



The
Coffee Concierge

*10 Ways to Make
Better Coffee
at Home*



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If you're like me, you drink coffee every single day.

For many people (especially Americans), coffee is used as a tool because of its caffeine content. As a result, we often take things like coffee's aroma, taste, and origins for granted.

But why leave these beautiful characteristics by the wayside? Why can't we appreciate coffee for just being coffee?

Although we don't always have control over the way our coffee is brewed (think 7-Eleven and the office break room), if you own a coffee maker you are at least brewing coffee once in awhile.

But is it any good?

Well, your home brewed cup of coffee may be good enough as far as you're concerned...but wouldn't it be awesome if it tasted even better than it already does?

Duh!

My hope is that after reading this quick guide you'll be making much better coffee at home. So if it helped, please let me know by shooting me an email at: benji@thecoffeeconcierge.net

Now, without further ado, here are 10 things you can do to make better coffee at home:

1. Ditch the K-Cups

Look, I understand that K-Cups and other "pods" are super-convenient. But the coffee will never be as good as it can actually be if you use these pod coffee makers.

So if you're really serious about making your coffee better, start things off by switching brew methods.

In my opinion, French Press or Automatic Drip is the best way to go for beginners who don't want to deal with anything that's too hands-on.

2. Buy your beans directly from a reputable roaster

Most people buy their coffee at the grocery store, which makes sense for a lot of reasons. For one, buying coffee at the grocery store is convenient. There is also generally a large selection to choose from.

There is one big problem though: freshness.

Coffee has a shelf life of about 2 weeks post-roast. This isn't to say that coffee is automatically bad after 2 weeks, but it will lose a lot of its aroma and flavor by this point.

Most grocery stores sell coffee that is way past the roast date, or doesn't even have a roast date at all. These are two big indicators that you are not buying fresh coffee.

But don't automatically count out all coffee sold at the grocery store. First, check for a "roasted on" date. Then, make sure that date isn't too far in the past.

To ensure that your coffee is at its freshest, I recommend ordering directly from a reputable roaster.

If you don't have a favorite roaster and would like to try coffee from different places, I recommend checking out [MistoBox](#) or [Angels' Cup](#).

Both of these services can get you in touch with lots of great coffee.

My personal favorite service is [MistoBox](#), because they customize your subscription based on your coffee preferences. You can also have the coffee sent as frequently as you'd like, any time between 5 and 45 days apart.

You can get \$10 off your first order with MistoBox by visiting the link [here](#). I'll also get \$10 towards my next order, so thanks in advance if you decide to sign up! Still, I'd encourage you to first check out my review of both coffee subscription services at the link above to decide which one (if any) is right for you.

3. Grind your own beans

If you were to do one thing to make better coffee, it would be to grind your own beans.

By grinding your own beans you ensure that your coffee holds its maximum aroma and flavor after brewing.

Any coffee that has been ground for longer than 15 minutes without making contact with water is already significantly less flavorful. Many would go as far to call coffee "stale" after 15 minutes. This is almost exclusively because of the coffee's exposure to air.



Not just any grinder will do though.

You should be using a burr grinder to grind your coffee so that you can vary your grind size, have a consistent grind particle size, and not over-heat your beans.

If you're looking for burr grinder recommendations, I recommend you check out my resources page for recommended grinders at all budgets:

<http://www.thecoffeeconcierge.net/resources/>

4. Know your brew recipe

When you make coffee, you should know how much coffee and water you are brewing with for the most consistent results. More specifically, you want to know how much water you use in relation to the coffee you plan to brew.

The best way to measure your brew recipe is with a gram scale, because not all coffee beans have the same density. So if you measure your coffee by volume (e.g. tablespoons) you could be brewing with different amounts of coffee from brew to brew because of coffee beans' varying densities.

If you don't have access to a gram scale, one tablespoon of ground coffee per 5 ounces of water is a good rule of thumb for a starting brew recipe.

