



BARISTA SCHOOL IRELAND • POCKET GUIDE

BARISTA LEVEL 1

The recipes, steps and checklists from your course, in your pocket. Keep it on your phone or pin it up behind the bar.

Weigh everything.

Coffee in, espresso out.

Change one thing at a time.

Otherwise you never know what fixed it.

Taste every shot.

The timer is a guide. Your tongue has the final say.

INSIDE: THE EIGHT LESSONS

01 Coffee and the café bar

02 Beans, freshness and grinding

03 Dose, distribution and tamping

04 Pulling a great espresso

05 Dialling in by taste

06 Milk: steaming and texture

07 The drinks menu

08 Workflow, cleaning and care

LESSON 1

THE BAR AND THE GRINDER

Machine part	What to know
Group head	Hot water comes through the shower screen here. Flush it before every shot.
Portafilter	The handle that holds the basket of ground coffee. We use a double basket for our 18 g dose.
Pressure gauges	The steam boiler, and the pump while a shot runs (about 9 bar).
Steam wand and knob	For milk. Open the knob fully when steaming.
Hot water tap · cup warmer · drip tray	Hot water for americanos, the cup warmer on top, and the drip tray, where your scale sits under the cup.

Grinder part	What to know
Hopper	Holds the beans. Only fill what you'll use soon.
Grind collar	Turns finer or coarser. Small moves only.
Dose controls	Grind by time or by button, then check the dose on the scale.
Chute and fork	The coffee comes out of the chute; the fork holds the portafilter steady underneath.

The grinder decides how fast water can pass through the coffee. That makes it your most important control.

Working safely

- Steam and hot water scald. Never point the wand or the tap at anyone. Purge into a cloth or the drip tray.
- The group head and portafilter get hot. Hold the portafilter by its handle.
- Knock out used coffee on the knock box bar, never against the group head.
- Never put your fingers into the hopper or the chute. The burrs are sharp, even when the grinder is off.
- Keep sleeves, hair and lanyards clear of the grinder and the wand.
- Wipe up milk and water spills at once: a wet floor is a slip waiting to happen.

LESSONS 1-2

BEANS AND FRESHNESS

	Arabica	Robusta
Grows	Higher up, often above 1,000 m	Lower down: a hardier plant
Tastes	Sweeter, brighter, more complex	Heavier, more bitter and earthy
Caffeine	–	Roughly double that of arabica
Where you meet it	Most specialty cafés. About 60% of the world’s crop	Instant coffee and some espresso blends

From cherry to bean. Coffee is the seed of a fruit, the coffee cherry. Each cherry holds two seeds: the beans. The farm takes off the fruit, dries the seeds to about 11% moisture and sorts them into **green coffee**.

Washed

fruit stripped off, beans rinsed before drying: clean and bright

Natural

the whole cherry dries in the sun: fruity, sweet and heavier

Honey

some sticky fruit stays on while it dries: in between

Roasting: roughly 10 to 15 minutes in hot air. The beans dry, turn yellow, then brown, and crack like popcorn (first crack, about 196 °C). **Lighter roasts** keep more fruit and acidity; **darker roasts** taste more of the roast. Most café house espressos are **blends**, so the espresso tastes the same all year and works well with milk.

Freshness: look for the roast date

First few days	Up to about 2–3 weeks	After that
<i>resting: lively shots</i>	<i>the sweet spot</i>	<i>fading: grind a little finer</i>

Storing beans

- ☐ **Airtight** container, or the original bag if it has a one-way valve and reseals well.
- ☐ Away from **light, heat and moisture**: not on top of the machine, not in the fridge.
- ☐ Only fill the hopper with what you’ll use soon.
- ☐ Use the oldest bag first.

Grinding

A **burr grinder** crushes beans to an even size. Grind size controls how fast water passes through the coffee, and so how much flavour it picks up.

Grind just before each shot. Ground coffee loses its flavour within minutes.

LESSONS 3-4

PULLING A GREAT ESPRESSO

18 g

Dose
ground coffee in the basket

36 g

Yield
espresso in the cup, weighed

25-30 s

Time
aim for about 27

1:2

Ratio
twice the dose comes out

Espresso: hot water at about **9 bar** forced through a tightly packed bed of fine coffee, in under half a minute. A good shot pours like warm honey, topped with **crema**, a golden foam of tiny gas bubbles and coffee oils. Another coffee may need a slightly different recipe, but this is always a sound place to start.

Step by step

- 1 Start clean.** Flush the group for a second or two, knock out the old puck, wipe the basket dry.
- 2 Grind and weigh 18 g** in the double basket, portafilter on the scale. The grinder's timer is only a guide: it can drift by a gram or more.
- 3 Level the bed.** Break up any clumps and settle the coffee flat and even across the basket.
- 4 Tamp once, straight and firm, then stop.** Check it's level, then wipe loose grounds off the rim so the portafilter seals.
- 5 Lock in and start straight away.** Cup on the scale under the spouts. Start the shot and the timer together.
- 6 Stop at 36 g.** Note the time, then taste it.

