

HOW TO GET BARISTA QUALITY COFFEE AT HOME



1 SELECTING THE RIGHT BEANS

Whether you're purchasing your beans from the supermarket or from an independent roaster, make sure you check the roasting date first. Beans should always be left for seven days after roasting to ensure they have the right level of oxidation for the oils to be released. It's these oils which create the delicious crema on the top of your coffee and give that authentic coffee shop flavour.



2 STORING YOUR BEANS

Light can have negative effects on your beans so it's important to store them in a dry, dark environment. Never store your beans in the fridge as this can lead to contamination with other flavours and smells. Moreover, avoid storing your beans in airtight containers as removing oxygen from the beans ages them and sucks out the oils prematurely. To keep your beans fresher for longer, store them in the bag they came in as these bags feature a valve which controls the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide the beans are exposed to. Make sure you use your beans within 30 days; after which they continue to oxidise further, and the flavour can become bitter. You can still use your beans, but they won't be as good.



3 EXTRACTION

It's all about finding the right balance and getting the perfect pour. If the extraction is too fast this can result in an acidic tasting coffee. In terms of the pour, you want to make sure the coffee runs through the machine slowly to ensure the oils are transferred into your cup. Baristas often refer to this 'perfect pour' as resembling a 'rat's tail'. When creating longer drinks, avoid free pouring, as this means the machine will over extract the ground beans and your coffee will taste bitter. Instead, add hot water to your mug before you add the coffee. Then, hold the cup at an angle and extract the coffee directly on top.



4 TAMPING

Once you've ground your beans, add a heaped mound of ground coffee to your café portafilter. Now you're ready to tamp - basically compressing the coffee. When tamping, don't worry too much about the amount of pressure you're putting on the coffee, using just a light amount of pressure is sufficient. The most important consideration when tamping is to make sure the tamper is level on the coffee's surface to ensure when the grounds come into contact with water, the water can penetrate the coffee evenly for a balanced flavour. The Breville Barista range of coffee machines feature a portafilter designed to sit level on the work surface, which makes tamping simple.



5 DAIRY VS. PLANT BASED MILKS

If you're looking for that professional latte microfoam or cappuccino froth, you need to make sure you're using the right milk. It's easier to stretch the proteins of milk by using one with a higher fat and protein content (such as jersey/full fat milk). This helps create a good microfoam by binding the proteins as opposed to sticking them together. Plant-based milks, such as oat and almond, are harder to work with as they contain less fats and proteins, but practice is key. Barista plant-based milks are becoming more readily available for in home use too and can help you achieve better results. Regardless of your preference, we recommend using milk straight from the fridge (four degrees) as the proteins stretch more easily at this temperature.



6 FROTHING YOUR MILK LIKE A PRO

If your Espresso machine comes with a milk wand, there are some handy hacks to ensure you're creating perfect microfoam. Ensure you purge the steam wand before you put it into your milk as this ensures there is no water in the wand. To create the perfect microfoam for latte/flat white, make sure the end of the steam wand is always on the surface of the milk and the milk is swirling over the top of the bulge of the wand. Having the wand on the milk's surface will create a microfoam, however if the wand is higher than the surface it makes the foam more aerated. When your milk is almost ready, plunge the wand. You'll know the milk is ready when you can't keep your hand on the jug for more than three seconds. Always tap the milk jug on your work surface to remove any larger bubbles.



7 HEAT UP YOUR MUG

To keep my coffee hotter for longer, use the Breville Barista Max's steam wand to heat your empty cup. If your machine doesn't have this function, simply do the same with boiling water from the kettle.

