



## Jiwaka Province

## Western Highlands, Jiwaka Province, PNG

**Partner since:** 2020

**Varietals:** Boubon, Typica and Arusha

**Traceable to:** Regional Blend

**Altitude:** 1650 - 1900 MASL

**Processing:** Cherries are collected by trucks/agents sent by Paul within a 10-20 mile radius from his wet mill in Kuli. Cherries are delivered fresh to the mill, pulped, fermented for 2-3 days, then dried on long tarps for 7-10 days. Parchment is then trucked to Goroka in Eastern Highlands for final milling and export before delivery to the port in Lae.

Jiwaka Province is one of the Highland regions at the eastern edge of the Western Highlands Province. This puts it between the two large collection centers of Hagen in the Western Highlands and Goroka in the Eastern Highlands. Jiwaka is where the Highlands begin to grow to higher peaks from the wider valleys of the East. Coffee grows in Jiwaka in the valley to the south of Mt. Wilhelm (tallest in PNG) and to the north of Mt. Kabangama (the 5th tallest in PNG). Coffees contributing to our Jiwaka lots are grown on very small farms (thousands of smallholders are needed to bulk

up to a full container), who sell cherry to several wet mills that sell dry parchment to our mill partners in Hagen and Goroka. These are well established washing stations who must develop relationships with individual villages in order to allow their trucks to pick up fresh cherry. Due to the far distance between the farms high up in the many smaller valleys off the main valley, high quality cherry must be picked up by the wet mills' trucks. Otherwise, without adequate cooperative structures to promote quality processing in the farmlands, the fragmented and inconsistent drying and storage practices upcountry will lead to poor quality lots from these wet mills. Converting truckloads of fresh cherry (well selected, quickly transported and pulped before it rots) from a day's drive away to high quality lots is a feat in itself!

Papua New Guinea coffees most commonly hail from the Highlands – the high-altitude areas of the “mainland” and split up between Western (Hagen), Central and Eastern (Goroka) Highlands regions. Smaller regions are beginning to pop up (e.g. the smaller islands like New Britain). The country offers a diverse set of options not in processing (rare to see anything but fully washed), but in producer format. Suppliers range from small cooperatives to well financed estates, to massive washing stations that can each produce dozens of containers per year. Crop to Cup's focus is generally on the

smallholder coffees of PNG (as opposed to its estate coffees). While each smallholder farm is small in land size and yields are drastically low, the sheer volume of smallholder farmers allows the country to produce massive volumes most years.

Many smallholders pulp by hand and wash in bags on their own farms, then sell parchment to local collectors who then re-sell to larger middlemen who buy from the side of the road and sell to exporters in larger towns like Goroka and Hagen. Those are generally low-quality coffees, but they account for most of the volume produced by the country (usually sold as Y-Grade). Most specialty lots come from washing stations who send trucks far and wide to collect cherry from thousands of smallholders. Tarp drying is most common, and the daily or weekly lots that come out of these washing stations can be impressive, for many of them are well managed with strict red cherry collection, clean water and careful attention to drying.

The other sources of PNG specialty lots are the new generation of coops and small, traceable producer groups. Coops and other organized farmer groups are now producing impressive qualities, but their numbers are still low. Much of this difficulty in building membership is due to cultural and geopolitical issues between villages. Hundreds of disconnected languages are spoken across the Highlands, and historically there was not a lot of cooperation between villages. The support that

agriculture provided was generally limited to each village, and each village is usually comprised of just one or a few families/clans. Further, the countless disparate areas of the Highlands only became connected upon the completion of the Highlands Highway (from the port in Lae to Hagen in the West) in the early 1950s (and “first” contact between Highlands and the coastal areas was not even until 1930!). To this day, access to the secondary valleys off the Highlands Highway is still difficult, and a lot of coffee is still transported by small prop plane from tiny airstrips in the middle of dense forest.

But when you do see coops, they are impressive. The examples of farmer organization we’ve seen in PNG often trump that of many other established producer countries. Coop farmers are often paid by cashless card swipe, and detailed home and family income growth plans are the norm. Traceability has improved as well, and we can now access lots as small as 10-20 bags produced by only one or two families. This has greatly improved our ability to weed out defective lots (which will always be common in such a smallholder context), and, over recent years, cup scores and consistency have followed suit.