

# The Irish Times - Monday, September 13, 2010

## Value for Money compares four varieties of takeaway coffee



**BENDERS**  
paper cup company



### McDonald's €2.50 for 16oz

Arguably the most successful element of McDonald's exhaustive rebranding exercise over the last several years has been the creation of its McCafés. While they may fall short of the comfortable, chilled-out coffee shops they have tried to mirror, they are a whole lot better than the Micky Dees of old with their fluorescent lights, bright yellow arches, leering Ronalds and vile coffee. The service is fast and the coffee is surprisingly good. It lacks the richness and depths of flavours you might get in a bespoke coffee shop but there are worse ways to start a morning.

**Verdict** Not exactly lovin it but . . .

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### Insomnia €2.75 for 16oz

The coffee which flows from this indigenous company's machines is a whole lot easier to find than any of the competition – with the possible exception of McDonalds – thanks to its presence in many Spar outlets across the country. It is pretty good without being outstanding. The flavours are nicely balanced, smooth with a pleasingly bitter edge. The cup we reviewed did lose points because of the coffee grounds at the bottom. And speaking of cups, ours was on the flimsy side and the lid was prone to drips.

**Verdict** Nice and local



## Butler's Chocolate Café €2.50 for 12oz

Free chocolate! You get a free chocolate with every cup – what's not to love about this? Nothing, that's what. This coffee finishes on top of the pile as much for the presentation as the taste of the coffee itself.

The cups have an odd styrofoamy texture so they'll not burn the fingers off you. The coffee is full of strong roasted, smokey flavours and it packs a hefty decent caffeine punch. And did we mention that they gave us a free chocolate? It is the most expensive option we tried, however, so maybe our choccie wasn't quite as free as we thought.

**Verdict** A damn fine cup of coffee

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## Starbucks €2.80 for 16oz

We're not going to lie, we were conflicted by this coffee and this brand. For a start, the brouhaha that surrounded the opening of Starbucks in Ireland several years back was ridiculous as were the queues that formed in the early days as people lined up to get a bit of what they hoped would be casual Seattle coolness in a cup. While the memory of that madness lingers, of more concern to us now is the coffee and the prices. We're not convinced either is in any way praiseworthy. The coffee is too bitter and we were not mad about the strong burnt undertones. And it is too expensive. We do quite like some Starbucks sofas, mind you.

**Verdict** Loves itself too much