

## Singapore's start-up Prefer launches soluble coffee and cocoa powders

15 August 2025 | News

Prefer, a Singapore-based food tech startup using fermentation to create affordable and sustainable flavours and ingredients, today announced an oversubscribed US\$4.2 million fundraising round alongside the commercial launch of its new products: soluble coffee and cocoa powders. The company, which is a spin-off from the Agency of Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR), Singapore's lead public sector research and development (R&D) agency, also announced its first commercial partnerships for international expansion with Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd and The Coffee Firm in Thailand and Australia, respectively. Made from food manufacturing byproducts such as rice and soy, Prefer's flavours are developed using a proprietary fermentation and roasting process. The company supplies its flavours and ingredients to FMCG brands, food manufacturers, private label retailers, and flavour houses, offering affordable ingredients that replicate the taste and functionality of coffee and cocoa at a fraction of the carbon footprint. According to its life cycle analysis, Prefer's coffee has up to 85% lower emissions and is 50% more affordable than the current market prices of traditional Arabica.



Prefer, a Singapore-based food tech startup using fermentation to create affordable and sustainable flavours and ingredients, today announced an oversubscribed US\$4.2 million fundraising round alongside the commercial launch of its new products: soluble coffee and cocoa powders. The company, which is a spin-off from the Agency of Science, Technology and Research (A\*STAR), Singapore's lead public sector research and development (R&D) agency, also announced its first commercial partnerships for international expansion with Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd and The Coffee Firm in Thailand and Australia, respectively.

Made from food manufacturing byproducts such as rice and soy, Prefer's flavours are developed using a proprietary fermentation and roasting process. The company supplies its flavours and ingredients to FMCG brands, food manufacturers, private label retailers, and flavour houses, offering affordable ingredients that replicate the taste and functionality of coffee and cocoa at a fraction of the carbon footprint.

According to its life cycle analysis, Prefer's coffee has up to 85% lower emissions and is 50% more affordable than the

current market prices of traditional Arabica.

Prefer invites coffee and cocoa companies to connect and sample the ingredients via their website, offering partners a commercially proven ingredient that drives cost savings, strengthens supply chain resilience, and supports the planet.

“This funding supercharges our mission to prove that fermentation is the key to unlocking the immense biochemical potential hidden within our food system's byproducts, creating a truly sustainable and resilient way to produce the flavours we love,” says Ding Jie Tan, Co-Founder & CTO of Prefer.

“With the support of our new partners, the quality of our new products, and the grit of this team, we’re in a unique position to ensure coffee and cocoa are accessible to the masses while respecting our planet,” says Jake Berber, Co-Founder & CEO.

This funding round brings Prefer’s total equity raised to US\$6.2 million. The lead investors are At One Ventures and Chancery Hill Capital, with participation from existing investor, Forge Ventures.

“We’re in the early stages of a food system transformation, one that decouples beloved consumer products from environmentally harmful supply chains,” says Helen Lin, Partner at At One Ventures and board member at Prefer.

“Our investment in Prefer reflects both the urgency of reducing our food system's agricultural footprint and our conviction in this team’s ability to deliver a sensory-equivalent experience with radically lower environmental impact, all while driving cost savings for customers. By reducing the need for commodity coffee and cacao farming, Prefer is enabling a future where taste and climate alignment can go hand in hand.”

The startup recently commercialised its coffee products through foodservice channels, collaborating with Melvados, a Singaporean food business.