

version, coming from the feces of an Asian palm civet, can cost more than 600 USD a pound; well, take that with a grain of sugar!

As a popular versatile beverage, I have always embraced my role – Brazil selling me to fund their athletes in 1932’s Olympics, me being the world’s second largest traded commodity, over 2.25 billion cups of me consumed daily and

roughly 10 billion kilos of me consumed yearly, my industry expected to reach revenues of 585 billion USD by 2025 etc. Of course, it does help my popularity when research suggests that consuming me is related to longer life span, lesser consumed calories (a black cup of me has only one calorie!), reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and Parkinson’s. But my presence in every other hand does not signify a lack of haters. In fact, I have been given the bombastic side-eye multiple times – Mecca leaders in 1511 thought I stimulated radical thinking and hence banned me; 16th century Italian clergymen who believed me to be “satanic”; Swedish government making me and my paraphernalia, including cups and dishes, illegal for its ties to “rebellious sentiment”.

From smooth and velvety lattes to strong espresso, from sweet-tooth frappuccinos to safe-choice cappuccinos, I have willingly undergone countless metamorphosis to suit the diverse tastes of the world. Serving everyone warmth in a cup, I have helped humanity conquer new lands and inspire new creations. No matter what comes, one thing remains certain: I, Coffee, the delicious enigma, will continue to be everyone’s faithful companion in times of joy, fatigue, and hilarious coffee shop mishaps. So, embrace the brew, my friends, and let’s caffeinate the world one cup at a time. Cheers!



At God’s own country

Nyla Kapil, AIS Gwalior, III B

Place: Kerala

Top sights: Sree Padmanabhaswamy Temple, Kovalam Beach, Varkala Beach, Kerala Backwaters, Tea Gardens, and Poovar Island

Best time to visit: June - July and December - January

Delicacies to try: Seafood, sadhya, payasam, banana chips

Things to carry: Umbrella or raincoat, beachwear, sunscreen, summer friendly clothes, beach footwear, camera, cash, first aid box, hat, sunglasses, comfortable shoes, insect repellent

Souvenirs to buy: Kerala handloom clothes, wall hangings, spices, and tea

Languages to know before you visit: English or Malayalam

My experience: Some journeys make you feel homesick, but then there are some that weave a spell, making you forget the comfort of your home. Kerala is one such place. From high-peaked mountains, turquoise blue oceans, pristine backwaters and thrilling adventure parks to wildlife sanctuaries, grand malls, lush green tea, estates and rain-drenched paddy fields, Kerala unfolds it all. No wonder it is known as ‘God’s

own country’. For me, every day was a joy to behold. I captured plenty of photographs to preserve those sweet memories and enjoyed the rich flavours of seafood.

My favourite memory from the trip: Wearing the traditional kasavu pattu pavadai was a truly special experience for me. Exploring the backwaters in Kerala’s traditional attire, along with our amazing beach visits, and beachside yoga sessions with my sister, added a serene touch. I would recommend all my friends to visit Kerala and witness its magic at least once in their lifetime. I would love to revisit this place.



Nyla enjoys her vacation in Kerala