

Enhancing the Flavor Profile of Your Coffee

BY ANDREW M. MALEC

When I was asked to write a food article, I was excited because I am a “foodie” and consider myself a home chef. I am always thinking about food, flavor profiles, and trying new cuisines. I thought that maybe I should write the article on how to make a Thai curry dish—my favorite cuisine and something that I prepare on a frequent basis. Perhaps I should write the article on how to prepare soft scrambled eggs, or on the history/cultural influences of a food product. As I was exploring ideas for this article with my wife, she encouraged me to “keep it simple” and write the article on how

to enhance a cup of coffee since I have been told on several occasions that I make great coffee. That seemed way too simple for a food article. However, as I pondered the idea as a potential topic, it reminded me that sometimes the “craft of cooking” is merely enhancing the simplest of things. Further, most of us have coffee at home which makes the tips I am going to describe accessible to almost everyone.

First, a good cup of coffee starts with the quality of the coffee itself. Like any dish that you prepare in the kitchen, it always starts with good ingredients; coffee is no exception. So, ensure that you have decent coffee. Second, use two

tablespoons of coffee per six ounces of cold, filtered water to ensure that you will get a rich, flavorful cup of coffee; using less than two tablespoons per cup will produce a weaker and more bitter cup of coffee. However, you can further enhance your coffee by adding a few ingredients to the coffee grounds before brewing.

Adding a pinch of salt, a few grinds of black pepper, and a few dashes of cinnamon to the ground coffee before brewing will produce an aromatic, slightly sweet and spicy flavor profile to your coffee. I realize that some of you may think it odd to season your coffee, but seasoning enhances the flavor of any dish that one is preparing in the kitchen (e.g., scrambled eggs, steak, pasta, etc.), so why not enhance the flavor of coffee?

Salt enhances the flavor and dampens the bitterness of the coffee. And the addition of black pepper provides a spicy flavor profile to your coffee. Cinnamon is also a great addition because it gives a sweet and flavorful note to the coffee, and is a great aromatic! I prefer to use Vietnamese cinnamon because it is a more intense, fragrant type of cinnamon, as opposed to Sri Lankan cinnamon, which has a more delicate flavor. The sweet note of the cinnamon balances the spiciness of the black pepper and provides for a fantastic cup of coffee. Cardamom can also be substituted to replace the sweeter note of the cinnamon if you prefer a more nutty, minty/herbal flavor.

These are just a few tips on how to enhance your coffee. If you regularly drink coffee, your cup of coffee can begin to taste very “one-note.” The good news is that it does not have to remain a “one-note” flavor profile. By simply adding a few ingredients of your liking to the coffee grounds before brewing, you can create various aromatic, sweet, and spicy flavor profiles. I encourage you to be creative and try some of these suggestions. You may be surprised by the flavor profiles you can create. Cheers!



*A Gift for My Wife:
A Flavorful Cup of Coffee*

PHOTO BY ANDREW MALEC



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