Once you find your perfect ratio, you'll be able to replicate great coffee time and again.

Keep in mind though, not all coffee makers call for the same ratio, so it will initially take some experimentation.

For drip coffee, I generally like to use anywhere from 15-20 grams of coffee per 12 oz mug.

If I'm only making one mug of coffee, I'll generally choose a higher number.

Say for this example that I've decided on 20 grams of coffee. Now I just need to calculate how much water to brew with.

The Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCAA) recommends something around 18:1, so for every 1 part of coffee we will brew with 18 parts water. So for 20 grams, we simply multiply $20\text{g (coffee)} * 18 = 360\text{ grams of water}$.

After brewing your coffee, here's how you adjust your ratio:

If you enjoyed your coffee, congrats – you've likely found a good ratio.

If the coffee is too strong, try a larger ratio (e.g. 20:1 or 25:1)

If your coffee is too weak, try a smaller ratio (e.g. 15:1 or 12:1)

5. Mind your water temperature



If you are brewing your coffee too hot or too cold, you are doing your final cup of coffee a disservice (except for cold brew).

Just like tea, coffee has ideal temperatures that it is meant to be brewed at, so keeping a thermometer handy will help you know if your coffee maker or kettle is doing its job.

The sad truth is that most automatic drip coffee makers don't brew at temperatures above 195°F. If better brew temperature is important to you (which it should be), you might want to take a look at [SCAA certified brewers](#) and/or [kettles with built-in thermometers](#).

My favorite kettle for manual coffee brewing (and temperature gauging) is the [Bonavita Variable Temperature Kettle](#).

The SCAA certified coffee maker I currently use for automatic coffee brewing is the [Brazen Plus by Behmor](#).

6. Filter your water

Since coffee is 98% water, it's clearly an important component to your final cup of coffee.

Charcoal water filters are generally the best and most cost-effective solution to having better quality water to brew your coffee with.

Many coffee makers come with built-in charcoal water filters, but if yours happens to lack a filter, you can buy a cheap Brita water pitcher. This is what I use to source all of my coffee makers with water.

7. Store your beans in a cool, dark, airtight space



I don't mean a refrigerator when I say "cool."

A cupboard should be fine, especially if you live in a colder region of the world.

The most important rules for coffee storage are:

- a) Minimal/no air entering the container
- b) No light exposure

I protect my beans from both of these harsh elements with the [Airscape](#) by Planetary Designs.

8. Pre-wet your filters

If you use paper filters and hate the taste of paper in your coffee, there is a pretty simple solution: pre-wetting your filter.

Simply take some hot water and pour it over your paper filter, making sure you wet the entire thing. You'll want to do this before adding your coffee to the filter of course.

9. Brew your coffee right after it has been ground

I mentioned that coffee begins to rapidly stale as soon as it is ground, so it's best to only grind your coffee right before you start brewing. The sooner the ground coffee makes contact with the hot water, the better your results should be.

10. Choose the right grind size for the brew method you're using

If you're grinding your own beans with a burr grinder, you have control over how finely (or coarsely) you grind your beans.

Different coffee makers call for different grind sizes, so you'll need to experiment a bit to get your grind "dialed in" for the device you're brewing with.

Here is a simplified guide:

French Press – Coarsest grind

Moka Pot – Coarse grind

Auto Drip – Medium grind

Espresso – Fine grind

For pour over coffee makers, it mostly depends on the thickness of the filters being used. A general rule is that the thicker the filter, the coarser your grind should be, and vice versa.

[Chemex](#) and [Kalita Wave](#) both call for coarser grinds, while [Hario V60s](#) call for finer grinds.

Thanks for reading!

I hope you enjoyed these home coffee-making tips.

Keep in mind, this is just the tip of the iceberg and I hope to help you improve your coffee even more in the future.

Please give these tips a try and let me know what you think. You can reach me at Benji@thecoffeeconcierge.net