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Making A Good Espresso

By Susan Green

Drinking espresso has become a way of life for most people, particularly those who have heavy schedules and who take time out to relax with a cup of freshly brewed espresso or coffee.

Coffee is so popular it is believed that it comes next to water as a popular drink. The whole world loves a good cup of coffee that annual consumption can reach to as high as 400 billion coffee cups all over the world.

Most avid coffee or espresso drinkers can have a cup of espresso a day or even more, without knowing where this rousing beverage came from. That heavenly brew comes from coffee beans that are sourced from evergreen trees that are grown all over the world. The evergreen tree is widely grown in Latin America, Indonesia, Hawaii, Southeast Asia and in Africa.

While the word espresso may have come from an Italian word meaning express or fast, it really is a misnomer since espresso or brewed coffee have to undergo a process before one can enjoy its freshly brewed taste. To make a good espresso, one has to start with a good coffee variety that must have undergone proper grinding. A good espresso maker handled by a capable barista can yield an espresso that can taste heavenly. The goodness of an espresso can be determined even from its aroma alone.

Coffee drinkers who are serious about making good espresso should invest in a good espresso machine. Good espresso machines come in a variety of brands, sizes and prices. You need not spend more to get a good espresso machine because there are good espresso makers that are reasonably priced. When making the espresso, always remember to turn on the espresso machine and allow it to heat properly. Establishments that have fast espresso orders do not really put off their machines to make sure it is properly heated for every espresso order.

When buying coffee beans, it is better to grind them as you use them because keeping them even in a tight container after grinding can result to a loss of aroma. Attention should also be placed on the type of grinder being used, with conical burr grinders preferred than flat burr grinders. The grinder with a conical burr is preferred because it can grind the beans without heating them and lessening their

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aroma in the process.

While the kind of coffee beans used for the espresso must be chosen well, baristas should also make sure that only filtered water is used for the espresso as the water's mineral content can affect the taste of the espresso.

When one finds a good coffee blend, the tendency is to buy more for storage. When you do this, do not commit the mistake of keeping coffee in the freezer or refrigerator. It is best to store them in a container that is foolproof and clean and place them in a dark and cool area.

The author is a regular contributor to Espresso Tips

<http://www.espressotips.com>

where more

information about espresso coffee makers, beans and espresso, in general, is freely available.

Espresso Martini

By Anthony Tripodi

With the popularity of espresso shops and martini bars is it any wonder that the espresso martini has become popular as well? Sometimes called the espressotini, this drink is a perfect blend of caffeine and alcohol. If you're looking for a buzz that picks you up while relaxing you at the same time, then it's time that you asked your barista or your bartender for an espresso martini.

So what is an espresso martini? Well, that depends on who you ask. There are so many variations of this drink out there that there isn't a generally accepted recipe. The only consistent ingredients are espresso and vodka and even then the espresso is sometimes substituted with coffee or even instant coffee crystals.

The best espresso martinis are usually made with real espresso. If you're making one at home, be sure to let it cool to room temperature before adding it to your cocktail shaker. Using ice to cool down your espresso will just give you watered down espresso.

The vodka in an espresso martini is almost always of the flavored variety. The most popular option is using a vanilla vodka and adding a coffee liqueur. But now there are espresso flavored vodkas available as well. Whether you use unflavored vodka, vanilla or espresso just remember that you don't want to use gin. It's true that martinis are made with gin but it really doesn't taste great when mixed with espresso.

Once the vodka and the espresso are added this is where all the variations come into play. Some people like to add a splash of Grand Marnier, while other recipes call for Tia Maria or Amaretto. Even chocolate liqueurs can be added if you prefer the taste of a mochaccino to a regular espresso. If you

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like the taste of one of these liqueurs and you think it will go with your espresso martini then give it a try. Whatever you choose, be sure to only use a splash because the main purpose of this additional liqueur is to add a just hint of flavor. You don't want to overpower the primary flavors of the martini.

The one thing that almost all espresso martini recipes agree on is the garnish. Three espresso beans will top your drink off properly. The rules for garnishes say that odd amounts are lucky so go with one, three or five beans.

Espresso martinis are becoming more and more popular no matter how they are made. Whether you're a regular at your local coffee house or that swanky martini bar in the city, why not order an espressotini the next time you're looking for new and unusual drink.

Anthony Tripodi is the webmaster of

<http://EndlessCoffeeBreak.com>

For more drink ideas like the

Espresso Martini, please visit

<http://www.endlesscoffeebreak.com>



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