

The Ultimate Espresso Cheat Sheet v1.0

Important Definitions:

Americano – Hot water at a temperature of ~93° C (~200° F) with espresso brewed on top. Smoother and more drinkable than drip coffee, but with the distinct espresso taste.

Cappuccino – A beverage consisting of a varying number of espresso shots, topped with a mixture of steamed milk and microfoam, which should when allowed to settle, deliver 2cm of microfoam at the top of the cup. A standard American size is a double shot in a 360ml (12 oz.) cup. The traditional Italian beverage is served, by Italian law, as a single shot beverage in a 150-180ml (5-6 oz.) cup.

Coffee – A shrub-like plant grown in tropical and Mediterranean climates which produces cherry-sized fruits containing a green coffee bean. The pulp is removed by hand or mechanical means, and the bean is allowed to dry. The green bean can then be shipped, roasted, ground, brewed, and consumed. *Coffea Arabica* is the most well known species of coffee, and the most widely used. The three main coffee growing regions of the world are sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South America, and Indonesia.

Espresso – A beverage consisting of 9g (.32 oz) of finely ground, dark roasted coffee beans brewed under ~9 atmospheres of pressure (135psi) at a temperature of 90-92° C (194–198° F). The result is a syrupy 30ml (1 oz.) of liquid topped by a thick golden foam, called crema. A *doppio*, or double shot, has the proportions doubled (18g of ground coffee, 60ml of liquid). The coffee grounds should be evenly tamped in the portafilter with around 40 lbs of force into a flat or slightly concave level puck. One shot of espresso is roughly equal in caffeine content to 120ml (4 oz.) of drip brewed coffee.

Espresso Machine – A steam-driven brewing mechanism consisting of a steam tank, a water tank, a group head (the espresso brewing mechanism), portafilters (the handles the coffee goes into) and steam wands.

Latte – A beverage consisting of a varying number of espresso shots, topped with steamed milk and 1cm of microfoam. A standard size is a double shot in a 360ml (12 oz.) cup.

Macchiato – Italian for “marked.” A single or double shot of espresso with an ounce or two of textured milk added.

Microfoam – A dense emulsion created by the careful steaming and aeration of milk, characterized by nearly microscopic bubbles. This foam is the basis of lattes and cappuccinos, the two mostly widely consumed espresso drinks. Microfoam is what makes steamed milk distinct from mere heating.

Ristretto – Italian for “restricted.” A shot of espresso which is stopped before it can completely brew. A ristretto should be 20ml (.67 oz.) for a single shot, and 40ml (1.33 oz.) for a double shot. Ristrettos are usually employed when a weaker but sweeter beverage is desired.

Steamed Milk – Milk aerated and heated by the steam wand of an espresso machine to a temperature of roughly 65-70° C (149-158° F). Milk scalds at 82° C (180° F) and should never be heated to that temperature. The “Ouch-2-3 Rule” should be used when steaming milk – a person's skin cannot stand solid contact with temperatures above 60° C (140° F). Once the barista's brain registers “ouch,” count to three and stop steaming the milk.

Shelf Life of Coffee:

Pettigrew's Rule of Three – Three weeks once the beans are roasted. Three minutes once the beans are ground. Three seconds in the machine before you brew.