



BARISTA SCHOOL IRELAND • POCKET GUIDE

BARISTA LEVEL 2

Recipes, calibration, tasting, a busy bar, brew recipes, machine care and your first week, plus the logs and checklists a café runs on.

The same drink every time

a written recipe, a scale on the bar and a log

Fast without cutting corners

flow, not rushing

Fitting into a team

their recipes, their checklists, their way of working

INSIDE: THE EIGHT LESSONS

- 01 Consistency: recipes and calibration
- 02 Advanced dialling in: ratio, roast and decaf
- 03 Tasting and quality control
- 04 Milk at volume and alternative milks
- 05 Speed and workflow on a busy bar
- 06 Filter, batch brew, cold brew and iced drinks
- 07 Equipment care and maintenance
- 08 The trial shift and your first week

LESSON 1

CONSISTENCY: RECIPES AND CALIBRATION

The recipe standard sheet

Good cafés write their recipes down: one sheet, on the wall, the same for everyone. Every café sets its own numbers (20 g in and 40 g out is just as sound): at work, **the house sheet is the recipe**.

On the sheet	
The coffee	Its name, roaster and roast date
The espresso	18 g in, 36 g out (± 1 g), 25–30 seconds
The milk	Whole milk steamed to 60–65 °C; plant milks in separate, labelled jugs
Each drink	The cup, the espresso, the milk or water, the foam depth and the finish

How close is close enough?

± 1 g on the yield is common: on 18 g → 36 g, anything from 35 g to 37 g is in spec.

Shot	Verdict
18 g → 36.4 g in 27 s	In spec. Taste it, then serve
18 g → 38.5 g in 29 s	Out. Stop the shot sooner
18 g → 36 g in 21 s	Out on time. Grind finer

SOPs: the written way

A **standard operating procedure** is the written way your café does a job: opening, closing, cleaning the machine, making each drink.

- Read them in your first week, and follow them.
- A better way? Suggest it to the manager. Don't just change it on your own.
- If an SOP and your manager disagree, ask. Don't guess.

Calibrating at opening

- 1 **Machine fully heated**, portafilters in the groups. Most machines need 20–30 minutes from cold.
- 2 **Flush each group** and purge each wand.
- 3 **Check the roast date** and fill the hopper with what you'll use.
- 4 **Purge the grinder**: a few grams thrown away. Overnight coffee in the grinder is stale.
- 5 **Pull, weigh, time and taste** a shot. Adjust the grind if you need to.
- 6 **Write it in the calibration log**: grind, dose, yield, time, taste.

Grinder drift: heat in a rush (shots run slower), quiet spells (purge a few grams), the room and new beans all move it. Check and log at opening, mid-morning, after lunch and mid-afternoon, and after any change or a shot that tastes wrong.

LESSON 2

ADVANCED DIALLING IN

Two levers. Get the time right with the grind first. Then fine-tune the taste with the ratio.

Ratios for an 18 g dose

Yield = dose × ratio.

	Ratio	Out	In the cup
Ristretto	1 : 1 to 1 : 1.5	18–27 g	The same shot stopped early. Thicker, sweeter, more intense
Espresso	1 : 2	36 g	Our starting point
Longer	1 : 2.2 to 1 : 2.5	40–45 g	Lighter body. Can open up a lighter roast

On time but a little sharp? A slightly longer ratio. Thin? A slightly shorter one. One change at a time.

	What it is	Fix it with
Strength	How concentrated the cup is. Shorter ratio: stronger. Longer: weaker	The ratio
Extraction	How much of the coffee the water dissolved. Under: sour. Over: bitter	The grind

A refractometer reads strength as **TDS**: espresso roughly 8–12% coffee, filter about 1.2–1.5%. You don’t need one: the scale, timer and your tongue do the job.

The dose belongs to the basket

A double basket is made for a range, often 18–20 g. **Too little**: a wet, sloppy puck and a gushing shot. **Too much**: coffee presses on the shower screen and the shot chokes. Change the dose only if the basket or house recipe changes, then re-dial: more coffee slows the shot.

Decaf

Often runs faster and goes stale sooner than the house coffee.

- ☐ Dial it in separately, to its own recipe, in its own grinder or hopper
- ☐ Smaller bags; check the roast date
- ☐ Mark the cup
- ☐ **Never swap it, never guess**: it may be for a medical reason

Blend

combined by the roaster for a reliable taste all year that works with milk. Most house espressos.

Single origin

one country, region or farm. Guest espresso or filter. Changes each harvest.

