

Crown Jewel Decaf Guatemala Swiss Water Process Finca Medina CJ1650

11.18.2025 | [See This Coffee Online Here](#)

Overview

This is a low intervention washed coffee from Antigua, Guatemala, produced by smallholders affiliated with Finca Medina. It is decaffeinated via chemical-free Swiss Water Process.

The flavor profile is comforting and sweet, with notes of milk chocolate, maple syrup, hints of sweet basil, and a delicate green apple acidity.

Our roasters found the coffee responded quickly to heat adjustments and was prone to easy heat absorption, and therefore recommended a gentle, slower approach overall.

When brewed, the team found that using a fine grind and a higher dose on a conical brewer produced the best results for this coffee.

Taste Analysis by Isabella Vitaliano

Decaf coffees are often overlooked on a coffee menu typically with lower quality and lower focus towards it on the sourcing all the way to brewing. Tides are turning and we see a renewed effort on these coffees with many establishments looking for micro-lot style decafs. This Guatemalan coffee fits the bill in a beautiful way with a flavor profile a classic Guatemalan coffee.

Sweet milk chocolate, maple syrup, melted butter and sugar like sweetness comprise of most of the flavors in this coffee. Top notes of basil and bay leaf come into play with a slightly smokey undertone that indicates it's a decaf. Subtle flavors of decaffeination compliment the inherent flavors of this coffee in a seamless fashion. Swiss water is no stranger to decaffeinating high end specialty microlots and their experience shows in the cup. From Guatemala this coffee was hand selected and shipped to Vancouver to be decaffeinated before landing in our warehouse in Oakland.

Source Analysis by Chris Kornman

Finca Medina

Finca Medina, established in 1842, is a 100-acre coffee farm and processing facility (*beneficio*) located in the foothills of Volcán de Agua, just a few short miles south of the historic city of Antigua. Agua, known sometimes by its indigenous Kaqchikel name Hunapú (“place of flowers”) is the extinct little sibling to the still-active stratovolcano Fuego to the west.

While Medina does indeed produce its own coffee for export, with 30 full time and 200+ seasonal workers, one of its primary workstreams is as a locus for smallholder farmers of the region to provide processing support, access to international buyers and export services, and education and social benefit programs. “This support includes training, technical visits to the producers' plots, educational tours, donations of coffee varieties resistant to coffee rust, development of foliar fertilizers for rust prevention, donations of molasses, support with soil analysis, and financing if desired,” Finca Medina wrote in a recent communication.

Finca Medina has been an export partner in Royal Coffee’s supply network since 2013, averaging two containers of coffee annually, including conventional and certified coffees, honey processes, and more.

Antigua Guatemala

Antigua Guatemala is a storied region, a city that claimed the title of capital of the Spanish colonies in Mesoamerica from 1543-1773, its colorful baroque architecture and picturesque cobblestone streets now world-famous as a UNESCO World Heritage site. It also happens to be at the heart of some of Guatemala’s most famous coffee growing regions, and coffee growing may in fact be responsible for the repopulation of the region in post-colonial times, after its abandonment in the aftermath of an earthquake in 1773.

The fields and valleys and mountain sides surrounding Antigua are filled with coffee. Antigua’s reputation for high quality coffee dates before the 1773 earthquake, however. While the 18th century exports from Central America were largely dominated by sugarcane, indigo, and cochenal (a short-lived insect-derived dye), Spanish Jesuits cultivated coffee in Antigua prior to 1767, and perhaps as early as 1730.

Modern day Antigua has been rebuilt with many homages to the original style of architecture, and many of the historic landmarks are preserved as ruins throughout the city. Its location, a mere 25 miles from Guatemala City, makes it an easily accessible destination for tourists, including coffee buyers, and its extensive coffee infrastructure and history eases some of the inherent complications of coffee growing, processing, and exportation.

