

The Coffee Detective Guide to choosing a Single-Serve Coffee Maker



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An introduction to one cup coffee makers and single serve coffees.

One cup coffee makers have revolutionized the enjoyment of gourmet coffee.

You can now make great coffee one cup at a time, without any of the usual hassle or cleanup. No coffee beans to grind. No filters to buy. No wet, used filters to throw away. No mess to tidy up.

But which of the various types of single serve coffee machines should you choose?

There are three main types of one cup coffee maker to choose from...

You can buy a **Keurig brewer**, and buy your coffee in the form of K-Cups.

You can buy a **coffee pod brewer**, like the Senseo, and buy coffee pods.

Or you can buy a **Tassimo** hot beverage system and use T-Discs.

If you are uncertain which kind of brewer you should choose, read through this short e-book and you'll find all the information you need to make a more informed choice.

Best wishes,

Nick Usborne
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**Keurig single serve coffee makers, and
the K-Cups you use in these brewers.**



Keurig brewers make one cup of coffee at a time, using K-Cups.

Keurig brewers have been around for a few years now and have gained a considerable following.

The brewers are a little more expensive than some of the pod brewers, as are the K-Cups they use.

However, Keurig fans will be quick to tell you it's worth the extra cost.

Each of the [Keurig brewers](#) is incredibly simple to use. You just make sure there is water in the reservoir and then add a K-Cup to a small holder at the top of the machine. Then close the lid, press one button, and you're done.

Owners of Keurig brewers are as enthusiastic about the K-Cups as they are about the brewers themselves.

That makes sense. Because regardless of the machine, it's the taste of the coffees that will finally win you over, or not.

The biggest seller of K-Cups is [Green Mountain Coffee](#), which already has a well deserved reputation for roasting very high quality coffees.

In fact, Green Mountain Coffee assured its investment in making its coffees available in the K-Cup format by buying Keurig.

So now GMC can keep coming out with new K-Cup coffees and blends, relaxed in the knowledge that it also owns and controls the manufacturer of the brewers themselves.

One other point to make about Keurig brewers and K-Cups is that the format is proprietary. That means that if any roaster wants to distribute their own coffees in the K-Cup format, they need permission to do so. (It's a different story with coffee pods, where the format is "open" and any roaster can produce and sell them.)

Not that you will be confined to the 35 or so excellent coffees Green Mountain Coffee offers. Timothy's World Coffee and Gloria Jean's also offer a good variety of their coffees in K-Cups.

There are [three Keurig single serve coffee makers to choose from](#). They are all fundamentally the same in how they work, but the more recent models offer some additional features and improvements.

K-Cups contain enough ground coffee to make one cup of coffee and are for use in Keurig Brewers.

If you have never seen a K-Cup, just think of those plastic creamer containers you use when making coffee at a gas station.

A K-Cup looks pretty much the same, with a plastic body and sealed, foil lid.

Inside, of course, K-Cups are completely different.

If you cut one open you'll find that the top half contains ground coffee, and beneath that there is a paper filter. In other words, for each cup of coffee you make, both the coffee and filter are contained within the K-Cup itself.

When you add the K-Cup to your Keurig brewer (and they are for use only in Keurig brewers), both the lid and base of the cup are pierced.

Then, when you press the Brew button, hot water is forced through the hole in the top, goes through the ground coffee and filter – and fresh coffee flows out through the hole in the base and into your mug.

There is just one size for K-Cups. However, the amount of ground coffee inside can be varied.

That's why you can buy regular strength K-Cups and also Bold K-Cups. The bold version contains a little over 20% more ground coffee.

As a result, you get a stronger, more intense brew.

Another time to use a Bold K-Cup is when you choose one of the larger brew sizes on your Keurig machine. A larger brew size uses more hot water, so you'll want to use a bold K-Cup to maintain the strength of your coffee.

Where can you buy your K-Cups?

The first place to try is [Green Mountain Coffee](#). They have an excellent reputation as master coffee roasters and offer about 35 of their best coffees in the K-Cup format.

They offer a good selection of blends, including organic, decaf and flavored coffees.

And if you are relatively new to brewing with K-Cups, you may want to start out trying some of [Green Mountain Coffee's variety packs](#). That way you can find out which blends and flavors you like best.

Coffee pod brewers and coffee pods.



Coffee pod brewers make one cup of coffee at a time with coffee pods.

With coffee pod brewers you can choose from quite a variety of machines, all made by different companies.

Essentially they all work in the same way. They each have a water reservoir, all use coffee pods and all make one serving of coffee at a time.

The coffee pods are like round, plump tea bags. The bag itself is the filter and contains enough ground coffee to make a single cup of coffee.

Now comes the tricky part.

There are a number of different companies which make coffee pod brewers. And, to make life a little more complicated, there is more than one size for coffee pods – and they are not all interchangeable between different brands of pod brewers.

When it comes to choosing a coffee pod brewer, the most popular machines are made by [Senseo](#), [Melitta](#), [Bunn My Café](#), [simplehuman](#), [Black & Decker](#), [Juan Valdez](#) and [Mr. Coffee](#).

There are other choices too, but these are the main ones.

And among these, probably the most popular is the [Senseo](#). Senseo was the first to start making pod brewers, back in 2004.

They started a trend and other companies have been quick to follow. Just keep in mind that not all coffee pods are the same size, and they don't all fit in the different brands of pod coffee makers.

