

Coffeehouse Lingo: How to Order the Perfect Cup of Coffee

These days when you walk in to a coffee shop it's a whole new world. You're not just ordering a "coffee". You're ordering a "coffee drink". There's an entire language you need to know just to order a coffee drink!

It all starts with placing your order. It used to be that you'd tell a waitress what you wanted. Now this job is held by a barista, or a person who serves coffee drinks as a profession. You need to tell the barista the size of the coffee drink you want. If you look on the menu, small, medium, and large will probably not be there. Your size choices are usually short (8 oz), tall (12 oz), grande (16 oz) and venti (20 oz).

The hardest decision will be what coffee drink to order "Black, cream & sugar" is probably going to get a strange look from the friendly barista. Ordering a drip coffee drink is not the fashionable thing these days. The more common drinks are cafes or espressos. You then need to figure out if you prefer a latte, mocha, or a cappuccino. A latte is an espresso shot with steamed milk. A cappuccino is equal parts of espresso, steamed milk and frothed milk. Mocha is basically a latte or a cappuccino with chocolate syrup added. But these are just the basics! The following list contains just a few of the coffee drinks available in a coffee shop (of course these names will vary slightly from one coffee shop to another).

-Caffe Americano: Single shot of espresso with 6 to 8 ounces of hot water added.

-Espresso Con Panna: An espresso shot with whipped cream.

-Ristretto: A restricted shot of espresso (called a short pull). During the brewing process, less water is allowed to pass through the coffee grounds. The makes for an especially intense flavor.

-Lungo: An extra long pull. During the brewing process, twice as much water is allowed to pass through the coffee grounds.

-Cafe Brevia: Cappuccino made with Half & Half instead of whole milk.

-Dry: Espresso with a small amount of foam and no steamed milk.

-Chairo: Espresso drink made "clear" by adding more milk.

-Caffe Mochaccino: Cappuccino with chocolate syrup.

-Frappe: Coffee drink made with ice cream and milk.

-Shot in the Dark: An espresso shot in coffee cup, then rest of cup filled with drip coffee.

Once you get your coffee drink, you just can't take a taste and say "Good coffee". One must first comment on the aroma (or bouquet), then the tone or appearance of the coffee drink. After the first taste, one can judge the body or weight consistency of the coffee drink. Next you need to describe how the coffee actually tasted. Was the coffee bitter, briny, buttery, spicy, sweet, stale, or even chocolaty? If all went well in the coffee preparation, and if you chose a good blend of coffee, this particular coffee drink could be considered mellow (or full and well balanced). Coffee sure has come a long way!

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