Selection & Decaffeination

This coffee was chosen from samples directly from Finca Medina as a part of Royal’s “Select” [decaffeination](#) project, in which our QC and trading team purchase coffee directly from producers and commission toll decaffeination afterwards (as opposed to selecting stock lots from our decaf suppliers). The program allows us to source from within our existing network of coffee producers and pay them directly, while also ensuring traceability and quality standards are maintained, then shepherding the coffee through the logistics hurdles of multi-national imports and exports.

Our chosen decaffeination provider for this lot was Swiss Water, a Canada-based company employing chemical-free methods with a long history of high-quality products and longtime service providers and suppliers to Royal. Their process involves hydrating the green coffee, then extracting caffeine by exposing the coffee to a proprietary solution of green coffee extract that gently removes the caffeine without losing any of the soluble flavor compounds of the original coffee.

Grower:	Producers associated to Finca Medina	Process:	Low Intervention, Washed. Decaffeinated by Swiss Water Process
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Region:	Antigua Guatemala, Sacatepéquez, Guatemala	Cultivar(s):	Bourbon, Caturra
Elevation:	1550 - 1700 masl	Harvest:	November 2024 – March 2025

Green Analysis by Chris Kornman

The physical specs on this coffee offer a couple of interesting anomalies but nothing entirely outside of expectations. The screen size is mostly 16+, in line with usual Central American “European Prep” or EP parameters, with a little higher percentage than average falling below screen 16. My manual density readings placed the coffee on the low end of the spectrum, which is typical for decaffeinated beans, but the Sinar registered it a little closer to medium/medium-plus. Its moisture content is very normal. Swiss Water processed coffees, we’ve often noticed, showcase a bit of an asymmetry between the moisture content and water activity, where the former may be low or average, while the later is often quite high. That is indeed the case here, as the water vapor pressure in the coffee exceeds our usual “risky” zone by a few decimals, but in my experience this is far less consequential for decafs than conventionals.

As per usual, the SWP beans are grayish by comparison to unaltered green coffee, and you can expect color change to look unusual. Trust your numbers through the early Maillard reaction and you should be ok. Check Doris & Evan’s roast notes for further intel.

Screen Size	Percent		Density
>20	4.54%		655 g/L (free settled)
19	12.35%		705 g/L (Sinar)
18	25.26%		
17	25.33%		Total Moisture Content
16	18.42%		10.9% (Sinar)
15	7.97%		
14	4.94%		Water Activity
≤13	1.20%		0.674 @ 21.47C (Rotronic)

Diedrich IR5 Analysis by Doris Garrido

Machine: Diedrich IR5
Batch Size: 5.5 lb

We take it seriously when we look for a new decaf coffee. I personally love elegance, complexity, and character. And that’s what we have found in this one from Finca Medina in Antigua Guatemala. It’s a coffee that delivers vibrant sweetness, layered flavors, and a delicate clean finish. All without that overwhelming decaf process flavor. It reflects the quality of the origin and the work of the Swiss water process.

If I describe my roast approach, I’d say that I start with a soft dry phase, adding the most energy at the end of this stage and the beginning of Maillard. Because of the energy retention in the Diedrich roaster, I cut the heat before

reaching caramelization, since there's enough momentum to finish the roast. The coffee density is on the lower side, and considering the processing it has undergone, it makes sense that it absorbs energy so quickly.

My batch size for roast analysis is mostly 5.5 lb. in a 5-kilos (11 lb.) Diedrich roaster. 50% of the roaster capacity. In this case, I warmed up the drum and charged the coffee at 391 F letting it slow dry before starting the gas at 2.5 minutes at 70%, then increasing to 100% at 4 minutes into the roast. Color change occurred around 301 F, as the coffee was already darkish (because of decaffeination). I defined color change at the point where browning becomes noticeable. At 6 minutes I dropped the gas to 30%, and that was the last energy adjustment. The coffee reacted great, with the rate of change dropping at a good pace.

Next, I introduced the full airflow and waited for the first crack, which happened at 385F at 8:37 minutes. The pace and the rate of change were perfect to allow a bit more caramelization, so I dropped the coffee after 1:56 minutes of development, with an end temperature of 406 F.