The three pod diameters are 44mm, 55mm and 62mm. The 44m pods fit the Melitta brewers (Although the more recent Melitta models now have a universal pod holder which accepts larger sizes). The 55mm pods fit the Juan Valdez brewer. And the 62mm pods fit the Senseo, Krups, Black & Decker and Mr. Coffee brewers.

So when you choose a coffee pod brewer, make your selection with a full understanding of where you are going to buy coffee pods of the right size, and what kind of selection will be available to you.

Coffee pods are like round, plump tea bags and are used in single serve pod coffee makers.

Coffee pods are the simplest of all the single serve coffee formats.

No plastic, no foil lids, no bar codes. Just ground coffee sealed within a top and bottom layer of filter paper.

Their simplicity also makes them less expensive than K-Cups (for the Keurig) and T-Discs (for the Tassimo).

In addition, a coffee pod is what is termed an "open format". In other words, any coffee roaster or distributor can put their coffee into pods.

As a result, coffee pod brewers offer the widest range of coffees, at the most competitive prices.

So why doesn't everyone just buy a pod coffee maker and buy coffee pods instead of one of the other single serve formats?

One of the main reasons is concern over the quality of the coffee. These concerns may or may not be well founded. But fans of the Keurig brewers, for instance, point to the fact that there is a great deal more control over who roasts the coffee that end up in K-Cups.

Proponents of K-Cups and T-Discs will also tell you that those formats do a better job of ensuring the coffee remains well sealed and stays fresh. All that said, we can find no proof or compelling evidence to suggest that coffee pods are inferior to K-Cups or T-Discs.

Of course, if you choose to buy a pod brewer, you are then faced with trying to figure out WHICH brewer to choose.

Only Keurig makes K-Cup brewers. Only Braun makes Tassimo brewers. But there are a whole host of manufacturers who make coffee pod brewers.

Hint: If you buy a [Senseo](#) brewer, you'll never lack for variety among the coffee pods available.

Other single serve coffee makers



In addition to K-Cup and coffee pod brewers, there is also the Tassimo, which uses its own T-Discs.

As mentioned elsewhere, the only "open format" for one cup coffee makers is the coffee pod.

Anyone can make coffee pods and sell them for use in pod brewers.

Then there is Keurig's approach to single serve coffee with their proprietary K-Cups. K-Cups are not an open format. You need permission and a license to put your coffee in a K-Cup.

This latter "closed format" scenario is also true of Tassimo's T-Disc.

The T-Disc is the third and, so far, final format for one cup coffee makers. You can only use the T-Disc in a Tassimo brewer. And the Tassimo brewer can only use T-Discs.

But there are some marked differences between a T-Disc and a K-Cup.

For instance, when you buy T-Discs to make cappuccino, which isn't an option with K-Cups anyway, you receive a package with separate groups of discs, some containing the ground coffee, and the others containing the milk.

This gives the [Tassimo system](#) a wonderful flexibility and allows it to offer not only coffee, but also latte, cappuccino and hot chocolate with a frothy, milky topping.

But before you make the leap, keep in mind that you can buy coffee pods from a dozen or more roasters, you can buy K-Cups from three or four roasters...but you can buy T-Discs ONLY from Tassimo.

In other words, before you pick the one cup brewer, give some thought to the coffees you are going to want to brew, how much choice is available...and where you are going to buy them.

Which is the best single serve coffee maker?

Which is the best one cup coffee maker...the Keurig B60, the Senseo HD7810 or the Tassimo TA 1400?

We are often asked to give our opinion on which is the best one cup coffee maker.

We have our own views but, for the purposes of this guide, we compiled customer ratings from sites like Amazon, Bizrate and other shopping comparison sites.

In other words, we decided to find out the opinion of thousands of one cup coffee maker buyers.

The Keurig B60 and the Senseo HD7810 are not the most recent models available, but they are top-sellers and have the largest number of customer reviews and ratings to work with.

In any case, the more recent models of both these machines add some extra features, but are fundamentally the same as the B60 and the HD7810.

The first thing to say is that all three of these machines received excellent customer ratings, consistently across all the results we studied.

These are good machines that are being used by thousands of happy customers.

But even among the best of the best, we did find that customers were consistently rating some machines higher than others.

Number 1 in customer satisfaction is the [Keurig B60](#), a one cup coffee maker that uses K-Cup coffee.

Number 2 is the [Senseo HD7810](#), which uses coffee pods.

Number 3 is the [Tassimo TA 1400](#), which uses T-Discs.

If you are thinking about buying a one cup coffee maker, any one of these will be a good buy.

So the choice you make could well come down to whether you like the idea of making coffee with K-Cups, coffee pods or T-Discs.

Conclusion

Whether you buy a pod coffee maker, a K-Cup brewer or a Tassimo with its T-Discs, you'll get a good machine and the convenience of being able to make one cup of coffee at a time.

One other thing to keep in mind is the price of the coffee.

None of these one-cup formats give you coffee at the same price as buying a bag of beans or a tin of ground coffee.

And the fancier the format, the more you will pay per cup.

In other words, T-Discs cost more than K-Cups, and K-Cups cost more than coffee pods.

Our final word?

If you are not too bothered about paying a little more per cup, go for the [Keurig](#). The machines are excellent and the K-Cup format is incredibly clean and easy to use. Plus there is an excellent selection of coffees to choose from.

If you want to pay less both for the brewer and the coffee, get a coffee pod brewer like one of the [Senseo](#) machines.

As for [Tassimo](#), it's a great machine...but we are not crazy about the limited choice of coffees, or the fact that you can only get the T-Discs from Tassimo.

But the choice is yours, and whichever brewer you choose, we hope you enjoy it for many years to come.

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