

Brewing



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All methods require starting with good, palatable water. Avoid tap water unless it is filtered. The ideal water temperature for brewing is between 195° and 205°F. Some coffee brewing machines can be adjusted to your choice of temperature, and so can some kettles. If you do not have temperature-specific appliances, simply bring the water to a boil and pause several seconds before applying it to the coffee grounds; it should be within the ideal range at that point.

Cleanliness is next to godliness if you want to sip the nectar of the Gods (or at least a good cup of coffee). Clean your equipment before every use or some of the leftover oils may transfer their growing rancidity to the new brew. The same is true for your cup and carafe. Residual oils from the coffee will build up on the maker, the cup and anything else coffee is stored in. These oils will become rancid and distasteful in a fairly short amount of time. No matter how good the coffee and how careful the brewing, dirty equipment will spoil the brew. Simply rinsing is not enough; it takes soap to cut the oils and remove the buildup.

Next, you must determine the method of brewing that suits your tastes. As discussed in the Grinding section, you should have a grinder that is capable of producing,



consistently, the particle size that is ideally suited for your brewing method of choice. Most experts will tell you that a cup of coffee is at its best for about 10 minutes after being brewed. So, if you brew a large pot, it should be for enough people to consume it quickly; otherwise, brew it one cup at a time as you consume it. I generally use an inexpensive, pour-over-filter method for my brews.

The amount of coffee to use varies with the method used and by taste, but the classic ratio is 16 to 1 (i.e., 16 parts of water to 1 part of coffee). For example, use 1 oz. (28.3 g) of coffee beans for a 16-ounce cup of coffee or 0.625 oz. (17.7 g) for a 10-ounce cup. I use a small scale to measure my coffee beans before brewing. This is the most accurate way to be consistent (and, remember, consistency is the goal if you want to repeatedly pursue the perfect cup).

When coffee is fresh, it will bubble and swell when water is added. This is called the “bloom.” You should allow the coffee to bloom for, at least, 30 to 45 seconds before adding more water. This allows the grounds to expel the carbon dioxide gas that is present in fresh coffee (if it



doesn't bubble then your coffee is stale) and allows the coffee grounds to become hydrated. That way the next water added will begin extracting the flavorful soluble solids instead of just pouring through. There are automatic brewers that will account for the bloom time (e.g., the Behmor Brazen in my kitchen). There are some instructional videos attached to the site to help you in your quest to find the perfect cup of coffee.