

10 New Uses for Coffee Filters

About 100 years ago, a German housewife named Melitta Bentz punctured the bottom of a brass pot, lined it with blotting paper, and—voilà!— made the first coffee filter. Almost a century later, a perfected version of Bentz's design is still used. "Coffee filters aren't as likely to crumple or dissolve in water as typical paper because they have better 'wet strength,' thanks to longer fibers," says Melinda McDonald, communications manager for Bunn, a beverage-equipment manufacturer. "Additionally, the fluted sides and cupcake shape allow substances to flow through the filter freely and prevent grains from flowing over the sides."

Use Coffee Filters to:

- 1. Diffuse the flash on a camera.** When you're taking a close-up, soften the brightness by placing a coffee filter over the flash.
- 2. Strain wine from a bottle with a broken cork.** Place the filter over a pitcher or a carafe and slowly pour the wine into it.
- 3. Serve popcorn or other snacks.** The filters act as disposable bowls, so there's no dishwashing.

4. Make yogurt dip. Use a rubber band to secure a paper coffee filter over the mouth of a deep cup or jar. Slowly pour 8 ounces of plain yogurt onto the filter. Let drain for one hour. In a bowl, mix the thickened yogurt with 1 small minced garlic clove, 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley, and salt and pepper to taste. Serve with crackers.

5. Heat up leftovers in the microwave. Use a filter as the protective covering over a bowl or a plate.

6. Prevent soil from draining out of flowerpots. When repotting, place a filter at the bottom, over the drainage hole, then add the soil.

7. Prevent scuffs and scratches on fine china. Use flattened coffee filters as spacers when you stack your dishes.

8. Protect hands from Popsicle drippage. Slide the wooden stick of an ice pop through a coffee filter so your hands stay mess-free.

9. Serve pita sandwiches. A circular filter is the perfect size for carrying a sandwich on the go.

10. Clean windows and glass when you're out of paper towels. Coffee filters leave no lint or other residue.