

Chiriquí barista represents Panama at World Barista Championship

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Summary

La Prensa interviewed Benjamín Roque, Panama's national barista champion and a Chiriquí native, at World of Coffee Panama 2026, where the World Barista Championship brought together champions from 60 countries. The story explains how specialty coffee's rise has turned barista work into a technical profession.

Details (summary of the article)

La Prensa reports from the World of Coffee Panama 2026 event at the Panama Convention Center, where the World Barista Championship gathered national champions from 60 countries. Panama's representative is Benjamín Roque, originally from Chiriquí, who discovered specialty coffee while working in a restaurant in David to pay for university studies. He started out attracted by latte art, then became interested in how variety and drying methods change aroma and flavour, and began visiting farms to learn from producers directly. Roque says a barista is a coffee professional who must understand origin, processing, roasting and brewing, and be able to explain it simply. In the competition each contestant prepares four espressos, four milk drinks and one signature drink for four judges, scored on dose, extraction time, cleanliness, consistency and communication, as well as presentation. He notes that training ranges from basic courses to international certifications, and that these contests drive innovation and highlight producers' work. The growth of Panamanian barista culture tracks the international fame of Panamanian coffee, especially Geisha, which has fetched record auction prices.

Original (es)

El barismo gana protagonismo con el auge del café de especialidad panameño

Benjamín Roque, campeón nacional de barismo, explica cómo la preparación del café se ha convertido en una profesión que combina conocimientos técnicos, creatividad y precisión. Panamá participa en una competencia mundial que reúne a representantes de 60 países.