

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Sam

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Sam.

Neil

And I'm Neil.

Sam

Did you have a cup of coffee this morning, Neil?

Neil

Oh yes, I can't start the day without my morning cup of coffee... or two... or three!

Sam

And what do you like about coffee so much?

Neil

Well, that lovely smell for one thing! And, of course, it wakes me up and gets me ready to face the world.

Sam

Ah, you mean the **caffeine hit** – the effect of caffeine, which is a natural stimulant, on your brain making you feel more awake. Do you think, maybe, you're... addicted to coffee?

Neil

It's not just me, Sam. Have you seen how busy coffee shops are nowadays?! Full of people enjoying delicious coffee from all around the world!

Sam

Well, it wasn't always like that, Neil. The first coffee to reach Britain in the 17th century took months to arrive by sea. It was made by boiling raw coffee beans, and apparently tasted awful! In this programme, we'll be looking into the history of coffee in Britain, and as usual, we'll be learning some related vocabulary too. But

before that, I have a question for you. The earliest coffee to arrive in Britain took its name from the port in Yemen it was shipped from. So, what was it called? Was it:

- a) Cappuccino?
- b) Mocha? or
- c) Latte?

Neil

I'll say b) Mocha.

Sam

OK. I'll reveal the answer later in the programme.

Neil

Britain's love affair with coffee started with the opening of London's first coffee shop in 1652. People loved the effect – coffee made them more talkative and brighter, it kept them awake for longer, and the drink became more and more popular. Within a decade over eighty new coffee shops had opened in the City of London alone.

Sam

By the 1800s, though, tea had replaced coffee as the most fashionable drink, partly because it was drunk by Queen Victoria. Listen as Judith Hawley, an expert on 18th century literature, takes up the story with BBC Radio 4 programme, In Our Time.

Judith Hawley

It became more of a working-class drink. So, there were coffee shacks and carts like these sort of little street carts that you get still in London, and you get all over New York, that is a cheap, quick drinks to **perk you up**. And the Temperance Movement sponsored coffee taverns to try to **wean** working men **off** going to the pub for lunch. So, it moved. It declined seriously and has never fully recovered even in the current coffee boom.

Neil

In the 17th century there was a coffee boom – an increase in its popularity. One of the reasons was that coffee **perks you up** – gives you more energy and makes you more active.

Sam

Drinking coffee was also supported by a social group called the Temperance Movement, who campaigned to make alcohol illegal. They used coffee to **wean**

men **off** alcohol – make them gradually stop using something they had become addicted to.

Neil

Coffee changed British society and continues to do so today. Here's Professor Judith Hawley again, talking to BBC Radio 4's, In Our Time, about the situation today.

Judith Hawley

I think if we look at the way coffee consumption is going today it seems to me to set out two quite radical alternatives for the world. One is the world of corporate coffee, the coffee chains existing on a low wage economy. So, you have that kind of mass coffee market on the one hand. On the other hand you have these **microlot** estates, **Fairtrade** coffee, the sort of hipster coffee which is as varied and as interesting as fine wines and is made in an **artisanal** way.

Sam

Many customers today are turning away from large coffee chains like Starbucks, in search of a more responsibly sourced cup of coffee. One example of this is **Fairtrade**, an ethical standards scheme which guarantees a fair price for coffee producers in South America, Africa, and Asia.

Neil

Another recent development is the use of **microlots** – small plots of land which grow specialised coffee beans prized for their high quality and unique flavour.

Sam

Fairtrade and microlot coffee are part of a shift in focus towards quality, **artisanal** coffee – coffee made by hand, in the traditional way by skilled growers. It's artisanal coffee that's often sold in smaller, independent coffee shops preferred by trendy hipsters.

Neil

So, coffee in Britain has come a long way from the days it travelled for months by sea from faraway places like Ethiopia and Java – which reminds me, Sam, what was the answer to your question.

Sam

I asked Neil which city gave its name to the first coffee to arrive in Britain in the 1600s.

Neil

I guessed it was b) Mocha, which happens to be my favourite drink.

Sam

Well, you guessed right because that was the correct answer! You certainly know your coffee, Neil.

Neil

Right, let's recap the vocabulary we've used in this programme on the history of coffee, a drink which can **perk you up** - give you more energy and make you feel awake.

Sam

Many people drink coffee for the **caffeine hit** – the way caffeine, which is contained in coffee, stimulates your body and mind. The effect can be so strong you might have to **wean** yourself **off** it – gradually stop using something which is bad for you.

Neil

Fairtrade coffee refers to a scheme which ensures that coffee farmers receive a fair price for growing their product, while a **microlot** is a small plot of land specialising in coffee beans of a very high quality or unique flavour.

Sam

Finally, **artisanal** describes something made by artisans - skilled workers who make things by hand in the traditional way.

Neil

Once again, our six minutes up. I'm off to get myself a hot steamy mocha. Bye for now!

Sam

Goodbye!

VOCABULARY

caffeine hit

the effect of the natural stimulant caffeine on your brain to make you feel more awake

perks you up

gives you more energy, makes you feel more active

wean (somebody) off (something)

make someone gradually stop using something that is bad for them

Fairtrade

a system of certification which ensures that producers receive a fair price and safe working conditions for growing coffee

microlot

small plot of land which grows specialised coffee beans of a very high quality or unique flavour

artisanal

made in the traditional way by an artisan (someone who is skilled in working with their hands)