





Whether it's the rich taste; the feel-good effects; or the health properties, we love our specialty foods, especially foods like chocolate, tea, wine, and coffee. For some reason these foods bring out the inner connoisseur in all of us. And once we get a taste of the good chocolate, coffee, wine, or tea, it's hard to go back to the corner store variety.

That's why I'd like to share with you an excellent way to roast and brew your very own tasty (and healthy) coffee.

There are many reasons to do this. Home roasted coffee that starts from green coffee beans:

- is much fresher: Most store-bought and coffee shop coffee is roasted and/or ground months in advance. This leads to stale coffee that's been subject to oxidation, even if it's in vacuum sealed bags.

- tastes better
- lets you control the type of roast: light, medium, or dark roast – it's totally up to you.
- has a higher antioxidant content: Typical processing includes weeks between roasting and grinding, and plenty of time before the beans are brewed. During this time, coffee loses a significant percentage of its antioxidant content. With home roasts you eliminate the added time and your perfect morning cup is healthier.
- makes you look like a culinary magician in front of friends and family: Imagine how impressed your loved ones will be when you create fresh coffee right in front of their eyes. Most people don't even know coffee beans start out green. You'll not only know that, you'll be the bean master.

Recently I set out to find the best way to roast, grind, and brew my own coffee at home. Nowadays there are a host of specialty devices that roast, grind, and brew the coffee for you. With them you're promised caffeinated perfection.

Unfortunately, the costs can add up. Just the other day I read an article that basically said that without \$1000 invested in specialty equipment, you might as well not bother.

Bollocks! Below you'll find a simple roasting, grinding, and pressing process that requires no specialty equipment. It brews an awesome cup every time – one that tastes rich and fresh, and is loaded with antioxidant power. (For more on a back-to-basics setup, see "True Tales from the Farm", elsewhere in this issue –Ed.)

ROASTING CHART

Cinnamon roast

The bean is light brown and dry, with no oil visible. The flavour is baked or "breadly", like roasted grain. There will likely be definite sour tones as the acidity is higher.

New England roast

This roast is apparently common in the eastern United States. It's a little darker than the cinnamon roast, but without the grainy flavour. New England roast will still have some sour tones to it.

American, light roast

Medium light brown beans. This roast is typical in eastern USA. This roast is the most often used for cupping or professional tasting.

City, medium roast

The color is darker still, more of a medium brown (think chocolate). This roast is common in the western parts of the USA. This roast is a good choice to taste the differences between varieties.

Full city roast

Medium dark brown beans. The beans will start to show some oily drops on the surface. Full city will have caramel or chocolate undertones.

French, espresso roast

Beans are starting to get dark brown, and French roasted beans are shiny with oil. There is less acidity, but with burned undertones. This roast is often used when making espresso.

Italian, dark French roast

Similar to regular French, but more so. Darker and oilier looking, and with a stronger burned flavour.

Spanish roast

Darkest roast of all. Colour is nearly black, and the flavour is flat with a charcoal undertone.



HOME-ROASTED COFFEE: STEP BY STEP

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Green coffee beans

Baking tin - a plain vented aluminum one will do

Oven

WHAT YOU'LL DO

Step 1: Preheat the oven

Preheat your oven to 450 degrees, using convection roast or convection bake settings, if possible. Of course, if your oven doesn't have convection, that's OK. Regular bake will be fine.

Make sure you turn the oven fan on high throughout the roasting process. Coffee roasting can produce a lot of smoke, especially if you try for darker roasts.

Step 2: Flatten the bake tin

Start with a vented aluminum bake tin. Pulling apart the sides, flatten the tin as much as possible.

Next, smooth out the tin so that it can lay flat on the counter. This will enable you to shake the beans around during the roasting process.

Step 3: Lay out the beans

Spread green, unroasted coffee beans out on the flattened bake tin. Place into the preheated oven once it hits 450 degrees. Note: use only enough beans for 1-2 days of coffee drinking. The fresher the roast, the healthier (and tastier) the coffee.

Step 4: Roast for 3-5 minutes

Roast the beans with the oven closed

for 3-5 minutes, and then open the oven to shake the beans around.

Make sure to give them a good shake, flipping them over and moving them to a new location on the pan. If you don't do this, the beans will roast unevenly, leaving some overdone and some underdone.

Step 5: Roast for 3-5 more minutes

Place the pan back in the oven and roast for 3-5 more minutes or until desired roast is reached. See roast chart below for roast colors and descriptions. Note: if your roast takes longer than 15 minutes, you should roast at a higher temperature. Every oven is different, so it may take several batches to achieve the best results. Practice makes perfect!

Also note: it's OK if the beans aren't roasted evenly. Some connoisseurs prefer a perfectly even roast color. However, a mixed roast offers a nice complexity of flavor.

Step 6: Cool the beans

Once beans have reached the desired roast, quickly place them into a colander to begin cooling. While cooling in the colander, shake the beans around to remove some of the skin.

Step 7: Allow the beans to rest and de-gas

At this point you can move straight to grinding and pressing, although fresh roasted coffee reaches its peak flavour and aroma about 24 hours after roasting. This rest period allows excess CO₂ to dissipate and allows the coffee bean to stabilize. However, this waiting period isn't necessary

and, in fact, some of the antioxidants are lost if you wait.

If you're looking for the absolute best flavour, let the beans rest. If you're looking for a great cup of coffee right away, one with a higher antioxidant content, you can skip this step.

Step 8: Grind the coffee beans

Using a food processor, coffee grinder, or Magic Bullet (my preferred grinder), grind the coffee beans into a fine powder. The finer the grind, the less time needed to steep. The coarser the grind, the more time.

The ideal size prevents grounds from sneaking into your coffee and appearing at the bottom of your cup. For a French press method, this is a larger grind; for a filter coffee maker, finer. And, of course, espresso grind is extremely fine.

Step 9: Steep and press

Use coffee quickly after grinding, while it's tastiest and healthiest.

I prefer a French press method. The right ratio of coffee to water is 1 tbsp coffee to 1 cup of water. So, if you want to make 4 cups of coffee, start by putting 4 tbsp of coffee into the French press. Add 4 cups of water that's not quite boiling. Stir gently.

Finally, add the filter and steep for 2 - 4 minutes (2 min for a small pot and 4 min for a larger). At the end of the steep time, press plunger down evenly to prevent grounds from escaping.

Sniff, sip, and savour. You are the Coffee Master.