

20 UNUSUAL USES FOR COFFEE



More ways to justify your addiction to caffeine.

Can you imagine life without coffee? We'd all stumble around like drones for hours every morning, lost without our precious fix. We love coffee for its flavor, its aroma and of course its pick-me-up, but there are at least 20 more compelling reasons to stay stocked up. These tips will give you surprising and unusual uses for fresh coffee beans or grounds that have gone stale, the pounds of used grounds you toss out every week and the dregs at the bottom of your cup.

Kill fridge odor

Wouldn't you rather smell coffee than two-week-old leftovers, half-rotten produce and spoiled milk? If your fridge is a nightmare of foul odors, place a bowl of fresh, unused coffee grounds inside and leave it for a day or two. The coffee will absorb the odors and you'll crave a cup whenever you open the door. This odor-killing trick works for practically anything else as well – just place the item in a sealed plastic bag along with an open can of coffee grounds and bye-bye stank.

Reduce cellulite

Pricey cellulite creams almost always have one major ingredient in common: caffeine, which supposedly enhances fat metabolism, reducing the appearance of these fatty pockets under the skin. To make your own coffee cellulite treatment at home, mix warm used coffee grounds with coconut oil and rub it onto your skin in circular motions for a few minutes before rinsing.

Erase smells on your hands

Garlic, salmon, cilantro – there are some things that smell delicious when cooking, but aren't so pleasant hours later when they linger on your hands. Get rid of them by rubbing a handful of used coffee grounds on your hands and rinsing with warm water.

Make rich compost

There's a reason so many gardeners **swear by** adding used coffee grounds to compost. The grounds are rich in phosphorous, potassium, magnesium and copper, they release nitrogen into the soil as they degrade and they're a little bit acidic, which is great for certain soils. If you compost on a large scale, you can get used grounds for free at your local coffee hot spot or mom-and-pop cafe.

Get shiny hair

Who doesn't want shiny, healthy-looking hair? Coffee is often recommended as a simple, natural treatment to make hair extra-glossy. Brew up an extra-strong pot, let it cool and apply it to your dry, clean hair. Leave it on for at least twenty minutes, then rinse. Keep it up once a week or so for best results.



Natural dye

The natural pigments in coffee make it a great natural dye for fabric, paper, Easter eggs – even your hair. Brush paper with strong brew and let it dry, or soak fabric items in hot coffee. The results won't be color-fast, and may bleed out onto other items, so it's best to use this on items that won't be washed very often if at all. Using coffee as a hair shine treatment, as previously mentioned, may temporarily lend a rich, dark tint to your hair.

Reduce fireplace mess

Want to clean your fireplace without causing a dust storm? Wait until the embers are cool, sprinkle damp coffee grounds all over the ashes, let them sit for about 15 minutes and then scoop out the whole mess into a metal ash can. The coffee grounds cling to the ashes, so they don't spew dust nearly as much as they would otherwise.

Pin cushion filler

Dried, used coffee grounds are the perfect filler for **homemade pin cushions**. Just wrap them in some scrap cloth, tie it off with a rubber band and place the cloth in an egg cup or other small container. The grounds will keep your pins from rusting, too.

Exfoliate skin

The same properties that reportedly enable coffee to reduce the appearance of cellulite can smooth and tighten your skin, and the texture of ground coffee will buff away dead skin cells, too. Make your own coffee-based scrub by combining a tablespoon of coffee grounds with half a tablespoon of olive oil and, optionally, a drop of your favorite essential oil.

Repel ants

Sprinkle dry, used coffee grounds in problem areas where you notice ants in your home or yard and they might just pick up and leave. To tackle huge ant mounds, pour an entire pot of brewed coffee right on the mound.



Fertilize plants

Acid-loving plants will thank you for sprinkling your used coffee grounds around their roots. Azaleas, blueberry shrubs and rhododendrons are just a few of the plants that flourish when treated with coffee thanks to all those nutrients. You can also dilute the leftover coffee in your mug and pour it right into your potted plants (as long as you don't use cream and sugar, of course!)

Keep cats out of your garden

To you, that little garden in your yard is a beautiful source of fresh herbs, fruits and vegetables, but to seemingly every cat in a five-mile radius, it's a giant, irresistible litter box. Just use the trick mentioned above, sprinkling used coffee grounds on the soil, and cats will want nothing to do with it.

Scrub all kinds of surfaces

Mildly abrasive and acidic, coffee grounds are great for scrubbing surfaces like countertops, cooking ranges and refrigerators. Use them alone or mix them with a little dish soap.

Auto air freshener

Next time you accidentally spill coffee grounds on the floor, don't just sweep them up and toss them in the trash. You can use them to make an all-natural DIY air freshener [like this one at Instructables](#). Try to use an old ripped pair of pantyhose and spare string to make this an even more eco-friendly project.

Grow mushrooms

Used coffee grounds are an ideal medium to grow many kinds of mushrooms, including oyster mushrooms. You can actually purchase mushroom-growing kits from a company called [Back to the Roots](#) which includes reclaimed coffee grounds, mushroom roots and a mini spray bottle. The kit can produce up to 1.5 pounds of oyster mushrooms within 10 days.



Repel fleas

Rub used, damp coffee grounds through your pet's fur after bathing to repel fleas without questionable, likely-toxic chemical treatments. If nothing else, it will at least improve that post-bath wet-dog smell that gets all over your furniture.

Pretty vase fillers

Stale or dirty coffee beans are still a thing of beauty. Use them as vase fillers, or in cups or jars full of pens and pencils. Not only are they pretty, they continue to smell good for quite a while, too.

Start vermicomposting

Red wiggler worms, the sort used in vermicomposting systems, love coffee almost as much as we do. It's not really clear why, but if you want a thriving community of worms to devour all of your kitchen waste (and those nasty little things really are amazingly efficient), be sure to add used coffee grounds to their bedding on a regular basis.

Secret recipe ingredient

Just a little hint of coffee can be the ingredient that becomes your undisclosed "magic touch" in foods like chili, ice cream and chocolate cake. Use a little bit as a marinade for steaks and not only will it make them unbelievably tender, it'll also provide a hint of deep, smoky flavor.

Touch up furniture scratches

Scratches on wood furniture disappear almost instantly by simply rubbing in a little bit of instant coffee dampened into a paste with hot water. Repeat if necessary until the scratch matches the surrounding wood.