

Tip Sheet: Yama Vacuum Brewer *from Sweet Maria's*

Vacuum brewing is a wonderful visual experience that just happens to result in great coffee. While these instructions may make it sound like it might require too much time and dedication, after several times you will find it is only slightly more laborious than other brewing methods, but much more fun! The following is meant to supplement the instructions that come with the brewer. More general tips on coffee brewing are located on this page www.sweetmarias.com/grind.brew.php

Brewing Instructions:

- Before you use the brewer for the first time, wash it thoroughly. With the Yama cloth filter, I would perform a mock brewing with no coffee just to condition the filter, or soak the filter through very hot water for a minute or two.
- Heat some fresh water until it nears the boiling point in a kettle or pan.
- You can prepare the coffee in the funnel (the top glass piece) while the water is boiling. Install the filter in the funnel by pulling the chain through the funnel shaft and hooking the end of the spring on the lip. With the Yama, place the funnel in the inverted plastic lid that doubles as a funnel stand.
- Add the correct amount of fresh coffee, ground as fine as you would for filter-drip brewing. This is fine, but not to the point where it clumps when you pinch it between your fingers. What is the correct amount? For all brewing it is 7.25 grams per 150 ml water. Huh? Well, that's a standard coffee measure (= a rounded tablespoon) per 5 oz. water. So a full pot in the Yama will take 5 scoops. Of course, you should brew coffee to your taste, but most people use too little coffee, and grind too coarse. This will make a weak brew in a vacuum pot.
- Make sure the outside of the bowl (bottom globe with handle) is dry (or it can crack when you turn on the flame). Pour your near-boiling water in the bowl, slowly to condition it to the heat. You can start with cold water; the process will take much longer though and I find the cup ends up tasting flatter as a result.
- Push the funnel onto the bowl. Not too hard, just snug. Twisting it in place can help make the seal more secure.
- If you have a gas burner set it to the LOWEST flame you possibly can. On an electric range, use the wire grid provided and set it on a low heat, on a small burner. On my stove the water is starting to be siphoned upward within 15 seconds when preheated water is used - longer if cold water is used. When all the water, (with the exception of a small amount which must remain in the bowl) has been drawn into the top, wait 30 seconds to 1.5 minutes (I prefer 1 min.) for the coffee to infuse. Some people like to give it a stir with a spoon. (When you see vigorous boiling in the top, try to lower the heat next time. The boiling you see is water vapor pressure releasing from the bottom, not actually boiling!)
- Extinguish the heat. When all the coffee has drained into the bowl, remove the funnel with a slight twist. Place it in the stand, serve up your wonderful coffee ...you have earned it!

The Yama is a stovetop model but you can use a spirit warmer or stove with a small platform, provided it generates enough heat.

Additional Comments:

- A note on grinding for vacuum brewing – As with any brewing process, a finer grind makes more of the surface of the coffee available to the water to dissolve. So you want to use the finest grind you can without clogging up the filter drainer. If your coffee takes a very long time to siphon down to the bowl (longer than 1 to 2 minutes) then use a coarser grind next time. If the coffee siphons down quickly but the flavor is weak, then use a finer grind.
- The only things that will cause the coffee not to siphon back down to the bowl are 1) too fine a grind of coffee is blocking the filter (see above); or 2) the vacuum seal did not form properly, so be sure you place the funnel into the bowl snugly, giving the funnel a slight twist into place. You can also try to wet the rubber seal slightly which can help form a better seal.
- If you choose to use a glass filter rod (like the glass Cona filter drainer) as a replacement for the filter assembly in the Yama 5 and 8 cup stovetop models, be very careful to watch that the coffee siphons correctly; the glass drainer can get clogged and if the pressure is not released, it can cause the glass bowl to implode! Whenever you are brewing with the replacement glass drainer, be sure to watch the brewer, and if it stalls (i.e. the coffee does not pull down to the bowl), wiggle the drainer to release the pressure or pull up on the funnel to break the vacuum. If it does not release - relight the flame on the bottom bowl, and the increased temperature ought to equalize the pressure.
- Vacuum pot coffee is very clean, and so may taste “weak” if you are used to French press or very strong coffee. You may need to increase the amount of coffee you use relative to the amount of water used as a result.

*Please note that the bowl and handle are NOT microwave safe! Do not try to reheat the coffee in the bowl as there are metal parts in the handle that will cause it to melt!