

# Perk Up!

Most of us can't get out of bed without it, but coffee is more than a morning pick-me-up: it's also a powerful brain and body booster

By *Hannah Bass and Matthew Kadey, R.D.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KENJI TOMA

Green tea gets all the glory but in fact your top source of free radical-fighting antioxidants comes in a humbler cup: coffee. The beans behind your brew—actually the seeds of the coffee tree's fruit—contain the same kind of nutritionally supercharged compounds found in plant-based foods such as chocolate, but without the sugary downside.

**GROUND CONTROL**  
For a fresher cup, grind your own beans. Use a fine grind for espresso, medium for a drip machine, and coarse for a French press.

**BEST PRESSED**  
For rich flavour with minimal effort, add hot water to grinds, steep, and then push the plunger. *Bistro grinder and Chambord French press, both bodum, available at [rawcoffee.com](http://rawcoffee.com).*

**FROTH AT THE MOUTH**  
With warm milk and this handheld aerator, you can whip up foamy coffeehouse drinks in less than a minute—minus the inflated price tag. *Aerolatte To Go frother, Dhs62, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)*



### Health Benefits in Every Cup

Studies show that coffee can help ward off mental decline, certain cancers, Parkinson's disease, high blood pressure, and even extra pounds (yes, really!). A study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine found that each time you refill your cup of java (caffeinated or decaf) in a day, you slash your diabetes risk by 7 percent; in another study, drinking two to three cups of coffee each day was associated with a 21 percent lower risk of heart disease.

To reap the maximum health benefits and get a great, fresh taste, Kim Thompson, owner of Dubai's Raw Coffee store and café, recommends buying your java in bean form and grinding just before you brew up. "Grind them to the correct size for the press or cafetière you're using," she says, continuing: "Boil the water and then let it cool for a couple of minutes, down to about 92 degrees."

Kim adds that coffee can spice up plenty of dishes—and not just the standard tiramisu: she recommends trying brewed coffee as a marinade and grounds as a rub for meats.

Most of us drink coffee with breakfast, but it's the perfect partner for food throughout the day. Gennaro Pelliccia, Costa's master coffee taster, says it's all about picking the right roast for your pairing. "Toasted nuts, seeds and anything caramelised go with medium or darker roasts," he says, "whereas salad goes with lighter and drier coffees."

As with everything, coffee is best in moderation, despite the body benefits. "400mg of caffeine a day is safe for most people," says nutritionist Alison McLaughlin. "This is roughly equivalent to three 250ml cups a day. But keep in mind, most coffee cups and mugs start at 350ml, so people are consuming more caffeine than they think."

### SPIKE YOUR SIP

Cream and sugar may delay the uptake of antioxidants into your blood, says a study in *The Journal of Nutrition*. Instead, take a tip from Arabic coffee tradition and flavour grinds with spices before brewing.

**CARDAMOM**  
Remove the seeds from three pods and crush using a mortar and pestle or the flat of a knife.

**FRESH ORANGE ZEST**  
Grate in ½ teaspoon.

**STAR ANISE**  
Add one whole dried star-shaped fruit for a spicy-sweet licorice flavour.

**CINNAMON**  
Grate 1 teaspoon from a stick or sprinkle the same amount of ground cinnamon.

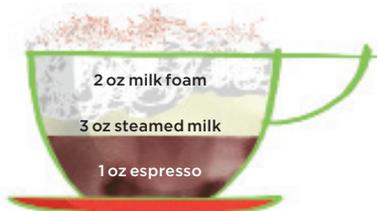
**NUTMEG**  
Use a spice grater to shave in ¼ teaspoon.

## YOUR CUP, DECONSTRUCTED

Unsure how a cappuccino differs from a latte? Consult this guide, courtesy of Giorgio Milos, Illy's master barista.



**ESPRESSO**  
(ehss-press-o)



**CAPPUCCINO**  
(kap-oo-chee-no)



**LATTE**  
(lah-tay)



**AMERICANO**  
(uh-mair-ih-kah-no)



**CAFE MOCHA**  
(ka-fay mo-kuh)



**ESPRESSO MACCHIATO**  
(ehss-press-o mah-kyah-toe)

### Espresso Granita

- 2½ cups espresso or strongly brewed coffee, hot
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Fresh mint, for garnish (optional)
- Whipped cream, for garnish (optional)

**1/** Chill an 8-inch square baking pan or other shallow container in the freezer. Pour hot coffee into a bowl and stir in sugar until dissolved. Mix in vanilla and let cool to room temperature. Pour coffee into the pan, cover the pan with aluminum foil or plastic wrap, and freeze until ice crystals start to form around the edges, about 2½ hours. Don't let the mixture freeze through.

**2/** With the tines of a fork, scrape the ice crystals into the centre of the container, cover, and return the pan to the freezer. Scrape ice crystals every 45 to 60 minutes until all the liquid has frozen into small crystals (about four times total).

**3/** Divide among four bowls and garnish with mint and whipped cream, if desired. Store any extra granita in the freezer, covered, for up to a week.

**MAKES 4 SERVINGS.**

*Per serving: 85 cal, 0 g fat, 19 g carbs, 21 mg sodium, 0 g fibre, 0 g protein*



COFFEE AND  
DESSERT,  
ALL IN ONE!