

How to Develop Film in Coffee

Supplies:

5 tsp. Instant coffee (not decaf)
3 1/2 tsp. Soda ash (Also called sodium carbonate or washing soda. Available at pool supply stores.)
1/2 tsp. Vitamin C powder
Water
Fixer (from a camera store)
Dishwashing liquid
Daylight developing tank and reel (Look for a used one at a photo supply store or try to borrow one, preferably with plastic reels.)
Roll of exposed film
Bottle opener
Scissors
16 oz. Measuring cup
Measuring spoons
2 Glasses
Spoon
Timer
2 Clothespins
Clothesline or coat hanger

Step 1: Mix the Coffee Film Developer

Makes 12 ounces

- a. Mix the Vitamin C powder and coffee crystals in a glass with 6 ounces of HOT water. (The water should be hotter than tap water, but not quite boiling. Microwaving is good.) Stir until all of the crystals and gritty bits are completely dissolved.
- b. Mix the soda ash in a separate glass with 6 ounces of water and stir until dissolved.
- c. To make the final developer, combine both liquids (Part "a" and Part "b") in a container that will hold 12 ounces. Cool down to 68 degrees. Coffee Developer must be used within 2 hours.

Step 2: Mix the Fixer and Wash

- a. Fixer: Follow the package instructions on your fixer to make enough to fill your developing tank. Set aside until you're ready to develop the film.
- b. Wash: In another container, dissolve a small drop of dishwashing liquid in enough water to fill the developing tank. Set aside for later.

Step 3: Set up a Darkroom

- a. The film must be loaded onto the reels in complete darkness. Find a darkroom that you can borrow, use a changing bag, or use the bathroom in your house, preferably at night. (Seal up windows and cracks under the door with black garbage bags.)
- b. Lay out your reels, film canisters, bottle opener, scissors, and developing tank parts in a way that you can find them in the dark.

Step 4: Practice

- a. If you have never loaded film before, practice a few times with a blank roll. Try it with the lights on a few times, then try it with your eyes closed!

Step 5: Loading the Reel

- a. Turn off the lights! This must be done in total darkness.
- b. Pry lid off of film canister with the bottle opener. Cut off film leader (the curved front end of the roll) and cut to make the end straight.
- c. Feed the film into the reel of your developing tank, turning first your right hand, then your left hand, clockwise, using your thumbs to guide the film onto the reel. Continue this motion until all film is loaded and you reach the end of the spool. Cut the film off the spool and give the reel an extra turn or two to load the very end of the film.
- d. Slide the reel onto the spindle (the part that looks a pipe), and put it into the tank. Screw in the part that looks like a funnel, and put on the rubber lid. Now you can turn on the lights.

Step 6: Developing

- a. Go where there is a sink and set the timer for 14 minutes.
- b. Take rubber lid off of tank and pour in the Coffee Developer. Put lid back on.
- c. Start the timer.
- d. Agitate constantly for the first minute. (One agitation equals turning the tank upside down and right side up.) After the first minute, agitate tank 3 times per minute until the remaining 11 minutes are up.

Step 7: Stop

- a. When developing time is complete, pour out the developer and fill the tank with water. Agitate 6 times, and then pour out the water. Repeat this step 2 more times.

Step 8: Fix

- a. Pour out the water ("stop bath") and fill the tank with fixer.
- b. Set the timer for 5 minutes and agitate 3 times per minute until the 5 minutes is up.

Step 9: Final Wash

- a. Pour out the fixer and fill the tank with water. Agitate 3 times and pour out the water. Refill with fresh water, agitate 6 times and pour out. Refill, agitate 12 times and pour out.
- b. Refill the tank with the soapy water you mixed in Step 2, agitate slowly 24 times and then pour out.
- c. Open the tank and remove the reel.

Step 10: Drying

- a. Twist open the reel and remove the film.
- b. Hang a coat hanger in your shower and hang the film from that or use a clothespin to hang the film from a clothesline.
- c. Bring two fingers together on either side of the film and drag them down the roll to squeegee off any excess water. Clip a clothespin on the bottom edge of the roll to keep the film from curling. Hang until dry.

Step 11: Enjoy!

Be sure to enjoy your developed film! **Specialty Color Services** can assist you with film scanning and printing services.