

Fix Your Cup

Common coffee problems, what causes them, and how to fix them



Taste Problems

Tastes sour or sharp

Cause: under-extracted, the water pulled too little from the grounds.

Fix: grind finer, use hotter water (93-96C), and brew a little longer.

Tastes bitter or harsh

Cause: over-extracted, too much was pulled from the grounds.

Fix: grind coarser, use cooler water, and shorten the brew time.

Weak and watery

Cause: too little coffee, or the grind is too coarse.

Fix: use more coffee (tighter ratio) and grind a little finer.

Too strong or intense

Cause: too much coffee for the water used.

Fix: use less coffee, or add a splash of hot water to taste.



Espresso Flow

Shot pours too fast

Cause: grind too coarse or not enough coffee in the basket.

Fix: grind finer, add a little coffee, tamp level and firm.

Shot chokes or drips

Cause: grind too fine or too much coffee, water can't pass.

Fix: grind coarser and reduce the dose slightly.

Thin or no crema

Cause: stale beans or a grind that is too coarse.

Fix: use fresh beans (within a month of roast) and grind finer.



Milk & Foam

Milk won't foam

Cause: warm or old milk, or the wand sits too deep.

Fix: start with cold fresh milk, keep the tip just under the surface.

Big bubbles in the foam

Cause: too much air pulled in too quickly.

Fix: aerate near the surface only briefly, then submerge and swirl.

Scalded or burnt taste

Cause: the milk was overheated.

Fix: stop steaming at 60-65C, the jug should feel hot, not painful.



Brewing

Muddy or silty cup

Cause: grind too fine for the method, or fines slipping through.

Fix: grind coarser and use a clean, suitable filter.

Pour over drains too slow

Cause: grind too fine, the bed is clogging.

Fix: grind coarser and pour gently in slow circles.



Five Golden Rules

- Change **one thing at a time**, then taste.
- Always weigh your **coffee and water**.
- Grind **fresh**, just before brewing.
- Keep beans **airtight, cool and dark**.
- Sour means **finer**, bitter means **coarser**.