Lighter roast

harder to extract: often a finer grind or a slightly longer ratio (1 : 2.2 to 1 : 2.5).

Darker roast

extracts easily, turns bitter quickly: a slightly shorter ratio or a touch coarser.

LESSON 3

TASTING AND QUALITY CONTROL

Customers who don't like the coffee rarely say so: they just don't come back. Taste every check shot, and a finished drink from time to time.

Sweetness
caramel, chocolate, ripe fruit.
A good shot has plenty

Acidity
brightness, like a crisp apple.
Sharp and sour when under-extracted

Bitterness
a little is fine. Harsh and drying means over-extracted

Body
weight and texture: thin, smooth, syrupy, heavy

Aftertaste
clean and sweet, or harsh and lingering

Smell
most of flavour is smell: breathe in before you taste

How to taste

- **Stir the shot first.** The crema is bitter; the layers taste different.
- Spoon and slurp. Never double-dip.
- Side by side teaches more than one on its own.
- Water to rinse between cups.
- Taste with the team, so everyone's "good" means the same.

Cupping

- 1 **12 g coarse** in each cup. Smell the dry grounds.
- 2 **200 ml** just off the boil. Leave 4 minutes.
- 3 **Break the crust**, smell, skim off the foam.
- 4 **Slurp from the spoon** when cool enough. Rinse between cups.
- 5 **Taste again** as it cools.

Faults and what they mean

You taste	Meaning and fix
Sour and thin	Under-extracted. Grind finer.
Bitter, harsh, drying	Over-extracted. Grind coarser.
Sour and bitter at once	Channelling. Level the bed and tamp straight.
Flat, papery, dull	Stale beans. Check the roast date.
Rancid, oily bitterness	A dirty group, basket or grinder. Clean it.
Chemical taste	Detergent left in after cleaning. Rinse and pour the first shot away.
Musty, mouldy or vinegary	A fault in the beans. Tell the manager, who can contact the roaster.
Milk drink flat or cooked, espresso fine	The milk was too hot or re-steamed.

One thing done well, one thing to work on. Spot-check sheet: page 12.

LESSON 4

MILK AT VOLUME AND ALTERNATIVE MILKS

Steam to order

*fresh, cold milk for every jug.
Never steam ahead, never re-steam.*

Match the jug

about 350 ml for one flat white or cappuccino, about 600 ml for a latte or two smaller drinks.

Keep milk cold

back in the fridge (5 °C or below) between rushes, oldest first.

Fill to the line. Measure once how much milk each drink takes, then fill to that level every time, in the jug, not by eye. Pour what the drink needs and you finish with an almost empty jug.

Sharing a jug

- Only drinks with the same milk and texture, ready together: two flat whites, two lattes.
- Enough for both, still below the spout. Swirl well.
- Pour each cup a share in turn, or split into a second jug and swirl both.
- Never a cappuccino with a flat white. Practise splitting when it's quiet.

Allergies and separate jugs

- Milk, soya, nuts (almond) and cereals with gluten (oats) are allergens.
- Separate, labelled jugs for plant milks.
- Avoiding dairy? Wipe and purge the wand first, clean jug.
- **Lactose-free is still cow's milk:** never for a milk allergy.
- Mark the cup or lid. Not sure? Check, or ask. Never guess.

Plant milks

Barista versions, **less air** than dairy, stop at the **lower end of the range** (about 60 °C), pour soon.

Oat

steams well, slightly sweet. Often the most asked-for

Soya

foams well. Can split if it's too hot

Almond

thinner and nutty. Pour quickly

Coconut

light body. The foam fades fast

Special requests

Request	Do
Extra hot	Steam to about 70 °C. Any hotter tastes cooked. Never boil it
Extra foam, or “dry”	A longer stretch
Skimmed	Foams easily, but drier and fades fast. Shorter stretch, pour soon
Extra shot	Pull it with the rest of the order, so nothing waits

Repeat the request back, then make it the same way every time.

LESSON 5 • WORKFLOW CARD

THE BUSY BAR

Speed isn't rushing. It's never doing a step twice, never walking to fetch something, never standing waiting on the machine. **Remakes cost more time than they save: never skip the scale or the wand wipe.**

ONE DRINK, IN ORDER

- 1 **Read the ticket:** cup, milk, size, anything special.
- 2 **Grind, dose, weigh, tamp.** Basket wiped dry first.
- 3 **Flush, lock in, start the shot.** Cup on the scale, timer running.
- 4 **Steam while the shot runs.** Right jug, right amount of milk.
- 5 **Wipe and purge the wand** straight away. Every time.
- 6 **Pour, check, serve.** Wipe the cup, call the drink.
- 7 **Reset:** knock out, flush, portafilter back in the group.