What the water takes out

The bright **acids** come out first, then the **sugars** that bring sweetness and body, and the **bitter** flavours last. A good shot stops in the sweet middle.

under 25 s: too fast		25–30 s		over 30 s: too slow	
15 s	20 s	25 s	30 s	35 s	40 s
Sour, thin, sharp <i>under-extracted</i> Grind finer		Sweet and balanced <i>keep it</i> Write the setting down		Bitter, harsh, drying <i>over-extracted</i> Grind coarser	

Channelling: if the bed is tilted or lumpy, water rushes through the thin side. The shot tastes sour and bitter at once, may spurt, or one spout runs faster. Fix: break up clumps, level the bed, tamp straight.

LESSON 5

DIALLING IN BY TASTE

Keep the dose (18 g) and the yield (36 g) the same, and move only the grind, a little at a time. **Finer** slows the water: a longer shot. **Coarser** lets it run faster: a shorter shot.

It tastes...	Usually	Do
Sour, thin, sharp	often under 25 s	Grind finer. The water rushed through
Bitter, harsh, drying	often over 30 s	Grind coarser. The water lingered too long
Sweet and balanced	25–30 s	Keep it. Write the setting down
Gushing: pale and fast	well under 20 s	Far too coarse, under-dosed or stale beans
Choking: barely drips	well over 35 s	Far too fine, or too much coffee in the basket

Taste beats the timer. A 31-second shot that tastes sweet is a good shot.

Rules for the grinder

- 1

One change at a time. Otherwise you never know what fixed it.
- 2

Small moves. One step, or a small turn of the collar.
- 3

Purge after a change. Grind a few grams and throw them away.

Before you touch the grinder

- ☐

Did you weigh 18 g, and stop at 36 g?
- ☐

Was the basket dry, the bed level and the tamp straight?
- ☐

Did you start the shot as soon as you locked in?

A worked example

Shot	Recipe	Time	Taste	Next
1	18 g → 36 g	19 s	Sharp and thin	Grind finer
2	18 g → 36 g	24 s	Better, still bright	A touch finer
3	18 g → 36 g	28 s	Sweet and rounded	Keep it

Grind numbers differ on every grinder: the direction matters. Three shots is typical; a new coffee can take a few more.

Dial in again

- ☐

Every new bag, even of the same coffee
- ☐

Each morning, and if the room warms up or cools down a lot
- ☐

As a bag ages: older beans usually need a slightly finer grind
- ☐

Whenever shots run faster or slower than the recipe

LESSON 6

MILK: STEAMING AND TEXTURE

The aim: smooth, glossy **microfoam**, no bubbles you can see, like a tin of paint. **Proteins** hold the foam, **fat** makes it creamy (whole milk is easiest to learn with), **lactose** tastes sweeter as it warms.



Set up the jug

- ☐ **Cold milk** from the fridge, a cold, clean jug.
- ☐ Fill to **just below the bottom of the spout**.
- ☐ **350 ml** jug: one flat white or cappuccino.
600 ml: a latte or two smaller drinks.
- ☐ Pour only what the drink needs.

Steam

- 1 Purge** the wand into a cloth or the drip tray.
- 2 Stretch**: tip just under the surface, steam fully open, a hiss like paper tearing, to about 37 °C.
- 3 Roll**: tip a little deeper and off-centre, a whirlpool.
- 4 Stop at 60–65 °C**. Close the steam before you lower the jug. No thermometer? Stop just as the jug gets too hot to hold.
- 5 Wipe and purge, tap, swirl**, pour soon.

Above 70 °C milk tastes flat and cooked. Steam fresh, cold milk for every drink.

Microfoam (wet)
fine, glossy, pourable, from a short stretch. Flat whites, lattes, cortados, mochas.

Macrofoam (dry)
lighter, airier, deeper, from a longer stretch. Cappuccinos. Still smooth, never stiff or bubbly.

Plant milks
barista versions, a little less air, stop at the lower end of the range, pour soon. A separate clean jug.

