

Starbucks by Nespresso Italian Roast: A Roast, Not a Country

From the teas.co.uk wiki

Starbucks by Nespresso Italian Roast: A Roast, Not a Country, in summary: Italian roast describes how dark the beans were taken, not where they grew. No Starbucks capsule goes darker: heavy, smoky, sweet underneath, with no acidity left, and built to be taken short.

Last reviewed by the teas.co.uk team in September 2026.

Nothing about the name says Italy grew these beans. Italian roast is roasting vocabulary for the far end of the scale, past blonde and medium, and it takes its name from a way of drinking coffee rather than a place of farming it.

Built for a short cup and a spoon of sugar

The style grew up around espresso the Italian way: short, often drunk standing at a bar, frequently sweetened and repeated several times a day. A roast for that job has to be unmistakable in 30ml and keep its character through sugar. That is not the brief for a coffee you sip black and analyse at length, and it accounts for nearly everything this capsule does.

So sugar here is not a compromise. The style was built around it, and a quarter teaspoon brings up the caramelised sweetness hidden beneath the smoke without hiding the coffee. Take it on the espresso button and keep it short; the flavour arrives at its densest straight away and does not build, so extra water only dilutes the point of it.

Italian Roast or Dark Espresso Roast?

The obvious comparison is the Dark Espresso Roast. That capsule holds on to more of its caramel sweetness; the Italian Roast goes a stage darker and into smoke, with a bold bitterness that is deliberate rather than a defect. The body is full and heavy, with the faintly oily feel of a very dark roast, and there is no brightness left at all.

Our advice runs one way. If dark coffee tends to taste ashy to you, begin with the Dark Espresso Roast and move up to this one once you know you like it. Choose the Italian Roast when you want nothing but roast in the cup. It is not a capsule for finding out if you enjoy dark coffee; it is for people who already know they do.

A forgiving capsule for a busy machine

A roast this dark has a practical upside: there is nothing fragile in it. Scale building up in the machine, or water that has sat in the tank overnight, barely registers against so much roast, where a light capsule would show every fault. That makes it an easy-going box for a kitchen machine that works hard and is not always looked after as well as it might be.

Its aroma is heavy and lingers, so expect the kitchen to smell of coffee for an hour after a single shot. The box holds ten capsules and 56g of coffee. They are built for Nespresso Original machines, not adapted to them; a Vertuo only accepts its own barcoded capsules and will not run these, so check your machine before you order.

The packs we stock

- [Starbucks By Nespresso Italian Roast, 10 Capsules 56g](#)

What to eat with it

- [Border Butterscotch Crunch Organic Biscuits, 135g](#): Butterscotch plays the part that sugar plays in the cup, softening the smoke with sweetness.
- [Maryland Cookies Double Chocolate, 200g](#): Double [chocolate](#) is rich enough to stand beside the deepest roast in the range without being lost.
- [Lu Le Petit Cookie with Chunky Rich Chocolate Chips, 184g](#): Rich chocolate chips give a short, smoky espresso a sweet counterpoint in a small bite.

Elsewhere in the Starbucks range

- [Starbucks Americano House Blend By Nescafe Dolce Gusto, Coffee \(12 Servings\), 12 Pods](#)
- [Starbucks Blonde Espresso Roast by NESPRESSO Coffee, Blonde Roast, Box of 10, 53g](#)
- [Starbucks Breakfast Blend by Nespresso Medium Roast Coffee, 10 Capsules 56g](#)
- [Starbucks by Nescafé Dolce Gusto 12 x Madagascar Vanilla Macchiato Coffee \(6 Servings\)](#)
- [Starbucks by Nescafé Dolce Gusto 12 x White Mocha Coffee \(6 Servings\)](#)
- [Starbucks by Nespresso Blonde Espresso Roast Coffee, 10 Pods](#)

The full range is on the [Starbucks brand page](#).

FAQ

Is Starbucks Italian Roast coffee from Italy? No. Italian roast is a roast level at the dark end of the scale, named after a way of drinking espresso rather than a place where coffee grows.

How does it compare with the Dark Espresso Roast? It goes a step darker. The Dark Espresso Roast keeps more caramel sweetness, while the Italian Roast leans into smoke.

Should I add sugar to Italian Roast? If you like. The style grew up around sweetened espresso, and a quarter teaspoon brings out the sweetness beneath the smoke.

Why does it taste smoky and bitter? Roasting this far removes the acidity and turns the roast into the main flavour. The bitterness is intended and suits a short serve.

Does a machine that needs descaling spoil Italian Roast? Much less than it would a light roast. At this depth the roast dominates whatever state the machine is in, though a regular descale is still good practice.

Curator's note: Short button, a quarter spoon of sugar if you fancy it, and drink it standing up in the kitchen. That is what the roast was built for. Lee, teas.co.uk, Tunbridge Wells.

In short: Starbucks by Nespresso Italian Roast: A Roast, Not a Country

Field	Detail
Brand	Starbucks
Packs we stock	10 Capsules 56g
Category	Coffee Pods & Capsules
Caffeine	caffeinated
Roast	The darkest Starbucks capsule
Serve	Short, with sugar if you like
Not for	Anyone new to dark coffee

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- [Tea vs Coffee: Taste, Caffeine and Switching](#)
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