

The Delights of Gourmet Coffee

Coffee has come a long way from the ground-bean beverage of the Turks. Around the world, you can now find coffee shops specializing in what they call gourmet coffee.

But what precisely makes a gourmet coffee special? The explanation may lie in the preparation.

From bean to cup, let's look at the steps in preparing gourmet coffee.

1) The Grind # In grinding beans to produce gourmet coffee, coffee masters insist on using burr grinders. This type of grinder uses two revolving "burrs" to crush the bean with less risk of burning. Conical grinders are the most popular type of burr grinder used to make gourmet coffee.

Conical burr grinders mill the coffee to a consistent size, allowing it to produce more extracts. They are also well-suited for the preparation of many types of gourmet coffee because they can grind into a wide range of sizes and consistencies.

Other than using a burr grinder, the only technique you can use to achieve the best consistency of coffee grounds is with a mortar and pestle. You don't want that, do you?

2) The Brew # This step is probably what determines the type of gourmet coffee prepared. Together with the presentation, the method of brewing determines the "name" of the gourmet coffee.

There are 4 methods for brewing gourmet coffee, and each method has additional sub-methods.

This explanation may get a little complicated, but try to keep up.

1) Boiling # In spite of the name, you can't actually boil the coffee. Boiling coffee for too long would result in a bitter coffee.

a) The easiest method is to put hot water over the coffee grounds and let the mixture stand to cool. This type of gourmet coffee should not be consumed to the end unless you want a mouthful of grounds.

b) Turkish coffee # To prepare this gourmet coffee, the finely-ground coffee is added with water and sugar to a small pot. The mixture is boiled briefly, and then served in small cups.

c) Cowboy # The coffee grounds are added to a pot of water, boiled, and served.

2) Pressure

a) Espresso # This drink is made with hot water between 195 to 205 degrees Fahrenheit. The water is forced, under a pressure of eight to nine atmospheres, through a "puck" of finely-ground coffee. The resulting brew is one of the strongest-tasting forms of gourmet coffee, with a distinct flavor and a layer of foam at the top the liquid.

b) Moka Express # This method of gourmet coffee uses a three-chambered pot. The water is boiled at the bottom and forced to pass through the coffee grounds in the middle section. The resulting gourmet coffee is collected in the upper section. The brew is almost as strong as espresso, but without the foam.

3) Gravity # Drip brewing is commonly known as "American Coffee." In this method, the gourmet coffee is prepared by allowing hot water to drip into coffee grounds held by a filter. It is typically weaker in taste than espresso, but contains more caffeine.

4) Steeping # "Total immersion brewing" using a French press is considered by devotees to be the only proper way to prepare gourmet coffee at home. The coffee grounds are combined with hot water in a cylinder. The cylinder contains a filter that is depressed after about four minutes, forcing the grounds to the bottom and leaving the coffee above the filter.

With so many methods of preparation, it's no wonder that it's called "gourmet" coffee. But it's not just preparation that determines the outcome of the gourmet coffee. There is also the style of presentation of the drink; and that makes a whole lot of difference.

From hot to cold, drinks to non-drinks, gourmet coffee has so many varieties that it is just spectacular.

So why are you waiting? Try them now. See for yourself that gourmet coffee really is gourmet.