



# The Only Home Brew Coffee Guide You Need

What's important, what's not, and how to make your coffee at home taste better.

-Written by Tom Snyder



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# Before Brewing

The number one thing to remember is that *coffee is personal*.

This guide will show you how to brew coffee with the most consistent and best practices. These are not rules, just guidelines. While there are many factors that influence the taste of coffee, the equation below is what I think matters most.

**Great coffee = 20% coffee, 20% grinder, 60% water**

## *Extraction*

Coffee has many different flavors inside of it that are extracted and transferred to the water it comes into contact with.

Flavor extraction works like a bell curve: if it is under-extracted (not enough contact time) your coffee will taste more acidic and sour, if it is over-extracted (too much time in contact) your coffee will begin to taste bitter. The extraction rate differs for each brewing method.

## *Grind*

Use a quality *burr grinder*. This will ensure an increasingly consistent grind and even extraction — or, in other words, a tasty cup of coffee! Anything from [Baratza](#) or Mahlkonig will serve you well.

## *Dose*

Begin with 1 to 2 tablespoons of coffee for every six ounces of water. A rounded tablespoon of coffee is about 9 grams.

I suggest getting a kitchen scale and weighing out your coffee and water. Standard coffee to water ratio is 1:15. Start with 25 grams of coffee and 375 grams of water.





Coffee is 98% water.

Therefore, bad water will give you bad coffee. Beer brewers, wine-makers, and other beverage makers start with the best water they have available. To get the best coffee, you should do the same. If you are using tap water that you wouldn't drink by itself, don't make your coffee with it. I know this seems a bit high maintenance, but you will be able to taste the difference immediately!

What should you use instead of tap water? I suggest using water from an RO filter, or buying filtered or bottled water. I keep an office water cooler in my home so I always have a large supply of good water available.

## Other Important Factors

### *Water*

Thoroughly filtered water, heated to 195-205 degrees Fahrenheit, yields the best results for brewing hot coffee. I suggest filtered or RO water.

If you don't have a thermometer, bring the water to a boil, take it off heat, then let it sit for 30 seconds.

### *Accessories*

- **Gooseneck kettle** - essential in pour over brewers, it lets the pourer evenly distribute the water at a consistent rate over all the grounds.
- **Kitchen scale** - will help you get the perfect coffee to water ratio every time.
- **Thermometer** - will help you brew great coffee consistently. The kettle I use at home has a thermometer built into the top.
- **Timer** - A stopwatch or phone will work.
- **Air-tight storage** - to help keep coffee beans from degrading too quickly. Many specialty coffee bags are resealable now.

## Roast Levels

Roasting coffee is the process of exposing green coffee beans to heat to cook them. In many ways, we can think of this like grilling a steak. People have their own preferences and there is no one right way to do it.

The basic roast levels are Light, Medium, Dark, and we can include French Roast in here, too. Light roasts tend to have a bit more fruitiness and acidity. Medium roasts are more balanced between acidity and bitterness.

As the coffee beans roast, the natural sugars within the beans caramelize, creating an oily shininess on them. Dark roasts will have a bit of shine to them.

French Roast takes the beans past the point of dark roast and fully caramelizes the oils in the beans. Typically, this is where the 'burnt' flavor notes start to show up.

## What Is A Coffee Bloom?

The coffee "bloom" is a term used to describe the process of gas being released after water comes into contact with ground coffee.

This is called a "bloom" because as the coffee grounds soak up and become saturated by the water, they expand and resemble a blooming flower.

This process is done in all manual brew methods. It helps release gases held in the coffee and prepares it for flavor extraction.

Best practice is to let the coffee bloom for 30-60 seconds. I find that most coffees extract better with a 45 second bloom.

When pouring the water for the coffee bloom, it is best to use a gooseneck kettle. It has a spout specifically designed to give an even, controlled flow. You want to make sure to wet all the coffee grounds when doing the bloom. Water on the paper filter won't help. Also, leaving some grounds dry won't prepare them evenly for flavor extraction.

