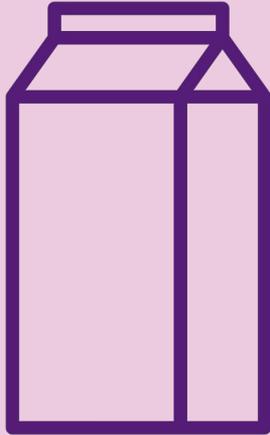


The AnZa Guide to Home Coffee



Milk Steaming

Milk Steaming Goals



We steam milk to achieve microfoam. Microfoam is made of small, tight bubbles and has the consistency of wet paint.

Microfoam gives the milk a smooth, creamy consistency with rich mouth feel, which, when mixed with coffee, is absolutely delicious.

Steaming milk can be tricky as it involves timing, lots of heat and requires that you hear, see and feel the milk as it foams.

Understanding Milk



Cow's milk is ideal for steaming as it is rich in protein and fat. Proteins and fat work together when heated to create stable air bubbles and long lasting microfoam

Other alternative milks, such as almond or oat, can also be steamed. However these have higher water and lower fat content than cow's milk, making them less amenable to generating microfoam. That said, certain manufacturers make 'barista' versions of their milk alternatives created expressly for steaming.

Rule for all milks: start cold and never steam the same milk twice.

Choosing a Milk Pitcher



It is also important to work out how much milk you are actually going to use. A 10-ounce latte has roughly 8 ounces of steamed milk.

Use a 12 oz to 16 oz metal milk pitcher—metal because it's important for monitoring the heat of the milk while steaming.

Fill the pitcher just below the milk spout (which is normally about half way up the jug) to allow space for the milk to expand. The milk pitcher should not be too full (your pitcher will overflow when steaming) or too empty (you'll be unable to submerge steam wand).

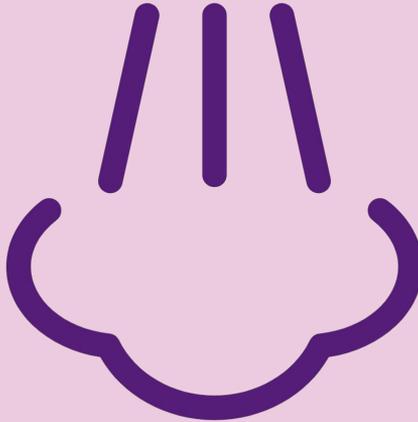
Step 1: Getting Started



To steam milk you need heat, so espresso machines use steam! The steam comes from the steam wand which directs the steam into the milk. The steam is controlled by a steam valve.

Lift the pitcher of cold milk so half of the steam wand tip is submerged in the milk. Place the tip somewhere between the center and the side of the pitcher. Turn the steam valve fully on!

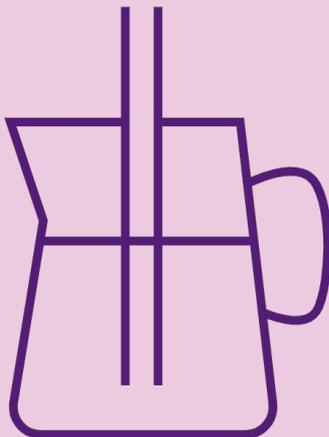
Step 2: Adding Air



Place your hand on the side or bottom of the pitcher so that you can feel the heat of the milk.

Lower the pitcher until you hear a clear 'tsssk' sound, a bit like someone ripping paper. This is the sound of air at the surface of the milk being incorporated to create foam. If you don't hear anything, or hear a loud high pitch squeal, lower the pitcher; if you get a lot of big bubbles, raise the pitcher.

Step 3: Stop Foaming at 'Lukewarm'



As the milk expands you will need to lower the pitcher to keep in the 'tsssk' zone.

When the pitcher feels lukewarm (the temperature of your hand) submerge the wand slightly deeper into the milk to get the milk spinning like a whirlpool inside the pitcher. This vortex mixes the micro foam and milk and creates the silky uniform texture.

Creating the vortex is an important step and has a lot to do with the angle of the pitcher to the steam wand and its steam holes. Experimentation will be needed!

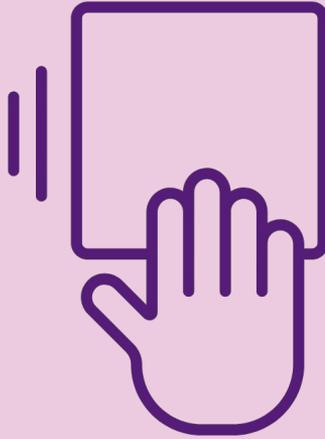
Step 4: Keep Heating!



No one likes tepid milk, so it's important to keep heating the milk. Keep the vortex going until the pitcher becomes almost too hot to touch. It should feel as if you don't want to hold your hand on the pitcher for more than a couple of seconds at a time. When the pitcher reaches this temperature, turn the steam wand off.

PSA: to avoid spraying yourself with hot milk, don't pull out the steam wand until the steam has stopped!

Step 5: Wipe & Purge

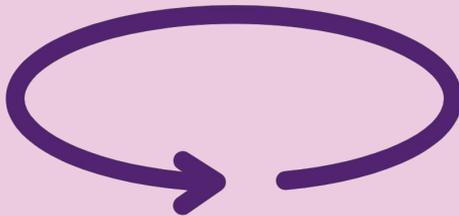


Always remember to immediately wipe down the the steam wand with a SLIGHTLY* damp cloth when you finishing steaming.

Also 'purge' all the leftover milk out of the wand by releasing two seconds of steam from the wand. Clean that thing!

*We highlight "slightly" because while a damp cloth is needed to remove the milk built up on the wand, heat transfers quickly through a wetter cloth and can burn one's hand. **Take care!**

Step 6: Tend to the Microfoam



To get truly smooth microfoam it is important to get rid of any large bubbles on the surface of your just steamed milk. A simple way to get them to pop is by tapping the pitcher a few times onto the countertop.

With a single boiler machine you will now be cooling the machine and setting up the espresso shot. This can take a minute, so it's important to 'groom' your milk

If the milk is left standing for more than 15 seconds it will start separating into foam and milk, to keep it consistent swirl the milk around the pitcher recreating the vortex. This keeps the foam and milk mixed, ready to be poured over that amazing espresso shot!

Step 7: Pour it!



Time to pour that beautiful milk into your espresso!
This is when the latte art experimentation can begin. There are many, many (many!) techniques for creating latte art, most of which are best explained by skilled people on YouTube.

Alternatively, you can just pour and enjoy!
Good luck folks and remember, don't be afraid of the heat.