



Just what started the
Italian love affair with
coffee?



Are you wondering why Italians are so into coffee?

Italians did not invent coffee, yet the passion they have for it makes the rest of world believe they discovered it. But they have invented a coffee culture unequalled anywhere else in the world. For them the most important reason to drink coffee is quite simple: they just like their coffee as much as they like their national anthem, pasta and olive oil. Without it, they wouldn't feel Italian. The whole world knows and envies the famous "espresso" who many try to copy, but can't quite get the hang of it.

Coffee came to Italy via Turkey. There were coffeehouses in Istanbul and the Turks began trading coffee in Italy in the 16th century. Venice was coffee's first stop. In no time at all, Venice claimed over 200 coffee houses along its canals. The fever caught on and soon Verona, Milan and Turin joined the cult of coffee drinkers and some of the very elegant coffee houses that were set up then still exist today. At the 1906 Milan Fair, the new IDEALE coffee machine introduced espresso to the world. It could make an espresso in (gasp) only 45 seconds! (Versus the 7 seconds it takes today.)

So, other than drink it, what can you do with it if you don't like such a strong brew? We have some espresso recipes on [the Club's website](#) Just go to the tab at the top that says, "La Cucina." You can try: tiramisu, cappuccino pudding, cappuccino

cheesecake, and no-churn coffee ice cream among others. An affogato is like Math 101: one scoop of vanilla ice cream and one cup of espresso poured over the top. Done.



Affogato--the easiest!



Tiramisu



Cappuccino Pudding



*Espresso
Cheesecake*

What kinds of coffee are there in Italy? Here are the most common.

First and foremost, the traditional and most-ordered **espresso**. Dark, rich, a thick “crema” floating on top and an aroma that defies description. Contrary to what you might think, espresso has less caffeine than regular drip coffee! It doesn’t matter where you get one: at the fanciest coffeehouse in Italy or at an Auto Grill on the autostrada, it will be consistently good.

And then there is the **Cappuccino**, coffee combined with steamed milk, often with a fancy design adorning the foam on top. Get it before 11:00 am. Italians consider this milky drink only a breakfast beverage and you’ll probably get a scowly face if you ask for one after 11:00 am, noon at the latest. After dinner? Forget it; it just won’t happen.

At most Italian bars, including the Auto Grills, you pay for your drink before it’s made. Never ask for an espresso, simply request, ‘un caffè, per favore’ (“a coffee please”); you will automatically get an espresso. If you order “un espresso per favore” you might as well hang a sign with “TOURIST” around your neck! It’s just not done.

Typically, coffees are drunk at the bar. If you wish to sit and drink at a table like you see in the movies, be prepared to pay double for your coffee. After all, it’s more work to take your order, bring it to you, give you a napkin, bring the sugar, and then clean up the table when you leave.

We mentioned that Italians can drink up to 7 coffees a day, (it’s only about a tablespoon or so and only about one Euro). It’s typical to meet up with a friend for an espresso after you’ve already had your first-thing-in-the-morning dose. Then after lunch, you need another. Mid-afternoon? A pick me up, of course! Before you go out for dinner at 9 pm? One more. After dinner? Yep. Let’s see...that’s 6? We must have missed one. Oh, well, six is probably enough.



[Click here to Take a Look at the Italian Coffee Culture in Italy](#)



Barista Giuseppe

Our Club has two machines but we are limited to only espresso and cappuccino. We don't do coffees at all our events so the next time you see the coffee station set up, stop by, say hello to Giuseppe and get an espresso or cappuccino. We hope to hear you say, "un cafe" or "un cappuccino, per favore" just like in Italy!

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