When brewing with a French Press, I pour the water for the bloom over the grounds, then stir grounds to make sure they are all evenly wet.

## Brewing Coffee Is Both Science And Art

There are many parameters in brewing coffee that will alter the taste. Later in this ebook I will show you the Coffee Flavor Wheel. This has different layers of tastes coffee experts use to describe what they taste. This is important when trying to develop your palette for coffee.

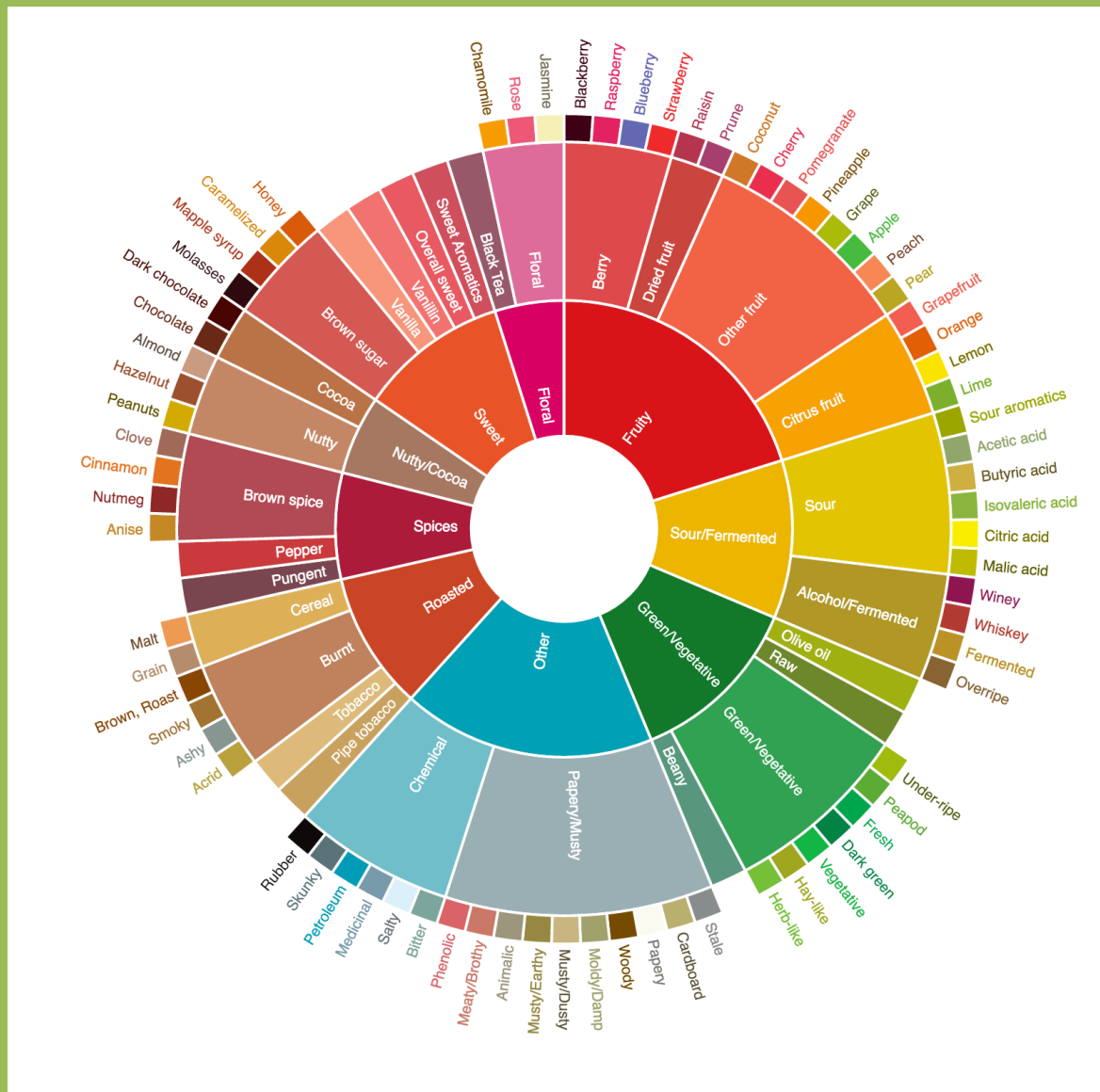
It will help give you language to describe the coffee you're drinking. It may take a while, but the coffee will be delicious!

