



Your Jargon-Free Guide To Filter Coffee

Contrary to some of the guides you may find online for making great filter coffee, it's neither difficult nor expensive. The whole point of filter coffee is convenience – it allows anyone to make a jug of really good coffee without needing to spend ages preparing it or requiring Barista-level knowledge of operating complex equipment. Ignore any advice that sounds overly complicated or fussy - keep it simple and you can't go wrong!

So What Is It?

Filter coffee machines are designed to pass near-boiling water through a filter paper full of coffee into a jug below. The jug will normally sit on a hotplate allowing it to be used over a period of time. For this reason, they're popular in offices, restaurants and reception areas where making fresh coffee every time someone wants a cup isn't convenient. The coffee is widely available in both large packs and in pre-measured sachets to make a single jug, which is the preferred choice for most people as it ensures consistent strength every time and means there's no mess.

How Do I Make Really Good Coffee?

OK, you're just a few steps away from making great coffee. Follow this guide and you simply can't get it wrong!

1. Use cold water and fresh coffee. If you are using pre-measured sachets, only open one when you're about to make your coffee.
2. Use good coffee. A bit obvious we know, but you're not going to turn rubbish coffee into a good one no matter how knowledgeable you are. Use a premium brand such as Lavazza filter coffee if you can, or a good alternative such as Planet Java coffee if you're on a budget.
3. Don't prepare coffee too far ahead, it's far better to brew it when you need it. Leaving it stewing on a hotplate will ruin the flavour after about an hour, at which point you should pour it away and make a fresh jug. If you're brewing into a flask, remember to warm it up first or you'll be drinking lukewarm coffee for the rest of the day!
4. Look after your equipment. After a few weeks, oils deposited from the coffee will accumulate in your flasks, jugs and filter pans. Use a powder such as Bravilor cleaner to remove the deposits and prevent them from tainting the flavour of the coffee. Most commercial coffee machines are very easy to keep clean.

What Coffee Should I Use?

This isn't the minefield that some 'coffee experts' will have you believe. It's partly a matter of personal preference of course, and partly down to selecting a suitable blend. Most filter coffee that's been pre-ground and packaged by a reputable company is already blended and roasted to work with filter coffee makers, and unless you've picked an own-brand that is suspiciously cheap, should be suitable to serve to your staff, customers, etc. Be mindful that some of the household names available in supermarkets are not as good as you may think, and that you generally get what you pay for. Discount coffee may sound appealing, but it may not taste it!

Avoid single estate and origin coffees unless you've tried them before, or have some knowledge of such products. Being single estate, 100% Arabica or from a specific region is no guarantee that, once ground, the coffee will be suitable for use in a filter coffee machine. Again – keep it simple. Select a tried and trusted filter coffee such as Lavazza's Qualita Rossa or Planet Java All Day Filter Coffee – these have already been refined over the years to ensure they'll work perfectly in any filter coffee machine.

Find a good wholesale coffee supplier either by recommendation or by buying a small amount first before placing any large orders – own brand coffee very dramatically and you don't want to make an expensive mistake.

What About Filter Papers?

Easy. Never reuse them, never wash them and never pre-pack them in advance with ground coffee. Simply use them as and when required and dispose of them with the coffee grounds once you've brewed your coffee. They are inexpensive at around a penny each (the Planet Java brand in particular even includes them with the coffee for convenience), so there really is no need for some of the DIY alternatives you may read online such as straining it through a pair of tights, etc!

All you need to do now is sit back and enjoy your coffee.....

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