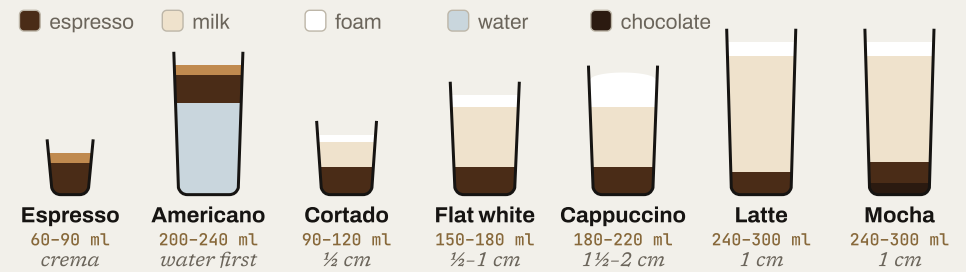
When milk goes wrong

You see	Fix
Screeching, no foam	Tip too deep. Lower the jug until you hear a hiss.
Big, spitting bubbles	Tip too high. Raise the jug a little.
Thin, no shine	Not enough air. Stretch a little longer.
Stiff, dry foam on top	Too much air. Shorter stretch, longer roll.
Won't foam at all	Milk warm, old or re-steamed. Start again with fresh, cold milk.

LESSON 7

THE DRINKS MENU

Almost every drink is a **double espresso (18 g in, 36 g out)** plus something: water, milk, foam or chocolate. Every café sets its own cups: the sizes here are typical, and what stays the same is how each drink is built.

chocolate

Drink	How it's built	Foam	Typical cup
Espresso	The double shot on its own		60–90 ml
Americano	Hot water in the cup first, then the espresso on top so the crema survives. Milk on the side if asked		200–240 ml
Cortado	Espresso cut with about the same amount of thin steamed milk	about ½ cm	90–120 ml
Flat white	Espresso, silky milk, a thin layer of microfoam. Coffee-forward	½–1 cm	150–180 ml
Cappuccino	Espresso, milk and a deeper layer of airy foam that domes slightly	1½–2 cm	180–220 ml
Latte	Espresso with plenty of steamed milk. The mildest on the menu	about 1 cm	240–300 ml
Mocha	Chocolate sauce or powder stirred into the shot, then steamed milk as for a latte	about 1 cm	240–300 ml

Strongest to mildest: espresso to milk



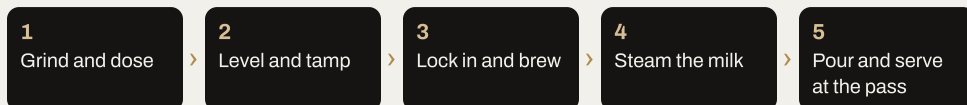
For anyone avoiding dairy, use a separate clean jug, and wipe and purge the wand first.

Repeat the order back: size, milk, anything extra. Most complaints start with a misheard order.

LESSON 8

WORKFLOW AND SERVICE

Set up the station: left to right



Start the shot first, then steam the milk while it runs, so both are ready together. Espresso starts to lose its crema within a minute, and milk left standing separates. Two drinks? Start both shots, then steam: a 600 ml jug can serve two smaller drinks that take the same foam.

Shift checklist

OPENING

- ☐ Machine fully heated, portafilters in the groups
- ☐ Flush each group, purge each wand
- ☐ Hopper: only what you'll use
- ☐ Dial in
- ☐ Clean jugs; one damp cloth for the wand, dry ones for everything else

DURING SERVICE

- ☐ After every jug: purge and wipe the wand
- ☐ After every shot: knock out, flush, wipe the basket
- ☐ Portafilters back in the groups
- ☐ Wipe counter and drip tray as you go
- ☐ Re-check your shot every hour

END OF DAY

- ☐ Backflush each group
- ☐ Soak baskets and portafilter heads (handles out)
- ☐ Brush gaskets and shower screens
- ☐ Clean wand tips; wash drip trays and knock box
- ☐ Brush the grinder chute; wipe hopper and machine

Backflushing

- 1 Blind basket** (no holes) with the detergent the machine maker recommends.
- 2 Lock in, run 10 s, stop.** Repeat about five times.
- 3 Rinse**, then repeat the cycles with clean water only.
- 4 Flush the group**, pull one shot and pour it away before you serve again.

Your machine's manual comes first. Some machines can't be backflushed at all.

Behind the counter

- Notice people** straight away: eye contact and a hello within seconds, even mid-pour.
- Make it the same every time.** That's what the recipe is for.
- Keep the station tidy.** Customers can see it.
- Handle problems kindly.** Listen, apologise, remake it.

Old coffee oil and dried milk make fresh coffee taste stale. If a fresh coffee tastes stale at the right time, clean before you change anything else.

DIAL-IN LOG

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Barista Level 1 pocket guide · baristaschoolireland.ie · Your machine's manual and your workplace's procedures always come first.

BARISTA SCHOOL IRELAND

BARISTA LEVEL 1

18 g in, 36 g out, 25 to 30 seconds. Weigh it, change one thing at a time, and taste everything.

KEEP GOING

Barista Level 2

Recipes and calibration, tasting, milk at volume, a busy bar, filter and batch brew, machine care, and your trial shift and first week.

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General barista training. Steam, hot water and espresso are hot: take care.

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