

# Barista Manual 1.0

## “About the Barista & the Third Place”

### Free Excerpt

The following pages are samples from the Gimme! Coffee *Barista Manual* and are available for free download at [gimmecoffee.com](http://gimmecoffee.com).

### Full Version

Complete copies of *Barista Manual 1.0* can be ordered at:

- ▶ [gimmecoffee.com](http://gimmecoffee.com)
- ▶ 1.877.446.6325

The full version includes:

- ▶ 120+ pages of crisp professional printing
- ▶ 60 images including 28 color photos
- ▶ Original diagrams and illustrations
- ▶ Forms for cupping, training, and more
- ▶ Checklists for prep and maintenance
- ▶ Wide margins for obsessive note-takers
- ▶ Coffee-resistant glossy cover
- ▶ Sturdy steel coil-binding

### Why the 1.0?

*Barista Manual 1.0* isn't our final word on the vast subject of specialty coffee preparation. We're always learning from fellow professionals and enthusiasts, and we're already looking forward to future versions. Please send your feedback:

- ▶ [feedback@gimmecoffee.com](mailto:feedback@gimmecoffee.com)
- ▶ [gimmecoffee.com/feedback](http://gimmecoffee.com/feedback)

body and taste. Therefore, if the coffee can't be used within 7-10 days, we recommend storing the whole beans in the freezer in glass, Ball-style canning jars or other airtight containers. As soon as the beans are ground, the cell structures are broken and all of the volatile aromatics quickly exit as gas into the air, lost forever. Therefore, the beans should be ground right out of the freezer and not put back in. Refreezing the beans can cause moisture to condense on their surface, adversely affecting the flavor.

Baristas should be able to answer a customer's coffee questions effortlessly, from comparative tastes to the environmental and economic impacts of the growing and buying practices. The generally curious can be seduced into becoming coffee experts themselves, if you are able to provide solid information. Some of the customers will already be incredibly well-informed and will expect the same from you. Our coffee offerings exhibit a full range of roast profiles, and if you're brewing Gimme! Coffee, you should become familiar with the nuances between a light and dark roast, and the different tastes, extraction times and physical characteristics they will exhibit. Current details on each of the coffees roasted and sold at Gimme! Coffee can be found in the roasting roster.

## **1.2 About the Barista**

Simply put, a barista is an individual professionally trained in the art of espresso beverage preparation. In point of fact, a barista is a bartender, a chef, a psychiatrist, a wellspring of information, a caffeine enabler, and artist, all rolled into one charming package. We believe the challenges specific to the profession of barista are ultimately what makes it a genuinely rewarding job.

### **1.2.1 The Third Place**

It is impossible to over-emphasize the fact that Gimme! espresso bars are not fast food restaurants. While it is important that customers are served their drinks in an efficient and timely manner, it is not our policy to hand someone their latte with one hand and push them out the door with the other. Neighborhood coffeeshops fill the much-needed and often-neglected role of a "third place" (the first and second places being home and the workplace). There has always been an intuitive understanding that people need a space outside of home and work in which to socialize, but it is only recently that the need for and function of third places has been studied and appreciated. Third places like cafés, pubs, piazzas and beer gardens are prevalent in the major cities of Europe, but have been on the decline in the US since World War II. The rise of suburbs and single-use zoning codes which create segregated residential areas have contributed to this decline.

The third place is a space away from work or home where people can meet, talk and basically hang out. These spaces must be free to enter and have relatively inexpensive consumable goods for sale (coffee, for example). They must be neighborhood-based and

accessible to most of the community on foot. Most importantly, everyone who enters should feel welcome, both by the people operating the space (in our case, the barista) and the other members of the community who visit there. A person should expect to see both familiar and new faces every time they come in, and should be able to comfortably enter into conversations with staff and fellow patrons.

In the past, the need for third places was filled largely by establishments like public parks, barbershops and neighborhood taverns. But factors like rising service costs, harsh Northeastern climates, and zoning laws which have moved these businesses into geographically distant commercial areas have left very few options for third places. More and more, neighborhood coffeeshops like Gimme! are stepping in to fill this need.

Even as the number of third places has dwindled, their benefits and importance are coming to be understood and appreciated. Once looked down on as just hang-outs, we are now realizing that third places allow for a type of social interaction called “affiliation” that people cannot get at work or at home. Affiliation indicates a type of friendship, camaraderie or fellow-feeling that is different from the formal interactions of work-life and the intimate social interactions of home-life. It suggests an attachment to a group more than to any of its particular members.

People feel a loyalty towards their chosen third place because of the regulars, a group that is fluid and always present in varying degrees, rather than to one or two specific close friends who may or may not be there on a given day. The informal, drop-in nature of third places like coffeeshops provide public social spaces for these types of relationships, where affiliation is not based on activity or production (like work) or any particular standard of creed, age, race or gender (as with church or more formalized social clubs), but simply on shared community.

Sociologists have shown that in the absence of third places and the type of friendships they allow, people have a tendency to put undue stress on their home and family life, escalating their expectations beyond the capacity of those institutions to meet them. Along with this comes a feeling of isolation, which is unhealthy for the individual and the community. We know that people need both intimacy and affiliation, and that the kind of extensive social networking a third place provides opportunities for contributes to people being happier at work, at home and in their family relationships.

This is the kind of inclusive, local gathering-place we strive to create. We want to provide a place for people to meet and get to know one another, to build a sense of community across boundaries of age, economics and level of education, on a welcoming neutral ground. The coffee is the catalyst: people who have seen each other a dozen times and never spoken can kick off a conversation debating the relative merits of Mocha Java versus straight-up Java, or telling the story about how a certain barista convinced them to move from the diluted milk-mass of a large latte to the brown gold of pure espresso.

Within this environment, the barista takes on the role of the public character or community rolodex, the person who seems to know everyone in the neighborhood, who can tell you where to go for a decent hair cut, oil change or glass of beer. The barista is often the first to welcome newcomers to the neighborhood and give them their first sense of being a part of a community. The feeling a customer gets from being greeted and welcomed by name upon entering the café is at the heart of Gimme! Coffee's business. To make this work, the barista has to embrace the role of community catalyst. The good barista makes concerted effort to get to know the customers as individuals, starting (but not ending) with their names, tastes, and drinks of choice.

Coffeehouses have historically been viewed as dens of subversion, where malcontents plan revolts, which, all things considered, is not such a bad thing to be. The job of the barista is to greet all comers with a smile and a welcome, to foster a sense of a coffee community within the shop and, by providing a place away from home that feels like home and a place away from work that never feels like work, lead the neighborhood and its members towards realizing their best selves.

### **1.2.2 La Mano**

In Italian, *la mano* means “the hand.” In espresso-speak, *la mano* means the expert hand of a barista. With *la mano*—and the technique, knowledge, and passion it implies—a barista can achieve a smooth, complex, rewarding shot that tastes just the way fresh coffee smells. It's the dark golden taste of espresso enlightenment, and it's the whole reason behind the artisanal “Third Wave” of coffee.

Gimme! Coffee is committed to developing the idea of the professional barista. Our baristas are caffeine samurai: rigorous and disciplined in our drink making, focused to a razor-sharp edge and possessed of a zen-like calm under stress. Production of the perfect coffee drink requires exacting standards and a broad base of knowledge, a combination of science and art. Fully trained baristas should take pride in the knowledge and skills that allow them to produce the most perfect drinks possible and should strive constantly to hone and augment those skills in pursuit of the perfect drink. Excellent baristas are always involved in a process of self-education, and they share their knowledge and passion with customers and the world at large.