

Brewing a Great Cup of Coffee

Annette and I chose and roasted this coffee thinking of you. The beans are from two of our favorite coffee plantations in Antigua, Guatemala – La Laguna and La Flor del Café. It's really chocolaty and smooth. We roasted it Thursday afternoon and it should be **great** for about 7 days and *good* until Wednesday, January 9th.

If you just drink coffee for the caffeine, I hope your morning cup of caffeine at least smells a bit better using these beans. But if you like taking the time to really enjoy coffee, then the following tips will help you brew a great cup of coffee every time:



1) *Use the best possible water available.*

Since coffee is 98-99% water, use good tasting cold water. Don't reheat or re-boil water. The reason is that coffee (and tea) brews better when oxygen is present in the water. Repeated boiling depletes the oxygen resulting in *flat* tasting/feeling water and the coffee will not taste as good as it does when made with freshly boiled water.

2) *Grind your beans just before you make your coffee to retain freshness.*

Coffee loses much of its flavor and smell within 10 minutes of grinding.

3) *Select the proper grind for your type of brewing method.*

The more finely you grind the beans the more intense the flavor will be. The coarser it is ground, the less intense it will be.

Coarse: used for percolators and cold water brewing (toddy style coffee).

Medium: used for electric drip/manual drip and French press methods. The French press (top right) is considered by coffee experts to be the best way to brew a great cup of coffee.

Fine: use for vacuum or Mocha coffee pot methods (aluminum Mocha pot, bottom right).

Extra fine: used for espresso machines.



4) *Measure the coffee beans to be used.*

An eight-ounce cup of coffee needs 2 rounded tablespoons of coffee beans (4 tablespoons of beans for a BIG mug). These are the proportions use at quality cafés like Greyfriars.

5) *Use very hot but not boiling water (195 to 205°).*

Pour as soon as you it begins to boil or just before, avoid over boiling.

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6) If you use a French press pour water, stir the mixture, wait 4 minutes, lightly stir again then slowly depress the plunger.

Four minutes has been determined to be the *sweet spot*... long enough for the coffee to be infused with robust flavor but not so long that it becomes astringent. Stirring the mixture disperses the coffee particulates evenly and provides a more consistent cup of coffee.

7) If you use a drip coffee maker don't let it sit on the burner more than 20 minutes

Continued cooking will change the flavor and aroma resulting in burnt, bitter, or harsh flavors. Reheating your coffee will also make it bitter. Use a thermos, thermal carafe or insulated mug if you plan to hold your hot coffee for more than 20 minutes.

8) Store coffee in an airtight ceramic, Lucite or metal container out of direct sunlight (in a cool dark place – like a cabinet – not the refrigerator or freezer).

Oxygen ages your beans (thus an airtight container is best) and when you put beans in the refrigerator or freezer, each time you open the container to scoop bean out, moisture in the form of condensation gets into the beans damaging the flavor.

9) Clean your coffee brewer or French press of any coffee residue or oils from the previous brewing.

VIDEO: A Perfect Cup of Coffee: go to www.storyville.com (click on THE METHOD button/link)

Dulce de Leche

(Argentine milk caramel)



In Argentina they use *dulce de leche* like we would butter, jam or Nutella...spreading it thick on toast and biscuits, but many Argentines also sweeten their coffee with it. When we first learned about this we thought it was kind of odd. Then we tried it. It is fantastic. Since the ingredients of *dulce de leche* are simply milk and sugar, it kind of makes sense.



We use it to make our own Caramel Machiatos by heating up milk and *dulce de leche* in the microwave, stirring them together until there are no visible bits of *dulce de leche*. Then we pour freshly brewed coffee (or espresso) into the milk + *dulce de leche* concoction. It's good!

If you are an anything-but-black-coffee-is-for-sissies type of person, then enjoy the coffee and the *dulce de leche* separately. You can cut up apples into wedges and dip them in the *dulce de leche* or put it on hot toast. Or eat it with a spoon. Think of it as a nutritional supplement (a sugar, fat and protein supplement) 😊