# SCA FLAVOR WHEEL

This is the tool used by the Specialty Coffee Association to describe flavors and aromas in coffee. Obviously not all these are desirable, but they are what can be recognized in coffee tasting.

The best way to use this wheel is to start from the inside and work your way out as you develop your palette.

Try to identify the flavors in the inner-most wheel when you taste coffee. Not all flavors will be found in every coffee. This makes each coffee unique.



# French Press

- Brew type: Immersion
- Materials: French press, whisk or stir stick, kettle
- Grind size: Coarse (like sea salt)
- Dose: 48g coffee  
Serving: 680g or two 12oz mugs of brewed coffee
- Time: ~4 minutes
- Convenience: Easy

## ***Method***

Grind beans and heat water to 200F degrees. Pour grounds into vessel and pour water to cover grounds. Pour 10% of total water to be used and wait for the bloom to finish 30-45 seconds. Fill the press with the rest of the water and cover with lid for 4 minutes. Then slowly push down the plunger, aim for 10-20lbs of pressure on the plunger. Pour into mugs and enjoy!

## ***Recommended***

Darker roasts typically do better in a french press than in other brewers. Try coffees from Sumatra, Mexico, or Brazil.



*Advantage:* Using a metal filter permits more oils to pass than paper filters. Many folks enjoy French press because it is simple and has more texture exactly what they want in a cup of coffee.

# Aeropress

- Brew type: Immersion
- Materials: Aeropress, stir stick, paper filter, kettle
- Grind size: Fine to Medium (like table salt)
- Dose: 15g coffee  
Serving: 240g brewed coffee, small cup
- Time: 3 minutes
- Convenience: Varied

## *Standard Method*

Grind beans and heat water to 200F degrees. Then place the paper filter in the bottom piece and rinse with hot water. Screw on bottom piece and place on top of mug or serving pitcher. Pour coffee grounds into aeropress. Pour 240 grams of hot water into the aeropress and use stick to stir 5 times. Place plunger on top and let steep for 1 minute. Then remove plunger, stir another 5 times and replace plunger. Begin to plunge for 30-45 seconds until all the water is passed through the filter. This makes a smaller cup than some of the other methods and some people prefer to add hot water to the brew. Remove aeropress and enjoy!

## *Recommended*

Medium roasts really shine here. Try coffees from Colombia, El Salvador, or Costa Rica.



*Advantage:* The aeropress is virtually indestructible. When compared to most other manual brew methods that are either glass or ceramic, this gives it a huge leg up and makes it perfect for travel or camping. The aeropress is unique because it employs the immersion method of coffee brewing but unlike a French press, it uses a paper filter. This gives an even extraction without the added oils and mouthfeel of a French press. One disadvantage is that the aeropress is really a single cup method. Another perk with the aeropress is the brewer has a lot of control over the entire brew process.

# Aeropress Cont'd

## *Inverted Method*

Place plunger just inside the aeropress. Then, flip it upside down. Now, the tube should be sitting on top of the plunger, using it as a bottom. Pour coffee grounds into aeropress. Pour 220 grams of hot water into the aeropress and use stick to stir 5 times. Place filter on top and let steep for 1 minute. Then remove filter, stir another 5 times and screw filter on. Flip over onto a mug or serving pitcher and plunge for 30-45 seconds until all the water is passed through the filter. This makes a smaller cup than some of the other methods and some people prefer to add hot water to the brew.

