

Brewing inequality:

Starbucks prices vs. wages
in European capitals

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In today's globalised world, the cost of living and wages vary significantly from country to country, reflecting the economic conditions and consumer behaviour in different regions. A cup of **Starbucks latte** might look the same across European countries but the effort needed to earn it varies significantly. In some capitals, such as Amsterdam, around ten minutes of work is enough to afford a cup of coffee. In others, however, it takes more than half an hour of labour. This reveals not only stark differences in income, but also highlights productivity and purchasing power across European capitals.

In order to better understand affordability across Europe, the team at [TradingPedia](#) decided to explore **the prices of popular coffee drinks at Starbucks across various European capitals**, comparing them with the hourly and monthly wages of workers in these cities. Our analysis examines how affordable a cup of coffee is in relation to local earnings and illustrates the wide disparities in purchasing power across the continent.

The comparison of such everyday purchases with income data offers a unique lens into the reality where **a €5 latte might be a casual indulgence in one country but a luxury in another**. Buying one cup of coffee per day might seem like a harmless expense, but surprisingly, it can add up to a significant proportion of one's monthly salary. In view of this fact, this analysis delves into **the most and least expensive cities for coffee lovers** and shows how a daily habit reflects broader income disparities, and examines the intersection of lifestyle, cost, and income in modern Europe.



Key Takeaways:

- **The most expensive Starbucks coffee beverages** can be found in **Copenhagen** where a cup of Latte costs €7.00, whereas **the least expensive one** is located in **Budapest** where consumers pay almost three times less – €2.80.
- In Amsterdam one can buy around 794 cups of Caffè Latte with their average monthly salary, whereas in Athens one can afford only around 210 cups in total.
- Employees in **Athens** must work the longest to afford any of the three Starbucks drinks studied, up to 49 minutes for a Caffè Latte or Iced Latte, **making it the least affordable city among those studied**. Buying one coffee per day in Athens will amount to an astonishing 14.3% of the average monthly salary.
- Despite relatively high prices, **Amsterdam ranks as the most affordable city in terms of time-to-earn**, with residents needing under 11 minutes of work for any drink. This balance of wages and cost makes it the top performer on our list.

Top 5 cities to get the most expensive coffee

	Capital	Americano	Caffè Latte	Iced Latte
1		€5.50	€7	€7
2		€5	€6.80	€6.80
3		€5	€6.80	€6.80
4		€4.66	€5.47	€5.53
5		€4.25	€5.45	€5.45

When it comes to ordering an **Americano** at Starbucks in Europe, some cities stand out not only for their high cost of living but also for the high pricing of a simple cup of coffee. **At the top of the list is Copenhagen**, where **a single Americano costs a striking €5.50**, making it the most expensive on the continent. Close behind are Brussels and Luxembourg, where the price is €5.00, followed by Vienna at €4.75, and London at €4.66, and Paris at €4.25. These high prices likely reflect both the cost of living in these cities and the premium branding of Starbucks in urban European markets.

The trend continues when we look at the price of a **Caffè Latte**. **Copenhagen tops the list again at €7.00**, followed by Brussels and Luxembourg at €6.80, each offering this popular milk-based coffee at a relatively higher price than the other capitals. Next in line are London and Paris, where a Caffè Latte will cost €5.47 and €5.45, respectively. The consistent appearance of these cities at the top suggests that Starbucks pricing aligns closely with local economic conditions and the fact that Starbucks locations tend to be situated in high-income, central urban areas.

As for the **Iced Caffè Latte**, the pricing follows a similar pattern to that of the Caffè Latte. **Copenhagen once more leads with a hefty €7.00**, followed by Brussels and Luxembourg at €6.80 each. Paris takes the fourth spot with €5.45, while London rounds out the top five at €5.53. While one might expect a chilled version to be cheaper, given that it typically involves less preparation, such as skipping the milk steaming step, the pricing strategy is more reflective of branding and perceived value than actual ingredient costs. In high-income cities, Starbucks maintains a uniform pricing model where cold beverages are priced on par with hot ones, regardless of their production complexity.

Top 5 cities to get the cheapest coffee

	Capital	Americano	Caffè Latte	Iced Latte
1		€3.29	€2.80	€2.80
2		€3	€3	€3
3		€3	€3.25	€3.65
4		€3.20	€3.40	€3.40
5		€3.43	€3.68	€3.68

When looking for an affordable Americano in Europe, a few cities stand out for keeping prices comfortably low. **At the top of the list are Rome and Valletta**, where an Americano costs just €3.00, followed closely by Lisbon at €3.20. In Budapest, the price is €3.29, while Sofia, rounds out the top five at €3.43. These lower prices are not necessarily a reflection of a lower cost of living or greater affordability, but rather a pricing strategy that aligns with local income levels and market expectations.

