

Sipping through the salary gap:

Starbucks coffee costs across the United States

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As everyday expenses continue to dominate **the American cost-of-living discussions**, even a routine coffee order can offer insight into broader economic patterns. While Starbucks prices are relatively consistent nationwide, differences in wages and income levels create meaningful disparities in how affordable coffee beverages really are depending on where one lives.

To explore the affordability of a cup of coffee across the United States, the team at [TradingPedia](#) analyzed the prices of three of **Starbucks' most popular drinks, the Americano, Caff  Latte, and Iced Latte, across all 50 U.S. states**. By comparing drink prices with average monthly income in state capitals, we calculated the number of minutes a person needs to work in each state to afford each coffee beverage, transforming a familiar part of daily life into a revealing measure of regional purchasing power.

Our analysis incorporates a national overview to determine how long, on average, an American has to work to afford each of the three coffee drinks. It also presents a closer look at regional trends by grouping states into four geographic regions, Northeast, Midwest, South, and West, to examine **how location continues to shape affordability**, even for something as routine as buying one's daily cup of coffee. The analysis also features rankings of the five most and least affordable state capitals for each beverage, highlighting the gaps in accessibility across the country.

Key Takeaways

- **The most expensive** Starbucks coffee drinks can be found in Honolulu, Hawaii where customers pay \$5.45 for an Americano, and \$6.25 for Caff  Latte or Iced Latte.
- **The least expensive** Starbucks coffee drinks are located in Jefferson City, Missouri, where an Americano costs \$4.25, a Caff  Latte is priced at \$4.95, and for an Iced Latte, one has to pay \$5.15.
- The citizens of Jackson, Mississippi **have to work the most for a cup of coffee** – 10 minutes for an Americano and over 12 minutes for an Iced Latte or Caff  Latte. In contrast, **Boston, Massachusetts offers the most affordable drinks**, with an Americano costing just 6 minutes and 17 seconds worth of labor, whereas Caff  Latte and Iced Latte will cost 6 minutes and 59 seconds and 7 minutes and 25 seconds, respectively.
- While the national average time to afford a Starbucks Caff  Latte is 9 minutes and 44 seconds, only 26 of 51 capitals fall below this line, revealing that for most Americans, coffee affordability remains tied more to their city's wage structure than the menu price.
- In Boston, Massachusetts, the average monthly salary can buy over 1,287 cups of Starbucks Americano, while **Santa Fe, New Mexico, ranks lowest** in coffee-purchasing power, with residents able to afford just 821 cups per month.



Price Overview and Average Affordability

Across the United States, the prices of popular Starbucks drinks show modest variation, but still reflect notable regional differences. **An Americano typically costs between \$4.25** in Jefferson City, Missouri, and Springfield, Illinois, the most affordable locations in the country, and \$5.45 in Honolulu, Hawaii, where prices are the highest. **The Caff  Latte ranges from \$4.95 in several state capitals**, including Texas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, and Illinois, to \$6.25 in Hawaii. **The cheapest Iced Latte costs just \$5.15** in Missouri and Illinois, while consumers in Hawaii and Connecticut pay the most at \$6.25. These price fluctuations, though not extreme, set the stage for a deeper analysis into coffee affordability, highlighting that it's not just the cost of the drink that matters, but also how much people earn locally to afford it.

On a national level, **the average amount of time an American worker needs to spend working to afford a Starbucks coffee remains under ten minutes** for each of the three drinks analysed. An Americano requires the least amount of time, with an average of 8 minutes and 21 seconds of work needed to cover its cost. The Caff  Latte follows, taking about 9 minutes and 24 seconds, while the Iced Latte is the most time-consuming to afford, requiring 9 minutes and 52 seconds of labor. These averages reveal that, while Starbucks prices are relatively consistent across the country, the true measure of affordability lies in how those prices relate to average earnings and hourly wages.

The most and the least expensive states to get coffee



The most expensive state capital for Starbucks coffee is Honolulu, Hawaii, where an Americano costs \$5.45, whereas both the Caff  Latte and Iced Latte are priced at \$6.25. Following closely for the Americano are the capitals of Ohio, North Carolina, Idaho, and Wisconsin, each with a price tag of \$4.95.

