

A New Barista's Guide to Making the Perfect Hot 16 oz Double Latte

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Purpose:

This guide will teach you how to make a hot 16 oz double latte at La Prima's CMU locations. Making a latte will teach you how to use an espresso machine for the first time. In four steps, you will learn how to make a latte that satisfies La Prima's commitment to traditional Italian coffee-making. Reviewing this guide regularly will improve your process.

Scope:

This guide is meant for new baristas working at the Gates and Wean locations on CMU's campus. Other La Prima locations do things a little differently, so be sure to ask your supervisor if you work at Oakland, the AC, or the Strip.

Procedure:

1. Preparing the cup:

Whoever is working the register will take customers' orders and write them down on a cup in the form of a short-hand cup code. They will place this cup on the drink counter.

Each drink on our menu has a unique cup code. The cup code will also include modifications to the customer's drink, such as syrups, decaf espresso, and milk substitutes. You can find a guide to cup codes on top of the pastry cart.

1. We use a first-in, first-out method when processing orders. That means we fulfill the orders in the order that we get them. Typically, this means you need to grab the cup nearest to you on the drink counter first.
2. Read the cup code to figure out what drink to make as well as any modifications it might have. If it is a paper cup, make a hot drink. If it is a plastic cup, make an iced drink. Some examples:
 - a. A hot 16 oz double latte with whole milk would be written as 2L on a 16 oz paper cup.
 - b. An iced 20 oz double latte with oat milk and vanilla syrup would be written as 2Loatv on a 20 oz plastic cup.
3. Read the cup code to determine if the customer wants any syrups in their drink. The number of pumps you add depends on the type of syrup and the size of the drink. If the customer requests a specific amount of syrup, the person on register will specify the number of pumps on the cup.
 - a. Be consistent when pumping the syrup bottle. Push the pump all the way down each time you pump. Replace the bottle when it is nearing empty or it will pump inconsistently.

Default number of pumps of syrup per drink size:

8 oz drink	12 oz drink	16 oz drink	20 oz iced drink
1 pump	2 pumps	3 pumps	4 pumps

Default number of pumps of chai per drink size:

8 oz drink	12 oz drink	16 oz drink	20 oz iced drink
3.5 pump	4 pumps	5 pumps	6 pumps

2. Preparing the espresso:

On your first day, your supervisor will show you each part of the espresso machine: the buttons, portafilters, group heads, and steam wands. When you press the single or double espresso button, hot water pours out of the espresso machine, through the puck of ground beans in your portafilter, and comes out as espresso.

Expensive espresso machines use high water pressure to extract flavor and caffeine. This high pressure tops your shot of espresso with cream (or “crema” in Italian). “Crema” is a mixture of sugar, coffee oils, and carbon dioxide.

To make an Italian-style double latte, first pour two shots of espresso into a 16 oz cup, then fill the rest with steamed milk. We call pouring a shot of espresso “pulling a shot.” Here’s how:

1. Remove a double shot portafilter from the espresso machine. A double shot portafilter has two spouts and a deeper basket than a single shot portafilter. If the portafilter is dirty, clean it with the rag on top of the espresso grinder.
2. For a double latte, put your portafilter under the grinder and press the double espresso button. There are two grinders: one is caffeinated, the other is decaf.
 - a. If the latte is decaf, be sure to use the decaf grinder. Serving caffeine to a customer who requests decaf could put their health at risk.
3. Put the portafilter full of ground beans on the rubber tamping mat. Tamp the coffee in your portafilter down into a hockey shaped puck. Avoid over tamping or under tamping your puck. You only need to press down firmly enough to flatten the surface of the puck.

Espresso puck is tamped down perfectly.	Espresso puck is not tamped down enough.	Espresso puck is overly tamped down.
Surface is even.	Surface is often loose and uneven.	Surface is tight and compact.
Hot water extracts coffee from puck evenly, leading to good	Hot water will find path of least resistance through puck, leading to	Hot water will take too long to move through the puck, leading to

espresso.	watery espresso.	overly bitter espresso.
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4. Put your cup beneath the group head you plan to screw your portafilter into. Group heads are the holes on the top of the espresso machine from which the hot water comes out.
5. Use your hand to wipe off any coffee grounds on the top of your portafilter. Avoid using the tamp for this, as it will crack your puck.
6. Screw your portafilter into a group head with a clockwise turn. There are two double shot buttons above each portafilter. Press the button to the left of the portafilter, as that is the one that supervisors calibrate regularly. This is known as “dialing in” a group head. A dialed in group head guarantees a consistent outcome: 1oz of well-extracted espresso per shot.
7. Watch the espresso as it pours into the cup, ensuring that:
 - a. Your cup is catching the espresso dripping out of both spouts of your portafilter.
 - b. For best results, the hot water should run through the puck and into the cup for about 25 to 30 seconds. Notify your supervisor if your shot is pulling faster or slower than this. Your supervisor will then dial in your group head to re-calibrate it.
8. When making drinks, only use a shot of espresso that is fresher than 3 - 5 minutes. Espresso loses flavor when exposed to air, becoming more bitter. Dumping your espresso shot into water or milk slows down this process dramatically. A shot of espresso is still good to use if it still has “crema” on top. If you’re unsure whether a shot of espresso is still good, it’s better to pull a fresh one than to serve a customer an old one. Remember, one of the company’s core values is: *do the right thing*.

