

Dear coffee lovers,

our Golden Compound coffee capsules have received the "OK compost HOME" certificate of the well-known certifier TÜV Austria. The certificate proves that the capsules are home compostable according to the criteria of TÜV Austria and are allowed to carry the "OK compost HOME" label (see figure below). The certificate can be found at TÜV Austria. In the following, we would like to explain what the certificate and the label mean in practice.



Label „OK compost HOME“ of TÜV Austria

What kinds of compostability are there?

A basic distinction is made between industrial compostability in central composting facilities and home compostability in the compost at home - also for coffee capsules.

What are the differences?

Coffee capsules are industrially compostable if they are suitable for composting in an industrial composting facility. Home compostable capsules, on the other hand, must be biodegraded in the domestic compost heap. The difference is that industrial composting facilities have conditions that favor the decomposition and biodegradation of the material, such as increased temperature and optimized process control. In contrast, there are no such artificial, optimized conditions in domestic compost. Home composting is therefore only possible with products that can be composted under the natural conditions that usually prevail on the domestic compost heap. Thus, home compostable materials have to meet different requirements with regard to the certification criteria than industrially compostable materials.

TÜV Austria also distinguishes between industrial and home compostability in its compostability certificates. Click [here](#) to go to the website of TÜV Austria, where the various compostability certificates are described. The "OK compost INDUSTRIAL" label only confirms that the products and packaging carrying it are suitable for industrial composting facilities. In contrast, the "OK compost HOME" label confirms that the products and packaging carrying it have been certified for composting on the home compost and are therefore suitable for home composting.



What does the TÜV test in the "OK compost HOME" certification procedure?

There is currently neither a German nor a European standard that defines the requirements for home composting in a binding manner. So far, there is only one such standard for industrial compostability - EN 13432 or European standard for the industrial compostability of packaging. This standard sets minimum requirements for how fast a product must decompose and biodegrade under industrial conditions within a certain time. Simplified it can be said that at a temperature of 58°C the product must have been 90% biodegraded within 90 days. The fact that only 90% and not 100% biodegradation is required here is due to the measuring method and the nature of the degradation. In biodegradation, the materials are used by bacteria and fungi as a source of food and are primarily broken down into CO₂, water and biomass. The test measures CO₂ emissions, but not the increase in bacterial or fungal biomass, which is about 10%.

As part of the examination for the "OK compost HOME" certificate, TÜV Austria checks whether these minimum requirements for biodegradation and decomposition are achieved even under the conditions that usually prevail on home compost. The most important difference is the temperature. Instead of testing at 58°C as for industrial composting, home composting requires biodegradation at 28°C. Even if the temperature in home compost in Germany is lower than 28°C for several months, the test means that the characteristic of home compostability is basically given. It may take only a little longer at lower temperatures. TÜV Austria therefore checks whether the composting result that must be achieved according to the standard on industrial compostability is not only achieved in industrial composting but also in home composting. If this is the result, the certificate for home compostability is then awarded.

