



BARISTA SCHOOL IRELAND • POCKET GUIDE

LATTE ART LEVEL 1

Milk, the pour, the heart and the tulip: the steps and fixes from your course, in your pocket. Keep it by the machine while you practise.

60–65 °C

stop the milk here: sweetest, and the foam holds

High and thin

sinks under the crema: the surface stays brown

Low and close

a little faster: stays on top and draws white

INSIDE: THE EIGHT LESSONS

- 01 What makes latte art
- 02 Milk for latte art
- 03 Steaming technique
- 04 The pour: tilt, height and flow
- 05 The heart
- 06 The tulip: two and three stacks
- 07 Fixing common mistakes
- 08 Practice plan and what's next

LESSONS 1-2

CREMA, MILK AND KIT

Crema: the canvas

The golden foam on top of an espresso: tiny gas bubbles and coffee oils. It fades as the shot sits: pour **within about a minute** of the shot finishing, or the background turns pale and patchy.

Microfoam: the paint

Milk with bubbles too small to see: smooth, glossy, pours like wet paint. **Proteins** hold the tiny bubbles; **fat** makes it silky. Whole milk is the easiest to learn with.

The four laws of latte art

Preparation
a fresh shot with good crema, a clean jug and a wide cup

Temperature
milk at 60–65 °C. Hotter pours thin and tastes flat

Texture
glossy microfoam, swirled right up to the pour

Pour
high and thin to start, then low and close to draw

Read the milk

	Too thin	Just right	Too thick
In the jug	Flat, no sheen	Glossy like wet paint, no bubbles you can see; milk and foam move as one	Stiff, dry foam on top
In the cup	Nothing white shows, even when you pour low	Clean shapes	White comes out in lumps: a blob, not a shape
Fix	Stretch a little longer		Shorter stretch, longer roll

The paint test: pour a little into an empty cup and tilt it. Good milk coats the side and slides back as one glossy layer.

How much foam?

- **For latte art**, steam as for a flat white or latte: the milk rises by about a tenth, about 1 cm of foam in the cup.
- **Cappuccino milk** rises by about a third: too thick to draw clean shapes while you learn.
- **Fresh, cold whole milk**, fresh for every drink. Never steam milk twice.
- **Plant milks:** barista versions, less air than dairy, the lower end of the range, pour soon.

The jug and the amount

Jug	Cold milk
350 ml	about 130–140 ml: one flat white or cappuccino
600 ml	about 230 ml for a latte, or 260 ml for two flat whites

Fill to **just below the bottom of the spout**. No measure? Fill the serving cup about two-thirds with cold milk and tip it into the jug.

LESSON 3

STEAMING TECHNIQUE

Cold milk straight from the fridge (about 4 °C), in a cold jug. **Purge the wand** first: a short blast into a cloth or the drip tray clears out water. Then two parts: the **stretch**, then the **roll**.



- 1 **Stretch: add air.** Tip **just under the surface**, a little off centre, steam fully open. Listen for a gentle hiss, like paper tearing. The milk rises. Stretch early, while the milk is cold. **Stop adding air at about 37 °C**, when the jug feels body warm.
- 2 **Roll: fold it in.** Raise the jug so the tip sits **about 1 cm deeper**, still off centre. The milk spins in a whirlpool and the hissing stops. The spin breaks big bubbles into tiny ones and mixes the foam through.
- 3 **Stop at 60–65 °C.** Sweetest, and the foam holds. At 70 °C and over it's cooked, flat, too hot to drink and the foam goes dry. No thermometer? Stop just as the jug gets too hot to hold. **Close the steam before you lower the jug.**
- 4 **Polish. Wipe and purge** the wand straight away. **Tap** the jug once, firmly. **Swirl** in small circles until it shines like wet paint. **Pour soon:** left standing, the foam separates.

Listen to the milk

You hear	Fix
A screech, no foam	The tip is too deep. Lower the jug until you hear the hiss.
Big, spitting bubbles	The tip is too high. Raise the jug a little so the tip sits just under.

