



How to Store your Coffee?

Roasted coffee beans have a shelf life of only a few weeks. What is more, if coffee is not stored appropriately, a number of chemical and biological changes can take place, making the coffee rancid, stale, mouldy, or worse.

When deciding on how to store your coffee it is worth taking these into account, by understanding the 'enemies' of coffee:

- Oxygen
- Water or Moisture
- Odours
- Light
- Temperature variations

Oxygen

Oxygen causes a number of undesirable chemical reactions within coffee beans. With appropriate care these reactions can be minimised increasing the shelf life of the coffee significantly.

Oxygen initially attacks the oils at the surface of the bean destroying aromas, and given enough time it will penetrate into the pores of the beans causing chemical breakdown of many compounds important to the flavour of coffee.

Moisture

Coffee beans kept in moist or humid conditions become stale very quickly. What is more, moist coffee beans become a key breeding ground for bacteria that will feed on the coffee, causing it to spoil.

Further, coffee should not be stored in the freezer or the refrigerator. When the lid is removed from a container of cold coffee beans, moisture from the ambient air will condense on the beans (The same way water forms on defrosting meat).

Light

Ultra Violet light from the sun accelerates the breakdown of oils and aromas at the surface of coffee beans, causing a flavour deterioration and staleness.

Odours

The oils at the surface of coffee beans are able to dissolve odours from the ambient air, this causes the coffee beans to take on the flavour. Whilst pizza flavoured coffee might sound exciting, we would still encourage appreciation of coffee's natural flavour. .

Taking in consideration all those 'enemies', the best recommendation for coffee storage would be as follows:

1. If possible, try to avoid purchase pre-ground coffee and grind your own beans as you go
2. Buy small quantities frequently, to maximize the freshness of the coffee
3. Store your coffee in an air tight packaging, in a cool, dry place, away from sun light, moisture and temperature variations
4. Ideal container is an oven-baked, sealed ceramic container, with a gasket and a tie – down clamps. This will slow oxidation and not let light rays through.
5. Original beans bag with a zip and a valve would be an adequate substitute in the absence of an air tight container.