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Specialty Coffee Consumption and COVID-19: The 2020 Square x SCA Coffee Report

May 20, 2020—Square, Inc. and the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA) released the 2020 Square x SCA Coffee Report, outlining the current state of the specialty coffee industry. The report also includes insights into new trends and ways of doing business emerging as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to unfold.

“Specialty coffee businesses across the country are evolving their efforts to serve communities and generate revenue during this unprecedented time. Amazingly, three in four Square coffee sellers have been able to continue operating during shelter-in-place, finding ways to adapt to their new circumstances,” said Peter Giuliano, Chief Research Officer at the Specialty Coffee Association. “This shows tremendous resilience and creativity, from curbside coffee pickup to grocery store-style sales, home delivery to expanded eCommerce. These trends seem to represent more than a brief moment in time—they likely indicate a greater transformation of the specialty coffee industry and a new way that coffee shops work within the communities they serve.”

As specialty coffee businesses continue to evolve, one quick pivot includes increasing delivery and pickup/takeaway options. The report also notes fewer cash transactions as consumers and business owners move to other forms of payment.

Key findings from the report include:

- 5,380% increase in combined sales across curbside and/or pickup orders.
- 109% increase in coffee subscription sales among coffee shops that have remained active during the pandemic
- 400% increase in the number of Square coffee shops selling healthcare donation-related sales (i.e., “buy coffee for a healthcare worker”)
- A recent surge in grocery-style sales at Square coffee shops; the percentages below indicate the increase in number of merchants selling each item, followed by median price per item:
 - Paper towels: 1,400% increase, US\$2.00
 - Carton of almond milk: 1,100% increase, US\$5.00
 - Family meal: 1,100% increase, US\$23.95
 - A dozen eggs: 850% increase, US\$4.00
 - Toilet paper: 711% increase, US\$1.50
- 26% of coffee shops were cashless (i.e., did not process any cash transactions) by late April, up from 2% in early March

Hundreds of millions of anonymized transactions collected in coffee shops across the United States were used to build this report. All data reflective of US Square coffee sellers, as of May 2020.

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Note to Editors

- “Shelter-in-place” refers to the period of time within Square data where the impacts of COVID-19 and local lockdown measures began to take effect (March 1, 2020 - April 2020). All comparisons here are made in reference to 2020 pre-COVID-19 data, collected during the period of January 1, 2020 - February 29, 2020.
- Read an SCA News article about the 2020 Square x SCA Coffee Report [here](#)
- See the full report [here](#)

About Square

Square, Inc. (NYSE: SQ) revolutionized payments in 2009 with Square Reader, making it possible for anyone to accept card payments using a smartphone or tablet. Today, we build tools to empower businesses and individuals to participate in the economy. Sellers use Square to reach buyers online and in-person, manage their business, and access financing. And individuals use Cash App to spend, send, store, and invest money. Square has offices in the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia, Ireland, and the UK.

About the Specialty Coffee Association

The SCA is a trade association built on foundations of openness, inclusivity, and the power of shared knowledge. The SCA’s purpose is to foster global coffee communities to support activities to make coffee a more sustainable, equitable and thriving activity for the whole value chain. From coffee farmers to baristas and roasters, our membership spans the globe, encompassing every element of the coffee value chain. The SCA acts as a unifying force within the specialty coffee industry and works to make coffee better by raising standards worldwide through a collaborative and progressive approach. Dedicated to building an industry that is fair, sustainable, and nurturing for all, the SCA draws on years of insights and inspiration from the specialty coffee community. Learn more at sca.coffee.

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