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Impress Dinner Guests – Make Lattes At Home

By **Debbie Dragon**

With an espresso machine in your kitchen at home, you can make your own latte's to enjoy for

yourself– and to impress your dinner guests! Some people look at the price of a home espresso machine and change their minds, but if consider what you typically pay when you buy a latte at your local coffee shop, whether it is a mom & pop shop or a chain (like Dunkin' Donuts), you're spending anywhere from \$2 to \$4 for a latte! Your espresso machine will more than pay for itself in a short time of making your lattes from home. Having your own espresso machine means having the ability to make latte's for much less than you spend on them when you go out. Plus you can enjoy them anytime– not just when you're on the road. Also, lattes are a wonderful after dinner complement– particularly when you have guests over!

Making a latte is all a part of the fun of having an espresso machine. While some people like to drink espresso shots right out of the machine, most people would prefer to make a latte or cappuccino to sit and enjoy with a good book, or good friends and conversation!

The espresso machine will grind your espresso beans fresh for every cup, giving you the fresh taste latte lovers have come to recognize as an integral part of the latte. Depending on your particular brand of espresso machine, you'll probably dispense about 7 grams of espresso into the handle. Once you've extracted the espresso shot into the provided espresso shot pot (usually stainless steel, with a pouring spout), you can start steaming your milk!

The basic recipe is 1 to 2 ounces of espresso to 8 fluid ounces of milk. Put your milk into the frothing jug, and slide the entire container over the steam arm nozzle. Make sure you keep the nozzle as close to the bottom of the container as possible to avoid making a lot of foam out of your milk. Use a thermometer so you know when the milk reaches 160 degrees Fahrenheit.

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Now you are ready to pour your steamed milk into the serving cup. A glass latte cup will look the best, and really impress your friends! Pour the steamed milk into the glass, using a spoon to hold back most of the foam that forms on the top of the milk. Once you've filled your cup with the milk, allow some of the foam to lie on the top for a "professional coffee shop latte" look.

Your final step to preparing a latte at home is to take your espresso shot and pour it slowly down the inside of the latte serving glass. Some of the espresso will mix with the milk at the bottom of the glass and some will layer itself in between the milk and foam. You'll have cloudy areas and several different shades of "latte brown", making for a wonderful presentation that rivals that of the best coffee house. Only you won't be paying \$4 a cup, and you can make it and drink it in your pajamas if you want to!

If you really want to make the presentation impressive, place your guests' lattes on a cute little serving tray, with a decorative plate of fancy cookies. Biscotti's are typically served with lattes, but you can be creative and serve anything you like. Maybe you could make some tiramisu using your espresso to make it from scratch for dessert, and enjoy slices of tiramisu with your homemade lattes! Your guests will want to come for dinner all the time once they experience your after dinner lattes.

This article has been provided courtesy of Kitchen Junkie,

<http://www.kitchenjunkie.com>

What's Your Party Style?

By George Meszaros

Do you know your party style? It is important to answer this question before you begin planning your next party. If you are comfortable cooking gourmet dinners for your guests, invite your guests for an haute cuisine extravaganza. If you can only cook chips and salsa, you can still have a great party.

You have to know what style makes you feel comfortable. After all, you want to be able to relax and have fun. You may be more comfortable with a pizza or BBQ party.

Before you do anything else in terms of party planning. Figure out what makes you comfortable, but keep the needs of your guests in mind. Just because you enjoy a certain kind of theme, your guest may prefer something else. Even though you may prefer a formal dinner party your guests may prefer something casual like a pool party. If you enjoy theme parties, the possibilities are endless.

When planning a formal dinner party you should remember a few important factors. Most importantly, it is your dinner party so you can do whatever you wish. You are the one throwing the party, the one planning the party, and the one paying for it. You can put in as much or as little effort as you deem appropriate.

The other factor you should keep in mind is what your guests want. Your guest may not enjoy a formal dinner party as much as you. Your guests may not enjoy getting dressed in a suit and tie for a party. Know who your guests are, what their likes and dislikes are.

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There is no correct or incorrect party style. Whatever party style you choose, be sure you are being yourself. Don't try to create a party where you feel uncomfortable. After all you are trying to have fun and enjoy yourself. Your task is to figure out what suits you best.

Unless you are a full-time party planner you don't have a lot of time to plan your party. Make sure you don't take on a larger project than you can handle. You don't want to get overwhelmed by party planning. Your friends and family will enjoy your company no matter what kind of a style you have for your next party.

Author: George Meszaros with

<http://www.partyfantastic.com>

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