



# THE PERKS OF COFFEE CUPPING

*Move over, wine tastings. There's a fun, new social occasion with a different buzz: coffee cupping. Here's how to host your first one.*

Coffee cupping has long been a practice of professional baristas and roasters who are assessing beans for commercial purposes, but these days amateur java-lovers too can be found evaluating brews at coffeehouses and home gatherings. Barista Daniel Humphries, who started cupping events at Chicago-based *Intelligentsia Coffee & Tea*, sees it as a fun way for consumers to learn more about coffee.

Hosting your own cupping event can also be a great way to spend time with friends. Here's how:

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**TASTE TEST**  
Ask guests to note fragrance, aroma, taste, body and aftertaste.



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## CUPPING ESSENTIALS

Brian Phillips, a coffee roaster for *Broadway Café & Roastery* in Kansas City, MO, recommends choosing four distinctive coffees to cup, such as *Ethiopian Yirgacheffe*, *Guatemalan Hue Hue Tenango* and *Indian monsoon coffee*.

During each step, take notes. At New York City's *Joe the Art of Coffee*, Amanda Byron uses tasting charts with the following categories: fragrance (the smell of beans after grinding), aroma (the smell after water is added), taste, body (the feel of the coffee in your mouth) and aftertaste.

For a blind tasting, each guest will need four 5- to 7-ounce mugs or tumblers with numbered labels on the bottom to correspond with each coffee, at least two soup or cupping spoons, a cereal bowl, a glass of water and an empty glass.

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## THE CUPPING

1. Measure out 2 tablespoons of ground coffee for each guest.
2. Boil water, wait 20 seconds, then pour over grounds to 1/2 inch below the cup's rim.
3. Four minutes later, hold two spoons with the convex sides facing each other, lower edges meeting. Push the spoons through the crust, and move your face close to enjoy the aroma.
4. Clear the crust and dump the surface grounds into a bowl. Rinse the spoons in the water glass. Take a spoonful of coffee, then slurp it to spray coffee over the inside of your mouth to experience the full taste.

Repeat the steps for the remaining coffees. When everyone's done tasting, share your observations, and remember there are no wrong opinions. Let your guests know which coffees they've tasted — and where to find their new favorites.

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