

# The VLOOKUP Essentials Guide

## Everything You Need to Know to Get Started with VLOOKUP

You probably do a VLOOKUP in your head every time you look at a food menu.

The **goal of the VLOOKUP function** is to return a value from a single cell in a column based on a lookup value.

To find the price of the Caffe Mocha size Grande, we look down the first column of items until we find Caffe Mocha, then look to the right to find the price, \$3.95.

This is exactly how VLOOKUP works!

### VLOOKUP Explained



1 Scan down to an find item

CLASSIC FAVORITES	TALL	GRANDE	VENTI
Caffé Latte	\$2.95	\$3.75	\$4.15
Cappuccino	\$2.95	\$3.65	\$4.15
Caramel Macchiato	\$3.75	\$3.95	\$4.25
Caffé Mocha	\$3.25	\$3.95	\$4.40
Caffé Americano	\$2.00	\$2.40	\$2.75

2 Look across to find the price Found it!

### VLOOKUP has 4 Arguments that help it Return a Cell's Value

`=VLOOKUP(lookup_value, table_array, col_index_num, [range_lookup])`

#### lookup\_value (value to find)

Value to lookup in the first column of the table\_array.

#### table\_array (range to look in)

The range to look in and return a value from. Only the **1st COLUMN** is searched for the lookup value.

#### col\_index\_num

Specify the number of columns to the RIGHT to return a value from.

#### [range\_lookup] (approx match)

FALSE: Finds Exact match  
TRUE: Finds Approximate match

A	B	C	D	E	F
1					
2	Caffe Mocha	=VLOOKUP(B2,\$B\$5:\$E\$10,3,FALSE)			
3					
4	CLASSIC FAVORITES	TALL	GRANDE	VENTI	
5	Caffe Latte	\$2.95	\$3.75	\$4.15	
6	Cappuccino	\$2.95	\$3.65	\$4.15	
7	Caramel Macchiato	\$3.75	\$3.95	\$4.25	
8	Caffe Mocha	\$3.25	\$3.95	\$4.40	
9	White Chocolate Mocha	\$3.45	\$4.15	\$4.55	
10	Caffe Americano	\$2.00	\$2.40	\$2.75	
11					

#### What is the price of a Caffe Mocha size Grande?

The VLOOKUP searches down the first column in the lookup range (B5:E10) for an EXACT match to the value in cell B2 (Caffe Mocha). It STOPS when it finds the first match and goes over 3 columns to the RIGHT to return the value in cell D8 (\$3.95).

### Important points to remember about VLOOKUP:

1. VLOOKUP searches down the first column of the table\_array and STOPS at the first match.
2. VLOOKUP always looks to the RIGHT based on the numbers of columns specified in the col\_index\_num.
3. A col\_index\_number of 1 will return a value from the first column in the table\_array.
4. The data does NOT need to be sorted for an exact match (when the last argument is FALSE).
5. The [range\_lookup] argument is optional, and defaults to TRUE for an approximate match.