

# Something's brewing...

With more visitors enjoying our coffee than ever before, **Jenny Linford** asks what makes for the perfect cup

It's a familiar picture in Trust properties all over the UK; after a busy few hours exploring, you're having a sit-down in one of our cafés. As you wrap your hands around a welcome hot drink, you might be interested to consider that most of you will have chosen to have a coffee. The Trust's 2013 figures show that over 3.2 million cups' worth were sold – half a million more than in 2012.

Tim Howard, the Trust's Food and Beverage Development Manager, is happy for the rising trend to continue. 'There's a real knowledge of coffee among our customers,' he says. 'Café culture has become part of our everyday life, and recent years have seen customers choosing more specialist coffees. Because of that, we're working on a new National Trust coffee menu, offering a range that includes cappuccino, latte, espresso, Americano and mocha.'

Britons have long had a coffee habit. The stimulating drink originated in Ethiopia, and was introduced to Europe from Africa via Arab traders in the 17th century. ➔



➔ London's first coffee house opened in 1652; an exotic, expensive drink, it was thought to quicken the spirits and prevent dropsy and gout. It quickly became fashionable. Coffee houses became popular meeting places, attracting philosophers, writers, politicians and merchants.

Recent years have seen a renaissance in coffee-drinking in Britain, evidenced by the rise of high-street coffee chains and independent coffee shops. Coffee vocabulary has expanded, too, from 'filter' and 'instant' to include terms such as 'skinny' (low fat) and 'flat white' (similar to a small, strong latte).

To meet modern expectations, Tim is trialling new coffee machines for the Trust as well as potential new coffee-bean suppliers, which entails ethical considerations. 'It's really important for us as a conservation charity that when we have to buy overseas products, we buy them in the most ethical way possible,' he explains. 'Our sourcing guidelines stipulate that global commodities like bananas, sugar, tea or coffee, should be either Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance.'

Both these organisations work to protect the growers and their environment, offering a sustainable approach. But it's more than simply a requirement. 'We want to understand where the beans are grown and how the workers are treated, and the companies we have been

considering all care about this,' says Tim. 'They have a story and are keen to tell it.'

Having set the fundamental ethical benchmark with sourcing, there is the important question of what the coffee tastes like. The long-listed coffees were first tasted by a panel, which included Tim, that compared the taste of coffee made from the different beans. Those which scored badly were too heavily roasted, which gives a burnt, bitter flavour. Others were too acidic, with an astringent taste which sits on the palate for a long time.

After narrowing down the competition, trials of the shortlisted coffees took place at the end of last year in a number of Trust properties. Both the coffee and the coffee machines were considered, and visitors invited to give their opinions.

The decision-making is a surprisingly technical process. With cappuccinos and lattes the Trust's most popular coffees – well over 600,000 cups of each are sold annually – Tim is interested in those coffee beans that perform well with milk. 'Cappuccinos use a double shot of espresso and for that you need to have a good flavour profile which will be strong enough to cut through the milk,' he says. 'You might have a flavoursome but mellow coffee, which is great as an espresso but would get lost with lots of milk.' For this reason, Tim favours a blend of

**Above** The Trust is trialling new coffee machines and will soon be expanding its range of specialist coffees.

**Above right** Freshly harvested Brazilian beans. Trust coffee only comes from ethical and sustainable sources.

 We asked our Twitter followers what they think makes the perfect cup of coffee...

Share your coffee with us by tweeting @nationaltrust

**@carlosradioguy**  
@nationaltrust as long as it's hot with milk and I am drinking it on Brownsea Island enjoying the view across Shell Bay to The Purbecks :-))

**@chriswibble**  
@nationaltrust coffee and walnut cake with an espresso at Colby Woodland Gardens.



**Above** Anyone for a latte or Americano?

**Above right** Whatever your choice, we hope you'll continue to round off your visit with a nice sit-down and a good cup of your favourite coffee – or tea, of course!

Arabica and Robusta beans. 'Arabica offers in-depth flavours, but they can be easily masked. Good Robusta beans have some power to them and can deliver a bitter note, so for milky coffees a small amount of Robusta in the mix will help fully bring out the flavour.'

It's not just down to the beans, though – using high-quality milk is a key factor, particularly for cappuccino. There are three levels of foam and milk in cappuccino: a big area of bubbles at the top, a thin layer of more textured milk, then the milk in the coffee itself. 'Having the correct milk structure is important' says Tim. 'We buy Red Tractor- assured milk from a British co-operative. We generally use semi-skimmed milk, but offering skimmed or soya milk is an important consideration, with decaffeinated coffee normally available, too.'

Is the craze for coffee the end of tea at the Trust? Tim doesn't think so. 'Tea will always play a special part in the National Trust, but I also really want us to be known for our great-tasting, sustainably produced coffee. I'm sure there's room in our cafés for both.' ☉

**Jenny Linford** is a freelance food writer, author of *The Creamery Kitchen* cookbook and *Food Lovers' London*

@kariluck

@nationaltrust >> a nice frothy Latte at #Lacock or #Tyntesfield.

