

It is not known for sure who introduced coffee cultivation in Colombia. Neither are the dates and the locations of the first plantations known.

Yet there are several stories on the arrival of coffee in Colombian territory. One of them tells that the seeds arrived from the east in Venezuela to the land of the present day departments of *Norte de Santander*

and

Santander

. Another tells that the first coffee tree arrived from Central America through the

Urabá

region of the department of

Antioquia

According to these versions, the first crops were planted in the departments of *Santander* and *Cundinamarca*

, and, years later, at the beginning of the 20th century, they disseminated through the departments crossed by the Central Range of the Colombian Andes and extended towards the slopes of the Western Range. Coffee took hold mostly in the Antioqueñan zone.



{rokbox title=|Coffee picker on a Colombian plantation|}images/stories/turistainternacional/Quehacer/Rutas/Cafe/cafe17.jpg{/rokbox}

Coffee picker on a Colombian plantation /Picture: 100 por ciento café de Colombia/

Another version of the story is related to the work “Orinoco Ilustrado”, written by Spanish Jesuit priest *José Gumilla*. He tells about the planting of the first seed in Colombian land in the *Santa Teresa de Tabagé*

Mission. Later, the Jesuits took coffee seeds to

Popayán

and planted them in 1736 in the seminary their religious community owned in that city.

Independently from these two versions, everything seems to indicate that the history of coffee in Colombia is linked to the Catholic Church, especially with *Francisco Romero*, the parish priest

of *Salazar de las Palmas* and a fervent admirer of the plant. He imposed the planting of coffee as a penance to his parishioners, according to the severity of their sins. His example was adopted by other priests and, so the cultivation was disseminated in the northeastern zone of the country.

After taking hold in *Santander*, coffee propagated in other regions on the slopes of the Andes Mountains, especially in *Antioquia, Caldas, Risaralda, Quindío, Tolima*, and *Valle del Cauca*.

Picture: [100 por ciento café de Colombia](#)