Note: When not in use, its best to keep your portafilter screwed into a group head on your espresso machine.

This will pre-heat the portafilter, leading to better espresso.

3. Steaming your milk

Properly steamed milk elevates the taste of a latte. It has a smooth, silky texture with little to no bubbles. A steam wand heats and aerates a pitcher of milk. A properly placed steam wand creates a whirlpool effect that steams your milk evenly.

Learning how to steam milk well takes time and practice. Keep at it, and don't be afraid to ask your supervisor for tips on how to improve your technique.

1. Select the appropriate pitcher for the milk you are about to steam. If the pitcher is dirty, rinse it in the pitcher rinser.
 - a. There are different pitchers for regular milk versus milk substitutes. The pitchers meant for oat, soy, and almond milk are labeled. Be careful not to mix them up—the wrong type of milk could give the customer an allergic reaction.
2. For a 16 oz double latte, pour milk into the pitcher until it is slightly above the base of its spout.
 - a. Note: steaming your milk will increase its volume by 20 to 50 percent.
3. Pull the lever to vent the steam wand before each use. This will get out any old milk, which could block the steam or get into your pitcher.
4. Place the steam wand halfway between the center of the milk pitcher and one of its sides. Place the head of the wand beneath the surface of your milk. Hold the pitcher flat. This position will ensure the steam creates a whirlpool in the milk.
5. Pull the lever on the steam wand to begin steaming the milk. When you start steaming, you will know the steam wand and milk pitcher are properly positioned if the milk whirlpools and you hear a sound like shredding paper. If instead of shredding paper, your steam wand sounds like a jet engine, your milk will end up poorly steamed. You will either need to adjust the angle of your pitcher, the angle of your steam wand, the position of your steam wand, or the depth of the steam wand in the milk.

Whole milk	Skim milk	Oat, soy, or almond milk.
Steams in about 25 – 35 seconds.	Steams quickly, in about 20 – 30 seconds.	Steams quickly, in about 20 – 30 seconds.

6. To ensure that you don't steam the milk too long, turn off the steam wand when you hear the sound of ripping paper deepen. This typically happens a couple of seconds after the milk pitcher becomes uncomfortably hot to the touch. Wait five seconds for the milk in your pitcher to settle, giving time for any bubbles in the milk to rise to the surface.
- a. Steaming your milk too long will burn it. Burnt milk gives off a rubbery smell. A pitcher of burnt milk will also be incredibly hot to the touch.

	Perfectly steamed milk	Under steamed milk	Over steamed milk
Bubbles	Few to no bubbles.	Few to no bubbles.	Many bubbles break up the surface.
How surface looks	Silky, glossy, and shiny. Looks like wet paint.	Looks like regular milk from the fridge.	Foamy.
What sound it typically makes while steaming	Ripping paper	Ripping paper or jet engine	Jet engine
Surface tension	Yes	No	Yes
Makes for good latte art	Yes	No	No

7. Well steamed milk can still have some bubbles on its surface. There are a few techniques to remove these bubbles. However, these tricks cannot fix poorly steamed milk, only improve the final result.
- Break up bubbles by:

- a. Tapping your milk pitcher on the counter.
 - b. Swirling milk around in the pitcher.
8. Pour your steamed milk into the cup in a circular motion. This motion mixes the espresso into the steamed milk.
 9. Clean the milk off your steam wand soon after you finish steaming. If you wait too long, the heat of the steam wand will cause milk to crust, making it harder to clean. Grab the rag on top of the espresso machine. To clean the steam wand, vent out a little air while wiping it up and down with the rag. Whenever venting the steam wand, avoid sticking your hand beneath it or you will get burned.

Note: Some customers want their drink to be cooler or extra hot. Others prefer their milk less foamy (flat white), or extra foamy (dry). These preferences will be specified through the cup code.

Tip: Well-aerated milk is ideal for latte art. Practicing latte art is a good way to improve your ability to steam milk. Practice by pouring hearts or ferns on top of your lattes.

4. Serving Drinks

1. Place your finished drink on the pickup counter within easy reach of customers.
2. Shout out the name and order written on the cup. It is important to shout because Gates and Wean Hall are loud, and customers often walk away instead of waiting for their drinks.
3. If no one picks up the cup after 3 minutes, shout the order again. Do this again after 5 minutes.
4. Throw the cup away if it is not picked up after 10 minutes. A drink that sits too long will taste bad, and eventually become too unsanitary to serve. If the original customer returns, let them know you had to throw it away and offer to remake their drink.

Note: Sometimes customers take a drink meant for another customer. If this happens, remake that drink before starting any new drinks. This aligns with one of La Prima's core values: finishing the job.