The same cities stand out when it comes to the Caffè Latte, where prices also remain refreshingly low. **Budapest leads with the cheapest latte at €2.80**, followed by Rome (€3.00), Valletta (€3.25), Lisbon (€3.40), and Sofia (€3.68). These cities tend to have vibrant local café cultures where espresso-based drinks are widely accessible and often far more affordable at independent shops-making Starbucks compete more directly on price.

As for the Iced Caffè Latte, the top five most affordable cities mirror the rankings for the hot version and prices are almost exactly the same. Again, Budapest offers the cheapest iced latte at €2.80, followed by Rome at €3.00, Lisbon at €3.40, Valletta at €3.65, and Sofia at €3.68. Interestingly, **In Valletta, the cold drink (€3.65) is slightly more expensive than the hot one (€3.25)**, unlike in the other capitals, where prices are identical. This might be due to local consumer preferences and seasonal demand. The identical pricing of iced and hot lattes in most cities highlights a consistent pricing approach by Starbucks, despite potential differences in preparation time or ingredients. In these markets, the uniform pricing likely reflects efforts to balance between global brand consistency and local purchasing power, ensuring accessibility without straying from **Starbucks' international pricing structure**.

Measuring the true cost of coffee in working minutes

When it comes to treating yourself to an **Americano**, workers in some cities are spending more of their time than others. **At the top of the list for the longest work time is Athens**, where it takes over 39 minutes and 22 seconds to afford just one cup. Close behind are Sofia at 34 minutes and 42 seconds, and Bucharest at 33 minutes and 55 seconds, followed by Prague at 28 minutes and 54 seconds. These figures underscore how a seemingly affordable coffee can feel like a luxury when measured against local average incomes.

The trend continues with the beloved **Caffè Latte**, where **Athens leads once again**, requiring nearly 50 minutes of work for a single cup. Bucharest isn't far behind at 37 minutes and 41 seconds, with Sofia just 27 seconds less. The Iced Latte follows the exact same pattern.

	Capital	Americano	Caffè Latte	Iced Latte
1		39 min 22 sec	49 min 22 sec	49 min 22 sec
2		34 min 42 sec	37 min 13 sec	37 min 14 sec
3		33 min 55 sec	37 min 41 sec	37 min 41 sec
4		28 min 54 sec	28 min 54 sec	28 min 54 sec
5		27 min 18 sec	23 min 14 sec	23 min 14 sec

On the flip side, **Amsterdam offers the most time-efficient coffee break**, where just around 9 minutes of work earns you an Americano. Madrid comes in next at 10 minutes and 28 seconds, followed by Cardiff at just 15 seconds more, Stockholm at exactly 11 minutes, and Belfast at around 12 minutes. In these cities, coffee becomes far more accessible when measured in minutes rather than money.

