

Tip Sheet for Chemex Brewers

There are a few key advantages to using a Chemex Brewer and making manual, pour-over drip coffee rather than auto-drip brewing with a home machine. The first key point is that the coffee-water mixture is the required temperature (between 195-205 f) from the beginning of the infusion. Few auto drip makers are capable of this. Over time, even a good auto-drip maker will brew at lower and lower temperatures. Secondly is that you have some control over infusion time based upon the fineness of your grind, and pouring technique. Lastly, you can keep this simple brew system very clean: auto-drip makers become foul with rancid coffee residue, and invariably even with drip machines that are diligently cleaned, I can immediately taste this bitter, off flavor.

Chemex brewing shares an advantage with other paper filter brewing techniques: you can use the effective, low-cost whirling-blade type grinders. A paper filter will not allow the "fines" in the rather uneven whirling-blade grind to pass through. Just make sure your grind is on the fine side, without big coffee boulders in it. A disadvantage of paper filters is they can impart a noticeable flavor to the brew, especially the thick Chemex filters. So pre-soaking the filter is a key to excellent Chemex brewing. Also, Chemex brewing is best when brewing larger amounts of coffee: paper taste and heat loss are more noticeable when trying to brew a small batch of say 12 oz.

These are intended as a "starting point" for Chemex brewing - ultimately you will figure out the best and most convenient ways to use these brewing devices, so please remake, twist, turn, distort, decompile, torch, grind and brew these instructions to suit your own needs!

Recommended Chemex Brewing Method:

- Open the Chemex-Bonded Coffee Filter into a cone. One side should have 3 layers, the other side 1 layer. Place the cone in the top of your coffeemaker with the thick portion toward the pouring spout. You may use non-Chemex filters like the Filtropa brand in #4 or Filtane #6 cone size, but Chemex filters are specifically designed to perform with the brewer. (*see note below). Using hot water, either from the tap or better yet from the kettle, pour in about 12 oz. so it soaks the paper filter. I find that the Chemex filter sticks to the glass sufficiently so I can invert it over the sink and the water will drain back out without taking the filter with it.
- Using a medium* grind for regular paper filter brewing, put 2 rounded tablespoons of coffee per 6 oz cup into the filtercone. Chemex instructions state one rounded tablespoon per 5 oz cup: standard SCAA brewing is 7.25 grams per 5 oz cup, which is closer to 2 rounded (not heaping) tablespoons. (This is the ratio for all filter / infusion brewing methods). If you get our blue scoops, then its one level scoop per 8-10 oz water. *- On the proper grind: If the water stalls completely in the grounds - your grind is too fine. If it pours through too fast, and the resulting coffee is weak - then the grind is too coarse. Adjust to your preference!
- When the water is boiling, remove it from the heat for 30 seconds. It should now be about 195 to 205 degrees f., the perfect brewing temperature. Chemex recommends pouring a small amount of water over the grinds, just enough to wet them without floating them. This pre-wetting allows coffee to "bloom", to swell and prepare for even infusion brewing. You don't want to lose the proper brew temperature in your coffee-water infusion, and I think the cup results are better if you initially fill the filter half-way (getting all the grinds wet in the process).
- After this first wetting simply pour more water, soaking the grounds each time but keeping the water level well below the top of the coffeemaker. I keep the filter filled to about 3/4 its capacity for the rest of the process, which is about 5-8 minutes ideally. Don't let the grinds go dry during the brew process or you have lost that good 195 - 205 brew temperature. Don't pass too much water through the grounds or you will have weak coffee with over-infused bitter components in it. Once the desired amount of coffee is brewed, dispose of the spent grounds by lifting the filter out of the coffeemaker (great for the compost or vermiculture!). Replace the filter with a Chemex Glass Lid to help keep the coffee hot. I don't recommend applying heat to keep the coffee hot, if you can avoid it. Better to have a luke warm cup with good flavor than a hot cup with stinky flavor because it has been kept on a burner. If you do use an electric burner, you need a Chemex Wire Grid.

* "The Chemex Coffeemaking System was developed by a chemist to achieve one result: brew a perfect cup of coffee every time. The key to the Chemex method is the fractional extraction of only the desirable parts of the coffee bean. Chemex-Bonded filters make this possible. They are 20 to 30 percent heavier than other filters, and filter out all sediment. They have been specifically designed to give balanced performance with the Chemex Coffeemaker. The filter combines a very fine grain, required for holding back the coffee mud with the right filtration speed (not too slow, not too fast) that promotes proper infusion. The filter is designed not to burst under the weight of the liquid during infusion, and not to break when lifting out the grinds. No other coffee filter is made to the Chemex specifications." -Chemex Company Literature