

Title:

Latte Frothing Basics - How to Make Delicious Frothed Milk

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483

Summary:

Steamed milk with delicious froth is essential to a good cup of cafe latte or cappuccino. Find out the basics of how to make a perfect cup of steamed milk.

Keywords:

frothing milk, steaming milk, steamed milk, how to steam milk, cappuccino, coffee

Article Body:

Few coffee drinkers fully appreciate the fact that frothed milk is what makes a cappuccino or latte. Without the milk and foam, it is just plain espresso. Like anything worth learning, it takes a bit of practice, even the most capable baristas have a hard time at first. Let us take a look at the frothing process.

Most experts agree that it is best to begin with a stainless steel pitcher, some cold milk and an espresso machine with a steaming wand. Past that, there are as many differing ideas about the frothing process as there are blends of espresso.

Stainless steel is preferred for its easy maneuverability, but any non-plastic container will work as long as it will not melt or crack with heat. The kind of milk you start with depends on the texture of foam you want to achieve. The higher the fat content, the more dense and more difficult to froth the milk will be. Skim milk produces light, airy foam, and is probably the easiest for beginners to practice with.

To determine how much milk is needed, fill the cups you plan to drink from with half the milk the drink requires. For example, a cappuccino is half espresso and half steamed milk, so you would fill the cup one-fourth full with cold milk because steaming will cause the milk to roughly double in volume. Pour the milk in the pitcher.

It is important that the tip of the steam wand is consistently held just below the surface of the milk. If it is too held too deep, the milk will scorch or boil before it froths. If it is not deep enough, it will blow the milk out of the pitcher and make a mess. Keep the palm of your free hand flush with the bottom of the pitcher. This will help you monitor the temperature of the milk

without interrupting the process.

Slide the pitcher away from the machine as to keep the tip of the wand just under the surface as the milk expands. At this point, if the milk is about the same temperature as the palm of you hand, plunge the wand deeper into the milk to warm it up. If the pitcher feels too hot, turn off the steam and tap the pitcher against the work surface. This lets large bubbles to escape and helps cool the milk. It is important to never let the milk boil.

Using a long-handled spoon to carefully hold the froth back, add the milk to the drink. Be careful to pour in one continuous stream. A spoon may be used to add the desired amount of froth on top of the drink, but if the frothing is done well, the result is a fine micro foam that can be poured directly from the pitcher. Cinnamon, nutmeg or grated chocolate is a nice addition to any drink.