

Rachel’s Ramblings

Fancy Coffee,
Saving Money

How many of us enjoy a good cup of coffee? I’m not talking about the kind that makes the hairs on your neck stand up. I mean the creamy, dreamy, dessert-in-a-cup kind—the fancy, frothy, fru-fru drink that feels like a warm hug in a mug.

Recently, I found a delicious (and healthier) way to enjoy my favorite coffee while still supporting my local coffee shop. It all started with a simple mindset shift: learning how to make satisfying substitutes without feeling deprived.

Once I figured out how to recreate my favorite drink at home, I realized how much I could save—without sacrificing the flavor or experience.

Let’s talk numbers. I used Starbucks Blonde Roast coffee at \$5.98 a bottle, which comes to about \$0.125 per fluid ounce. I added FairLife Whole Milk, which is ultra-filtered and costs \$4.97, or roughly \$0.096 per ounce. For the sweetness, I used Torani White Chocolate Sauce at \$6.22 per bottle (\$0.377 per ounce). And for that creamy richness, I included Great Value Heavy Cream at \$5.67, or \$0.177 per fluid ounce. My homemade version used 6 ounces of coffee (\$0.75), 6 ounces of milk (\$0.58), 2 ounces of white chocolate sauce (\$0.75), and 2 ounces of heavy cream (\$0.35). Altogether, it cost me \$1.73 for a 16-ounce drink—or just \$2.60 for 24 ounces.

Compare that to my favorite local coffee shop, where a large 24-ounce cup runs \$7.00. That means I save \$4.40 every time I make it at home—an impressive 62.86% less. And let’s not forget, I’m using better-quality ingredients with fewer additives and more control over what goes into my body.

While I’ll admit the white chocolate sauce still contains a questionable ingredient or two, it’s a far better option than the ultra-processed creamers found in grocery store refrigerators. Have you ever read those labels? They’re packed with hydrogenated oils linked to heart disease and inflammation, high fructose corn syrup and added sugars that spike blood sugar and promote insulin resistance, artificial flavors and colors that can trigger allergies or behavioral issues (some of which the government is only now beginning to regulate), and preservatives like carrageenan and sodium stearyl lactylate, both known to cause digestive distress and inflammation in people.

At home, I made smarter choices. I chose ultra-filtered milk to limit lactose and reduce calories—a decision that also helps my nursing baby, who is sensitive to certain ingredients. The heavy cream I used is not only delicious, but also versatile—I could whip it in my KitchenAid and save the extra for a strawberry dessert after supper. No waste. And surprisingly, heavy cream offers health benefits many people overlook. It’s rich in fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K, which support immune health, bone strength, and vision. It’s low in carbohydrates, making it friendly for fellow ladies with a keto and low-carb lifestyles. And it provides healthy fats that help balance hormones and promote satiety.

Could I have swapped out the white chocolate sauce for stevia and saved even more calories and sugar? Sure. But I wouldn’t have enjoyed it as much—and enjoyment matters to me. Could I have used only milk instead of combining it with heavy cream? Of course. But again, it just wouldn’t have tasted the same. I usually stir the whipped cream into my drink at the coffee shop anyway, so I was just being honest about what I actually enjoy. Why make something if you don’t like it?

And that’s the key takeaway here: if the substitute isn’t practical or pleasurable, you won’t stick with it. You’ll either quit altogether in frustration or run back to the coffee shop five days a week. That’s why I’ve adopted what I call the 80/20 rule—80% whole, nourishing ingredients, 20% indulgence that keeps me satisfied. It’s a realistic way to shift habits without the burnout or guilt.

