



DATASHEET: African Delight (Kenya AA)

ORIGIN INFORMATION

Grower: SL28, SL34, Ruiru 11, and Batian

Region: Karatina, Nyeri County, Central Province, Kenya

Altitude: 1524 - 1692 masl

Harvest: October - December

BACKGROUND DETAILS

Nyeri coffees are almost always at the top of a cupper's list of favorites, and this exceptional coffee from the Karatina Factory (aka Washing Station) is unquestionably the cream of the crop. Described as having a prototypical Kenya profile, an argument could be made that this coffee is the standard against which to measure the rest.

The flavor profile reads like a summer music festival lineup of classic Kenya flavor notes, opening with juicy blackberry, savory sundried tomato, and blackcurrant jam, and headlined by zesty-sweet ruby red grapefruit.

Karatina belongs to a small but exceptional Cooperative Society called Barichu that includes Gaturiri and Gatomboya factories and together represent fewer than 1000 smallholder farming families. The farms and factories are located within Central Kenya's Nyeri county, bordered on the west by the Aberdares range, and on the northeast by Mount Kenya. In all of Africa, only Kilimanjaro tops the maximum elevation of Mount Kenya.

Smallholders like those that contribute to Karatina tend to measure their plots by number of trees rather than acreage, averaging around 250 coffee plants per plot. Many are inter-cropping to improve the biodiversity of the region and the security of their harvest, planting banana, grevillea, and macadamia in addition to coffee. Kenya's auction system elevates the value of exceptional coffees, and keeps the country's coffee margins high, stable, and independent of the volatile C Market.

Like most Kenyan growing regions, coffee in Nyeri benefits from its equatorial location and two distinct annual rainy seasons, resulting in a main crop in the winter and a "fly" crop harvested in the summer. However, East Africa has been hard-hit by climate disruption in recent years, and Kenyan production is very low this year by comparison to last. Early predictions originally seemed to indicate a good year, but drought, irregular rains, and a frost in Othaya have cut yields for both main and fly crops.