



ROASTING COFFEE WITH A POPCORN MAKER

If you don't have access to a purpose built home coffee bean roaster, the next best thing that you can use is a popcorn maker. While not specifically designed for roasting coffee, they are still ideal for the beginner to use to start roasting green coffee beans at home.

You will need

1. A hot air popcorn maker (1500watt) with a solid base to the popping chamber where the hot air enters via vents in the side. (See the diagram).
DO NOT use a popcorn maker with a mesh bottom. It may prove to be a fire hazard if used for roasting coffee beans!
2. A metal colander (for cooling the beans once roasted).
3. A wooden or metal mixing spoon (for agitating roasted beans in the colander).
4. A ceramic or metal bowl (to collect chaff).
5. A cup measure (usually supplied with the popcorn maker).
6. A timer of some description (optional).
7. Some green coffee beans.



Popping Chamber with side vents

The Process

1. The roasting process generates a fair bit of smoke so it is advisable to set up the popcorn maker in a ventilated place near a kitchen exhaust fan or window ... better still outside!. Good overhead lighting is essential to enable you to visually monitor the roast as it progresses. Make sure that all your equipment and supplies are within easy reach.
2. Add the same amount of green coffee beans to the popping chamber as the manufacturer recommends for popcorn. This will be easy if the machine came with a measurer. In any case, no more than 2/3 to 3/4 of a cup of coffee beans should be roasted at any one time. More than that amount will result in uneven roasting and can pose a fire hazard.
3. Close the plastic cover of the popcorn maker and place the ceramic or metal bowl under the outlet chute of the popcorn maker. This will catch the chaff that is blown from the outside of the coffee beans during the roasting process. Turn on your popcorn maker (start your timer if you have chosen to use one)
4. After around 3 minutes you will notice a quantity of fragrant smoke being generated and what is known as the "first crack" can be heard. From this point on you will need to monitor the beans a little more closely so that you don't go past your desired roast colour.
5. The total time required really depends on how dark you wish your beans to be. For a light roast, a minute after the "First Crack" should be enough. For a dark roast, listen for the "Second Crack" and turn off your machine soon after. Roasts develop quickly, so be vigilant. You want to pour the beans out of the popper when they are a bit lighter than you desire, as roasting will continue until the beans have cooled. Time how long your perfect roast takes so you can replicate it easily.
6. Tip the roasted beans into the metal colander and stir with the mixing spoon to cool them. The beans will be very hot at this point so you may need to use an oven mitt.
7. Coffee should be stored out of direct light in an airtight container, however, with a fresh roast you should wait 12 hours before sealing the container tightly as the beans need to vent off CO2. DO NOT store in the fridge or freezer.
8. Warm, fresh roasted beans are wonderful, but the coffee attains its peak around 4 to 24 hours after roasting. If you store it as recommended, the coffee will maintain its "fresh" status for up to 5 days.

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