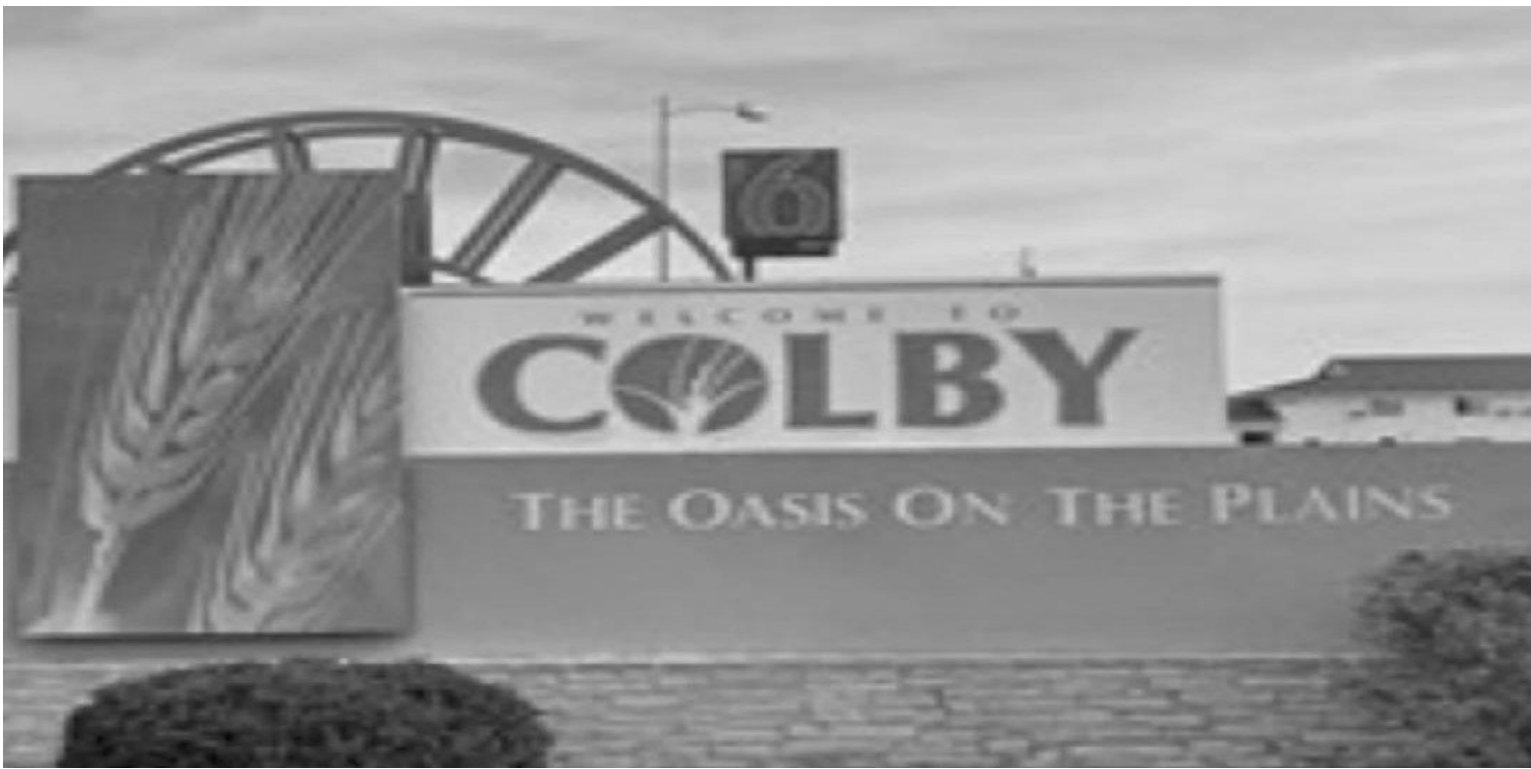
Let’s talk long-term impact. If you drink coffee five times a week and four of those times you make your drink at home, that’s \$10.40 for four homemade drinks plus \$7.00 for one coffee shop visit, totaling \$17.40 per week. Compare that to your previous \$35.00 weekly habit of coffee shop visits five days a week, and you’re saving \$17.60 weekly. Multiply that by 52 weeks, and you’ve got \$915.20 in annual savings.

Think about what you could do with that extra \$900+ a year. Maybe you finally invest in a nice espresso machine and start hosting coffee dates with friends. Maybe you put it toward a car, or chip away at lingering debt. Maybe it’s fun money for a weekend getaway with your spouse, or an updated wardrobe that celebrates your health goals. The point is—you didn’t give up coffee. You simply reworked the habit to serve your goals.

And if you need one more reason to embrace this coffee life, let the science encourage you. Regular coffee drinkers have a 10–15% lower risk of early death, especially from heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers. People who drink 3–4 cups a day have a 25% lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes. And here’s a happy bonus—women who drink four or more cups of coffee daily have a 20% lower risk of depression, according to a Harvard study.

So, here’s an 80/20 coffee life. Eighty percent homemade with whole ingredients. Twenty percent local shop support and the joy of sipping out. It’s better for your body, better for your budget, and better for your life—all without giving up what you love most.

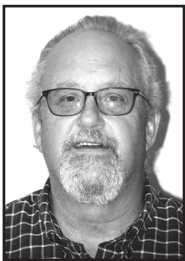
—Rachel Redlin



Political Rhetoric has its Place
But Forgive me for Believing it

So it finally happened. It was always going to happen at some point. It just took 46 years.

For 46 years, the Islamic regime in Iran starting with the Ayatollah Khomeini, has been consistent in its desire to wipe the State of Israel from the face of the earth. Each succeeding leader has been very open and very vocal.



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last week.

Although we don’t know “for sure” if Iran had indeed produced an atom or nuclear bomb, we have been told for years that they were “very” close.

Israel finally decided that diplomacy (46 years worth) had failed.

Israel “believes” what Iran has been saying.

Iran has the right as a sovereign nation to do what they want and to say what they want. Yet, Iran doesn’t have the right to expect people and nations to ignore or discount what they have done and said.

