
MY RECIPE FOR GOOD COFFEE

By
JB Harlin



**The only thing that should be larger than
your coffee cup is your lens!**

Let me begin by saying that I have my own taste for what I consider GOOD Coffee. As they say 'your mileage may vary' but I am going to outline what I like and what I have learned about making coffee that suits my taste. I also need to say that I like coffee. I drink a lot of coffee. In the summer I drink less because it is just too darn hot, but in the cool of the winter I drink the stuff all day. I will also add, you either like the stuff, or you don't.

Let me begin by saying, *I Do Not like any kind of flavored coffee!* Coffee should be consumed hot and black. Milk is as gross as it comes, and I would rather you spit in my cup than add that stuff. Sugar in coffee or tea is near sacrilegious in my world. If you want sugar and cream, try coconut pie, strawberry short cake, good birthday cake with ice cream or any other sweet dessert of your choice. And, just to be perfectly clear, Instant Coffee. . .you have to be kidding?

Now, with that out of the way, let us get down to making a good cup of coffee, my way. We will begin with the coffee. Most any ground coffee is OK, but barely, and some should be avoided completely. Folgers makes a good substitute to smoke in your pipe instead of tobacco. If I were forced to use a canned coffee I would choose Maxwell House. There are others that are also good, but that is one that I have experience with. It would be for emergencies only!

My preference is to buy whole beans and grind them myself. I only grind what I intend to brew at any one time. I do not store whole bean coffee in the fridge nor freezer. I buy a 12-16 ounce bag, one at a time as I use it up. That way I am pretty sure I have fresh coffee beans. I like my coffee strong. This is where you have to experiment. The amount of coffee, the way you grind it, and the amount of water determines, in most part, what you get. I grind the beans in a small electric grinder



**This is my choice for
now. Subject to
change and any time.**

and I grind it till it is powder. For me, you can not get enough out of the beans, strong is good!

What brand of coffee beans to purchase you ask? Again, this is a very personal thing and I even change brands every so often. Right now, at this writing, I prefer Starbucks House Blend. I have been drinking this for over a year and it still suits my taste. When we travel, I buy a bag of this same coffee ground. This way I can make coffee on the road in the motels where we stay. Never run out of coffee.

Next we get into the coffee maker. I have learned a lot about coffee makers over the years. Here is my preference and it isn't that difficult. Do not buy any coffee maker that uses a Mr. Coffee basket-type filter. These are the flat-bottom filters that you see everywhere. They just do not brew a good cup of coffee. What you want to look for is any coffee maker that uses a cone-shaped Melita-Style filter. The #4 cone filter is used for 8-12 cup coffee makers and is what I use. There is a reason why the cone-shaped filters work better and I will quote from the Melita web site;



The only coffee filter to use. Forget the basket-type, they just do not make good coffee. This is the Melita, but any cone-type filter will work.

In general, cone shaped holders with cone shaped filters are recommended as the design ensures optimal coffee saturation and extraction versus basket shaped holders/filters. Improved extraction results from the concentration of coffee on the bottom of the filter which then creates turbulence as the water hits the grounds thus creating saturation over the entire surface area of the ground coffee. Most higher-end coffeemakers are equipped with cone shaped filter holders.

There, that was a lot easier than me trying to explain what is going on. I have tried both and have always preferred the cone-shaped filter.

I buy filters in bulk, normally from the discount warehouse in 250-500 count quantities. Nothing constitutes more of an emergency than running out of filters, short of running out of coffee. I admit that in a total panic I have brewed coffee in a paper towel. Don't recommend it, but it works as an emergency fix. The only other emergency that can happen is a broken coffee maker. Keep a spare in the closet.

Now we are down to the coffee maker itself. As explained above, you want a machine that uses a cone-shaped filter. What brand? That is up to you, but you have two interesting choices. There are two basic designs in coffee makers, the regular coffee



This is not the grinder I have. Mine is twenty years old and no longer available. This Krups unit should work fine.

maker with a heater under the carafe or the thermal carafe style. Which do I prefer? For me, the latter is the choice.



This is the coffee maker I use. Probably been replaced with a newer model by now.

As coffee sits in an open carafe on a heated burner it absorbs oxygen from the air and oxidizes, the water evaporates and you end up with a bitter mess. Nothing is more gross than coffee that has been setting on the burner for half a day. The thermal carafe machines have no heater. The first benefit is you can't go off and leave it on to burn down the house. But the main reason is that the thermal carafe keeps the coffee hot and fresh all day!

My preferred brand of thermal carafe coffee maker is the Cuisinart. There are others, but the Cuisinart thermal carafe has a patented top that seals out air to help prevent oxidation of the coffee. And it works! You fill the thermal carafe with hot water while you grind the coffee and fill the maker. This pre-heats the carafe, which is just a big thermos bottle, and the coffee stays hot all day.

The last thing for good coffee is good water. If you have no other choice, use that tap water. But, we don't even drink the stuff that comes directly out of our tap. It smells like a cross between chlorine and diesel fuel and gives me terrible heartburn. Either use a good clean bottled water or use a high-quality filter to remove the chemicals. If you can taste and smell chemicals in the water, it will alter the coffee also.

There you have my recipe for good coffee. Strong, black, hot and on hand all hours of the day and night. Who could ask for more?



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