LA Barista Quick Facts

June, 2025

This month, LSU Agri-business student Sean Tomlinson (*Seans Pinched Beans Coffee in Gretna*) gave a presentation on chicory at **Lafayette Coffee Festival**. His full industry white paper is posted on our event website: www.LafayetteCoffeeFestival.com.

Here are highlights that any barista may use when discussing chicory coffee:

- Chicory is an ancient beverage. Evidence shows it was used as a daily drink with medicinal benefits (digestive aid) in Egypt and Greece more than 2000 years ago. Chicory actually has analgesic properties similar to Advil or Tylenol.
- There are two main species of chicory - Cichorium Endivia and Cichorium Intybus. We drink a subspecies of the latter.
- **Fun Fact**: Chicory was a common beverage used in Europe for centuries. The French popularized the combination of chicory and coffee. They exported this culinary tradition to French colonies in the new world and southeast Asia. Hence, coffee with chicory is regarded as fine dining in both New Orleans and Viet Nam.
- **Fun Fact**: chicory may have been part of a royal French scandal. In 1670, poisoning was attempted on (name) and she claimed it was done through her daily chicory water.
- **Myth Buster**: It is widely circulated that during the Civil War, Union troops destroyed or took the majority of coffee away from New Orleans. Residents used chicory to stretch their remaining coffee supply. Many feel chicory today is still used as a "cheap filler" to stretch coffee blends. Truth be told – chicory is usually a more expensive ingredient than most coffee beans.
- Today, the main use of chicory (root) is actually in cattle feed, due to its helpful digestive properties. High quality chicory is still grown in France; but the most substantial domestic producer is the Larue Company in Nebraska.

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