

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hand holding a brown paper coffee cup with a black lid. The person's face is partially visible on the right side of the frame, looking down at the cup. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with greenery and sunlight.

FETCO®

BATCH BREWING **VS** SINGLE-CUP COFFEE

WHAT RETAILERS SHOULD KNOW

A breakdown of the pros and cons,
plus tips for creating a **better coffee**
experience for customers

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In convenience stores, batch-brewed coffee has long been the norm, with “Make a lot and keep it hot” the overall goal for retailers offering it. But as consumers increasingly favor premium drink options—37% say they are purchasing hot specialty coffee more than they were two years ago, according to Technomic’s 2018 Beverage Consumer Trend Report—retailers have made moves to ensure their customers can find exactly what they’re looking for when they stop in. Those moves include offering new creamers, flavors, roasts and blends, but there’s also been a trend of offering single-cup options using machines that allow customers to brew their own single-serving cup of coffee, matched perfectly to their preferences. But offering single-serving


coffee creates concerns with cost, not to mention sustainability, which has been a hot topic in recent years.

Batch-brewing equipment has changed quite a bit in recent years, with more sophisticated equipment allowing operators and retailers the opportunity to create complex, high-quality brews without having to take the time to brew each cup individually.

For c-store retailers, deciding what type of machinery and what type of coffee to use can be overwhelming. Learning more about the ins and outs of each method of brewing can offer the insight store operators need to offer their customers the best experience possible.

Single-Cup Brewing


PROS AND CONS




Single-serving coffee equipment, such as those that work with coffee pods or K-cups, are a popular choice for many consumers. With these machines, customers can choose the coffee—flavored or unflavored, decaf or regular, etc.—that matches precisely what type of drink they feel like having. In c-stores, these can be good things to have on hand because they can help reduce product waste—that is, only as much coffee is needed is brewed. However, these machines can produce an excess of physical waste from the pods or cups themselves. While the items may be recyclable, unless a store has specific signage and solutions to ensure compliance, that plastic waste can add up fast.

With consumers' increased focus on sustainability and businesses that have environmentally friendly practices, waste from single-cup brewing can be less than ideal for retailers. The shift toward offering more sustainable options has cleared the path for batch-brewing equipment to not only get an upgrade but also to be more widely used in settings where higher-quality coffee is called for.

For c-stores, this has meant a shift in the types of coffee offered. Gone are the traditional urns that brew the same coffee day in and day out, and the pejorative “gas station coffee” descriptors that can go along with it.



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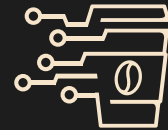
NEW BATCH-BREWING EQUIPMENT OFFERS UPGRADED EXPERIENCE

As specialty coffee continues its rise, consumers expect to find it in more and more places: at their favorite corner coffee shop, in cans and bottles at the grocery store and, unsurprisingly, at the convenience store they stop in regularly. Batch brewing has come a long way — nowadays, equipment used can be carefully calibrated to ensure ideal brewing variables are in play, resulting in a superior cup of coffee, even when batch-brewed.

Roasters often work with their customers to establish an ideal throw weight, and then retailers can use a FETCO grinder to grind their coffee. They may also use frac packs, in which case a grinder would not be needed. Once that's decided on, then the coffee is brewed into thermal dispensers, where it stays warm and great-tasting until it's served. What's more, the machines feature a touchscreen interface that allows retailers to record custom recipes with particular roasts for future use.

Digital brewers help to produce a more consistent brew, and it allows retailers and convenience-store employees to focus their time on other matters in the store because the coffee takes care of itself. Given increased reliability of coffee equipment, retailers don't need to worry about a too-weak, too-strong or stale batch making its way into a customer's cup. And with consumers expecting a great cup no matter where they buy it, it's critical for c-stores to offer consistently and reliably delicious coffee.

For c-store retailers looking to update and upgrade their coffee offerings, batch brewing can be a great way to do so.



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STEPS TO OPTIMIZE BATCH BREWING

C-store retailers have an array of choices when it comes to batch-brewing equipment. For providing a premium experience without creating excess plastic waste, batch brewing is the perfect solution—but it's crucial to take these steps to optimize the experience and output.

First things first: Use good-quality coffee grounds. A cup of coffee is only as good as its origins, so using subpar beans or grounds will ultimately result in a less-than-stellar cup. Work with a supplier who understands batch brewing and can recommend great blends.

Retailers should also ensure that the machinery is kept very clean. Great coffee can't be great if it's brewed in a dirty machine.

Don't be afraid of a little trial and error, either. When batch brewing—if it's with a new machine, or if a retailer is new to this method—it can be helpful to start with a

more general setting and then fine-tune the “recipe” until the best cup is produced. Changing variables such as the amount of coffee used, water temperature and length of dispensing time can have a significant impact on the outcome.

Finally, don't think of batch brew as a “Make a lot and keep it hot” process. While batch brewing is quicker than single-cup brewing, larger batch sizes mean the coffee at the bottom of the pot will sit there longer and longer, degrading in quality over time. Try smaller batch sizes, such as a half-gallon or a quarter of a gallon, to optimize the overall pot of coffee's quality.

Learn more about implementing batch brewing

Given the array of machinery and number of steps involved in newer, more updated batch brewers, retailers may feel overwhelmed or confused about where to start. Thankfully, there's help to be had: Simply visit fetco.com to learn more about the variety of equipment available for c-stores and beyond.

