

## General Home Roasting Observations for **Stovetop Roasting** from *Sweet Maria's*

What You Need: Whirley-Pop (also called Felknor Theatre II) stovetop corn popper, or Back to Basics Stainless Steel popper or another similarly designed device, gas or electric stove. A 550 degree thermometer is helpful for this method. A metal colander or two for cooling, and oven mitt. Stovetop roasting takes some practice. There are more variables than other methods since you set the heat and provide the agitation. But the results can be outstanding and the 1/2 lb. batch is nice. It sometimes seems like a 3-handed act: before you start, try a “dry-run” by adding green coffee without any heat, and agitate it. In the course of the roast, agitation gets easier as the coffee loses weight and expands.

### Instructions:

- Turn on your stovetop exhaust fan, or open a kitchen window. Have all your supplies within reach.
- Measure out about 8-9 ounces of coffee by weight, or about 12 ounces by volume.
- Preheat popper over low flame / medium electric burner setting. NEVER use highest heat settings/flame -you'll melt your popper! See the tip below about using a heat-diffusing cast iron pan if necessary. Heat until thermometer reads about 400 degrees. PLEASE NOTE: A thermometer is going to give an inaccurate reading when the inside of the popper is shiny and reflective, so use a LOWER heat until the popper is broken in and seasoned. **Remember that if the window starts to melt or warp - you are roasting too hot! It is probably best to replace this part with aluminum foil, a pie tin or other material more heat resistant.**
- Put your beans in the popper and start your medium paced, steady cranking. Thermometer will drop to around 350. Don't let it drop much below 300, or get much above 400 except at the end. These temps are “starting points”; you will ultimately personalize the process once you have done it a few times. And remember, you are measuring the air temperature in the popper, and the actual temperature on the bottom will be higher. DO NOT ROAST BY TEMPERATURE ALONE - watch the beans and popper to be sure the roast is moving not too fast, not too slow.
- Around 6 minutes you should hear the "first crack" and see roast smoke. Wait 1 minute and slightly reduce the heat, not so much that the roast stalls, but enough so that the roast does not progress too quickly. Start checking the roast by flipping back the lid at about 1 minute intervals or less. Second crack ought to occur anywhere from say 9 minutes to 12 minutes, depending on how you like to time the roast. TIP: If you can learn to roast by smell and sound only (and avoid opening the lid) you can reduce escaping roast smoke.
- You want to pour the beans out of the popper into the colander when they are a tad lighter than the color you desire, since roasting continues a little into the cool down process.
- Agitate beans in metal colander or bowl with a big spoon until they are warm to your touch. You may need oven mitts for this. You may want to shuffle the beans between 2 pans/ colanders. You may want to walk out to a porch to aid cooling.
- If beans have light colored chaff still attached to them, simply agitating them in the colander should remove it. If you blow lightly on the beans the chaff will fly off, but do this outside or over a sink to avoid sweeping the floor. Chaff is released as the coffee roasts, so lighter roasts have more chaff, dark roasts less. Chaff is flavorless so it is okay if you do not remove all of it.
- Coffee should be stored out of direct light (and not in a fridge or freezer) in an airtight glass jar, but with a fresh roast, wait 12 hours to seal the jar tightly; it needs to vent off CO<sub>2</sub>. Warm, fresh roasted beans are wonderful, but the coffee attains its peak 4 to 24 hours after roasting. If you store it as recommended, we'll call it fresh for 6 days. When you open that jar in the morning, you will know what fresh coffee truly is.

### Tips:

- If the agitator jams while cranking, don't force it. Crank in the opposite direction to free it. When the popper is cool, see if you can bend the agitating tines or adjust the metal arms to hug the bottom of the pan a little closer.
- If the popper is too hot, use a cast iron pan, or cast iron heat diffuser under the aluminum pan.
- Having trouble getting an even lighter roast? You need to slow down the initial warm-up period of roasting (from the time you put the coffee in until first crack). Also keep the heat low to avoid scorching.
- Clean the popper with scalding hot water every so often to reduce the coffee oils ... it is not necessary to clean it after every roast. I clean mine after every 15-20 roasts. I have actually “seasoned the drum” of my new professional shop roasters by burning up coffee in it!

### How to add a Thermometer to your popper:

- You simply need to drill a hole with a 3/16 bit through the top. Make the hole in the middle of the lid flap that has clips to the rim. The aluminum is so thin you can actually punch a hole with a screw or nail ... but be careful not to dent the lid. The stainless steel popper needs to be drilled. We have more detailed instructions and photos on how to make a thermometer clip (if you need one) online!