

What to Eat With It: Coffee and Pastry Pairings

Match strength to strength, and let one of the pair be sweet. The lower half lists pairings that belong to a place.

COFFEE REFERENCE CARD

The coffee	Pair it with	Why it works
BY THE CUP		
Light roast, black (washed Ethiopia, pour-over)	Lemon or berry scone; plain shortbread; blueberry muffin	Bright, fruity coffee wants fruit or butter beside it, and nothing loud. Shortbread's butter softens the acidity. Avoid: dark chocolate; heavy spice.
Medium roast, black (the house coffee)	Oatmeal cookie; coffee cake; maple cookie; almond biscotti	Caramel and nut in the cup meet oats, brown sugar, maple and almonds on the plate. American coffee cake is named for what it is served with. Avoid: very tart fruit.
Dark roast, black	Ginger molasses cookie; chocolate anything; biscotti for dunking	A strong, bittersweet coffee needs something that can stand up to it: molasses, spice, chocolate. Biscotti is dry by design and made to be dunked. Avoid: delicate, lightly flavored bakes: they vanish.
Honey coffee	Honey shortbread; plain scone; granola	Echo the honey, or stay plain and let it lead. Avoid: anything iced or frosted: sweet on sweet.
Coffee with milk	Cinnamon bun; scone with jam; coffee cake	Milk softens the coffee, so richer and sweeter bakes fit
Cà phê sữa đá (phin, condensed milk, ice)	Something plain or salty: buttered toast, a plain butter cookie, salted shortbread	The drink is already dessert. Salt and plain butter make the next sip taste sweeter. Avoid: frosted or filled bakes.
Iced coffee, black	Lemon bar; fruit scone; shortbread	Cold dulls sweetness and sharpens acidity, so bright, buttery bakes suit it. Avoid: dry, hard biscotti: nothing to dunk in.
PAIRINGS THAT BELONG TO A PLACE		
Filter coffee — Sweden	Cinnamon bun (kanelbulle)	<i>Fika</i> : the coffee break as an institution, in some workplaces written into the contract. Coffee is "often accompanied by pastries such as cinnamon buns."
Any hot coffee — the Netherlands	Stroopwafel, set on top of the cup	The steam warms the waffle and softens the syrup inside. In Australia they are sold as "coffee toppers."
Café au lait with chicory — New Orleans	Beignets under powdered sugar	Café du Monde's pairing. Chicory went into the coffee during a Civil War shortage and stayed; it "adds a chocolate-like flavor."
Café de olla — Mexico	Pan dulce	Coffee brewed in a clay pot with cinnamon and piloncillo (raw cane sugar): already spiced and sweet, so the bread beside it is plain and soft.
Cafecito — Cuban Miami	Pastelito de guayaba (guava pastry)	Sold together at the walk-up café windows, all day. A tiny, very sweet coffee and a flaky fruit pastry.
Turkish coffee	Turkish delight, and a glass of water	"Often served with something small and sweet to eat." The coffee is unfiltered and strong; the sweet follows it.
Arabic coffee (qahwa, with cardamom)	Dates	Served unsweetened; "to balance the bitterness, it is often accompanied by dates," dried fruit or nuts.
Ethiopian coffee ceremony	Popcorn, peanuts or himbasha bread	Three rounds of coffee roasted and brewed in front of the guests, "accompanied by a small snack such as popcorn."
Melange or mocha — Vienna	Apple strudel; Linzer torte	The coffee house is where people sit for hours; cakes and tarts are part of the furniture.
Morning coffee — Japan	Thick buttered toast and a boiled egg	"Morning service" at a <i>kissaten</i> : the toast comes with the price of the coffee.

• The top half is judgement, to test at the table; the bottom half is custom. For a stall: biscotti and shortbread keep two weeks; scones are best the day they are baked.