On the other end of the spectrum, the cheapest Americano can be found in Jefferson City and Springfield at \$4.25, followed by Little Rock, Austin, and Annapolis at \$4.45. **The most affordable Caff  Latte is priced \$4.95** in 9 state capitals, while the lowest price for an Iced Latte is \$5.15 in five state capitals.

Regional Trends of Affordability

Minutes of labor per cup of coffee



When examining regional trends across the U.S., a clear pattern emerges in coffee affordability based on geographic location. **The South ranks as the least affordable region**, with the highest average work times: 8 minutes and 40 seconds for an Americano, 10 minutes and 7 seconds for a Caff  Latte, and 10 minutes and 19 seconds for an Iced Latte. In contrast, the Northeast consistently shows the greatest affordability, requiring only 8 minutes and 14 seconds of work for an Americano, 9 minutes and 16 seconds for a Caff  Latte, and 9 minutes and 27 seconds for an Iced Latte. **The West falls second in affordability**, with working times of 8 minutes and 17 seconds, 9 minutes and 14 seconds, and 9 minutes and 44 seconds, respectively. In the Midwest, workers need to spend an average of 8 minutes and 38 seconds of labor for an Americano, 9 minutes and 47 seconds for a Caff  Latte, and 9 minutes and 58 seconds for an Iced Latte. These figures reflect a recurring trend: coffee is most affordable in the Northeast region and least affordable in the South, thus showing how regional wage differences significantly influence what a cup of Starbucks really costs.

The most and least affordable state capitals to get coffee



Top five least affordable state capitals to get coffee

The five least affordable state capitals to buy an **Americano** reveal a strong presence of Southern capitals. **At the top of the list is Jackson, Mississippi**, where it takes 10 minutes and 5 seconds of work on average to afford the drink. It is followed by Baton Rouge, Louisiana, at 9 minutes and 46 seconds, Santa Fe, Mexico, at 9 minutes and 46 seconds, and Charleston, West Virginia, at 9 minutes and 32 seconds. Last place in the top five least affordable capitals is taken by Frankfort, Kentucky, where Americano costs 9 minutes and 26 seconds of labor.

When it comes to the Caff  Latte and Iced Latte, the least affordable city is Jackson, Mississippi, where workers need to dedicate 12 minutes and 38 seconds of labor to afford a cup. This is followed by Baton Rouge, Louisiana, at 12 minutes and 14 seconds, Frankfort, Kentucky at 11 minutes and 50 seconds, Des Moines, Iowa at 11 minutes and 32 seconds, and Cheyenne, Wyoming, at 11 minutes and 8 seconds.

Top five most affordable state capitals to get coffee

The Northeastern and Midwestern regions predominate as **the most affordable states to buy an Americano** with relatively low prices and decent wages combine to offer strong value. **Boston, Massachusetts, stands out as the most affordable**, with just 6 minutes and 17 seconds of work needed to afford the drink. It's followed by Albany, New York at 6 minutes and 49 seconds, Sacramento, California at 6 minutes and 58 seconds, Olympia, Washington at 7 minutes and 22 seconds, and St. Paul, Minnesota at 7 minutes and 25 seconds.

In the case of the **Caff  Latte**, Boston again leads the list, with only 7 minutes and 25 seconds of labor required, making it the most affordable city for this drink as well. Albany, New York follows at 7 minutes and 40 seconds, then Olympia, Washington at 7 minutes and 49 seconds, Sacramento, California at 8 minutes and 8 seconds, and Annapolis, Maryland at 8 minutes and 29 seconds.

The most affordable Iced Latte is found in Olympia, Washington, at just 7 minutes and 58 seconds of work. Boston remains near the top at 8 minutes and 7 seconds, followed by Albany, New York, at 8 minutes and 27 seconds, Sacramento, California, at 8 minutes and 43 seconds, and Denver, Colorado, at 8 minutes and 49 seconds. These cities offer a clear contrast to the least affordable locations, emphasizing how regional wage differences and pricing strategies intersect to make certain areas much more budget-friendly for coffee lovers.

How many cups of coffee can the average monthly salary buy?