Steam and steamed milk are hot. Keep your hand on the jug, not the wand, and point the wand away from you when you purge.

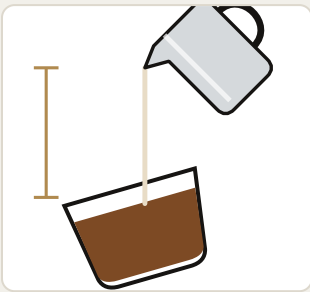
What you need

- ☐ **A steel jug** with a defined spout. A 350 ml jug suits one cup
- ☐ **A wide, round cup**, about 180–240 ml. Far easier than a tall glass
- ☐ **A thermometer** for your first weeks, until your hand knows 60–65 °C
- ☐ **A clean, damp cloth** kept only for the steam wand

LESSON 4

THE POUR: TILT, HEIGHT AND FLOW

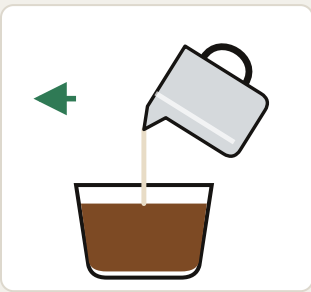
The one rule. High and thin sinks under the crema and leaves the surface brown. Low and a little faster stays on top and draws white. Every design is a switch from one to the other, at the right moment and in the right place.



1 The base
5–10 cm up, thin



2 Drop and draw
about 1 cm away, faster



3 Lift and finish
lift, thin, straight through

Phase	Jug	Flow	Cup
1 The base	A few cm up, about 5–10 cm, into the centre	Thin and steady: think pencil, not hose	Tilted about 30° towards the jug. Fill to about half
2 Drop and draw	Right down, almost touching, about 1 cm away	A little faster	Keep levelling as it fills
3 Lift and finish	Up a few centimetres	Thin, straight through	Flat by the finish

Say it as you pour: “Tilt, high, thin... drop, close... level... lift, through.”

Hold the cup and the jug

- Cup in your free hand, by the body or the handle, tilted about 30° towards the jug so the espresso pools on the near side. Bring it slowly level as it fills.
- Jug by the handle, relaxed grip, elbows close to your body. Your **wrist** does the fine work.

Controlling the flow

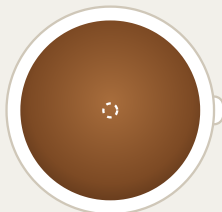
- A **steady stream** matters more than speed.
- Tip the jug a touch further to pour faster; ease it back to slow down.
- **Stopping cleanly**, with no drips, is a skill of its own. You need it for the tulip.

White showing already in the base? You are too low or pouring too fast. Go higher and thinner.

LESSON 5

THE HEART

The heart uses every move of the pour: the base, the drop and the finish. Every other design is built on it. Pour hearts until they land in the middle of the cup, every time.



1 Base
high, thin, centre



2 Drop
low, close, centre



3 Hold
still, let it grow



4 Cut through
lift, then cut

- 1 Base:** cup tilted towards the jug. From a few centimetres up, a thin, steady stream into the centre.

High • thin • centre • fill to about half

- 2 Drop:** the spout right down until it almost touches the surface, **in the centre of the cup**, a little faster. A white circle appears. Start levelling the cup.

Low • close • a little faster

- 3 Hold:** keep the spout **still** and the flow steady while the circle grows to about two-thirds of the cup's width. Keep levelling.

Still • steady • let it grow

- 4 Cut through:** when the cup is **nearly full**, lift the jug a few centimetres so the stream goes thin. Draw it straight through the circle, away from you, in line with the handle. Stop at the far edge.

Lift first, then cut

Judge every cup

Contrast

clean white on an even brown

Centre

in the middle of the cup

Symmetry

both sides match

Size

fills the cup without touching the edge

LESSON 6

THE TULIP: TWO AND THREE STACKS

Small shapes stacked one behind another. The new skill is the **clean stop**: lift the jug and stop the flow completely between stacks. No dribbles. A clean stop gives a clean layer.



