

# What espresso really is.

Espresso is not a bean and not a flavour — espresso is a method. Keep this page beside you while you watch, and keep the numbers and the tasting compass in view.

## The method in numbers

~9 bar

brew pressure

88–94 °C

brew temperature

25–30 s

flow time

25–35 ml

in the cup

## The tasting compass



**sour**

under-extracted · water ran through too fast

balanced · sweet = your target

**bitter**

over-extracted · water ran through too slowly

## Remember this

- **Crema deceives.** Lots of crema ≠ good espresso (robusta makes plenty of it and often tastes flat).
- **Dark is bitter, not strong.** A dark roast even holds slightly less caffeine.
- **Taste first, think second.** Your tongue is your best measuring device.
- **The one question:** sour or bitter? It steers every correction you will ever make.

# Taste with intent.

Your assignment until the next episode: drink your next espressos with intent and note where they sit on the compass. You will be surprised how quickly your tongue improves.

| Date | Bean | sour ↔ bitter (1 sour · 3 target · 5 bitter) | Note (body / finish) |
|------|------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|      |      | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5                            |                      |
|      |      | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5                            |                      |
|      |      | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5                            |                      |
|      |      | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5                            |                      |
|      |      | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5                            |                      |
|      |      | 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5                            |                      |

## The four words for your taste

- **Body** — the weight on your tongue (watery ↔ syrupy).
- **Acidity** — the liveliness, in the good sense (flat ↔ zesty).
- **Sweetness** — your target at the centre of the compass.
- **Finish** — how long the flavour lingers pleasantly.