Two groups, one jug

- 1 Dose, lock in, start the first shot
- 2 While it runs, dose and start the second
- 3 Steam while both shots run
- 4 Pour, wipe and purge the wand, reset both groups

Plan the whole order to reach the pass together: no shot waits more than about a minute.

Reading the orders

- Work them **in order**.
- **Group drinks that share a milk:** two lattes, one jug.
- Read the whole ticket first: size, milk, extra shot, decaf, takeaway.
- Plant milk and decaf need their own jug and grinder: plan them in.
- Not clear? Ask before you make it.

Talk to your team

- **“Behind”** passing behind someone; **“Hot”** carrying a jug, portafilter or hot water.
- Call what you're making: **“Two lattes on, flat white next.”**
- At the pass: **“Oat flat white for table 6.”**
- Two baristas? One on espresso, one on milk and the pass. Agree it before service.

Reset between rushes: two minutes

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ☐ Empty the knock box | ☐ Swap your cloths | ☐ Check a shot and log it |
| ☐ Wipe the bench and drip tray | ☐ Restock cups, lids, milk, beans | ☐ Tell the team before something runs out |

LESSON 6 · RECIPE CARD

FILTER, BATCH, COLD BREW AND ICED

60 g
per litre
about 1 : 16.5, filter and batch

92–96 °C
Water
just off the boil

15 : 250
V60
grams of coffee : water

1 : 8
Cold brew
concentrate, steeped cold

Grind much coarser than espresso: medium for batch brew, a little finer for a V60. **Fast and sour: grind finer. Slow and bitter: grind coarser.**

The V60: 15 g coffee, 250 g water

Rinse the paper with hot water and pour it away. Add the coffee, level it, zero the scale, start the timer.

0:00
Bloom: about 40 g to wet all the grounds

0:30–0:45
Pour in slow circles

1:45
At 250 g

2:30–3:30
Drained. Swirl and serve

Batch brew

- ☐ Weigh: about 60 g per litre
- ☐ Brewer's programme, clean basket, fresh paper
- ☐ Into an insulated flask, never onto a hot plate
- ☐ **Label the brew time;** pour away after about 30 minutes
- ☐ Taste the first cup of every batch

Cold brew

- 1 Coarse grind**, about 100 g to 800 ml cold water (1 : 8).
- 2 Steep in the fridge** 12–18 hours, then filter.
- 3 Serve** diluted about 1 : 1 with water or milk, over ice.
- 4 Covered, cold and dated.** Your café's food safety plan says how long it keeps.

Iced drinks

Drink	Build
Iced americano	A glass full of ice, cold water, then the espresso on top
Iced latte	A glass full of ice, cold milk, then the espresso on top. No steaming
Iced filter (V60)	15 g coffee, 150 g hot water, brewed onto 100 g of ice in the jug

Fill the glass with ice: half-full melts fast. Scoop ice with a clean scoop, never with the glass. If a glass breaks in the ice, all of that ice has to go.

LESSON 7

EQUIPMENT CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Old coffee oil and dried milk make fresh coffee taste stale and bitter. A lot of bad coffee isn't the barista's fault: it's a dirty or badly set-up machine. **Your machine and grinder makers' instructions come first** for cleaning products and methods. Daily, weekly and monthly checklist: next page.

Every use

habits you never skip: wipe and purge the wand, flush the group, wipe the basket dry

Daily, weekly, monthly

on the checklists, signed

As scheduled

the service, by the technician

Water and scale

- Coffee is mostly water: a cup of filter is over 98% water.
- **Hard water** leaves limescale: weaker steam, slower flow, and in the end the machine fails.
- **Very soft water** can corrode the machine and tastes flat.
- **A water filter** sized by the technician protects machine and taste. Log every change: the maker's interval is a maximum.
- Descaling is done as the technician and maker advise. Never improvise it.

Gaskets, screens and your scale

- **Group gasket:** hard or cracked, handle locking further round, or leaking round the rim? Report it.
- **Shower screen:** blocked holes give uneven shots.
- **Steam wand tip:** blocked holes give weak or lopsided steam.
- **Your scale:** reads zero empty, kept dry, batteries changed before they die. A drifting scale makes every recipe wrong.

