

Coffee Cocktails Are Fall's Biggest Beverage Trend – Here's How to Make Them at Home

The combination of aged spirits, spices, and espresso makes for a deliciously kicked-up cocktail.

By **Betty Gold**

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When a [pumpkin spice latte](#) just isn't cutting it, coffee cocktails are the perfect blend of caffeinated warmth plus spirited spice to power you through the fall and holiday season. Whether you want to spruce up your holiday brunch with a warm mug of Irish whiskey-spiked [pour over](#) or end the day with an espresso-scented nightcap, Stephan Berg and Alexander Hauck, co-founders of [The Bitter Truth](#), are the ideal beverage experts to tap. Here are Hauck's top tips to guide you through the dos and don'ts of incorporating [coffee](#) into cocktails—including the best spirits and fall-flavored fixings. (Think chocolate bitters, caramel syrup, cardamom...thirsty yet?)

Aged Spirits Are Best

Hauck recommends using aged spirits in coffee cocktails over clear ones, as they tend to have richer, mellower, more complex flavor, and may contain hints of oak, butterscotch, or vanilla. "Whether you opt for aged rum, whiskey, brandy, or tequila, the woody vanilla flavors really go well with coffee."

Test It Out First

If you want to test spirits in coffee, try a classic—Irish coffee—but replace the Irish whiskey with the spirit of your choice. "The cold version of this drink is really tasty, too," he says.

Choose a Quality Coffee

According to Hauck, the quality of the coffee is the most crucial part in these drinks. "If the coffee is bad, the drink is bad. I'd always go for a strong espresso with not too much acidity," he says. And remember: if you're sensitive to caffeine later in the day, simply swap regular coffee or espresso for decaf.

Incorporate Syrups With Complementary Flavors

Coffee shops offer lots of syrups to enhance coffee: vanilla, caramel, any kind of nut, cinnamon, chocolate, and more. All these flavors pair perfectly with coffee cocktails, too.

Add Spices

Incorporate spices like cardamom—either pods or powder work great. “Not only does cardamom add nice spicy and floral notes to the coffee, it also adds some health benefits,” says Hauck. Other smart spice additions include cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves.

Use a Touch of Bitters

“If you generally like spices in coffee and coffee cocktails, I also recommend using bitters.” The Bitter Truth [Chocolate Bitters](#) are a great option. Hauck's favorite? A double espresso with two or three dashes.

Stephan Berg and Alexander Hauck

Try This Easy Coffee Cocktail Recipe

Meet Me At Luke's by Stephan Berg and Alexander Hauck of The Bitter Truth

Ingredients

- 3/4 ounce The Bitter Truth Chocolate Bitters
- 2 ounces espresso
- 1 teaspoon vanilla sugar
- 1 ounce cream



Method

Dissolve vanilla sugar in hot espresso. Add the chocolate bitters and ice cubes and shake until cold (note: to make the drink hot, omit the ice and simply stir the bitters into the espresso). Strain into a cocktail glass and top with slightly whipped cream.