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Brewing A Perfect Cup Of Coffee

By Lynne Birch

Brewing a great cup of coffee depends on a number of things such as the quality of the coffee

bean, the quality of the water being used, the type of brewing being done, and the grind of the coffee. Now quality of bean and water is something you can easily take care. Just use good quality beans and pure water. However the relationship between the grind of the coffee and the type of brewing being done is more detailed and could use a little explanation. Now we all know that we make coffee by passing hot water over crushed coffee beans. However for it to really work well we need to understand just how long the water should be passing over the beans. The purpose of this article is to help you understand how to match your coffee's grind to the type of brewing you are doing in order to make the best coffee possible.

Generally speaking, the 'soaking' time relates directly to how coarse the coffee is ground. This means that smaller coffee grinds need less contact with the water, and coarser grinds need longer contact. Espresso coffee is only exposed to water for 20–40 seconds and as a result is made using extremely fine grind coffee. A French press coffee maker can take as much as 4 minutes and uses an extremely coarse grind. If coffee is left contacting water for too long for its grind size, unwanted extracts emerge and make the coffee taste bitter. Of course if the grind is too large and the water passes very quickly (like using french press grind in an espresso maker), very little of the caffeine and flavours extracted and will have poor flavour.

Of course filters play an important role in managing the balance between over and under brewing your coffee. Not only do they keep the grind out of your cup, but they also control how fast the water passes over the grinds. Paper filters are the most common, but many people are also using metal varieties. Paper filters are quite good. However they can absorb some of the coffee flavour, and some people claim they can taste the paper in the final coffee. Metal filters are normally made from stainless steel or gold plated mesh. They have very fine weave and filter out the coffee grinds very well. They also do not alter the taste of the coffee at all. Metal filters are also more environmentally friendly than the paper alternative.

Whichever you choose, be sure to buy decent quality. Cheap filters often clog or not allow the coffee to brew properly. A decent quality metal filter will last years and save money in the end.

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Brewing a cup of coffee is not that hard. Brewing a great cup takes a little more understanding, but isn't any harder. Start with fresh beans and good clean water and then match your brewing style to the proper grind and then mess around with the exact proportions and pretty soon you'll be brewing killer coffee every time.

Lynne Birch writes on home decor and home improvement.

<http://www.my-kitchen-appliance.com>

has

a selection of articles and reviews of kitchen appliances that is growing daily. Updated coffee maker reviews are at:

<http://www.my-kitchen-appliance.com/Coffee-Maker.html>

Coffee Five Ways!

By Suzanne Allen

Coffee has five primary ways of being brewed. Each method has brewing variables – introduction of water, brewing temperature, and separating the brewed liquor from the coffee grounds. These five methods are called Turkish brewing, concentrate brewing, percolating, drip brewing, and French Press brewing.

"Turkish" or "Greek" Coffee

Turkish coffee or kahve is the traditional name is made in small containers directly on the flame with water and finely ground kahve comes to a boil. Often times it is brewed up with sugar already introduced. In some traditions they will pour off a little into each cup and then bring it to a second boil, pouring the rest off into each cup insuring an even distribution of grounds. In some regions they serve the kahve with added spice which is usually cardamom. The coffee is not filtered from the liquor which leaves a thick pungent and muddy brew. The mud settles to the bottom of the tiny demitasse cups the coffee is served in. In many countries they read the coffee mud after you have drank your coffee and tell you your future.

Concentrate Brewing

Concentrate brewing is very popular in Latin America and other parts of the world. It is beginning to make a come back in the U.S.. Concentrate brewing takes large amounts of coffee that is brewed with small amounts of water to brew a concentrate. To make a cup of coffee you mix some of the concentrate with hot water. The concentrate is brewed either hot or cold. When it is brewed cold you must let the coffee sit for at least a day. This method creates a mild light-bodied coffee with little aroma and a little acidity with a muted flavor.

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Percolating

This procedure involves a continuous brewing of the coffee grounds using boiling water which then turns to boiling coffee liquor brewing over the grounds. This method is practical but is an insult to the coffee bean. Brewing with boiling water is bad enough, then boiling the liquor is asking for a thin, bitter and tarry coffee.

Though this produces an awful cup of coffee many people still prefer percolation. If its for you then more power to you!

Auto drip

This is the most popular way to brew coffee in the U.S.A. Pouring hot water over grounds in a filter and letting the brew drip out the bottom, simple. Drip brewing can produce an excellent cup of coffee if the proper equipment is used. One of the biggest issues with auto drip machines is they don't brew at the right temperature. Bunn is one of the few companies which calibrate their machines to the proper temperature. If you have a good auto drip brewing machine then the next hurdle to tackle is the filter. Paper filters can deposit a flavor in the coffee and also do not allow a lot of the coffee oils and organic compounds through. A gold-plated reusable filter is the perfect option for drip brewing. It will not

deposit a taste in the coffee and doesn't trap as much of the coffee's essence as paper filters do.

French Press or Press Pot

French Pres brewing gives you complete control. It is more labor intensive than auto drip the brewing variables can be better controlled. Coarsely ground coffee is placed in a glass carafe. The hot water is then poured over the grounds. When the brewing is complete the top is placed on and a plunger that consists of a metal mesh plate is pressed down pushing the grounds to the bottom. The coffee liquor is on top ready to be poured off. The mesh filter allows the oils and fine coffee particles through without a problem. Also because a coarser grind is required a longer brewing time is required. A general rule of thumb is four minutes for a French press. This direct contact of the grounds to water allows a more complete, controllable, and even extraction. Even with the coarse grind though a coarse grind will still produce some fine particles. A cup of French-pressed coffee will be fuller, more body, and more flavor. It will also have sediment on the bottom of the cup.

Suzanne Allen is a lover of all things coffee. She also runs and owns

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