@jcarmensmith

@nationaltrust Strong & black for Jim, smooth with hot milk for me. Favourite NT place to drink it? Stables Restaurant @ DunhamMassey!

## Coffee talk

The Brownlows of Belton House in Lincolnshire were early adopters of the coffee craze at the start of the 18th century. Family members each had their own long-spouted coffee pots and china dishes.



When it comes to per capita coffee consumption, the Netherlands leads the way at 2.4 cups of coffee per day. Despite the increased interest in coffee here, the UK drinks less than half a cup a day.



In dollar value, coffee is the second largest export in the world (after oil).



Coffee was initially viewed with suspicion in Europe, nicknamed 'Satan's brew', until Pope Clement VIII (1536–1605) gave the beverage his blessing.

Coffee houses were seen as places where revolutionary ideas could spread. The Boston Tea Party of 1773 was planned in a coffee house, the Green Dragon tavern.



In 1938, Milanese coffee bartender Achille Gaggia patented a steam-free coffee machine which used a piston to force water through the coffee grounds at high pressure – the beginnings of the modern espresso age.



# Spring recipes



The combination of coffee and cream is perfect for an indulgent dessert, says Development Chef **Clive Goudercourt**

## Cappuccino cheesecake

Preparation time: 20 minutes  
Cooking time: 1hr 15 minutes  
Chill: overnight  
Makes 14 portions

### Ingredients

#### For the biscuit base:

300g/12oz digestive biscuits  
1tsp ground cinnamon  
125g/5oz butter

#### For the filling:

800g/2lb cream cheese  
250g/9oz caster sugar  
25g/1oz coffee granules  
25ml/2 tbsp whisky (or brandy)  
200ml/7 fl oz double cream  
4 eggs  
50g/2oz plain flour

#### To finish:

300ml/10 fl oz double cream  
50g/2oz icing sugar  
Grated chocolate

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 130°C (110°C fan)/ gas mark ½.
2. Line the base of a 23cm spring-form tin with greaseproof paper.
3. Place the biscuits in a large bag and bash them with a rolling pin until you have fine crumbs. Tip them into a bowl and stir in the cinnamon.
4. Melt the butter in a microwave or a small pan and stir into the biscuit crumbs until the mixture sticks together.
5. Tip the biscuit mix into the tin and use the back of a spoon to press it down, smoothing it until you have an even layer. Place in the fridge to chill.
6. Put the cream cheese and caster sugar in a large bowl and whisk them together until smooth.
7. Dissolve the coffee granules in two tablespoons of boiling water and then stir in the whisky.
8. Pour the double cream and the coffee into the cream cheese mix, add the eggs and dust the flour over the top. Whisk again until well combined and smooth.
9. Remove the base from the fridge and pour the cream cheese mixture over. Level the top with a spoon, place in the oven and cook for one hour 15 minutes, or until it still has a slight wobble in the middle and is lightly coloured and set around the edge.
10. Remove from the oven and leave to cool. Chill overnight in the fridge.

### To top:

Put the double cream and icing sugar in a large bowl and whip with a whisk into a soft peak. Spoon in drops around the edge of the cheesecake and sprinkle over the grated chocolate.

#### Clive's tip:

'If you have an espresso machine, use two shots instead of the coffee granules.'



## Mocha bread and butter pudding

Preparation time: 20 minutes  
Cooking time: 25–30 minutes  
Serves 6

### Ingredients

350ml/12 fl oz milk  
350ml/12 fl oz double cream  
4 eggs  
10g/1 tbsp coffee granules  
8 slices extra thick white bread  
70g/3oz butter  
100g/4oz chocolate chips  
100g/4oz caster sugar  
30g/1oz demerara sugar  
Icing sugar, to dust

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C (150°C fan)/ gas mark 3.
2. Grease a deep 20x15cm casserole dish.
3. Put the milk, cream and eggs in a large bowl and whisk to combine.
4. Dissolve the coffee granules in a little boiling water and whisk into the milk mixture.
5. Spread the butter onto the slices of bread and cut into quarters.
6. Layer the bread, butter side down, in the casserole dish and sprinkle the chocolate chips over the bread.
7. Place another layer of bread over the chocolate chips and sprinkle more chocolate chips over this. Continue until the bread and chocolate is used up.
8. Sprinkle the caster sugar over the bread and then gently pour the milk mixture evenly over the bread slices.
9. Leave the pudding to rest for about 30 minutes, so the bread can soak up the mixture.
10. Sprinkle the demerara sugar over the top, place in the oven and cook for 25–30 minutes or until the top is crispy and the custard has set.
11. Remove from the oven and dust with icing sugar. Serve with a portion of custard.

#### Clive's tip:

'This recipe is a great way of using up dried bread – it makes it much tastier. Stick to white bread, rather than wholegrain, for the best result.'



[nationaltrust.org.uk/mag/recipes](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/mag/recipes)