

# YUMMY NORTHWEST

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## Do you know beans?

There isn't enough room in one issue to cover all there is to say about coffee. For now, we'll start with green (unroasted) beans, learn something about roasting, and encounter foam art.

Turn your enjoyment of coffee into an adventure. Trace the trail of beans in your neighborhood: Ask your barista where the coffeehouse gets its beans roasted and follow your nose to the source. A small-scale roaster will most likely be happy to show you how it's done.

Don't expect any secrets to be revealed, but do expect to learn that small is better and every individual roaster does it differently. The trail of your coffee adventure may wind a long way before you taste every cup of coffee in your area.

But it will be an adventure you will never forget.

## The magic of roasting

You can read and study all about coffee, says Mark Handman, owner of Wild Wheat Bakery in Kent, Wash. But ultimately, good roasting is "doing and doing and doing and lots of experimentation."

"I think my coffee is good now," said Handman. "But it will be better next year." His curiosity and hard work will pay off.

Each variety of bean has its own inherent flavor. Even if you roast every bean in exactly the same way, each variety will have its own taste in a cup of coffee. Imagine the limitless possibilities of roasting each variety in a different way, bringing out its best flavor, and then



## Local coffee beans

You can't buy beans grown in the Pacific Northwest, but the United States does produce its own variety.

Hawaiian Kona coffee is highly prized for its unique flavor properties. Grown in the Kona region on the Big Island of Hawaii, the beans for this premium coffee are picked by hand. The beans are then roasted for a long time at a high temperature, resulting in an intense flavor.

During the second week of November, the Kona Coffee Cultural Festival is celebrated. For more information, see [www.konacoffeefest.com](http://www.konacoffeefest.com).

Two Kona coffee brands recommended by a **Yummy** reader are:

Greenwell Farms  
[www.greenwellfarms.com](http://www.greenwellfarms.com)

Kona Joe  
[www.konajoe.com](http://www.konajoe.com)

blending them to suit your taste. This is the challenge and fun of roasting.

Small roasters like Handman can create unique blends that large coffee companies can't afford to spend time on. Large companies also tend to produce tried-and-true blends that customers learn to expect as signature blends.



AFTER 15 MINUTES, THE BEANS ARE ROASTED.

Although Handman is generous with information, his exact coffee profile – the roasting recipe he created to produce his blends – is a "friggin' secret."

But Handman does say, "I'm trying to develop a sweetness, to try to create a chocolatey flavor that stands up to milk."

His customers who buy a lot of milky lattes will be happy to know this.

Handman also uses what he believes are the best decaffeinated beans. If you're looking for a good cup of decaf, Wild Wheat Bakery is the place to go.

## Creating art in a coffee cup

I'd just seen a contest on TV where baristas from around the world competed to show off their skills in creating lavish designs in the foam on top of a cup of coffee. A tap of the milk pitcher, a flick of the wrist, and jaw-dropping edible art appeared as if by magic.

I asked Brittany, my barista at the time, what she could do with coffee art. Never having heard of it (this was her first job), she nonetheless obliged with all the willingness of any highly praised barista. From that day on, my coffee was handed to me in a disposable cup with a smiley face or flower drawn on it with a pen.

Ask your favorite barista, who will probably be more than happy to show you what she or he can do.

Here we see Maria D. Santana of Wild Wheat Bakery, Kent, Wash., pouring her heart into a cup of coffee.



The result: beautiful!



## More about coffee

Learn about creating art in foam – and oh so much more about coffee – by going to [coffeegeek.com](http://coffeegeek.com).

Tour a large Seattle roasting plant on the Wet Your Whistle tour. Get more information at [seattletours.us/tours](http://seattletours.us/tours).

Are you on a tight budget and can't figure out where all your money is going? Find out if it has anything to do with that morning cup of coffee. Use the coffee calculator at [hughchou.org/calc/coffee.cgi](http://hughchou.org/calc/coffee.cgi).



## Cowboy Coffee

This is easy: Bring a pot of water to a boil. Toss in a handful of ground coffee (more or less, depending on strength desired). Let sit for a moment, then pour. Some say a splash of cold water, a crushed eggshell, or a raw egg tossed in will help grounds settle before pouring. (Just be careful not to pour the egg and shell, too.)

## Wild Wheat Bakery

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## Do it yourself

Are you inspired to try roasting at home? Perhaps the most surprising thing about roasting coffee is that anyone can do it.

Start by going online ([sweetmarias.com](http://sweetmarias.com) is a good place to start) to order green beans.



GREEN BEANS IN HAND, ROASTED ONES IN THE PAIL

Even at this stage, you can learn to distinguish the unique grass-like scent for each variety.

But before you get all fancy and buy an [extremely] expensive roaster, try throwing the beans in a hot-air popcorn popper or experiment with a frying pan. Sweet Maria's can help you get started: [www.sweetmarias.com/airpopmethod.html](http://www.sweetmarias.com/airpopmethod.html).

There are books and Web sites to read, classes to take, and many generous professional roasters to learn from. But in the end, you may find you are happy to buy the beans all ready to make coffee.

Wherever your beans are from, or however they are roasted, savor the moment of enjoying a cup of coffee.



## About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest.

## Contact the editor

Comments, corrections, topic ideas, and submissions are all most welcome at [Yummy\\_Northwest@hotmail.com](mailto:Yummy_Northwest@hotmail.com). View archives at [yummynorthwest.com](http://yummynorthwest.com).