

Espresso : Spur of the Moment

Espresso is about an ounce of a dark, heavy-bodied, aromatic, low acid, bitter-sweet coffee drink topped by a thick reddish brown foam of tiny bubbles. It is not just a strong cup of coffee as may be implied by the smaller volume; the foam, or *crema*, which captures the intense coffee flavors, is as important as the liquid underneath.

In more technical terms, espresso is a colloidal dispersion produced by emulsifying the insoluble oils in ground coffee. These oils don't normally mix with water. But under intense pressure generated by commercial espresso machines, oils are extracted from ground coffee, formed into microscopic droplets, and suspended in liquid coffee concentrate. *It is this emulsification of oils that distinguishes the espresso from strong coffee.*

Making a Perfect Espresso

But making the perfect espresso remains elusive to most practitioners outside of Italy. It takes a good, well-tuned espresso machine, a well trained barista proficient in the art of espresso, properly blended and freshly roasted beans, and, precisely ground and consistently dosed and packed coffee.

European Style Espresso

Much of what is made and sold as espresso in North America is not espresso at all. It is merely a strong cup of coffee, *albeit* made with an expensive espresso machine. Instead of being the essence of coffee it is supposed to be, the average espresso is weak, watery, bitter, burned, without aroma, unpleasant and unsatisfying. Most of them have little or no *crema*.

European espresso, on the other hand, tends to be dense and bitter-sweet with ample *crema* and intense, distinctive flavors. Although there are differences in roasting styles, there exists a broad consensus as to what a perfect espresso is.

Blending for Espresso

Blending for espresso is very different from

blending for brewed coffee because the two beverages are vastly different. Brewed coffee extracts mostly the water-soluble components in ground coffee, the flavoring compounds, that account for the aroma, taste, body and color of the beverage. Brewed coffee, regardless of how it is made, can accommodate a wider range of final product characteristics.

European espresso, on the other hand, exhibits a much narrower spectrum of characteristics in terms of acidity, body, color, *crema*, aroma, taste and aftertaste. For example, high acidity, considered by many as a virtue in brewed coffee is not desirable in quality espresso.

Ideal Italian style espresso is very low in acidity, high in body, and it features plenty of rich, velvety, persistent reddish brown *crema* that captures the aroma and taste of ground coffee. *Crema* is the single most important indicator of a well made espresso and it is essential for capturing the intense flavors of ground coffee. Vapors produced during espresso extraction are contained in the tiny oil droplets and, as the espresso is consumed, these bubbles release bursts of volatile aroma molecules that find their way to the olfactory receptors in the nose through the pharynx.

Malabar Gold Espresso Blend

Malabar Gold is patterned after the European espresso, more like the Italian espresso. *The crema produced by this blend is astonishingly rich and persistent, lasting for over forty minutes* before it breaks in the middle to reveal the dark brew underneath.

Malabar Gold, the result of seven years of development and testing, provides a sweet, smooth, mellow espresso with lots of body. It is a low acid blend with no unpleasant bitterness and not even a hint of sourness. Its aroma and fragrance are pleasant and distinguishing and its taste is unique and outstanding.

Typical American espresso contains about five different coffee beans; some six, seven and some as many as nine coffees. Except as a gimmick,

this has little value because one can not discern the effect of the last bean of the ninth coffee in the blend. **Malabar Gold** normally has only three beans in it and it will never have more than four.

Each coffee in most espresso makes comparable contributions to all aspects of the espresso; viz., body, *crema*, color, aroma, taste, and after-taste. Altering the proportion of one coffee affects all the parameters somewhat equally; balancing the blend becomes a very complex process.

The rigors of blending is simplified in **Malabar Gold** by bringing the physical properties, such as body, *crema* and color from one set of beans and the flavor components, such as aroma, taste, and after-taste, from a different set of beans.

Low Acid Coffees

Malabar Gold uses as its base the "Super Grade" of the one-of-a-kind Monsooned Arabica, the lowest acid coffee in the world. This coffee, exclusive to Josuma, provides a smooth, mellow base with ample body and *crema* of its own. It has a mild, pleasant earthy flavor that is so muted as not to conflict with the flavoring coffees in the blend. Flavor components, aroma and taste, are brought into this blend by the use of high-lighter coffees whose characteristics are proudly displayed in this espresso. They are some of the most aromatic coffees in the world.

Premium Washed Robusta

Malabar Gold espresso is enhanced by the use of a premium washed robusta from India that is clean and mellow. Unlike the dirty, rubbery, cheap robusta commonly available, this has a clean, smooth, soft cup with no rubbery after taste. It adds to the caffeine content of the espresso for that "extra kick" one looks for.

Since most espresso beverages sold in America is milk based, this high quality robusta is an important additive to help "fortify" the coffee taste. By cutting into the milk, it helps coffee flavors of the arabica high-lighters to come through.

Perhaps the most significant effect of this premium washed robusta is in enhancing the richness and longevity of the *crema* without detracting from the neutral character that is so critical for a superior espresso. It also adds a unique flavor profile, typical of European espresso, that simply can not be obtained with arabica alone.

Roasting Guidelines

It takes more than just mixing the beans together to produce this ready-to-roast blend. Our initial attempts at roasting this green blend produced disastrous results. At various roast levels, some beans stayed "green and grassy" while others were clearly over roasted. It took nearly three years, working diligently, to perfect this green pre-blend and offer it as a ready to roast coffee. In the process, we learned a lot more about green coffee characteristics, and we now understand more about roast behavior of these coffees than we ever have.

We recommend that **Malabar Gold** be roasted to "full city"; darkest you can roast before any oil shows on the freshly roasted beans. In this lighter roast, varietal features of the coffee beans in the blend are preserved. Use of low acid coffees, such as the Monsooned coffees, is critical for employing a light roast.

In one Sivetz type air roaster, the bean temperature reaches 457 deg F. The temperature setting will vary from roaster to roaster depending on the machine design. In practice, you may have to take it into the "second crack" to find the point at which it oils in your particular roaster and then back off for subsequent roasts.

This Blend Needs Resting

Malabar Gold benefits immensely from resting for about 72 hours after roasting for the flavors to fully develop. It would take longer if the beans are stored in one way valve bags immediately after they are roasted, while they are still quite warm.

Finer Grind

Malabar Gold requires to be ground finer than most other blends to produce a quality espresso. Some grinders simply cannot grind fine enough and are unsuitable for use with this blend.

Bag Size

Malabar Gold in the ready to roast form is packaged in double jute bags that are hydrocarbon free. They come 100 lbs nett to a bag.

Josuma Coffee Company

Josuma Coffee Company imports fine specialty coffees for distribution to brokers, wholesale roasters, and roaster/ retailers in the United States and Canada.

Josuma Coffee Company, located in the San Francisco Bay Area, was formed in 1992 to function as a knowledgeable importer and to act as an effective liaison between the coffee producers and the Specialty Coffee market in North America.

This coffee is available thru:

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JOSUMA
COFFEE COMPANY

MALABAR GOLD®

*a green,
ready-to-roast
premium
european
espresso
blend*

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