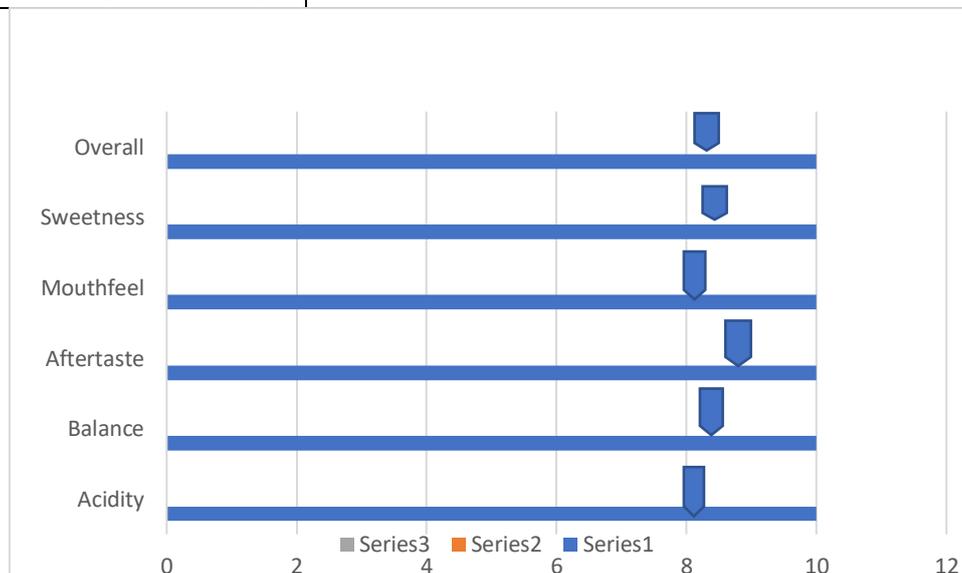




PRODUCER PROFILE

Coffee Name/Type	BAHO COFFEE
Country of Origin	Rwanda
Region/Area	Rutsiro district, Western Province
Washing station	Fugi & Bugoyi
Actual Farm Size (hectares)	
Number of producers/growers	1100
Minimum Altitude (MASL)	1550
Maximum Altitude (MASL)	1900
Soil Type	Volcanic Red brown Lake Kivu soil
Flowering Period	May to July
Harvest Period	November to Jan
Shipping Period	Feb - March
Average rainfall (mm)	1399
Average annual temperature	23
Miller Name	NAEB : Rwanda Coffee Board
Exporter Name	BAHO Coffee Producer
Certification	
Varietal	Red Bourbon
Screen size/grade	15+
Process	Natural process
Components of the blend % (if applicable)	
Cup Profile	Strawberry sweetness with a sultana finish, medium to full body finish with cocoa and plum
Cup Score /Graph	83



Cultivation

Farmers in Rwanda have small coffee plots, usually around 250 trees. Most coffee trees are intercropped with food crops like maize and potatoes. Despite their small size, for many, coffee remains the main cash crop and their biggest source of income throughout the year.

“Farmers are motivated [to produce quality coffee] but their efforts are not well remunerated. Coffee prices are not meeting farmers’ expectations,” says Rusatira Emmanuel, Managing Director of Baho Coffee. This is why washing stations countrywide, including those owned by Baho Coffee, are striving to incentivise high quality coffee production with better prices and support for farmers seeking to improve the quality of their harvest.

In the early 2000s the Rwandan government, with the input of international partners, identified coffee as a potentially key generator of much needed export revenue. To improve the quality of coffee, the government has incentivised the creation of new Coffee Washing Stations (CWSs) in coffee producing areas and has partnered with local stakeholders to make sure that farmers are the main beneficiaries. As one measure to this end, the government supports washing stations by providing inputs. The stations, in turn, transport the inputs from government warehouses to the area so farmers can access them more easily. The station is also involved in training farmers how to use inputs properly.

Bugoyi station supports farmers in a number of other ways as well. The station provides safety equipment such as masks and gloves for farmers to use while applying certain chemicals. Bugoyi also supports farmers with small, year-long loans to help with the costs of production and other expenditures such as medical bills or school fees. The station grows seedlings and distributes them to farmers to help them renew ageing rootstock. They provide trainings on hygiene and sanitation and help farmers gain access to clean water.

Bugoyi also organises Farmer Field Schools (FFS). FFS are groups of 20-30 farmers who live and farm close to one another. The farmers then elect a lead farmer who attends trainings at the station. The lead farmer returns to their area and teaches the group he leads using a centrally located demonstration plot. Through the FFS, farmers learn about soil conservation, water protection, waste management and more.

