



## The Art of Tasting Citavo® Coffee

SYSCO Citavo® Coffee is an important part of many foodservice operations. Research on coffee trends supports the fact that consumers recognize and appreciate quality coffee. No matter where they are buying the cup, they are anticipating better coffee and are willing to go to greater lengths to find it. Consumers don't always expect gourmet coffee, but they do expect and respond to quality. It's not about either traditional or gourmet coffee--it's about better coffee. This is why foodservice operators need to understand and appreciate the art of coffee tasting so they can make better buying decisions at every quality tier when it comes to coffee for their customers.

Citavo has a blend to meet your operator's individual needs, from traditional varieties to premium roasts. Coffee tasting is a lot about personal preference-- there is no right or wrong. The first step even before the coffee tasting begins is to understand the demographics and geographic preferences of your customer base. We can help identify the types of coffee that would most likely satisfy your customers as the Citavo breadth of line has a coffee to appeal to every customer demographic and geography. For example, traditional roasts under the Citavo label include 100% Arabica Traditional Roast, roasted to a medium level for a rich flavorful profile. The 100% Arabica European Roast has the same signature blend as the traditional roast, but is roasted to a deeper color that results in a full-bodied, well-developed flavor. Citavo also has premium blends that provide exceptional flavor and rich, smooth aromas to appeal to the discriminating coffee drinker.



## The "How To's" of Coffee Tasting

### **PRIOR TO TASTING**

The operator is tasting for their customer and needs to take his or her personal preferences out of the decision. This will lead to a better coffee selection and ultimately more customer satisfaction.

No more than 3-4 coffees should be tasted at one session as the palate gets fatigued and cannot differentiate after that point. Start with the operator's current coffee and then present the competitive match, then the upgrade. When tasting coffee, the operator should use his or her normal additives (cream and sugar) in their customary proportions. China cups are recommended.

Temperature is also important. Pour the coffee at 180-185° F. but let it cool for 5 to 10 minutes so you don't burn your tongue. Below 160° F. is considered to be tepid and not acceptable as aromas start to dissipate and you won't get the full taste experience of the coffee.



The sales person usually leads the discussion and asks questions about the experience and notes the responses from the operator. Usually the operator will experience notable differences among the three coffee samples and especially between the current coffee and the upgrade.

#### **COFFEE TASTING**

The first step in coffee tasting is to note the appearance of the coffee. Even if the operator uses additives it is important to pour a cup of black coffee to see the appearance. Do you see oil on the top of the coffee? It usually means that it is a dark roasted coffee with volatiles that add to the flavor of the coffee. You should be able to see the solubles in the coffee as well that look like darker swirls.

Next, smell the coffee and note the aroma. Knowledgeable coffee specialists can provide descriptions (smoky, nutty, sour, etc.) so operators can accurately describe what they are experiencing.

Now, taste the coffee. When you take a sip of coffee the idea is to cover the whole palate. This is done by slurping so that the aromas can be experienced as well as the flavors. Cover the whole palate to enhance the experience.

What are you tasting for? There are 3 essential characteristics: the roast, the acidity and the body. Roast as in cooking the coffee which caramelizes the flavor. Flavors are characteristic of a given growing region. An experienced roastmaster will roast the coffee in such a way as to bring out the best flavor for that variety.

Body and acidity are characteristics that describe taste and what happens when the coffee is consumed. Body is the feel of heaviness on the tongue and can be achieved by either a darker roast or by using more

coffee. A heavy bodied coffee tends to be enjoyed with rich, dense desserts and by consumers wanting a more robust flavor in their coffee.

Acidity may be fearful to many people but in coffee it's actually a good thing. Acidity is known as the pop or brightness, snap or life in the coffee. A higher acidity level is like comparing a Macintosh apple to a Granny Smith and is usually tasted in the roof of the mouth.

#### **COFFEE BREWING & EQUIPMENT**

Since 50% percent of the brewing fundamentals are dependant on the brewing equipment, it is important for the operator to maintain it. This includes maintaining the water supply and filtration, the actual operation of the equipment and its cleanliness. The best quality coffee grown will not matter if brewed with bad water or dirty equipment.

There are well over 300 types of commercial brewing equipment available in the United States today. The selection of the proper brewing equipment is an important one. The quality of the finished cup of coffee depends on having the proper style of brewer that matches the "style" of coffee selected for the operation.

#### **CLOSING TIPS**

We have complete coffee training programs including web casts for anyone who wants to learn the basics. This includes espresso which tends to be the type of coffee that intimidates foodservice operators the most. In addition, your Citavo materials have a complete listing of both traditional and gourmet SKUs with descriptions to make it easy for you to help your operator select the best coffee for their establishment. Take advantage of all of the support Citavo coffee has to offer and help your customer reach new heights in coffee sales.