



THE SPECIALTY COFFEE  
CHRONICLE

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# SERVING IT UP ZABAR'S STYLE

By Saul Zabar

From the time my father, Louis Zabar, founded Zabar's in 1934 to today, we pride ourselves on selling only superior quality products at reasonable prices—regardless whether it's smoked fish, pickles, cheese, coffee, hundreds of in-store prepared food products, housewares or one of thousands of other delicious items we offer. But there is more to it than that.

Zabar's is a New York experience, a neighborhood deli and a family specialty store all wrapped in one. Our store is really a bustling deli with a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere. We offer the attention to detail, customer service and quality that you likely won't find in a big corporation. We have created a store that offers a wonderful experience, a place where you'll see familiar faces, not just a place to shop. That's why I feel the store has been a culinary tradition and staple in Manhattan's Upper West Side for 73 years.

Saul Zabar selects his green coffee, roasts the beans and then cups at Zabar's.





Zabar's has been selling coffee for over 70 years. Saul Zabar has been roasting coffee at Zabar's for over 40 years.



New York City's Zabar's wants to stay true to its family's roots of hand-selecting, tasting and marketing fresh products daily.

## EIGHT THOUSAND POUNDS OF COFFEE A WEEK

Between our store, online and mail order sales, Zabar's sells over 8,000 pounds of coffee a week, which I believe is more than any other single store in America. That doesn't happen overnight and it doesn't happen without an ongoing dedication to quality.

Zabar's is a longtime coffee roaster. We've been roasting and selling coffee for 40 years and have a very loyal following. That said, today there is much more competition. You can find a coffeehouse on every corner and many high-end specialty coffees are now sold in supermarkets. But we aren't going to change. We will continue roasting and testing our coffee the same as we have for years. I select the green beans, roast them, and then each week my daughter Ann and I get together in my office on the store's second floor and we cup them to personally make sure the quality and flavor are consistently up to Zabar's high standards.

While there are a lot of coffee drinkers out there, there is still a lot of education consumers need. It's very common for people to use too little coffee or not know how much coffee is appropriate. Or they aren't able to enjoy the coffee's full potential because they are using the wrong grind for the type of coffee maker they have. We also can't seem to get past the myth that darker coffee is stronger or has more caffeine or that espresso has less caffeine than coffee. But by offering 14 different roasts from around the world, and many flavored coffees at a reasonable price, we provide an opportunity for our customers to experiment a little, make their own unique blend, and hopefully find a handful of favorites.

While our tasting methods will remain the same, we are constantly looking for new blends and regions that are producing high-quality coffee. In response to letters and requests from our customers, we've been taking a closer look at the sustainable coffee business, which tries to pay growers a premium while helping the environment, and we've recently found beans that are at the level we demand. So, we are now selling Rainforest Colombian, Zabar's first Rainforest Alliance product. As the sustainable coffee business becomes more mainstream and matures, I'm sure you'll find us offering more sustainable blends in the future.

Working with my daughter and younger generations has opened my eyes to the world outside of New York City. New Yorkers love our coffee and other products. I've learned that while they may move away, their love for New York-style food doesn't diminish. Demand for our specialty items has far surpassed the borders of the city—one factor that pushed us to take a more serious look at e-commerce in 2000—and we continue to expand our online and catalogue offerings regularly.

In the end, we really just want to keep true to our family's roots. My daughter, Ann, nephews, cousins and I still hand-select, taste and market fresh products daily. And any time you walk into the store you'll find at least one Zabar hard at work. ☺

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*Saul Zabar is Zabar's president. Zabar's coffee and other delicacies can be purchased by phone, fax and of course, in their New York City store at 2245 Broadway (at 80th Street). Phone: 212-496-1234. E-mail: [zabarscatalog@zabars.com](mailto:zabarscatalog@zabars.com). Fax: 212-496-0392.*