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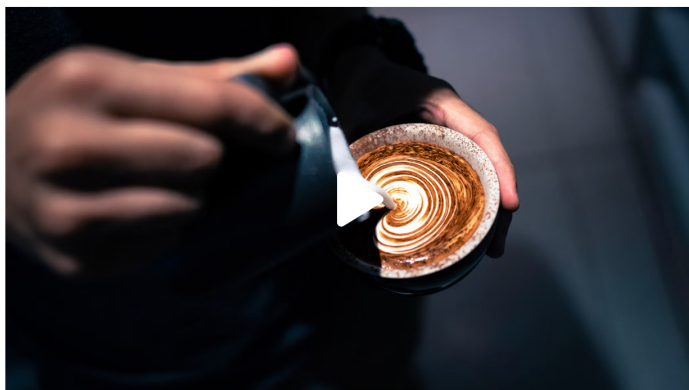
Kitchen Tips

Genius Tips For Making Coffee At Home, Straight From Baristas And Coffee Experts

It's possible to keep your coffee hot for longer *without* microwaving it!

By **Kelly Allen** PUBLISHED: MAY 4, 2021

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The [surge in at-home coffee making](#) (...I'm looking at you and the milk frother you bought last May and still haven't used) was fueled by the closure of coffee shops during the peak of the pandemic. Remember the [Dalgona coffee](#) craze? But as more people become vaccinated and shops are opening again, coffee drinkers continue to brew their own beverages. And the reasons are plenty: Many people still aren't commuting. It's often cheaper than buying coffee from a shop, especially if you drink it every day. It's even therapeutic—whether it's part of a personal routine or [shared on TikTok](#).

Whatever method you use or [form your coffee takes](#), we've gathered the best tips from baristas and coffee experts for home brewing. They might inspire you to try a new step, like actually grinding your own coffee beans. Or you'll be surprised to learn there's a hack to keep your coffee hot for longer—without microwaving it! In any case, these are must-know tips for coffee beginners and aficionados alike.



Focus on the quality of your water.

“The minerals in water are what help draw flavor out of the coffee grounds when brewing,” Chloe Langham, an account manager and educator at [Partners Coffee](#), says. “Using filter water is key, as you’ll want to remove any chemicals, sediment, or tastes from your tap water before brewing.”

If you want to really get extra, Langham says, “you can buy mineral packets, like the ones from [Third Wave Water](#), to add to distilled water.” She calls them “the perfect composition for coffee brewing.”

Grind your own coffee beans using a burr grinder.

Sure, buying pre-ground coffee is easier, but the extra step of grinding it yourself is worth it. “Grinding your coffee just before use gives you the most flavorful and complex cup possible,” Langham adds. “Pre-ground coffee will stale and lose complexity and aroma very quickly.”

Specifically, using a burr grinder is key. “Burr grinders will crush your coffee into evenly-sized pieces and will allow you to control the size of the grounds, whereas a blade grinder (like a blender or spice grinder) will indiscriminately chop the coffee into differently-sized pieces,” Langham says.

What’s wrong with that? Well, different size grounds brew at different rates. If the grounds are more uniform, the flavors will extract more evenly, which leads to more balance and fullness of flavor. “If you’re going to invest in one nice piece of coffee equipment, make sure it’s your grinder,” Langham says.

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Ryan Schumack—an experienced barista and co-owner of the Brooklyn-based coffee shop [Sweetbee](#) that’s set to open this year—agrees. If you really want a burr grinder but are turned off by the price, he suggests checking out the secondary market in your area. “It is not hard to buy used and change out the burrs, the parts that actually grind the coffee,” he says.

Make sure you buy good beans.

When you buy coffee beans, look to local third-wave coffee shops “as they’re more likely to have quality beans that are not over-roasted,” Schumack adds. “If you’re in a market where they sell fancy beans at the grocery store, check for a ‘roasted on’ date, not a ‘best by’ date.”

While checking the dates isn’t a guarantee of quality, it’ll let you know the beans are fresh. “As your beans age, they let off a lot of gasses,” he says. “The gasses are what create a ‘bloom’ when brewing the coffee. If there is no bloom, you likely have old beans.”

When using a French press, let the coffee grounds settle at the bottom and don’t push the plunger all the way down.