## *Recommended*

Bright and fruit-forward coffees really shine here. Try coffees from Guatemala, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. Washed or honey processed.



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# Chemex

- Brew type: Pour Over
- Materials: Chemex, Chemex paper filter, kettle
- Grind size: Medium to Coarse
- Dose: 25g coffee  
Serving: 350g brewed coffee, medium cup
- Time: 4-5 minutes
- Convenience: Involved

## ***Method***

Begin by heating water to 200F degrees and grinding beans. Then place the filter in the top of the vessel with the thickest side against the spout. Using hot water, rinse the filter while simultaneously heating the vessel. During this step the filter should begin to stick to the sides of the Chemex, but not fill the spout. Grind beans and dump the rinse water. Pour grounds into center of filter and level. Using about 10-15% of total hot water, wet all of the grounds for the first bloom and start a timer. Let bloom for 30-45 seconds then begin pouring the rest of the water evenly over the grounds- not the paper- in concentric circles. Aim to finish pouring at the 3-minute mark, with the last drop of coffee falling around the 4-minute mark. Toss the grounds and filter and pour directly from the Chemex and enjoy!

## ***Recommended***

Bright and fruity coffees do great in a Chemex. Try washed coffees from Kenya, Ethiopia, or Panama.



*Advantage:* First of all, look at that beautiful vessel! Also, Chemex's come in a variety of sizes so they can be great for making large amounts of manually brewed coffee. Having the brewer and serving vessel in one makes for a really elegant system. Because the thick paper filter sits flush against the walls of the server, water flows through the grounds more slowly and the dwell time is longer than other pour over methods. This is helpful, as brewing a tasty cup is less dependent on the skill of the user and more on precise and well-chosen parameters.

# Hario V60

- Brew type: Pour Over
- Materials: V60, serving vessel, paper filter, kettle
- Grind size: Medium Fine
- Dose: 25g coffee  
Serving: 350g brewed coffee, medium cup
- Time: 4 minutes
- Convenience: Involved

## ***Method***

Begin by heating water to 200F degrees and grinding beans. Then place the filter in the V60 and the V60 on top of the serving vessel. Using hot water, rinse the filter while simultaneously heating the vessel. Dump water out of vessel. Pour grounds into filter and make sure they are level. Pour just enough water to cover grounds, 10-15% of total hot water, in circular motion and let bloom for 30-45 seconds. Finish pouring water to cover grounds evenly in a circular motion. Let the brew finish running through filter and pour into a mug and enjoy!

## ***Recommended***

The V60 is very versatile. It can bring the best flavors out of any coffee. Try coffees from Kenya, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and El Salvador.



*Advantage:* V60 is great for making a single cup of coffee. The spirals in the cone help to evenly extract the coffee. The V60 filters will have a minimal paper taste, if any, but make sure to rinse it thoroughly beforehand. This pour over brewer can also be used to sit directly over your coffee mug, making the system very efficient.

# Final Thoughts

The number one thing to remember is that coffee is personal.

There are many other brew methods than the ones I guide through here in this e-book. This is the methods that I believe are the best and most practical for brewing coffee at home.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. I hope it has given you some valuable insights into the incredible world of coffee.

The landscape of the coffee industry is still changing. It is exciting to see what new brew methods will emerge with changing culture and technology.

## *Choosing Coffee*

You might be asking yourself, “Now that I know HOW to brew coffee, WHAT coffees do I buy to brew at home?”

My advice is to buy at a local coffee shop, or from a coffee roaster’s website.

Coffee purchased in the grocery is typically near or past its prime brewing date (about 4 weeks after being roasted).

Coffee has flavor notes inherently found in it — unadulterated. Quality specialty coffee does not add flavor oils, seasonings, etc. to the coffee. It should be coffee only!

When purchasing coffee, go to a reputable coffee shop and ask the barista to help you. They can help you find a coffee that will fit your desired profile.



Have fun and happy brewing!  
-Tom



*Want to learn more about coffee brewing?*

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