

Italian astronaut brews, sips first fresh espresso in space

May 4 2015, by Marcia Dunn



In this photo posted on Twitter, Sunday, May 3, 2015, and provided by NASA, Italian astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti sips espresso from a cup designed for use in zero-gravity, on the International Space Station. Cristoforetti, the first Italian woman in space, fired up the first espresso machine in space, which uses small capsules, or pods, of espresso coffee. (NASA via AP)

The first Italian woman in space is now the world's first orbiting barista.

Over the weekend, astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti fired up the first espresso machine in space. She posted a photo of herself on Twitter from the International Space Station on Sunday, sipping from a cup designed for use in zero-gravity.

For the special occasion, she put on her "Star Trek" uniform top.

"Coffee: the finest organic suspension ever devised," Cristoforetti said via Twitter, quoting from the old TV series, "Star Trek: Voyager. "

"Fresh espresso in the new Zero-G cup! To boldly brew...", she added.

Cristoforetti, who returns to Earth next week following a half-year mission, almost didn't get any space espresso. The experimental, Italian-made espresso maker, dubbed ISSpresso using the International Space Station initials, was supposed to arrive in January, but didn't get to orbit until April because of a shipment backlog.

How did she like the space brew? She didn't say on Twitter, but she was all smiles for the cameras and gave a thumbs-up. It had to beat NASA's instant coffee, drunk by straw from a pouch. The espresso actually is brewed in a clear pouch, behind the closed door of the boxy coffee maker, and that's how Cristoforetti and NASA crewmate Scott Kelly first sampled it. Cristoforetti later switched to the small, pitcher-like zero-g cup, a new American-made item.

Italy's 120-year-old coffee maestro Lavazza and the Turin-based engineering firm Argotec, which teamed up on the space espresso project with the Italian Space Agency, were thrilled to see their 260-mile-high results.

"Today the International Space Station feels a little more like home," Lavazza said via Twitter.

The space espresso maker uses small capsules, or pods, of espresso coffee. Fifteen coffee capsules flew up with the machine aboard a SpaceX cargo carrier, as well as five capsules for flushing out the system. More coffee capsules are available for launch if requested by the six-person crew.

More information: Cristoforetti on Twitter:
twitter.com/astrosamantha

Italian Space Agency video: www.asi.it/

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