On the cupping table, I enjoyed the coffee's cleanliness and delicate layer of candy sweetness, the green apple acidity, and a buttery milk chocolate mouthfeel. Thanks to the Swiss water processes, there's minimal processing flavor, allowing the origin coffee flavors to shine beautifully. Soon, this will be featured on our menu as an espresso offering.

Ikawa Pro V3 Analysis by Isabella Vitaliano

Our current Ikawa practice compares two sample roast profiles, originally designed for different densities of green coffee. The two roasts differ slightly in total length, charge temperature, and time spent between color change in first crack. You can learn more about the profiles [here](#).

The flavors of this Guatemalan coffee are cohesive and delectable with the flavors of the decaf processing. On the high density roast of this coffee the flavor felt a little bit empty but there were some light botanicals and hot coco flavors in the cup. The light density roast was more lively with more dark chocolate notes, hazelnut and overall was very creamy. While the flavors were improved, I did find this roast to be a touch toasty. I recommend trying the low density of this coffee first, while this roast was a little bit toasty it still complemented the other flavors well to make a delicious cup.

You can roast your own by linking to our profiles in the Ikawa Pro app here:

Roast 1: [Low Density Sample Roast](#)

Roast 2: [High Density Sample Roast](#)

Brew Analysis by Joshua Wismans

The ultimate trick of a decaf coffee is making you believe that the coffee isn't actually decaf, and this coffee is quite the magician. What you get with this coffee is a cup both rich and delicate, highlighting a classic Guatemala profile full of nougat sweetness and delicious cherry fruit. This coffee is not very soluble, so you'll need to use a heavy hand with grind and dose. The results though are indelible.

Our first brews were with a more standard recipe, closer to a 1:16 ratio and a moderate grind setting. The results were a bit hollow, with a TDS of 1.14 and a profile that was thin and under extracted.

With such a low TDS, we increased the dose and made the grind much finer, hoping to wring out more flavor from

the brew. Using a brew ration of 1:15 and a much finer grind, we found the sweet spot. The TDS was still low at 1.25, but the flavors were all there. Berry compote, milk chocolate, root beer, and all spice come together in this cup in the most delicious way.

Our recommended parameters are a fine grind with a high dose on a conical brewer. This profile wrings out all the flavor, while still providing clarity to the fruit in the cup.

Roast	Method	Grind (EKS43)	Dose (g)	H2O (g)	Ratio	Bloom (g)	Bloom (s)	Total Brew Time	TDS	Ext %
Diedrich	V60	9	20	300	15	50	40	3:45	1.25	16.21

Espresso Analysis by Tim Tran

Recipe 1: 18g in, 36g out, 0:31 seconds

Recipe 2: 19g in, 38g out, 0:25 seconds

Antigua is a producing region with a storied history of bringing out beautiful coffees and is noteworthy to mention when discussing the excellence surrounding Guatemalan coffee. And while it feels unnecessary to add the caveat of a decaffeinated coffee when discussing this particular lot, it does bear mentioning that this coffee carries hallmark characteristics of an excellent Guatemalan coffee.

When brewing this coffee as espresso, my favorite recipes showcased notes of toffee, oranges, and clove, accented with a fairly rich, syrupy body. My favorite recipe was 18 grams of coffee to brew 36 grams of espresso in 31 seconds. This recipe also brought in notes of cherry cordial and cinnamon.

As I explored the different extraction profiles, a trend I noticed was the overwhelming brightness that made its presence in flavor as I opted for faster extraction profiles. This coffee has a very notable brightness to it that quickly makes itself apparent at faster extraction times and across different coffee doses.

My second favorite recipe was using 19 grams of coffee to brew 38 grams of espresso in 25 seconds. This recipe, taste-wise, balanced some of the brighter more citrus-forward notes with notes of cola, cinnamon, and that ever-present toffee that was found across the various recipes I tried.

A very tasty coffee that was a treat to brew. Ultimately, my recommendation for this coffee is a fairly moderate dose used to brew a moderate yield, targeting a standard extraction time. A coffee that fits the standard curve as far as espresso parameters and serves a delicious cup!