



**Wilson's**  
Coffee & Tea

## Buying Coffee, Drinking Coffee

**W**ilson's Coffee & Tea is Racine's original roaster of coffee. The roaster allows us to provide the freshest coffee and maintain a higher level of quality control than is otherwise available. In particular, we can try many different degrees and methods of roasting to determine how we think a particular coffee should be roasted to deliver the best possible flavor from each coffee we carry. Buying coffee this obsessed over is not enough to enjoy coffee to the fullest.

Coffee is perishable. It begins to stale as soon as it is roasted. By our standards, most coffee being sold is stale and would be thrown away before it even gets to the final point of sale. As a result, there are a lot of people who have never really had a cup of freshly roasted coffee. Our policy of roasting just what we need as we need it and not selling coffee pre-staled for your convenience puts you ahead of things there, but it is a mistake to stock up on coffee. We recommend buying only what you will use in one to two weeks. Coffee should be stored in a cool, dry place. It should be ground immediately before brewing as grinding accelerates the staling process. If you do not have a grinder, we sell small chopper grinders appropriate for use with automatic drip brewers. We will also be happy to grind coffee when you buy it, but you may notice the faster staling.

If you do not drink much coffee and cannot use what you will but within a month, freezing will do less harm than not. Freezing coffee instantly alters it, but the change is less dramatic than a few months of staling. A good compromise in this situation is to leave out the portion that you will use quickly according to the storage recommendations above and freeze the rest. When working with frozen coffee, it is important to remove only the coffee that will be used immediately. Coffee that is repeatedly frozen and thawed will quickly develop condensation, causing the quality to deteriorate more rapidly than if the coffee had been left out of the freezer entirely. Frozen coffee beans grind just as easily as room temperature beans and, provided the water is hot enough to brew good coffee, frozen grounds will brew just as well as room temperature grounds.

Water quality is one of the most important factors in coffee brewing. Coffee is, after all, mostly water. You should always start with cold running water. Bottled water does not contain enough oxygen and will produce a flat tasting cup of coffee. Filtering may or may not be necessary depending on the quality of your water. There are several tests you could do to determine if your water is good for brewing coffee, but there exists a very good test that is quick, simple, and free. Run your cold tap water, fill a glass from it, and taste the water as you drink it. If the water tastes like good, clean water ought to, there is no need for a filter. Any off qualities in the water will interfere with getting the proper flavor from your coffee.

Many coffee brewers come with a hot plate to keep the coffee hot after brewing. While this does keep the coffee hot, it also cooks the flavor out of your coffee. The hot plate on your brewer should be turned off as quickly as possible to avoid this. If you find that your coffee becomes unacceptably cold because of this, you may want to invest in a thermal carafe. We carry a number of bottles that will keep coffee hot longer than it maintains a good flavor.

People often ask us how much coffee they should be using. We can say how much coffee we use and these people are usually surprised at how much that is. The most common mistake in brewing coffee is probably not using enough. If you think you may have this problem, try adding an extra scoop or half scoop of coffee. If this improves the flavor of your coffee, try adding yet another scoop for your next pot. Repeat until your most recent pot of coffee is not better than the one before. If you enjoy several different kinds of coffee with different styles of roast, the optimal volume of coffee will not be the same from coffee to coffee and adjustments may be needed. Darker coffee beans are less dense than beans roasted to a lighter degree. A one pound bag of French Roast, for example, seems more full than a one pound bag of Yemen Mocha Sanani. When trying another coffee after finding out what you most enjoy for one, you may want to keep this in mind and use a lesser or greater volume of coffee to keep the weight of the coffee you brew consistent.

When your goal is to enjoy coffee to the fullest, you are the best judge of what is good. The best way to brew coffee is the way that produces what you consider to be the best coffee.