

Title:

Coffee Pods and Espresso Machines

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Summary:

Making the perfect espresso requires skill and knowledge that not many outside Italy possess. But with the advent of coffee pods and espresso machines, the guesswork is taken out of making the perfect shot of espresso.

Keywords:

espresso pod machines, coffee pods, espresso machines

Article Body:

There's nothing like the **perfect espresso**. Finely ground, dark roasted coffee, pressed and percolated into a strong, rich coffee drink that delights the senses and perks up your day. In Italy, ordering a coffee means that you're ordering an espresso. The Italians stop in their local bar once, twice, even three times a day for the perfect cup of espresso. But here in America, it's not as easy to find espresso done right. The grind of the coffee, the right temperature, the pressing of the coffee and the foaming of the milk are skills that few people know how to wield properly on this side of the ocean. But now with **espresso machines** and **coffee pods**, the guesswork is taken out of making espresso at domestic bars or even in your own kitchen at home.

In Italy, most Italians wouldn't recognize what we think of as a coffee maker. They use a "machinetta", a contraption that looks like a metal hourglass that has a top like a pitcher. The machine has 2 chambers. Water and coffee go into the bottom chamber. The machine is placed on the stovetop and heated until the water boils, percolating through the espresso grinds and into the second chamber. The pressure on the grinds between the two chambers insures that the coffee is pressed - the word espresso means "expressed" - and the rich taste comes from getting as much of the flavor out of the grinds as possible. The milk is heated and whipped separately. But it's easy to make a mistake in this process. Either by using the wrong amount of water or coffee, turning the heat on too strong or not using the right timing.

The growing popularity of espresso has meant that people want an easier, error free way to make it at home. So now you can find espresso machines that let you get the right combination of the necessary steps every time. There is a wide

range of models to choose from, with different features and capacity. Some are designed for use in restaurants or bars, capable of producing large volumes of coffee in shorter amount of time. Unless you do enough entertaining at home to justify the cost, these probably aren't the best solution for you.

Models made for home usually produce either one or two "shots" of espresso at a time. If you prefer your espresso "macchiato", with milk, or you want to turn your espresso into a cappuccino, you will want to get an espresso machine with a nozzle that creates the steam and lets you froth the milk. Beyond these choices, you might want to consider a product that lets you use coffee pods. These pods look like large tea bags. They contain the exact amount of espresso to deliver a perfect shot every time. You simply put the pod into its slot, close it, and start the machine. When the cycle has finished, you just throw the pod away. It helps prevent any problems with measuring out the espresso and makes cleaning up absolutely easy.

If you purchase a machine that uses coffee pods, you might want to consider whether or not it can also take either another brand's coffee pods or regular loose espresso. Some machines do, but many will work only with the coffee pods that the same company also designs. Having the flexibility to use either the pod or loose coffee means you can still use it even if you run out of pods, which might need to be special ordered. Until these machines become more popular, it's not likely that the pods will be carried consistently in local grocery stores. Plus, the choice to use either kind of coffee also gives you the freedom to experiment with other roasts or flavors of espresso to further indulge your love of coffee.