



# Coffee Bars

Coffee shops have become a normal part of life for today's teenager. If students are already stopping by coffee shops before and after school, bringing this environment inside the building can increase revenue for your school nutrition department, increase milk consumption, and allow your team to control the nutrition of the coffee beverages your students consume.

## Why are Coffee Bars important?

Adding a coffee bar or cart to your high school(s) can help you compete with popular off-campus shops and enhance the image of your program.

Additionally, your team can control the nutrition of the caffeinated beverages your students consume. USDA allows sales of coffee and espresso beverages in high schools up to 12 ounces and under 60 calories as part of the Smart Snacks in School program.

Coffee bars are also a great option for selling other a la carte items – such as smoothies, tea and hot chocolate – and a la carte breakfast and lunch items.



### Increased a la Carte Revenue

Some schools with coffee bars see upwards of \$900 per week in profits – that's more than \$30,000 per year.<sup>1</sup>



### Increased Student Participation

Coffee bars may increase breakfast and lunch participation – some schools saw up to a 4% ADP increase after implementing a coffee bar.<sup>1</sup>

## Enhances the Image of Your Nutrition Program



**The coffee shops have created a 'university' type atmosphere and are constantly evolving based upon student preference and feedback. Product quality and consistency are a driving force for the items that we choose. We mimic our competition as closely as possible with packaging, marketing and products offered. The coffee shops in both high schools are located outside of the cafeteria.**



**- Julie Telesca, SNS, Director of Nutrition Services**  
Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, Grapevine, Texas

# Coffee Bars

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### Are coffee-based beverages allowed to be sold in high schools?

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Yes. Unless your particular state has more stringent rules and does not allow them, the USDA Smart Snacks rules allow coffee and espresso, only in high schools and only if they meet the beverage calorie restrictions: 40 calories per 8-ounce serving or 60 calories per 12-ounce serving are allowed, and you need only count the calories from added ingredients – like flavored syrups – not the calories from the low-fat or fat-free milk.<sup>2</sup>

Options for offering coffee/milk-based beverages through Smart Snacks are:

- **Using low-fat or fat-free unflavored milk and coffee or espresso.** If milk and coffee or espresso are the only ingredients, then this is considered an allowable beverage, and the only limitations are to a 12 oz. portion and served at the high school level.
- **Using low-fat or fat-free flavored milk.** If the ingredients in a latte are coffee or espresso and flavored milk, then the latte is an allowable beverage and the flavored milk calories would not count.
- **Using sweeteners.** Sweeteners can be added to milk in a latte (either during preparation or afterwards by the student) but must be evaluated to meet the required calorie limits of <60 calories per 12 fluid oz. This is the same as <5 calorie per 1 fluid oz. If a smaller beverage is served, the calories need to be proportional to the size of the beverage and may not exceed 5 calories per fluid oz.

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### May espresso and steamed (or boiled) milk beverages be sold, such as lattes and cappuccinos?

A

Yes, as long as the beverage sold is comprised of two allowable beverages. Espresso (or coffee) is allowable at the high school level only and may be combined with skim milk, flavored or unflavored. Espresso (or coffee) may also be combined with 1% milk, as long as there is no added flavoring. Additionally, it would be acceptable to sell an espresso beverage over ice or blended with ice. All final beverage sizes must be no more than 12 fluid ounces.<sup>2</sup>



## Can schools serve coffee alongside the USDA school meal program?



Yes. Coffee bars operated by the school nutrition department do not apply to the competitive food service regulation – especially if the coffee is part of a reimbursable meal (see below for more info).



## Can a latte be part of a reimbursable meal?



No. Milk used in preparation of menu items other than smoothies may not credit toward the fluid milk requirement. Therefore, lattes/coffee-based beverages may be offered with a reimbursable meal but the milk in the latte does not credit toward the requirement to offer milk.



## What should my price point be?



Look at coffee shops and restaurants serving coffee beverages in your area, then price competitively against your findings. Many schools start prices at \$2-\$3 for an 8-ounce beverage.<sup>1</sup>

## More questions?

Reach out to your

[Local Dairy Council School Wellness Consultant.](#)

### References:

1. [Dairy MAX Pilot results](#)
2. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/qas-smart-snacks-interim-final-rule>

