

Understanding Different Coffee Roasts

Did you know that there are hundreds of kinds of coffee? That might not surprise you, but did you know there are also many different kinds of roasts? What's your favorite coffee roast – dark, light, or somewhere in between?

Coffee results when the roasted seeds or “beans” from a coffee plant are brewed. Coffee plants can be either Arabica or Robusta. Beans from an Arabica plant have a mild flavor, slightly sweet, with a hint of fruit or berry taste. Beans from the Robusta coffee plant have a higher level of caffeine and a more harsh flavor.

Coffee lovers have their go-to roast level. By learning about the types of coffees and variations of different coffee roasts, you can decide when to use each. The roast level provides a baseline guide to the taste you can expect.

While the type of bean does have an impact on taste, the roasting process gives coffee much of its flavor and aroma. How long the coffee beans are roasted impacts the body, flavor, and acidity. When the beans are roasted, they transform from green coffee beans to the aromatic brown coffee beans we know and love.

The length of time the beans are roasted affects the color, flavor, and aroma of the coffee when it's brewed. The color of a coffee bean can help identify the roast levels. Four types of coffee roasts are light roast, medium roast, medium-dark roast, and dark roast. The difference in coffee roasts is in their oil, caffeine, and acidity levels.

The names of the roasts and descriptions vary depending on the brand and type of coffee. The longer coffee beans roast, the darker in color they become, and the more the flavor and aroma change. The longer the beans roast, the less caffeine, and acidity they contain. Here's a breakdown of coffee roasts explained so you can pick a roast that's in line with the flavors you enjoy.

Light Roasts

Light roasts are lighter in color, mostly light brown. Light roast coffees have a light body, delicate flavors, and are more acidic. These beans do not have oil on the surface. Light roast coffee beans also keep most of the caffeine from the original state of the coffee bean. Some popular categories of light roasts include Cinnamon, Half City, Light City, and New England.

Medium Roasts

Medium roasts have a medium brown color and more body than light roasted beans. When beans are medium roasted, the result is beans with a more balanced acidity, aroma, and flavor. Some popular roast names for this roast level are American, Breakfast, City, and Regular.

Medium—Dark Roasts

Medium-Dark roasts have a richer, darker color with some oil on the surface of the beans. These roasts have a richer, fuller flavor, more body, and less acidity. Roasts in this category include After-Dinner, Full City, and Vienna.

Dark Roasts

Beans that have been dark roasted are dark brown or almost black. The beans can have an oily surface and a pronounced bold rich body. Dark roasted beans have a strong, sometimes spicy, and smoky flavor. This roast is known for having a bitter taste, but it actually has low acidity. Roast names that fall within this category include Continental, European, Espresso, French, Italian, New Orleans, and Viennese.

People should try all different types and different roasts before they determine their favorite roast level. Lighter roasts have less oil, more caffeine, and a higher level of acidity. Darker roasts are oilier with less of an acidic flavor and lower levels of caffeine.

By understanding the different types of coffee plants and coffee roasts, you can begin to explore coffees and find the one perfect for you.

(Sources: www.freshroastedcoffee.com; knowyourgrinder.com; www.ncausa.org; <https://www.perfectbrew.com/>)