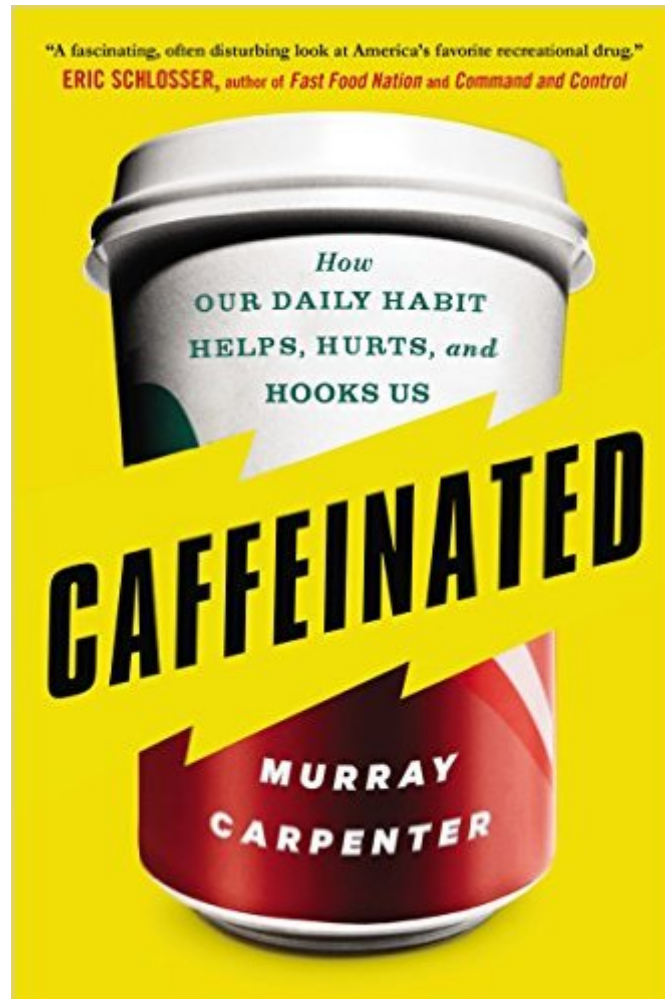


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Caffeinated: How Our Daily Habit Helps, Hurts, And Hooks Us



Synopsis

“You’ll never think the same way about your morning cup of coffee.” Mark McClusky, editor in chief of Wired.com and author of *Faster, Higher, Stronger*—Journalist Murray Carpenter has been under the influence of a drug for nearly three decades. And he’s in good company, because chances are you’re hooked, too. Humans have used caffeine for thousands of years. A bitter white powder in its most essential form, a tablespoon of it would kill even the most habituated user. This addictive, largely unregulated substance is everywhere—in places you’d expect (like coffee and chocolate) and places you wouldn’t (like chewing gum and fruit juice), and Carpenter reveals its impact on soldiers, athletes, and even children. It can make you stronger, faster, and more alert, but it’s not perfect, and its role in health concerns like obesity and anxiety will surprise you. Making stops at the coffee farms of central Guatemala, a synthetic caffeine factory in China, and an energy shot bottler in New Jersey, among numerous other locales around the globe, *Caffeinated* exposes the high-stakes but murky world of caffeine, drawing on cutting-edge science and larger-than-life characters to offer an unprecedented understanding of America’s favorite drug.

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Customer Reviews

It's true. Being a parent can drive anyone to try drugs. I'm definitely a testament to that: after being a parent, I started getting a cup of coffee every other day. Hence when I saw the NPR article about *Caffeinated*, I checked it out from the library. It's a short quick read, but unfortunately didn't provide much more information than another book, I'd read recently, *Buzz*. *Buzz* spends a lot of time on the physiology and biology behind caffeine and the effects it has on your body. *Caffeinated*, however, spends more time on the commercial side. For instance, it covers not just coffee and tea, but the plethora of energy drinks, pick-me-ups, and military applications of caffeine, as well as various food incidents that caused the FDA to take action. For instance, it mentions that the earliest documented source of caffeine was from chocolate, which I thought was interesting, since I'd always thought that the use of Tea in China and India long predated that. It did provide several pieces of information that I previously didn't know, such as the fact that the orange soda drink, Sunkist, contains caffeine! And a significant amount of it at that! Fanta, by contrast, does not. It never ceases to amaze me what the FDA is or is not allowed to regulate, and the book provides quite a list of kid-enticing snacks that surprised me as containing caffeine. In any case, the book does explain why in recent years, it's been harder and harder for me to find power-gel or GU type products that don't contain caffeine. It appears to have been used as a performance enhancing drug by professional athletes ever since it was removed from the prohibited list in 2004!

Caffeinated Murray Carpenter Carpenter begins with one of the world's favored sources of caffeine-chocolate. An archaeological dig in Mexico has turned up traces of chocolate that are more than 3500 years old. He takes a tour of the farms that grow cacao beans. The cacao bean contains cocoa butter, caffeine, theobromine, and many molecules producing flavor and aroma. Much of the chocolate made is 30 to 70% cacao with lots of sugar, to offset the bitterness. Another source of caffeine is tea. Not too surprising when tea is steeped for longer periods more caffeine is extracted. For instance the number of milligrams of caffeine extracted after one minute is 17 milligrams, after three minutes 38 milligrams, after 5 min 47 mg of caffeine. Similar to wine and beer connoisseurs, coffee lovers delight in using long poetic descriptions. They use a coffee wheel to describe the difference between light roast, medium roast, and dark roast. This despite many controlled tests showing that experts neither agree with each other or themselves in multiple trials of describing the aroma and flavor of different coffees. On a larger scale Michael Norton, a coffee

trader, decided to substitute cheap \$2/lb coffee for famous Kona coffee that sells for \$10/lb. Interestingly the buyers for major coffee companies like Starbucks bought it. They couldn't tell the difference! There are two main types of coffee arabica, used in most coffee you buy and robusta which as the name implies is quite flavorful. One of the chief flavors of coffee is caffeine and the more roasting the less caffeine. So if you want a lot of caffeine try light roast and the least caffeinated is the dark roast though it has additional flavor.

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