

Wake Up and Smell the Coffee!

BY SUE MAYFIELD GEIGER

Coffee consumption reduces rates of several common diseases.

Worldwide, we drink about 400 billion cups of coffee each day. A commodity, second only to oil, coffee is America's food import. tropical evergreen shrubs, these little red berries usually end up as a steaming cup of java for those of us who depend on its properties to kick start our day.

Legend has it that in circa 850 Ethiopia, a goat herder noticed that his goats acted very frisky after eating some strange berries from a nearby bush, so he popped some in his mouth and was soon frolicking with his goats. The goat herder told a monk who told his brothers and soon, they all found divine inspiration. Well, legends abound, but the truth is that coffee did come from Ethiopia; however, Arabs were the first people to cultivate it around circa 1100. By the 17th century, coffee had made its way to Europe, and eventually into the New World. Today, coffee is grown in a multitude of tropical countries, like Hawaii, Central America, Columbia, Brazil, Africa, Asia, and of course, Arabia.

For those of you who think that Starbucks is responsible for the social aspects of coffee, think again. Although the French invented "café society," coffeehouses sprang up in Greenwich Village

(New York) in the late 1940s, but the really hip hangouts appeared during the 1950s beatnik era where you could get your groove on with intellectual conversation, poetry, folk music, improvisational jazz, and stand-up comedy. Although we still enjoy the social aspects that coffee drinking provides, we are starting to realize its powerful health benefits. There is even an "Institute for Coffee Studies" at Vanderbilt University led by Dr. Peter Martin who praises its perks and encourages everyone on the planet to drink two to four cups a day to keep the doctor away. Stating that most previous studies focused only on caffeine, Martin says that coffee contains hundreds of compounds that may contribute to a better understanding and treatment of some of the most prevalent diseases of humankind, such as addiction, depression, heart disease, and Parkinson's. So, what's the secret? It turns out that the roasting process—not the raw beans—produces these compounds. Obviously not good news for those of you who prefer light roast, because research has found that dark roast coffee restores blood levels of vitamin E and glutathione (your body's most powerful antioxidant comprised of three amino acids) more effectively than light roast coffee.

With dark roast, the beans have been roasted to a higher temperature and for a longer time. Now, if you think that darker roast has the most caffeine, not so. Actually, the darker the coffee, the less caffeine it has because the caffeine concentration is given by the coffee to water ratio. Dark roast generates less acid because when the beans are roasted at high temperature, the chaff that covers them burns off—the chaff being responsible for gastric acid.

If you are truly hooked on light or medium roast, order a latte made with dark roast until you get accustomed to the taste.

It is said that French philosopher Voltaire drank 50 cups of coffee a day. Bach even wrote a cantata describing his love of the bean. Recent studies published in the New England Journal of Medicine gives today's coffee lovers the green light for as much as six cups a day. Researchers from the National Cancer Institute analyzed 229,119 men and 173,141 women ages 50 to 71 who filled out a questionnaire about their coffee intake at the beginning of the study (1995) and were followed until their death or the study's completion in December 2008. In relation to men and women who did not drink coffee, those who consumed six or more cups per day had approximately a 10% lower risk of death for the men; 15% for the women. So, drink up, go forth and enjoy your cup of Joe.

Coffee consumption reduces rates of these common diseases:

- Depression/anxiety
- Heart disease
- Type 2 Diabetes associated with obesity
- Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases
- Cancer
- Alcohol/drug addiction

Buying and brewing tips:

- Buy organic. Some coffee is contaminated with pesticides, so buy organic when possible.
- If you use a drip coffee maker, use non-bleached filters. They have a property that binds to lipid-like compounds, allowing the filter to remove them. White filters are chlorine bleached and some of the chlorine will be extracted from the filter during brewing.
- Purchase coffee in whole bean form and grind yourself to prevent rancidity.
- Dark roast contains less caffeine than lighter roasts and easier on your stomach.

Pumpkin Spice Coffee for Thanksgiving

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| 1 cup Kona coffee | 1 Tsp. Allspice |
| 4 Tsp. Ground Cinnamon | 1 Tsp. Nutmeg |
| 2 Tsp. Ground Ginger | 8 cups of water |
| | 4 Tbsp. almond milk |



Mix cinnamon, ginger, allspice and nutmeg. Place in the coffee filter. Add the ground coffee on top of the spice mixture. Brew 8 cups of water with the coffee/spice mixture and pour into glasses. Stir in almond milk. Makes 4 servings.



- Drink your coffee black if possible to avoid spiking insulin levels.

Caffeinated vs. Decaf:

- Those who are sensitive to the effects of caffeine often tolerate decaffeinated coffee better. There are health benefits to decaf coffee, although they are different from fully caffeinated versions.
- There are at least four decaffeination processes with much debate about which process is the best. They are: 1) Water process; 2) Precision process in which methylene chloride is used to extract caffeine molecules; 3) CO2 process; 4) Ethyl acetate process.
- Again, buy organic. However, many big coffee companies sort out their worst beans for the decaf process.
- Most decaf coffee in North America is decaffeinated outside the U.S.

Buy Fair Trade:

- The U.S. consumes one-fifth of all the world's coffee, making it the number one coffee consumer in the world, yet very little of it is fair trade coffee.
- The world's largest coffee producer is Brazil, followed by Columbia, Vietnam, Indonesia and Mexico. With 20 million families in 50 countries directly involved in coffee cultivation, buying fair trade can make a big difference in their lives.
 - Where to Buy: Starbuck's, Peet's Coffee and Tea, Costco, Safeway, Sam's Club, Target, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods are some of the many establishments advocating Fair Trade practices.

Candy Cane Coffee for Christmas

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| ¼ cup Jamaican coffee | 1 Tbsp. Stevia |
| 2 cups of water | 1 Candy Cane |
| 1 Tbsp. almond milk | |

Brew coffee and water. Pour coffee, almond milk and Stevia into a glass. Place candy cane in glass and stir. Makes 1 serving.

