

Coffee Machines: Making the Perfect Cup

There are basically four types of coffee makers on the market today: the drip, the vacuum, the French press, and the stovetop. Each requires a different type of preparation and a varying amount of time and involvement on behalf of the user. However, having different types of coffee makers allows the user to find his or her particular taste and preference and make coffee at home.

Drip coffee makers:

The drip coffee is the easiest and most common coffee maker used today, partly due to its simplicity and efficiency. The machine itself does most of the work - you just add the freshly ground coffee and cold water. The drip coffee machine is an efficient method whereby the cold water is poured into the reservoir and the heating element then delivers the heated water for brewing. The coffee is ready in a matter of minutes. Paper filters are used to hold the coffee grounds. These filters are then discarded after each use, so the clean up is easy. The drip coffee machine burner will keep the coffee hot for an extended period of time after brewing.

Vacuum style coffee makers:

Vacuum style brewing has been around since 1840. A vacuum style coffee maker is made up of two separate glass containers stacked one on top of the other with the brewing taking place in the top section. The lower section is filled with cold water, which heats up to a boiling point. A siphon will pull the hot water from the lower section through the grounds and into the top section. Then gravity takes over and the coffee will feed back into the lower section, leaving the coffee grounds in the top section. When you take the top section off, your freshly brewed coffee is ready to be served. Many people prefer vacuum style brewing rather than drip coffee brewing, due to the taste that the drip coffee paper filters leave behind.

Stovetop coffee makers:

Stovetop coffee makers have two separate, stacked pots very similar to the vacuum style coffee makers; however, the grounds and cold water are in the same container. In the stovetop method, the second container houses the finished product. The lower container holds the water, filter basket, and the ground coffee. The lower container needs to be heated, forcing the water through the grounds that get siphoned from the lower to the top container. The coffee is then be ready to be served from the top container. The style and shape of the stovetop coffee maker makes it a very attractive piece to those who want an elegant flare in their coffee makers. However, the stovetop coffee maker is not recommended for larger parties. Also, when preparing the coffee, it must not be allowed to boil - for this could potentially lead to a bitter tasting coffee.

French Press coffee maker:

The French press method, which was developed in 1933, is a simple design yet produces a full-bodied coffee. The method consists of filling the canister with one tablespoon of coarsely ground coffee for every cup of hot water. The plunger handle is then placed onto the pot to aid in the heat retention, and is then slowly depressed. The stainless steel mesh of the plunger will push the grounds to the bottom of the canister, separating them from the coffee. The coffee may then be served right from the canister. Coffee brewed this way must be consumed right away, for the glass canister losses heat quickly. This makes for a not very desirable cup of coffee. Stainless steel press pots are available, but are not as popular as the glass canisters.

No matter which coffee maker you choose, it is very important that you clean your coffee maker thoroughly. All four of these methods make great tasting coffee; however, each method has a unique process that must be developed and mastered by the user. The challenge is to find the one that best fits your needs and lifestyle!

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