

Making the perfect coffee: Baristas vs. Coffee Makers

There's nothing quite like a cup of coffee in the morning. The aroma alone seems to wake you up and fill you with energy.

How do you like your coffee? There are so many varieties anymore that it's hard to choose. It may even take an entire lifetime to taste all the kinds of coffee available today.

Where do you think the perfect cup would come from: a coffee maker or a person?

Coffee drinkers use coffee makers for the convenience these machines offer. Some critics, however, claim that the appliances sacrifice some of the taste. Recent innovations in coffee maker technology, however, try to prove the critics wrong.

Coffee makers now prepare each cup with amazing accuracy, getting the temperature right, the timing down to a split-second and the ingredients measured to near-perfection. Designed to make the best possible cup of coffee, these smart coffee makers make each cup as delicious as possible.

Regardless, coffee makers are still machines. And machines can only accomplish so much.

Coffee makers are confined by their functions. Beyond their functions, they can do nothing else. They can't customize each cup of coffee to fit your character; they make each cup the same way. Some people are comforted by the fact that each cup the coffee maker brews will turn out exactly the same. But are you?

Isn't uniqueness a part of living? And don't our little quirks determine who we are? Do we not all have an ideal blend of coffee in our minds?

Coffee makers do not really take that imagined ideal into account. They simply make a cup of coffee considered by their designers to be "perfect."

They are nothing more than tools, needing human guidance and input. And machines also have the inclination to break down. A coffee maker will, eventually, stop making that "perfect" cup of coffee.

How about a barista? Who are baristas?

A barista is a person dedicated to creating the perfect cup of coffee for the right person. They blend, brew, taste, test and do everything they can do ensure that your coffee is just right. They innovate, always thinking of new ways to delight you with that ever-flavorful coffee bean.

They are also human, so every cup will be unique -- a flavor infused with the humanity of the barista. However, their humanity is also a limitation. Unlike a coffee maker, baristas can't just start making coffee whenever you want them to. You can't just turn on a barista at any time of the day and tell the person to make you coffee.

Also, being human makes the barista imperfect. Unlike coffee makers, baristas cannot be preprogrammed to make the exact same cup of coffee every time.

Sometimes, the quirks of a barista make the coffee taste horrible. But sometimes, the barista includes just enough human quirks to make the cup just perfect. When you think about it, the coffee maker is necessary to modern baristas. They need all the help they can get, if they want to succeed.

Coffee makers and baristas work mutually. The barista chooses the ingredients, finds the right flavors for the right people and guarantees that the coffee will turn out with the quirks and personality of each person. The coffee maker takes those ingredients and transforms them into what the barista envisions -- the right cup for the right person.