

## When “Optimal” Beats “Perfect”

What makes a cup of coffee “perfect?” While researching I realized that coffee perfection is entirely subjective and, therefore, unattainable. What Metropolis Coffee and other specialty roasters are aiming at instead is an “optimal” cup of coffee for customers.

I found sites discussing up to 19 different methods to brew coffee, some of which make your kitchen resemble a mad scientist’s laboratory. Methods break down into a few different categories, including: brewing under pressure (e.g., with an

espresso machine), via steeping (French press), via filtration or dripping (an electric percolator or machine pour over), and via boiling (cowboy coffee or Turkish coffee). Metropolis Coffee gave us some handy tips to give you the best results, no matter which brewing method you choose.

- **Water.** They encourage using filtered water between 195 and 200 degrees Fahrenheit. Using unfiltered water may introduce undesirable flavors.
- **Beans.** Buy whole beans and keep them in an airtight con-

tainer at room temperature. Grind the beans immediately before you use them (They recommend using a burr grinder). Beans should be used within a week of opening.

- **Filters.** It might sound like blasphemy, but they recommend bleached filters noting, “We promise, your brew will taste much less papery.”
- **Right amount of coffee.** Use between 1.6 and two grams of coffee per ounce of water. A general rule of thumb is a tablespoon of coffee weighs in at around six grams.

A Tala Roaster Latte



Here is an incomplete list of the local independent coffee shops worth visiting. Our cute little coffee bean ☕ denotes purveyors that roast, serve, and sell their own beans. Coffee shops in green are places where you can pick up a copy of *Our Green Plate*.

### Arabica Cafe

59 Douglas Ave., Elgin  
facebook.com/arabicacafeelgin  
224.227.7192

### Arcedium Coffeehouse ☕

60 Indiana St., St. Charles  
arcedium.com  
630.444.0610

### Calibre Coffee

100 W Higgins Rd. Ste. H-60,  
So. Barrington  
calibrecoffee.com  
847.551.4420

### Chaube Coffee Roasters & Cafe ☕

601 Lake Cook Rd., Deerfield  
chaube.coffee  
224.424.9522

### Conscious Cup Coffee Roasters ☕

5005 NW Hwy. #101, Crystal Lk.  
consciouscup.com  
815.356.0115

### Cook Street Coffee

100 E Station St. #170, Barrington  
cookstreetcoffee.com  
847.387.3768

### Daily Projects Coffee Bar & Eatery

124 S Randall Rd., Algonquin  
facebook.com/dailyprojectscoffee  
224.209.8636



### FreshGround Roasting ☕

321 Stevens St. N., Geneva  
freshgroundroast.com  
630.457.4458

### Grounds Coffee Bar

82 Railroad St. Suite B, Crystal Lk.  
facebook.com/Groundscrystallake  
815.900.1339

### Hansa Coffee Roasters ☕

755 N Milwaukee Ave., Libertyville  
hansacoffee.com  
847.226.8815

### Ipsento Coffee Roasters ☕

2035 N Western Ave.,  
Chicago  
ipsento.com  
773.904.8177

### Kindred Coffee Roasters ☕

148 W Washington St.,  
West Chicago  
kindredcoffee.roasters.com  
630.473.0657

### Metropolis Coffee Company ☕

1039 W. Granville Ave.,  
Chicago  
metropoliscoffee.com  
773.764.0400

### Modest Coffee Roasters ☕

245 W. Roosevelt Rd. Bldg 2-15,  
West Chicago  
modest.coffee  
708.595.8775

### Newport Coffee House ☕

1121 Half Day Rd., Bannockburn  
mynewportcoffee.com  
847.940.7134

### Old Man Murph’s Coffee Roasters ☕

Woodstock  
oldmanmurphs.coffee

### Pepper Park Coffee

22000 N. Pepper Rd.,  
Lk. Barrington  
pepperparkcoffee.com  
224.848.4913

### Reprise Coffee Roasters ☕

911 Telegraph Rd., Lk. Forest,  
reprisecoffee.com  
847.386.6866

### River City Roasters ☕

114 N. Main St., Wheaton  
rivercityroasters.coffee  
630.909.3480

### Tala Coffee Roasters ☕

834 Liberty Dr. Unit B, Libertyville  
talacoffee.roasters.com  
847.508.0517

### Tugboat Coffee ☕

151 S. Rohlwing Rd., Addison  
tugboatcoffee.com  
844.488.4262

