

Coffee Guide

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Introduction

In 2010, it was found that about 5,600 paper cups were used and disposed every day at WashU, which is more than 1.3 million cups every year. This staggering number shows us that shifting our coffee purchasing practices can have significant impacts on WashU's footprint and overall health of the environment. This guide will assist decision-makers positioned to select environmentally preferable and fair sourced coffee as well as helping offices determine which type of coffee maker is right for their office. Following the recommendations of this guide qualifies green-certified offices for as many as 4 points on the green office checklist.

Purchasing Coffee – Sustainably & Fair Trade Sourced

Not all coffee is sourced the same way. At WashU we strive to source our coffee from places that value sustainability and fair trade in their practices. Look for these labels when purchasing your office's coffee to ensure best practices.

Fair Trade: Fair Trade Certified coffee helps support a better life for farmers by guaranteeing farmers a minimum price, linking them directly with importers, and creating long-term environmental stewardship and sustainability.

Rainforest Alliance: Rainforest Alliance certified coffee helps integrate biodiversity conservation, community development, and the fair treatment of farmers.



In addition to looking for these labels, also look to source your coffee from local roasters. Not only are you supporting local businesses, but you are also cutting down on the environmental impact of transportation emissions.

Don't Forget!

Don't forget these quick tips to help your coffee practices be as sustainable as possible!

- Turn your machine off between uses and overnight – standby mode consumes a lot of energy (there is usually an automatic power down setting)
- Keep it clean! Mineral residue can affect the heating function of your machine, making it less efficient and thereby using more energy
- Use reusable mugs when drinking your coffee to avoid single use cups –the WashU bottomless program is a great option for this! Not only does it save money for the daily coffee drinker, but it also encourages you to use one cup throughout the semester over several single use ones.

Choosing the Right Coffee Pot for your Office

Types of Coffee Machines	Pros	Cons
Thermal Carafe Coffee Pot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeps coffee warm without energy consumption - Great for larger offices (2-8 cups depending on machine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires filter* - More expensive option
French Press	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manual - Easy to Clean - No electricity use - reusable filter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fewer Cups (2-4 cups) - Requires hot water
AeroPress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manual - Easy to clean - No electricity use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fewer Cups (1-3 cups) - Requires hot water - Requires filter
Least Sustainable Coffee Maker Options		
Hot Plate Coffee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Best for offices who drink a lot of coffee quickly (does not keep coffee warm efficiently) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Keeps coffee warm significant use of energy - Burns your coffee while warming
Keurig**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy to make 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Most expensive per cup - Creates extreme excess of waste (plastic, coffee grounds, etc)

*See appendix on reusable coffee filters

**See appendix on reusable k-cup

Top Coffee Makers



Bonavita Connoisseur – This thermal coffee pot is the most efficient for larger batches of coffee. This coffee makers utilized a process called pre-infusion, which wets the grounds before brewing for an extremely consistent and fantastic cup of coffee. It is one of the best coffee machines on the market. Find out more [here](#).



French Press – The French Press may seem low tech, but it can give you the most consistent coffee brew. It requires both a coffee grinder and a hot water boiler, but it is great for one or two person offices if you are committed to lowering your costs and energy usage. It uses by far the least amount of energy of the options and is also the cheapest. Two of our favorites are a high end [thermal French press](#) or [a glass French press](#) with a superior filter.



Cuisinart Perfectemp – This hot plate coffee pot option is common for offices where multiple people use the coffee pot over any given day. This style of drip coffee makers has warming plates designed to keep your coffee warm. However, this pot consumes between 750 and 1250 watts of electricity per pot. We encourage you to look at other options for coffee pots, but if you are going to go this route, we suggest [this model](#) as its carafe is more insulated than traditional glass carafes to keep your coffee warmer with less electricity.