Harvest and Post-harvest

During the harvest season, cherry is selectively handpicked by farmers and their families. Bugoyi encourages farmers to sort through their cherry, removing any unripe, damaged or overripe cherry before selling their cherry to the station. At Bugoyi, staff sort cherry by hand and then float the cherry to check for density. The station accepts cherry that passes both visual hand sorting and floating. On average, Bugoyi has 120 seasonal workers who oversee and inspect cherry from intake to pulping to drying and beyond. Sorting work consumes over 70% of seasonal labor, but Rusatira knows it is worth it.

Accepted cherry is then pulped on a Mackinon pulper before being dry fermented for 12 hours. The parchment is soaked for 8 hours in clean water to ensure complete removal of mucilage before being washed through grading channels. All Baho stations employ their own extended grading system to separate beans into different qualities and sizes. At Baho Coffee stations, coffee is separated into grades A, B and C. Then, grade A is further separated into three grades and grade B into two separate grades, with C remaining a single grade. “It’s more work,” Rusatira says. “But it gives my coffee a chance to excel.” Rusatira believes that “coffee talks” and he likes to listen. Establishing additional grades allows him to interpret each individual bean’s ideal grouping and create more uniform and delectable lots.

After grading parchment is then spread on raised beds in the shade.

After this step, the first 5 days are the most critical, says Rutasira. During that time, the parchment is in direct sunlight to reduce any risk of mould or overfermentation. Employees at Baho stations are continuously sorting coffee as it dries on raised beds to ensure the coffee is clean. After the first 5 days, the parchment is moved under shade to complete the drying process, where it is sorted repeatedly, again.

Rusatira says he drew inspiration about drying from cooking methods. “When you take meat and you put it on charcoal, after 20 min you have your meat ready. But in an oven, it would take 45 minutes. If you put it in hot ash, it may take two hours. When you taste these three meats, I’m sure there’s a difference in the taste,” he says. “I have this kind of thinking that coffees that dry slowly, the taste and lifespan of this coffee may be longer and more delicious than the coffee that dries for 10-12 days in sun.” In total, the parchment from Bugoyi station dries under careful scrutiny for up to 93 days.

About our Partner: Baho Coffee

Rusatira Emmanuel is the founder and owner of Baho Coffee. Rusatira established Baho Coffee in 2013 after a long career in coffee that began as a washing station manager and culminated in a position as head of a department, managing a number of stations. Today, Baho Coffee oversees four washing stations across Rwanda. With one station in each of the coffee producing provinces, Baho Coffee has access to a wide range of profiles and processing methods.

In addition to providing a number of educational, financial and agricultural services to farmers, Baho Coffee also has several social programs that are geared towards helping farmers, especially marginalised groups like women, older farmers and youth.

Rusatira, who was personally affected by the Rwandan genocide that took place in 1994, focuses on helping women because he understands firsthand that many families lost many male members during the genocide. As a consequence, Rusatira explains, many Rwandan families are headed by women. Single motherhood—whether caused by the genocide, lack of access to family planning or other circumstances—is often lonely and isolated. Rusatira’s intention is to bring typically isolated single mothers together and ease that isolation while also providing support and training to help them improve their circumstances.

Rusatira’s plan is to process and sell the coffee from women-led families separately. A key part of this plan is to include not only a wide range of information on the lives and conditions of the women in the group but also to include a letter, written by the women in the group, detailing how their station and their customers can help them overcome specific challenges in their lives.

In addition to his program to help single mothers, Rusatira is also focusing on helping older farmers continue to feel relevant and to support young farmers in establishing and improving their farms. He is confident that Baho Coffee’s impact will continue to grow year after year. “As a small company we’re on a small scale,” he said. “But I keep extending.”

Coffee in Rwanda

Coffee in Rwanda is linked to the country’s tumultuous history. In particular, the last decade of the twentieth century in Rwanda was marred by a horrific genocide that killed more than 800,000 people in fewer than 100 days between April and July 1994. This event all but destroyed the country’s important coffee sector.

The incredible resilience of the Rwandan people is evident in the way that the economy has recovered since then. Due to strong government support, liberal trade rules and international investment, today Rwanda is considered one of the most stable countries in the region. Coffee production has played a key role in this economic growth and stability.

Today, smallholders propel the industry in Rwanda forward. The country doesn’t have any large estates. Most coffee is grown by around 400,000+ smallholders, most of whom own less than a quarter of a hectare. Most of Rwanda’s coffee production is Arabica and is almost entirely Red Bourbon.