If someone is in front of me loading a gun and saying the whole time that they are going to kill me...I can either believe them and act first or I can take the chance that they are loading blanks and try to reason with them. It really is as simple as that.

The world has tried to “reason” with Iran and their current (46 years) political regime for a long time. The United Nations have come to agreements with Iran that have been violated before they even start. Deception, evasion and attempted blackmail, not to mention the shedding of innocent blood have been part and parcel of what we haven gotten in return.

Is Israel totally innocent and pure? No, they will always do what is in their best interest and they are not about let their people die in a mushroom cloud or be terrorized by groups just to take the “high moral ground” of letting a country (whether through proxy or directly) strike first.

People have short memories and true history is sometimes hard to find.

Israel became a nation by a decree of the

United Nations in 1948.

In 1967 they were attacked on three sides by their neighbors and they drove them back. It was tried again in 1972.

While many people seem to forget that twice in their recent history, attempts have been made to eradicate them as not only a nation but as a people...rest assured, Israel has made promises to its people that they will not wait around for it to happen again.

Israel didn’t start this war. Iran did through their proxies of Hamas, Hezbollah and others which Iran funded, armed and trained. And of course, through their own rhetoric.

What is the outcome?

It’s unclear. It all depends on how fast each country can rearm with missiles and armaments.

Unlike Gaza, I can’t see Israel pushing ground troops into Iran. I think Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait might get a little peeved over that...even though I haven’t heard anything from Jordan even though missiles are flying right over them from two different directions.

I don’t see Iran invading Israel. They would have to build a coalition of other nations to do that and if that happened...then we will have nuclear war in the MidEast.

So, most likely in a few days or weeks, one side or the other will run out of rocks to throw. Iran will back down most likely, because they will have to put down an uprising.

Then it will begin all over again for decades to come unless Jesus comes back.

The goals will remain the same unless there is regime change in Iran and even then...

Iran will tell the whole world that they want to wipe Israel from the face of the earth and begin developing or acquire weapons to facilitate that goal. Israel will rightly take steps to prevent that from happening. Innocent lives on both sides will be lost in the pursuit of those goals.

Wash, rinse, repeat.

Fake Policeman, Knocking on
Doors at Night is a Bad Idea

The recent murder of Minnesota state Representative Melissa Horton and her husband Mark has dropped jaws across the country. The couple was gunned down in their home by someone masquerading as a police officer. Obviously, he was able to fool them long enough to kill them. Moments before and only five miles away he had visited the home of Minnesota state Senator John Hoffman and his wife Yvette shooting them multiple times, most likely thinking he was leaving them for dead. At this writing they are expected to survive.

Such an intrusion scares citizens because criminals copy the acts of other criminals. How do we know if a legitimate policer officer is knocking on our door whether it’s the middle of the night or the middle of the day?

Two officers should make the visit and announce themselves as police loud and clear. They should clearly state the reason for the visit before entering a home. Flashlights or outside lighting should be on to help with visibility and identification. Uniforms should be visible with badges and IDs. The knock pattern should be a firm knock or doorbell press then they should announce themselves as police again. There should be a 30 second to one min-



from
other pens

- Glenn Mollette

ute wait for a response from the resident before knocking or ringing the doorbell again. For a search warrant, the warrant should be shown before entry. Your local sheriff or city chief of police may have a different protocol and it needs to be made known.

Unfortunately, this still doesn’t keep a criminal from copying the protocol to achieve their criminal endeavor.

I believe 99 percent of Americans are good law-abiding people. However, no one wants to be caught off guard by a criminal invasion. Representative Horton would not have wanted to mistakenly shoot a real policer officer who might have been doing his job to protect her. Sadly, the man was there to kill she and her husband. He succeeded. This is why door knocking after dusk is a bad idea unless you have a pre-arranged appointment and everyone knows who everyone is and the reason for the visit.

When I was 12 years old, I was home

alone while my parents were at church. About eight o’clock it was pitch black with darkness and a man started knocking on our front door. He then went to the back door and started knocking. He then came back to the front door and continued pounding the door. I was terrified. I didn’t know who it could be. I loaded our 12-gauge shotgun and aimed it at the front door in fear he would soon be coming through.

Like a fool, I opened the door but knew the outer storm door was locked. I had the shot gun close by. The man asked if my dad was home to which I replied, “No. he’s gone to church.” The man then inquired if my father still had hogs for sale to which I replied, “Yes, but you’ll need to speak to him about that.” The man said he would come back later. To this day I don’t know who that man was but I’m glad I didn’t shoot him. It’s too bad Representative Horton or Senator Hoffman didn’t shoot the man knocking on their door in the middle of the night.

Knocking on doors at night is a bad idea.

Dr. Glenn Mollette is the author of *Unccommon Sense*. Available wherever books are sold.

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