



The Sparkplug Scoop

COFFEE BASICS

Coffee: A Love Story

I grew up in coffee-obsessed Vancouver and then had the good fortune to roam around the world, including to many coffee countries. I've had countless cups of coffee made using so many different brewing methods. Over the years, I got wondering: why is it that we don't drink amazing coffee every day? Especially at home where we control the ingredients and brewing?

Luckily, making great coffee isn't rocket science. To extract every delicious flavour molecule out of a precious coffee bean, all you need to do is:

- start with the right quantity of fresh, premium coffee
- grind it to the right consistency for your coffeemaker
- expose the grinds to the optimal temperature of water for the *time recommended* for your brewing equipment

& *voila!* All those heavenly flavour molecules dissolve right out of the bean and into your waiting cup.

So here is a guide for you to become the savvy "meh"-proof coffee brewer you were born to be, no matter whose kitchen you are in.



This is our basics - tips that apply to almost all coffee making.

Want specific tips for YOUR coffee maker?

Email me right NOW and say which brew guides you want!



The Basics

Rules of thumb for pretty much any coffee maker

1. Coffee - Use Fresh Roasted (Sparkplug) Coffee



OK, maybe you don't have to buy Sparkplug Coffee every time. But, whatever coffee you're buying, fresh tastes best! How to know if it's fresh? Check the roast date or "packaged on" date. Ignore the "use by" or "best before" date, those are meaningless!

TIP Don't buy too much coffee at a time. Buy just enough so that you can drink it up within 2 to 3 months of receiving a Sparkplug Coffee order. We always tell you the date your order was blended and packaged so you can figure out when to reorder some more fresh coffee.

2. Grind - pick the right grind that works best for your coffeemaker.



Ideally, grind the coffee just before you make each cup or pot of coffee. You're looking for a grind that is consistent - meaning the particles are all the same size - and are the correct grind for your coffeemaker.

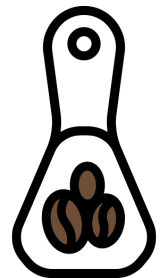
A grind that is too coarse can give you coffee that is underextracted (weak - the beans and water didn't get enough time together). Too fine can result in coffee that is bitter.

In general, the size of the grind is related to how much time it takes to make the coffee. Finer for very short brew times such as espresso and coarser for French press or percolators with longer brew times.

3. Measure - use the proper proportions of coffee to water.

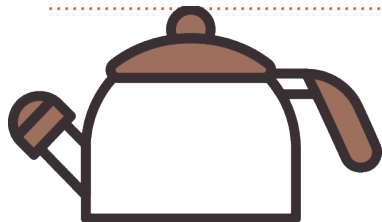
A common mistake is not using enough coffee. For most coffeemakers, we recommend 2 Tbsp / 30 ml of ground coffee for 8 oz / 235 ml of water (a standard coffee cup).

If you want to get very precise, weigh 12-13 grams for standard North American mug (8 oz / 225 ml) or 55-60 grams per litre of water.



TIP It is easy to underestimate the amount of coffee needed - if you're making "one cup" of coffee, measure the mug so you know if it is one 6-ounce (about 170 ml) old school serving or the increasingly common 10- or 12-ounce (280 to 340 ml) servings. Once you've figured out the right measurements for your mug or coffeemaker, you can whip up a brew, certain that you've got the right mix.

4. Water - the same WATER you'd drink straight up.



Most of us in Canada are fortunate to have pure, clean water on tap so you can probably ignore this one. Just be aware that water quality affects the taste of coffee. If your tap water tastes of chlorine or minerals, run it through a filter before adding it to your kettle or coffeemaker.

5. Temperature - use HOT WATER, not quite boiling.

The water temperature makes a big difference. If the water isn't hot enough, the coffee can taste sour (ick!) and weak. If it is too hot, it can be bitter.

TIP Coffee nerds say 91–96°C or 195–205°F is the perfect temperature. If you are boiling coffee for your brewer – whether for an AeroPress, French press or pour-over of any sort, wait 30–45 seconds after your kettle comes to a full boil before you start brewing.

6. Brew Time - follow the timing recommended for your brewing equipment

Like grind size and temperature, the amount of time the water and beans are in contact has a big effect on the taste. Too much time gives you a bitter, over-extracted brew. Not enough time makes your coffee weak and boring.



7. Store - in an airtight container & a cool, dark spot

We get asked this all the time – no, the fridge or freezer are not recommended. No. Just don't.

TIP Yes to any airtight container. Especially if there is a way to remove air when you close it up. The ziplock bag that your Sparkplug Coffee comes in works well: push out any air that got in then zip it back up and put it in your cupboard. A mason jar also works fine! If it is clear, make sure to put it somewhere dark and not out on the counter in the sunlight.

More tips at www.Sparkplug.Coffee



HOW DO YOU BREW?

We want to see how you brew your coffee at home, work – wherever!
Share your pictures with us on social media & tag @SparkplugCoffee !



xo... Kara
Chief Coffee Officer