



What you should know about **Coffee**

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With millions of Americans jump-starting their day with coffee, it may come as a surprise that many of us don't know much about America's beloved beverage. Where does coffee come from? Are there any health risks to drinking coffee? How much coffee is too much? Many health studies have attempted to answer these questions, and the research continues to grow.



Coffee trees are native to east Africa, but today, Brazil, Vietnam, and Colombia are the largest exporters of coffee. Coffee beans are the seeds of two different species of coffee trees—arabica and robusta. Roasting transforms the raw, green coffee beans into flavorful and aromatic beans. The bean color is a good indicator of flavor balance, medium roasts giving the fullest body, with darker roasts yielding more potent and bitter tastes.

History



The original Arab version of brewed coffee, which still thrives in the Middle East, is combining the finely powdered beans with water and sugar in an open pot, which produces a very concentrated coffee with some sediment. The first Western modifications of coffee brewing date from around 1700, when the French isolated the beans in a cloth bag and eventually developed the drip pot, producing a sedimentless brew with reduced astringency. Then in the 1850's, the most important innovation of coffee brewing was made: the Italian espresso, a word that signifies rapid production for a single customer, made possible by forcing water through the grounds with high pressure. Standard American filter-drip coffee came later.

Flavor

Coffee flavor is a balance of acidity, bitterness, and astringency with countless aroma compound variations (nutty, fruity, spicy, buttery...). Robusta coffees develop a characteristic smoky aroma that is less acidic, which is valued in dark roasts. Milk and cream reduce the astringency of coffee by binding to the compounds responsible for bitterness.

Storage

Once roasted, whole coffee beans keep for a couple of weeks at room temperature, or a couple of months in the freezer. Once the beans have been ground, room temperature shelf life is only a few days.

Coffee & Health

Who knew?...Coffee, the traditionally criticized beverage for negative health implications, has made headlines in recent years for having a wide range of health benefits. Research shows that regular consumption of 1-3 cups of fresh coffee daily is a healthy way to start the morning. Here's a look at some of the more scientifically supported health perks of coffee:

- Can lower the risk of type 2 diabetes
- May protect premenopausal women against breast cancer
- May reduce colon cancer risk
- Lowers risk for liver cirrhosis
- May inhibit inflammation in postmenopausal women, thereby helping prevent cardiovascular disease
- May help prevent gallstones
- Lowers Parkinson's disease risk
- May protect against Alzheimer's
- Reduces the onset of asthmatic attacks
- Provides antioxidant protective effects



**Many of these studies do not take into account how the coffee is brewed and the freshness of the beans—freshly roasted & brewed coffee may contain the most beneficial compounds.*

A NOTE ON GOURMET COFFEE BEVERAGES

A latte or café mocha is a morning jumpstart for many people, but a recent study found that gourmet coffee drinks can add nearly 200 additional calories to your daily intake. You can reduce your coffee calories by switching to skim milk, passing on the whipped cream, and adding modest amounts of natural sugar or honey.



Caffeine

Some of coffee's reported benefits are a direct result of its higher caffeine content. An 8 oz cup of coffee contains about **3.5x more** than the same serving of tea or soda. In addition, caffeine is a stimulant that can fight fatigue, enhance mood and boost athletic performance. For most adults, moderate amounts of caffeine—1-3 cups of coffee—pose no health problems. However, coffee **may not be for everyone**, as some caffeine-sensitive individuals cannot tolerate excessive amounts. In addition, caffeine can have a diuretic effect, increasing water loss through urination.

QUICK TIP: Sweet taste doesn't always have to mean more sugar

Spice up ground coffee before brewing with cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, nutmeg or allspice or add a hint of sweetness by adding ¼ tsp vanilla to a cup of coffee.