



Begin by pouring the milk into the center of the crema. Pour quickly enough to prevent separation in the pitcher but slowly enough to keep the crema intact.



Maintain a consistent, moderate flow rate throughout the entire pour. To do this, you must accelerate the tipping motion of the pitcher as the amount of milk in the pitcher decreases.



Rock the pitcher back and forth once the white cloud appears.



Continue rocking the pitcher to create a zigzag pattern. It is critical to resist the urge to raise the pitcher away from the surface of the beverage. It may be counterintuitive, but keep the pitcher as low as possible while pouring and constantly accelerate the tipping of the pitcher to maintain the flow rate.



Back the pitcher toward the edge of the cup while zig-zagging. Once you reach the edge of the cup lift the pitcher a couple of inches and drizzle a small stream of milk back across the centerline of the zigzags.



Ecco!

How to Pour Latte Art

To pour latte art you must have a fresh shot of espresso with a reasonable amount of crema and properly textured steamed milk. The milk should look creamy and glassy, with no visible bubbles.

The most common mistakes beginners make are pouring the milk too slowly and lifting the pitcher away from the surface of the beverage while pouring. Pouring milk too slowly can cause it to separate in the pitcher, causing less-aerated milk to pour into the beverage and more-aerated milk to remain in the pitcher. This makes pouring latte art difficult and also results in an under-aerated beverage. Raising the pitcher away from the surface of the beverage causes the milk to dive under the crema rather than resting on top of the crema and forming a design.

Raising the pitcher while pouring prevents the milk from resting on the crema because the flow of the milk is accelerated by gravity. Raising the pitcher is analogous to diving from a high board: just as the milk dives to the bottom of the cup and hardly disturbs the crema, the diver cuts through the surface of the water with hardly a ripple and submerges deeply. On the other hand, pouring with the spout of the pitcher kept very close to the surface of the beverage is analogous to diving from the edge of a pool: the milk skims the surface of the beverage just as the diver merely skims the surface of the water.

The Spoon Method

The spoon method is common in New Zealand, but I've yet to see it practiced elsewhere. The benefits of the spoon method include delaying froth separation in the cup and allowing control over the texture of the milk while pouring. The disadvantages of the spoon method are it takes more time than free-pouring, requires the use of both hands, and is harder to master.

The spoon method works best with a round bell or vev pitcher with a beveled edge. The wide mouth of the bell pitcher provides a better view of the milk texture while pouring and allows easier spoon access and control.

To execute the spoon method, steam the milk, groom it if necessary, and use a tablespoon as a gate to control the flow and texture of the milk as it is poured. The details are different for each drink, but the basics are the same.

1. Begin the pour with the spoon tightly restricting all but the densest, least frothy milk. Some baristi use the spoon to pull back (away from the pouring edge) the frothiest milk several times before restricting the milk and starting the pour.
2. Pour into the center of the espresso at a moderate rate to prevent breaking up the crema.
3. While pouring, lift the spoon slowly to allow frothier milk into the cup.
4. The surface of the finished drink should be glassy and can be finished with a design if desired.