

sweet maria's

Chemex Brewer Tip Sheet

The Chemistry of Coffee Brewing:

When brewing coffee, hot water acts as a solvent which washes the soluble solids out of the coffee grinds and into the brew. Brew methods that use paper filters have only the soluble solids in the cup. Brew methods like French press, espresso or turkish coffee have insoluble solids suspended in the liquid. Five main factors influence control brewing results. First is the ratio of water-to-coffee. Second is the particle size of the coffee: a finer grind means more surface area of the bean is exposed to the water. Third is the temperature of the water, ideally between 198-204°F, since water is a better solvent at near-boiling temperature. Fourth is contact time, how long the water and coffee are in contact with each other. Last is agitation; stirring the coffee-water infusion increases extraction rate of soluble solids. Knowing these simple theories might help you troubleshoot that next bitter, weak, or flat tasting cup.

Recommended Chemex Brewing Method

1. Open the Chemex-Bonded Coffee Filter into a cone. One side will have 3 layers, the other side 1.. Place the cone in the top of your coffeemaker with the thick portion toward the pouring spout. You may use non-Chemex filters like the Filtropa brand in #4 or Filtane #6 cone size, but they may break and Chemex filters are specifically designed to perform with the brewer. Using hot water, wet the paper filter. The Chemex filter sticks to the glass so you can invert it and pour off the water.
2. Using a medium grind, add one coffee measure (about 8 grams by weight) of coffee per 5 oz cup. If possible, weigh the dose of coffee. Because dark roasts take up more volume than light roasts, measuring ground coffee by volume can be inaccurate. On the proper grind: If the water stalls completely in the grounds - your grind is too fine. If it pours through too fast, and the resulting coffee is weak - then the grind is too coarse. Adjust to your preference!
3. After the water boils, remove from the heat for 30 seconds. It should now be about 195 to 205°F. Chemex recommends pouring a small amount of water over the grinds, just enough to wet them. Pre-wetting allows the coffee to "bloom", or swell, and prepare for even infusion. I think the results are better if you initially fill the filter half-way (getting all the grinds wet in the process).
4. After the grinds are wet, simply pour the remaining water slowly in a circular motion, keeping the coffee in as compact an area as possible. Don't pass too much water through the grounds or you will have weak coffee with over-infused bitter components. Once the desired amount of coffee is brewed, dispose of the spent grounds and filter (great for the compost or vermiculture!). Replace the filter with a Chemex Glass Lid to keep the coffee hot.

Further Tips

- Also, Chemex brewing is best when brewing larger amounts of coffee: paper taste and heat loss are more noticeable when trying to brew a small batch of say 12 oz.
- I don't recommend applying heat to keep the coffee hot. Better to have a lukewarm cup with good flavor than a hot cup with stinky flavor because it's on a burner too long. If you do use an electric burner, use a Chemex Wire Grid.

Chemex contact info: chemexcof@aol.com
More on brewing with Chemex: www.sweetmarias.com/brewinstr/brewing.inst.chemex.php
More info about brewing coffee: www.sweetmarias.com/grind.brew.php