

12 Survival & Homesteading Uses For Coffee

Coffee, that dark, heady brew that gets you out of bed in the morning and keeps you going throughout the day! Though it's most certainly delicious to drink, coffee has many different uses.

Pour yourself a cup of Joe, pull up a chair, and find out how else coffee may help around the homestead or even save your bacon someday. Oh, and don't throw away the grounds quite yet – after you read this, you'll understand why.

1. Compost

Coffee grounds add acidity to [your compost pile](#) and may also attract worms and repel pests. Remember that you want to keep the ratio of green matter and brown matter equal and coffee counts as green matter.

Coffee is rich in nitrogen, which your compost needs in order to cure properly. If you're worried about not having enough phosphorus or potassium in your compost, throw some banana peels on your pile, too.

2. Fertilizer

Coffee grounds have two of the three major components of fertilizer: nitrogen and potassium. It also adds a nice magnesium boost, which your plants need to grow and thrive. Since you also need phosphorus and calcium, you'll need to add some lime or wood ash to your mix.

3. Staying Awake

Sure, coffee is a great eye-opener, but it's great to help you KEEP your eyes open, too. If you're in a survival situation and it's your watch, you're not going to want to doze off on your post.



Also, if you have to travel a long distance, the extra energy will help you keep pushing on. An interesting fact for you here: certain tribes in coffee-growing countries used to wrap a coffee bean in fat to carry with them as a source of energy.

This would probably be great to do with Pemmican, too. You'd have fat, protein, carbs and energy. For that matter, coffee is a great source of antioxidants and other goodies that will help you out along the trail.

4. Headaches

One of the primary ingredients in many headache or migraine medications is caffeine. Also, if you're used to drinking coffee on a daily basis, especially a LOT of coffee, you will likely go through withdrawals from the caffeine addiction.

The primary symptom is a headache. So, whether you're suffering from a migraine or headache caused by something else, or from caffeine deprivation, drink a cup of coffee to get rid of it.

5. Grow Worms

If you live near water and are going to be depending on fish and a compost pile for food/gardening, [worms are your friend](#). They need gritty substances such as coffee to aid in their digestion so a planter full of dirt and coffee grounds would be heaven for worms.

6. Barter

You know how much you love your coffee. Well, you're not the only one, but you may be the only one who thought ahead enough to stockpile it! Coffee is going to be a great barter item if SHTF even for a little while.

7. Get Rid of Odors

Whether it's in your refrigerator or freezer or on your hands, coffee grounds are great for getting rid of gross smells. If you're wanting to keep your fridge or freezer smelling fresh, put a couple of cups of coffee grounds in an open container and set it inside for a couple of weeks or until you have some stored up that you're not composting.

If the odor is on your hands after you peel onions or work with garlic, you can get rid of it by rubbing some coffee grounds in your hands like sand, then wet them a bit and keep rubbing.

8. Scrub Dishes, Pots and Pans

Coffee grounds are abrasive and if you're out of scouring pads or are on the run but don't have access to your standard cleaners, coffee grounds are abrasive without being scratchy and are great to use to scrub grease and grime off of your dishes. This is also just a great way to re-use the grounds and avoid using chemicals on your dishes.

9. Grow and Rescue Your Carrots



If you rub your seeds in coffee grounds and add some grounds to your soil when you plant the seeds, you'll be accomplishing two things at once.

First, you'll help your carrots grow – they love coffee grounds and it will help you grow bigger, better ones.

Also, underground critters that may want to gnaw on them before you're ready to often don't care much for coffee so they'll leave your carrots alone!

10. Save your plants

Sprinkling some coffee grounds around your plants will [keep pests such as harmful insects away](#). Ants and slugs are particularly averse to coffee grounds.

Just be careful doing this around plants that prefer a more alkaline soil because when it rains, that coffee is going to filter down through your soil and when you weed, the grounds will likely get mixed in with the soil. This is great for those acid-loving plants.

11. Make Rejuvenating Soap

Would you like to really get rejuvenated during your shower or when you're washing your face? Coffee grounds added to your homemade soap serves two purposes: they act to exfoliate dead skin cells and the caffeine in the coffee can actually be absorbed through your skin to help give you a little boost. It also helps with those bags under your eyes.

12. Boost Morale

When everything in your life seems turned upside down, a bit of normalcy goes a long way. A cup of coffee in the morning helps anchor you and boost your morale by giving you that sense of normalcy. Even the smell of it brewing will give you a comforting boost.

Storing Coffee for Long-Term Stockpiling

There's quite a debate about whether coffee is best stored ground or in bean form. Just like everything, it will probably taste better longer if you store beans, but are you absolutely positive that you're going to have a way to grind them?



Also, if you have to run, you're probably not going to be able to grind your own beans on the trail. For that reason, I'm stepping over the debate line onto the side of "ground".

The National Coffee Association says that the commercial containers that your coffee comes in aren't ideal for long term storage but they don't say why.

They do say that coffee should be stored in an airtight container in a cool dry place. Seriously, that leads me to think that the containers that your coffee comes in would be fine for long-term storage, especially if you're buying the vacuum-packed bricks.

Be careful with where you store your coffee; in a cabinet by the stove is definitely too warm as is a cabinet that gets direct sunlight. Your best bet would be in a pantry, basement or storage closet.

Coffee has numerous purposes besides just drinking! Throughout our history, it's been a staple product for people who travel light. Pioneers heading west carried it and many who lived mainly off of it may have survived the trip because the water had to be boiled to make it. That killed the bacteria that was in the water along the way. Many pioneers died of cholera, which boiling water would have prevented.

Our military have always had packs of coffee in their meal packs for both energy and morale purposes. There's just something about coffee that's made it as American as apple pie and it deserves a cherished place in your stockpile.

If you have any other good uses for coffee or coffee grounds, please share them in the comments section below!

Interested in surviving off the grid? [CLICK HERE](#) to find out how!

*This article has been written by **Theresa Crouse** for Survivopedia.*