



3 Reasons to cook with coffee

If you've never considered adding a splash of coffee to your favourite recipes we've got 3 great reasons to cook with coffee.

Most of us admit that we can't function without a good cup of fragrant coffee in the morning. We cherish our favourite brew like liquid gold and wrinkle our noses at the thought of burnt beans. But when it comes to cooking with coffee we tend to leave our grounds on the shelf.

Our modern diet leans heavily on salty and sweet flavour profiles, with sour and umami flavours (umami is savoury – often described as brothy or meaty and is found in foods like miso or mushrooms) occasionally being added in an attempt to balance it all out. Coffee on the other hand falls squarely into the bitter category. Without understanding how a balance of bitter flavours can improve a dish we tend to leave it out of our recipes and never even consider adding it to our spice rack.

It doesn't have to be that way though. Isn't it about time we found some new ways to enjoy our favourite caffeine fix?

Here are 3 great reasons to cook with coffee:

1. It intensifies chocolate

Much like how adding salt to caramel can give you a richer end result, adding coffee to your chocolate recipes intensifies the chocolate flavour while simultaneously cutting through the sweetness. This allows you to make rich, decadent chocolate desserts that won't leave you feeling sick – unless you happen to eat the whole thing.

Recipe: Coffee Chocolate Truffles

200g good quality dark chocolate
1/3 cup thickened cream
2 teaspoons instant coffee powder
¼ cup chocolate sprinkles

Combine chocolate and cream in a microwave safe bowl. Microwave uncovered on medium heat for 2-3 minutes. Stir with a metal spoon every minute or so, until melted and smooth. Stir through coffee powder. Cover and refrigerate for 3 hours until firm. Roll into balls and coat in chocolate sprinkles. Refrigerate again until firm.

[Or try our Nutella and Coffee Scrolls recipe.](#)

2. It adds complexity

You might find yourself frequently craving something salty or sweet, but what your tastebuds are craving is variety. The best meals are able to deliver elements of these different flavour varieties within the same dish. Adding coffee to your recipes can add to the complexity of the flavour overall. Use coffee like a spice and try adding it to soups, stews and marinades to see how it can blend with other flavour profiles to create a more complex and delicious end result. You can even try adding a sprinkle of coffee grounds to your next cheeseboard to see how it can improve the strong cheese flavours.

Recipe: Coffee Beef Stew

2 tablespoons olive oil
600g lean beef, cut into cubes
2 brown onions, diced
1 garlic clove, minced
200g cup mushrooms, halved
¼ cup plain flour
5 tablespoons dry white wine
5 tablespoons brewed coffee
Fresh thyme & Bay leaves
Salt & pepper to taste

Brown meat in batches in oil over medium-high heat.

Remove meat and keep warm

Reduce heat to low and cook onion and garlic until glassy and fragrant.

Sprinkle in flour and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes.

Add wine and coffee and bring to a simmer, stirring constantly.

Return meat to the pan, along with a few sprigs of thyme, a couple of bay leaves, and salt and pepper to taste.

Cover and leave on medium-low heat for 1 hour, or until meat is tender.

Remove bay leaves and serve.

3. It tenderises meat

Adding coffee to your dessert probably seems like a no-brainer, but how would you feel about rubbing it on a steak? Coffee pairs particularly well with meats like pork, beef and fish to add an earthy flavour to the dish. As an added bonus to the flavour pairings, coffee can help to tenderise meat. This gives you a more enjoyable end result with less uncomfortable chewing, and is generally applied as a dry spice rub directly onto the meat, with the excess being brushed off before consuming.

Recipe: Coffee-rubbed Rib Eye

¼ cup each chilli powder & finely ground espresso
2 tablespoons each paprika & dark brown sugar
1 tablespoon each of dry mustard, salt, pepper, ground coriander, dried oregano
2 teaspoons of ground ginger
2 rib eye steaks
Olive oil

Preheat your oven to 200C.

Combine all the spices in a bowl.

Brush each of your steaks with olive oil.

Rub 2 tablespoons of the coffee mixture on one side of each steak.

Cook in a hot pan, rub side down for 3-4 minutes or until golden brown.

Flip the steak over and cook for a further 2 minutes.

Place on a baking tray and cook in the oven for 8-10 minutes for medium-rare.

Put all excess coffee rub in an air-tight container for future use.

[Or try our Coffee Spiced Pulled Pork Sliders recipe.](#)

Learning to cook with coffee will add more depth to your recipes. While coffee goes with many flavours, it pairs particularly well with citrus, cinnamon, allspice, cloves, garlic and salt.

You can head over to our [recipes](#) to see even more ways to cook with coffee!