

## Tip Sheet for French Press Brewing from Sweet Maria's

Now that you can buy a cheap French Press (also called a Press Pot) at K-Mart or Target, people seem to think they are missing something by not trying it out. Personally I love brewing in a press. It is the primary way that I drink coffee! **The advantages are many:**

- No paper filters to dispose of, to absorb aromatic coffee oils or to impart a "paper taste" to the coffee
- Total control over water temperature and brew time, unlike the auto-drip coffee maker that is rarely at correct brewing temperature (195-200 degrees) when the water hits the coffee.
- It's simple, easy and quick. It's fairly easy to clean up. I don't mind the additional sediment in the coffee, because there is also more body in the cup.

**... but is French Press Brewing for everyone? No!**

- There is more sediment in the cup: You never take that last sip. To manage the sediment, you need a decent burr mill that can create an even grind. If you have a whirling blade mill, you can install a Nylon Filter in addition to the Stainless Steel one to help manage the sludge. But it will always be there. Personally, I would not brew in a French Press if I had only a whirling blade grinder ... but they don't tell you that when you buy it!
- French Press brewing is used to make fresh coffee to consume immediately ...which is ideal. It is not good to leave the coffee in the press for any length of time. Tailor the size of the press or the amount you make to what can be consumed in 10 minutes or so. Don't try to keep it warm. Don't let the coffee sit longer in the press; even in the plunged position it continues to extract.
- For the above reason, I discourage the "travel press" design in which the press doubles as a cup and you drink out of it. And I don't like the stainless steel thermal French Press that insulates the coffee because it is no good to keep the coffee warm if it is still in contact with the grounds. If you need hot coffee for a longer period and want to use a press, decant the coffee into a thermos after brewing,

These are intended as a "starting point" for French press brewing - ultimately you will figure out the best and most convenient ways to use these brewing devices, so please remake, twist, turn, distort, decompile, torch, grind and brew these instructions to suit your own needs!

### Recommended French Press Brewing Method

- Use the finest even grind coffee you can, but coarse enough to avoid having the grind pass through the filter. I use a grind just a few notches coarser than filter drip, and nowhere near a coarse multipurpose or perc grind. The key to avoiding sediment is in the evenness of the grind, and a burr grinder will give you this.
- Pull the lid and plunger out of the glass beaker. Put one standard coffee measure (7.25 grams by weight is the standard) per 4 to 5 oz. water, into the beaker. Many presses measure cups in small 4 oz (about 125 ml) size called a Tasse. A 3 Tasse press makes about 12 ounces maximum. (That's 1 mug of coffee for many people!) Buy a press that's just a little larger than you need because you can always make less.
- Pour the correct amount of 195 to 200 degree water into the press, slowly at first to avoid creating a dry island of coffee grounds. Allow the coffee to float to the surface, which much of it should, Don't overfill the press. The water/coffee needs to be just at, or a little below the bottom of the beaker spout.
- Pick up the plunger by the knob so that the lid is down against the screen. Place it lightly on top of the press so that it keeps the heat in, but does not start to push down on the coffee at all. Leave it for 1 minute.
- After 1 minute either remove the lid and briefly stir the coffee with a spoon, or (and this is what I do) carefully swirl the press in a circular motion to agitate the brew and make the grinds sink. (Not all the grinds sink, they resurface at the top again. If all the grinds have sunk., You probably let it brew too long). If you removed the top, replace it.
- After another minute or 90 seconds, begin to plunge. **Please note:** most instructions have you plunge after 4-5 minutes rather than my recommended 2.5 to 3 minutes. This is because I prefer using the finest grind possible, to a coarse chunky grind that cannot make all the coffee oils and aromas available in the brew. Finer grinds extract faster. Hold the lid in place with one hand, and carefully start to push on the knob at the top to force the plunger screen downward, pushing the grinds with it to the bottom. Take care right at first, because it's easy to have the filter disc in crooked and allow a flurry of grounds to escape around it. If disaster strikes, don't worry. Just pull out the plunger and lid completely, rinse quickly in hot water, and start over right away.
- Push steadily and the plunger should reach the bottom in 20-30 seconds or less. There should be some resistance though. If you do all this, there should be a small amount of tan crema on the surface of the coffee in the plunger (provided your coffee is homeroasted or roaster fresh!) Pour, serve, don't save it! Coffee is best right away, within the first 10 minutes. Don't try to keep it hot, just make more fresh Press coffee if you need it. Enjoy!