

A Morning Routine.

A routine is a habit, often one that gives us comfort, or some sort of benefit. We say in English that we are 'creatures of habit'. Humans like to have a routine, a familiar way of living. I've noticed that even my children have developed their own routines: how they dress and take care of themselves, what they like to eat and when, and even how they play. A routine that I have in the morning that makes a positive impact on my day, is my coffee routine. A few years ago, my husband and I decided that it was time to get a decent coffee maker: an espresso machine. Espresso, and the whole mediterranean style cafes that are enjoyed so much here, have only really taken off over the past fifteen to twenty years. When I first came over here, Starbucks was very new indeed. They were the first company that brought the laid back, sit and have a coffee, culture to the states. And now there are many other such companies. So, when we decided to buy an espresso machine, Starbucks was the obvious choice for us. If you've ever been in a Starbucks, you'll find that they don't just serve espresso. They have a huge variety of coffee, tea, and juice drinks, as well as pastries, and some savory food. Also, they sell coffee by the pound, either ground or whole bean. And then, you'll also find shelves of cups, tea and coffee pots, and espresso machines. So, Starbucks seemed to be the obvious choice when it came to buying our espresso machine. We ended up with one called a Barista, which is medium sized, and perfect for two people to use. It has a spout which can be used to heat and froth-up the milk, and of course the coffee brewing section. Using an espresso machine was not new to me. I had worked at an espresso stand for a year when I first got married. Before that, I worked in a restaurant in Leicester Square, London, where we had a huge, Italian, copper espresso machine. It could make several drinks at once. It was so big and gorgeous, that we would polish it every day to make it really shine. When it comes to my coffee routine, it's quite simple really. I turn it on, add fresh water, and flush out some of the day-old water. While it is heating up, I put about a tablespoon full of ground espresso into what is called the coffee basket. This is the metal cup with holes in it that is part of the arm that attaches to the machine. When the light comes on that indicates available hot water, I press the 'brew' button, and the hot water flows through the coffee and the filter, and out into the shot glass. It's hot, fresh, and frothy. When it comes to the milk, I cheat a little. I don't bother heating and frothing it in the traditional way. I just warm up some soy milk in the microwave while I'm making the espresso. I add the coffee to the milk, and that's it. Perfect! It's the best part of my breakfast.

Grammar notes.

Related vocabulary: froth, filter, impact, the obvious choice.

1. I like my latte as plain as possible: milk, espresso, no flavoring, no froth.
2. The irrigation system needs a filter so seeds and organic matter don't clog up the pipes.
3. The chemical factory hasn't had any impact on our environment because they have strict safety laws.
4. A German chocolate cake was the obvious choice for the anniversary party; everybody likes it, and it is the baker's specialty.