Hamilton Beach – For small offices, sometimes all you want is a single cup of coffee. This single-serve coffee brewer gives you the ease of a Keurig with none of the waste. Your spoon becomes your filter after picking up your ground coffee and then you just press go. This machine is adjustable and fits all sized cups including travel mugs. [This coffee maker](#) is great for a sustainable single cup.

Resources Used

Types of coffee:

- <http://fairtradeamerica.org/Fairtrade-Products/Coffee>
- <https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/articles/rainforest-alliance-certified-coffee>

Sustainable Coffee Tips:

- <https://oxfordre.com/environmentalscience/environmentalscience/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199389414.001.0001/acrefore-9780199389414-e-224>
- <https://www.recycling.com/sustainable-coffee-guide/>
- [https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/asset/document/ENERGY STAR Scoping Report Coffee Makers.pdf](https://www.energystar.gov/sites/default/files/asset/document/ENERGY_STAR_Scoping_Report_Coffee_Makers.pdf)

Coffee Makers:

- <https://coffee-channel.com/different-types-of-coffee-makers/>
- <https://commercial.keurig.com/campaigns/office/>
- <https://gearpatrol.com/2020/04/14/best-coffee-makers/>
- <https://coffee-channel.com/different-types-of-coffee-makers/>
- <https://www.digitaltrends.com/home/best-coffee-makers/>
- <https://www.timelesscoffee.com/best-single-serve-coffee-maker-with-no-pods/>

Keurig Appendix:

- <https://commercial.keurig.com/campaigns/office/>
- <https://www.bustle.com/p/the-3-best-reusable-k-cups-16909521>

Reusable Filter Appendix:

- <https://www.roastycoffee.com/coffee-filter/>
- <https://www.tenbestreview.com/home-kitchen/top-10-best-reusable-coffee-filters/>

Keurig Appendix

<p>Reusable K-cups</p>	<p>This option is the most environmentally friendly, as it doesn't encourage single use disposable containers. While it might not be as convenient for a large office, reusable K-cups produce far less waste than a disposable option.</p>
<p>Compostable K-cups</p>	<p>This option is more environmentally friendly than disposable plastic K-cups that go straight to the landfill, yet they are still single use. If you are in a small office with a commercial composting option, this could be a good option for your team. While these cups don't end up in the landfill and are very convenient, they still produce a lot of waste, as they can't be reused.</p>
<p>Disposable plastic K-cups</p>	<p>This option is by far the least preferable of the three. It is not reusable or compostable, so all of the waste goes straight to the landfill. If you are in a small office, a Keurig might be a good option to reduce waste. However, there is no difference in convenience between compostable and plastic cups, so I implore you to choose compostable.</p>

Reusable Filter Appendix

The most important thing to consider when purchasing a reusable coffee filter is the model of your coffee machine. Many already have reusable filters on the market. Others can use substitutes like the ones below.

Select the Right Filter	
Select the filter size	<p>#1 Size Filter: For one-cup coffeemakers (both electric and non-electric)</p> <p>#2 Size Filter: For 2 to 6 cup electric coffeemakers or 1-2 non-electric coffeemakers</p> <p>#4 Size Filter: For 8-10 cup non-electric coffeemakers or 8-12 cup electric coffeemakers</p> <p>#6 Size Filter: For Fits 10+ cup pour overs/ non-electric coffee makers</p>
Consider the shape of your filter	<p>These are three types of shapes of filters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conical - Basket - Disk (i.e. French press, aeropress)
Example Filters	
All Purpose Filter 	<p>This universal metal filter works for most coffee makers and is a great buy for both conical and basket shaped coffee machines. Purchase here.</p>
Basket Filter 	<p>This basket shaped metal filter suits many brands of coffee machines. It is easy to clean and dishwasher safe. Purchase here.</p>
Reusable Hemp Coffee Filters 	<p>Metal coffee filters can create darker roasts with cups that have slightly higher levels of fat. These hemp filters will act closer to those of the paper filters in taste. However, they are less durable and less sustainable than a metal filter.</p> <p>Purchase a reusable hemp filter here.</p>