Cleo Coyle Makes Norwegian Egg Coffee

Photos and text © by Alice Alfonsi who writes The Coffeehouse Mysteries as Cleo Coyle in collaboration with her husband, Marc Cerasini.

This basic method of making coffee is known by many names: Norwegian Egg Coffee, Swedish Egg Coffee, Finnish Egg Coffee, Hungarian Egg Coffee, and (of course) Lutheran Church Basement Egg Coffee. If you are making large batches of coffee and your grinds are coming pre-ground in a can or plastic container, this is an excellent method of doing it. Pre-ground coffees that are mass produced have less dimension and complexity than premium coffees. And this method of making coffees is one way to turn a cheaper coffee into a smoother and more drinkable brew.

To read my full blog post on this method and its historical origins, click here.

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Why an egg? My amateur sleuth, coffeehouse manager Clare, solved that mystery in my Coffeehouse Mysteries. An egg contains proteins, and proteins help the coffee grounds to *flocculate*; that is, clump together, which helps to prevent the bitter grinds from ending up in your cup. Proteins also bind to the polyphenols in coffee, ridding it of astringency, which aids in clarifying it. That's why the result is a pleasant, mild tasting brew. This method is *also* a fun way to make your own **Spiced Coffee Blend**. I'll show you how in the recipe below. May you drink it with joy!

Yields about 10 servings (6-ounce cups of coffee)

(1) PLACE 2 quarts of water (eight 8-ounce cups) into a saucepan

(2) HEAT until the water boils; while you're waiting for the boil, make the egg paste *(go to step 3 on next page)*…

Once strained, the egg coffee produces a very pretty, amber-colored beverage. Despite using inexpensive, pre-ground coffee, the result is clear, smooth, and delicious.

(3) MIX a paste consisting of:

1 egg + 3/4 cup ground coffee* + 1/4 cup water

(4) ADD this coffee-egg paste into the water as soon as it begins to boil. Give it a gentle stir, and do not stir again.

(5) BOIL for 3 full minutes.

(6) REMOVE the pan from heat. (Don't simply turn the heat down, take the pan off the hot burner.)

(7) LET STAND for a full 2 minutes.

(8) STRAIN coffee into a carafe (I use a fine mesh sieve).

Serve the egg coffee hot or iced, as you like, with or without cream and sugar.

FINAL NOTES:

* TYPE OF COFFEE: I suggest a bold, dark roast for this method, which will give you a rich coffee flavor. In my experience, medium and light roasts yield a cup that’s not as rich, even a bit on the watery side. The amount of coffee I'm using works for me. You may want to use less coffee or more water. Experiment with your own taste.

*FYI Note on Step 6 - Many recipes for "egg coffee" direct you to add cold water during step (6). But in my experience this does little to benefit the brew. Instead, I find it makes the coffee more watery and lessens the pleasant impact of a wonderfully hot, steaming cup.

Make Your Own Spiced Coffee Blend!

To create a spiced coffee blend using this method, simply add your favorite whole spices to the pot during step 1.

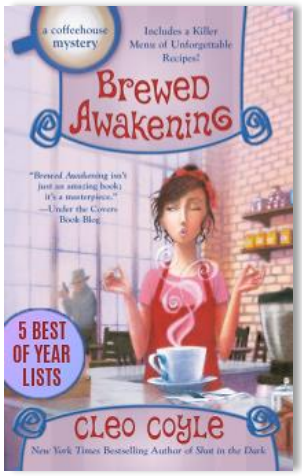
Here are the whole spices that I like to use...

3 cinnamon sticks, 2 whole cloves, 1 teaspoon of crystallized ginger, and 1 star anise. You can mix and match your own with one warning...

WARNING: Do not use ground spices. These will float in the coffee and will not give you the same nuanced flavoring as whole spices.

What about Grandma and her Eggshells?

Remember that old idea of throwing eggshells into coffee filters to help reduce the acidity? Well, Grandma was right, if she did it right. The shell is calcium carbonate, which will neutralize acid. Here's the thing, though, it only works if you really crush up the shell into the grinds. Simply throwing large, empty shells into a coffee filter does nothing to change the acidity level. And, as I noted at the beginning of this recipe, premium coffees would not benefit from this kind of treatment. Use it only for cheaper, mass-produced coffee (the kind you find sold pre-ground in cans). **To learn more about the Norwegian origins of this coffee, and how it evolved with immigrants to the Midwestern United States, read my full recipe blog post by clicking here.**



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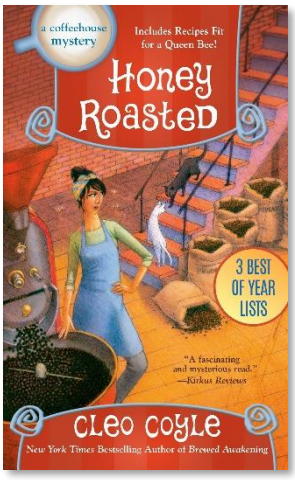

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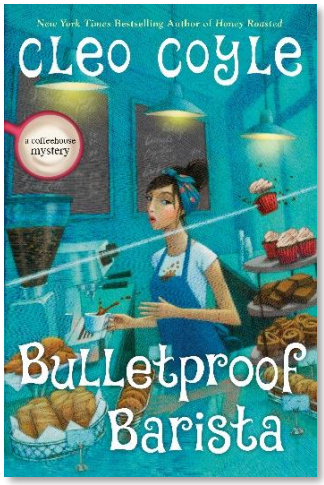
Eat with joy! ~ Cleo

The Coffeehouse Mysteries are bestselling culinary mysteries, set in a landmark Greenwich Village coffeehouse. Each includes the added bonus of recipes.
To learn more and see more recipes, visit Cleo Coyle's online coffeehouse at www.CoffeehouseMystery.com
And her recipe blog at www.CleoCoyleRecipes.com



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