One of Schumack’s favorite at-home brewing methods is the French

press. “They’re an easy way to break into the world of coffee wonks,” he says. When using one, or any method to brew coffee, do as much as you can to eliminate inconsistencies by measuring your coffee and water. He uses a 1:18 ratio—meaning for 15 grams of coffee, he’ll pour 270 grams of water.

“Many people do not like how thick the coffee from a French press is, or the way their cup has suspended coffee grounds in it,” he says. Here’s his trick for avoiding the latter:

Instead of using the plunger right away after four minutes, take a spoon and break the crust at the top of the French press. Begin to push down all of the coffee grounds. Then walk away for another five minutes. While you are away, all of the coffee grounds will settle to the bottom of the French press. When you use the plunger, don’t push it all the way down so as not to disturb the coffee bed. Pour your cup of joe and enjoy the complex flavor of a French press without any of the muck at the bottom of your cup!

Don’t store your coffee in the fridge.

Storing coffee in your fridge isn’t doing it any favors. It doesn’t keep coffee fresher for longer and can even affect the quality of flavor in your coffee. “Your coffee can absorb moisture from your fridge and even absorb the smell of any pungent foods in there,” Chloe Langham says. “It’s best to keep it in a cool, dry place away from light, like a cabinet—if you have a jar or airtight container, even better!”

Use an espresso shot right after you make it.

If you often get distracted when making coffee with espresso, that could be the reason your cup tastes more bitter. “There’s something called a dead espresso shot,” Bryanna Buchman, a former Starbucks barista, says. “Basically, once the espresso is brewed, it should be poured into the milk

Use an espresso shot right after you make it.

If you often get distracted when making coffee with espresso, that could be the reason your cup tastes more bitter. “There’s something called a dead espresso shot,” Bryanna Buchman, a former Starbucks barista, says. “Basically, once the espresso is brewed, it should be poured into the milk (if for a latte) or drank almost immediately while it is still a nice brown color,” she continues. “If you let it sit, it becomes a dark brown, almost black color and will taste really bitter.”

Fill your mug with hot water, then pour it out before adding your coffee.

When drinking coffee at home, we tend to take our time sipping it. “One thing you can do to keep it hot longer is to heat up more water in your kettle or hot water heater, and pour some directly into the glass or mug you’ll be drinking from,” Suhail Mandani, a longtime barista and co-founder and managing partner of [Saltwater Coffee](#), says. “Dump the water out right before pouring the hot coffee in. This will ensure the glass or mug pulls the heat out of the coffee at a slower rate, keeping your coffee hotter for longer.” *[Ed. note: You don’t have to dispose of the water—use it to create your next batch of iced coffee!]*

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Want to take it a step further? “You can also pour hot water from the kettle into the server, container, or carafe you are brewing into, which will have the same warming effect,” Mandani says.

Froth your milk.

A really easy way to elevate your at-home coffee game is to froth your

milk. "I'd recommend a milk frother for barista-level coffee, but that can be pricey," Teresa Dang, a former Starbucks barista, says. "If you want an alternative, buy a frothing wand and warm up milk on the stovetop with the wand to foam it."

An added bonus? Frothed milk will make your drink look prettier, and you can even try your hand at latte art.

Use a drip coffee maker as a pour-over.

One pro hack that always comes to mind for Tyler Schultz, the director of coffee for [MistoBox](#), is the drip coffee maker hack. "Unplug it and use it as a pour-over with hot water from your kettle," he says. "The heating elements in the majority of cheaper automatic home brewers don't really get hot enough to brew and extract all of the delicious flavors that balance out the more acidic, sour compounds that are extracted first." He recommends using hot water just off the boil when brewing, especially with lighter roasts.

Cheat Guide to Perfect Brewing, courtesy of Tyler Schultz

CHEAT GUIDE TO PERFECT BREWING

If your coffee tastes too sour, bright, acidic, or weak try the following:

- Increase the amount
- Use a slightly finer grind
- Agitate (stir) the grounds while brewing

If your coffee tastes too acidic, or weak try the following:

- Increase the amount of coffee used in relation to water
- Use a slightly finer grind
- Agitate (stir) the grounds while brewing
- Increase water temperature
- Increase contact/ brew time

If your coffee tastes too bitter, intense, chalky, or bold try the following:

- Decrease the amount of coffee used in relation to water
- Use a coarser grind
- Decrease water temperature
- Decrease contact/ brew time



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