When to call a technician

Never take panels off or repair the machine yourself. Tell the manager, who will call the technician, if:

- ✗ A pressure gauge is outside its usual range
- ✗ Water is leaking inside or under the machine
- ✗ Steam is weak or missing, even after purging
- ✗ One group suddenly brews differently from the others
- ✗ The electric trip, or you see sparks or smell burning: **switch off if it's safe to, and keep people clear**
- ✗ The grinder makes a new noise, overheats or jams: switch it off, never put your fingers in

Write faults down for the manager the same day, with what you did about them.

YOUR CLEANING SCHEDULE

DAILY, WEEKLY, MONTHLY

Tick and initial. Every use, never skipped: wipe and purge the wand, flush the group, wipe the basket dry.

Every day at close	M	T	W	T	F	S	S
Backflush each group with detergent (where the machine allows), then rinse	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Soak baskets and portafilter heads, handles out	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Brush the gaskets and shower screens	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Clean the wand tips	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wash drip trays, knock box and jugs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Brush out the grinder chute, wipe the hopper	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sign the closing checklist	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Weekly	Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4
Shower screens out and cleaned (if your machine allows)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Steam wand tip holes clear	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grinder hopper washed and dried	☐	☐	☐	☐
Milk fridge seals and shelves cleaned	☐	☐	☐	☐

Monthly	Mth 1	Mth 2	Mth 3	Mth 4
Grinder burrs cleaned as the maker recommends, then dial in again	☐	☐	☐	☐
Group gaskets checked	☐	☐	☐	☐
Water filter checked against its schedule	☐	☐	☐	☐
Behind and under the machine and grinder cleaned	☐	☐	☐	☐

The service is done by the technician, as scheduled.

LESSON 8 • CHECKLIST

THE TRIAL SHIFT AND YOUR FIRST WEEK

Most café managers aren't looking for perfect latte art on a trial. They want someone they can trust on the bar. **Speed comes with time. Attitude and hygiene show from the first minute.**

Clean

*hands, station,
clean as you go*

Their way

*follows it, takes
direction well*

Customers

*notices them
and smiles*

Questions

*asks good ones,
remembers the
answers*

Consistent

*weighs, tastes,
the same drink
twice*

Before the trial

- ☐ Asked: arrival time, length, what to wear, who to ask for
- ☐ Looked at their menu; visited as a customer
- ☐ Arrive 10 minutes early
- ☐ Clean non-slip shoes, hair tied back, short clean nails, little or no jewellery
- ☐ Phone off and out of sight
- ☐ Certificates and CV, if they ask

Your first week

- ☐ Learned where everything lives, and put it back
- ☐ Opened and closed with someone, signed their checklists
- ☐ Filled in the calibration log
- ☐ Read the SOPs and the allergen information
- ☐ Learned the regulars' usual orders
- ☐ Asked for feedback after each shift

On the bar

- ☐ **Washed my hands first**
- ☐ Asked for the house recipe, and followed it
- ☐ Weighed and tasted
- ☐ Asked before changing the grinder
- ☐ Nothing to make? Cleaned, restocked, or asked
- ☐ Made a mistake? Said so and fixed it

Till and cash

- Repeat the order back, check the screen, then take payment.
- **Card:** the customer taps or inserts it. Never out of their sight.
- **Cash:** say the amount handed over; note stays out until the change is counted back.
- Never leave the drawer open. Count the float the café's way.
- Refunds, voids, discounts, or anything wrong at the till: the manager.

Safety and the team: allergens, never guess. Burns: call "hot" and "behind". Slips: wipe up spills at once. Free? Ask who needs a hand. Feedback: listen, say thanks, try it.

Weigh it, taste it, keep it clean, and ask. That's a barista any café wants to keep.

RECIPE AND CALIBRATION LOG

[illegible]

YOUR SPOT-CHECK

TASTING AND QUALITY SPOT-CHECK

Check three drinks at a time against the house standard. Tick what's right, then write one thing done well and one thing to work on.

Drink	1	2	3	4	5	6
ESPRESSO						
Dose and yield in spec	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time in range	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Tastes balanced	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
MILK						
60–65 °C	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Glossy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Foam depth as on the recipe sheet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
PRESENTATION						
The right cup, clean, no drips	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Served promptly with a friendly word	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
STATION						
Wand wiped and purged	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cloths separate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Milk back in the fridge	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

One thing done well

One thing to work on

BARISTA SCHOOL IRELAND

BARISTA LEVEL 2

Weigh it, taste it, keep it clean, and ask. That's a barista any café wants to keep.

KEEP GOING

Latte Art Level 1

Milk, the pour, the heart and the tulip.

baristaschoolireland.ie

General barista training. Espresso machines, steam and hot water can burn: take care.

© Barista School Ireland 2026