

# Cappuccino – A tale from the hood!



**Cappuccino**, as you must already know - is an Italian coffee-based drink popularly prepared with espresso, hot milk and milk foam. But do you know where the drink - and the word - comes from?

**C**appuccino takes its name from the hooded frocks of the order of Franciscan Minor friars - *cappuccio* means 'hood' in Italian which perfectly describes the luscious head of foamed milk that sits atop the drink's espresso base. When expertly poured so that a circle of white is perfectly encircled by the darker coffee, the design on a traditionally prepared cappuccino is called a monk's head. Indeed, with their iconic brown hooded cowls and shaved heads, the monks of Capuchin are a pretty close human resemblance to the ring of crema and the white foam that tops the classic beverage.

An offshoot of the Franciscan Catholic order, these friars struck out on their own in 1520, adopting the coffee-colored cloak, or *cappuccio*, as an imitative sign of gratitude to the Benedictine Camaldolese monks, who offered Capuchins refuge while they dodged persecution from church officials. Legend also has it

that a 17th century Capuchin monk, Marco d'Aviano, invented Cappuccino after the Battle of Vienna in 1683, and that it was named after him. The Viennese, it is said, bestowed the name Kapuziner in the 19th century, although their version included whipped cream, which the Italians found rather heavy.

The drink however, has always been known largely by this Italian name and the famous Espresso coffee machine which is used to make cappuccino had its first patent being filed by Luigi Bezzera in 1901, who is largely credited with its invention. The beverage grew exponentially in popularity, as the large espresso machines in cafés and restaurants were improved during and after World War II. By the 1950s, the Italian cappuccino had found its refined form.

Cappuccino as a taste was largely confined to Europe, Australia, South Africa, South America and the more cosmopolitan regions of North

America until the mid-1990s when it was made much more widely available to North Americans, as upscale coffee bars sprang up. In Italy, cappuccino is generally consumed early in the day as part of the breakfast, with a croissant, better known to Italians as *cornetto*, or a pastry. Generally, Italians do not drink cappuccino with meals other than their breakfast. That's obviously not the case in most other countries.

All said and done, whether you like the Traditional Cappuccino, the wet/dry one, the Cappuccino Scuro or the Cappuccino Chiaro, the truth is, its popularity is not unfounded and its appeal to the human palate most certainly cannot be refuted.

"I like Cappuccino, actually," said David Lynch once, for "even a bad cup of coffee is better than no coffee at all." Well, we couldn't agree any more.

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