1 First stack
just beyond centre



2 The push
just behind, nearer you



3 Third stack
a little smaller



4 Pull through
last stack to first

- 1 A shorter base.** As for the heart: high, thin, into the centre. Stop a little earlier, **just under half full**, to leave room for the stacks.
- 2 First stack.** Drop close, **just beyond the centre**. Let a small white dot form, about the size of a coin. Lift and stop the flow cleanly.
Drop • dot • stop
- 3 Second stack: the push.** Drop again **just behind the first dot, nearer to you**. The new dot pushes the first one forward and it wraps round. Stop. Lift and cut through now for a **two-stack tulip**.
- 4 Third stack.** Once more, a little nearer to you again and **a little smaller**. Bring the cup level as it fills.
- 5 Pull through.** Lift a few centimetres, thin the stream, and draw **one straight line through every stack**, from the last one you poured to the first. Stop just past the first stack, before the rim.

Count a silent “one, stop” for every stack. It keeps them the same size.

LESSON 7

FIXING COMMON MISTAKES

Every cup tells you what went wrong. Find the fault, change **one thing**, and pour again.

If every design is going wrong, it's probably the milk. Fix the milk first.

Milk and flow

You see	Fix
Nothing white appears	Milk too thin, or the spout too high in the drop. A little more air in the stretch; get the spout right down.
White comes out in lumps	Milk too thick, or left standing. Less air, a longer roll, and swirl right up to the pour.
White blobs in the base	Pouring too fast: a thick stream punches through the crema. Base higher and thinner; save the faster flow for the drop.

The heart

You see	Fix
Lopsided or leaning	Drop in the middle, level the cup evenly, and cut through in line with the handle.
A ring, brown inside	Get closer and pour a touch faster in the drop. Check the stretch.
A blob with a fat tail	Shorter stretch, longer roll. Lift and thin the stream for the finish.

The tulip

You see	Fix
Stacks joined by trails	Lift and stop completely after every stack.
Stacks merge into one	Move each drop a little nearer to you, and pour smaller pushes.
Runs out of room	Stop the base earlier, and make the stacks smaller as you come back.

Bubbles, blurs and pale cups

You see	Fix
Bubbles on the surface	Tap the jug, swirl, and stretch a little less.
A broken or blurred pattern	The milk separated in the jug. Swirl until it shines and pour soon after steaming.
Pale, patchy background	An old shot. Pour within a minute of the shot finishing.

LESSON 8

YOUR FIRST TWO WEEKS

About **15 minutes most days** beats one long afternoon. Use wide, round cups. Practise the stretch and the roll with cold water and **one drop of washing-up liquid**: it foams much like milk, with nothing wasted. Never drink it, and rinse the jug well before you use it for milk.

Days	Focus	Goal
1–3	Milk	Three foams (short, medium and long stretch), the hand test at 60 °C, and the paint test
4–8	The heart	Five hearts in the middle of the cup, then three sizes on purpose
9–14	The tulip	A two-stack tulip with clean stops, then three even stacks that fit the cup

Milestones

- ☐ Three glossy jugs in a row, stopped at 60–65 °C
- ☐ Five hearts in the middle of the cup
- ☐ Three heart sizes, on purpose
- ☐ A two-stack tulip with clean stops
- ☐ Three even stacks that fit the cup

Practice tracker

After each session, one line: the design, how many cups, a tick for each thing your best cup got right, and **one thing to change** next time. Stuck for a week? Go back a design for a day, then try again.

Day	Design	Cups	Contrast	Centre	Symmetry	Size	One thing to change
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	
			☐	☐	☐	☐	

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LATTE ART LEVEL 1

A clean heart proves your espresso and your milk are both right. A few cups, most days.

KEEP GOING

Latte Art Level 2

The wiggle and the rosetta, advanced tulips, the swan, six cups the same, and different cups and milks.

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General latte art training. Follow your machine's instructions and, at work, your manager's procedures.

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