



COFFEE FILTERING SYSTEMS: Properly Clarifying Your Brew

Using the proper filtering method is critical to brewing the perfect cup of coffee. During the brewing process coffee oils and sediments are suspended in the beverage. Filtering methods clarify the brew and reduce the amount of coffee sediment. In this issue, we will discuss the history of coffee filters and the benefits and challenges presented by different filtering methods.

Why Proper Filtration Is So Critical

The best coffee filtration systems hold back the undesirable particulates so the finished brew is free of loose grounds, which can tinge the coffee with objectionable flavors. (See filter chart on back page.) Paper filters allow for soluble solid flow-through, while also affording ease of use and good sanitation practices. Metal filters, while reusable, do not have as fine a mesh as paper filters, so they allow some undesirable particulates to pass through them. They also require constant cleaning or they will become plugged with coffee oils.

The key is finding a paper filter perfectly balanced between having a weave structure thick enough to catch the coffee grounds but not so thick it prevents the soluble solids from flowing through it. Boyd Coffee Company's paper filters, especially those designed for our Coffee Profiler®, (and other Techni-Brew International® brewers) achieve that balance, while actually exceeding the Specialty Coffee Association of America's requirements for brewing to the Golden Cup Award

Did you know...

You can use coffee filters for more than filtering coffee!

- Slip a white coffee filter in your camera bag! They can be used as "white cards" for white balancing your camera or camcorder. Also, placing a coffee filter over the flash will soften harsh light on the subject.

Flash is covered with a coffee filter.



- The super-absorbent filters can soak up small spills easily, so they make a handy replacement for missing towels or rags.
- Filters make great "perfect circles" for art and sewing project patterns!
- Do not, however, use paper towels (or any other kind of paper) as a replacement for coffee filters. Hot water may cause some papers to leech chemicals and undesirable flavors into your coffee. Need more filters? Contact Boyd Coffee Company!



◀ Coffee filter paper plays an important role in ensuring uniform extraction. At left is a filter with spent grounds after brewing in the Coffee Profiler®, which during the SCAA certification test for uniformity of extraction, scored the highest with a score of 91.3 percent.

If you choose paper filters, remember that not all paper filters are alike, according to Brian Juckeland, Boyd Coffee Company's Coffee Marketing Manager. "The cheaper paper filters do not have the same flow rate and porosity as the ones Boyds uses, which may lead to a heavy, possibly bitter brew," Brian pointed out.

"Also, thin filters tear easily because they lack wet strength. Torn filters release grounds into your coffee, so the entire pot becomes spoiled," he added.

Standard, making the final cup an outstanding brew.

To get the most from your paper filters, Brian suggested making sure they are stored in a clean, airtight place away from fragrant foods and other fragrant kitchen items. "And never stack your coffee-filled filters ahead of brewing. Both the filter and the coffee will absorb undesirable restaurant/kitchen odors and cause the grounds to stick to the bottom of the next filter," he said.

A Short Coffee Filter History

Before 1900, most people made coffee beverages by either boiling the grounds, then waiting for them to settle before pouring a cup, or by pressing the boiled grounds with a metal sieve of some sort, French-press style or, more recently, through the portafilter on an espresso machine.

Eventually coffee drinkers began straining the boiled grounds through cloth, usually a fine mesh cheesecloth. The first metal coffee filter was patented 1802.

In 1908, German housewife Melitta Bentz made coffee by pouring water over grounds and filtering them with blotting paper. This method appealed to the German coffee drinker — clarity and aroma without bitterness, but the French and Italians were not looking for these qualities, so it was more than 70 years before paper filters became popular there (even today, Italians rarely use paper filters).

In 1964, just six months after the first specialty coffee store was opened by The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Boyd Coffee Company's Red Wagon Store opened its doors, and was well ahead of the industry by showcasing the "Flav-R-Flo" cone-and-paper filtering system Boyds developed just three years earlier.



A Flav-R-Flo® Coffee Maker circa 1961

Boys wanted to provide the same innovative paper-filter brewing system to our restaurant and other foodservice customers, but we could not find a manufacturer who made paper filters in commercial-brewing sizes, so we made our own. For more than 15 years, the "Boys Filter Queens" machine stitched sets of die-cut paper filters for our C-model brewers.

With the advent of modern brewing systems, paper filters in all brewer sizes have become the norm, since they are so easy to use and provide quick, sanitary spent-grounds disposal. And with recent concerns about the environment, paper filters are being engineered to compost right along with the coffee grounds.

FILTERING METHODS Characteristics, Advantages & Disadvantages

Metal Plates, Disks and Woven Screens:

- Are initially more expensive, but last longer, so they are less costly over the life of the equipment.
- Require constant care and cleaning or they will become clogged with coffee oils and residue.
- Should be made of high-quality metal (stainless steel, brass or gold plated).
- Allow more sediment and colloids to enter the brewed coffee, giving it a heavier taste and slightly cloudy appearance, a flavor some coffee drinkers prefer (i.e., French press).

Cloth Filters:

- Can allow moderate amounts of particulates to pass through.
- Must be made of high-quality fabric.
- Must be rinsed before initial use to remove sizing and foreign odors.
- Should never be cleaned with soap, detergent or bleach.
- Can be difficult to keep clean—may need to be replaced often.
- If made with organic fibers, may break down after several uses.

Paper Filters:

- Easiest to use among options; provide easy sanitation.
- Eliminate sediment and cloudiness in the finished coffee drink.
- Have the most even texture.
- Are the most commonly used filters in foodservice operations.
- Are made from either oxygen-processed whitened fibers (white color), or unprocessed fibers (brown color). The white filters are not "bleached," so no chlorine or other chemical residue enters the coffee from the filter.
- Should be stored away from aromatic foods because they can absorb odors, ultimately affecting the coffee's taste.

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