

NEWS RELEASE

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February 29, 2024



A New Komodo Coffee Blend for Dragon and Coffee Lovers

The Virginia Aquarium and local shop, Fathom Coffee, partners on new blend with a mission

Virginia Beach, VA – Distinct earthy tones, flavors of dark chocolate and vanilla, and notes of black pepper and cedar. This is what to expect from the new Fathom Coffee Komodo Dragon blend, in collaboration with the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center. This blend contains sustainably sourced and packaged beans from the volcanic slopes of Flores, Indonesia, home of the endangered Komodo dragon.

Fathom Coffee and the Virginia Aquarium have combined their enthusiasm for conservation to create a cup that coffee drinkers can feel good about. With reusable packaging, 100 percent solar-powered roasted coffee, and the use of electric roasters; the Komodo coffee blend awakens drinkers without disturbing the environment.

The beans originate from Flores Island and are sourced from family-owned farms surrounding the town of Bajawa. Savor the taste of Flores while supporting the care of the Komodo dragons at the Virginia Aquarium. 10 percent of the profits from this coffee blend go directly to the Aquarium's Foundation.

"Fathom Coffee supports a number of local non-profits that are aligned with our values and interests, and we're always looking for opportunities to collaborate and have some fun," said Jeff Werby, Fathom Coffee owner and founder. "When we fell in love with the Indonesia Flores Komodo Dragon coffee, we immediately thought of the Virginia Aquarium! It's a Virginia Beach icon that we love to visit, and we thought this would be a unique way to support the Aquarium's mission to educate and connect the public to these endangered animals."

The Virginia Aquarium cares for three Komodo dragons, Teman (21), Bejo (7), and Kado (7). Teman arrived at the Virginia Aquarium at 3 years old from Denver; Bejo and Kado were born at the Virginia Aquarium as part of the greater Species Survival Plan program (SSP) with the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA).

“Komodo dragons are one of the world’s most charismatic reptiles. They are intelligent, curious, and creative,” said the Virginia Aquarium’s assistant curator of fish, herps and invertebrates, Colin Walker. “As a dragon caretaker, we have the opportunity to appreciate the full scope of their individuality as well as learn about their behaviors and innate survival strategies.”

Komodo dragons currently have a stable population density but are highly fragmented in their home range due to geography. This makes them vulnerable to shifting environmental conditions such as sea level rise and food depletion, which is a direct result of the health of the environment in which they live. Due to these factors and their overall population size, Komodo dragons are listed as endangered according to the 2021 IUCN assessment. This animal is highly valued, and several organizations have established conservation programs to protect and preserve the species.

“As the world’s largest lizard, they are the apex predator in their native environment and ensure the ecological health of the islands, encompassed by Indonesia’s Komodo National Park, and have great cultural significance to the people there,” said Walker.

One of the major threats to most megafauna is the loss of contiguous habitat due to commercial and residential land development, timber harvesting, and agricultural activities. Coffee beans can be grown through a regenerative process rather than depreciating a habitat. Coffee beans prefer partial shade and thrive when planted within old-growth forest rather than open-tilled fields, so there is little incentive to deforest an area to grow it. The shoots, leaves, flowers, and fruiting body serve as a food source to enhance insect, mammal, and bird diversity. Coffee, when grown with specific methods, can serve to enhance the overall ecological health of the island.

The Komodo Dragon blend is more than a morning pick-me-up but a message to keep plastic and waste out of the local waterways and landfills. In addition to supporting the Aquarium’s animals and exhibits, educational programs, and the Stranding Response program, the Foundation specifically provides financial support for the Komodo Species Survival Plan, acquisitions and transfers of dragons contributing to the SSP, and tools and enrichment items for the Komodo dragon care team.

Purchase the Komodo Dragon blend at Fathom Coffee or purchase a jar of beans at the Virginia Aquarium’s North Building store. Return your glass bottle to Fathom for a discount on your next coffee purchase.

Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center

The [Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center’s](#) mission is to connect people to the marine environment, inspiring a more sustainable future. The Aquarium aspires to be a driver in conservation, education, tourism, and sustainability, leading the charge to save wildlife and their ecosystems. Owned by the City of Virginia Beach, the Aquarium operates as a city department in partnership with the Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center Foundation. The Aquarium is proud to be an accredited member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquarium, and the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

The Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, supports the work of the Virginia Aquarium. The Foundation procures and maintains the Aquarium’s exhibits, including the animals and habitats. It is also responsible for annual and capital fundraising, administration and funding for the Virginia Aquarium Stranding Response Program, conservation and scientific research efforts, and the Aquarium’s mission-related education programs. You can be a part of our mission by making a [tax-deductible donation](#) to support our programming.

Fathom Coffee & Roastery

Fathom Coffee, a veteran-owned craft coffee roaster established in 2016 by Bob Werby, Jeff Werby, and Lisa DeNoia, radiates a deeper love for coffee. Their dedication to sustainability is evident in their solar-roasted beans and their support for environmental conservation and military families. From source to sip, they delve into the realm of quality, nurturing community through engaging conversations. Whether you seek your perfect cup in person seven days a week from 0700 to 1500 or prefer to explore their wide range of beans, products, and values online at fathomcoffee.com, Fathom Coffee invites you to find your fix.

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