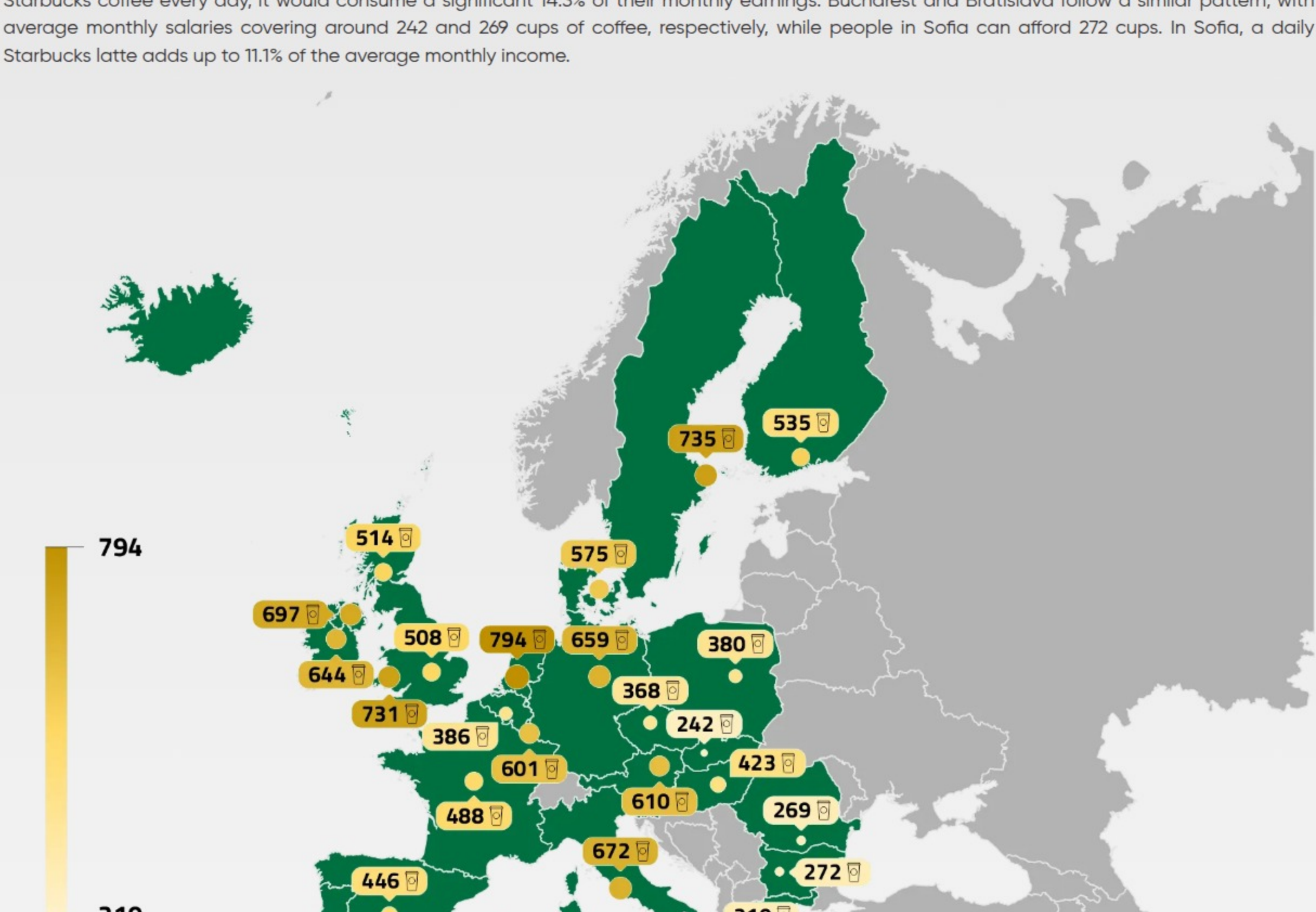
For both the Caffè Latte and Iced Latte, **the required work time is identical in each city**: 10 minutes and 31 seconds in Amsterdam, 11 minutes and 49 seconds in Madrid, and 12 minutes and 59 seconds in Cardiff.

	Capital	Americano	Caffè Latte	Iced Latte
1		8 min 57 sec	10 min 31 sec	10 min 31 sec
2		10 min 28 sec	11 min 49 sec	11 min 49 sec
3		10 min 43 sec	12 min 59 sec	12 min 59 sec
4		11 min 0 sec	12 min 37 sec	12 min 37 sec
5		11 min 58 sec	13 min 37 sec	13 min 37 sec

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

In Amsterdam, the average monthly salary can buy around 794 cups of latte, and if one purchases a cup per day, it amounts to just 3.78% of their monthly income. A similar situation is seen in Cardiff, where the average salary can buy 731 cups of latte, and in Belfast, where one can afford 697 cups of the beloved hot drink.

In striking contrast, **the citizens of Athens can afford only around 210 cups of latte with their average monthly salary**. If they choose to buy a Starbucks coffee every day, it would consume a significant 14.3% of their monthly earnings. Bucharest and Bratislava follow a similar pattern, with average monthly salaries covering around 242 and 269 cups of coffee, respectively, while people in Sofia can afford 272 cups. In Sofia, a daily Starbucks latte adds up to 11.1% of the average monthly income.



Final thoughts

The most expensive cities in terms of absolute coffee price aren't always the least affordable when wages are taken into account. **Cities like Copenhagen and Amsterdam** may top the charts for the cost of a Starbucks drink, but their high average incomes mean that locals still spend relatively little time working to afford one. As a result, these cities remain among the most affordable when measured by minutes of labour required to buy a cup.

On the other hand, **cities like Budapest, Rome, and Lisbon showcase a different dynamic**. While the Starbucks prices there are lower in absolute terms, the average income is also considerably lower, meaning a cup of coffee may still represent a notable slice of a worker's time or salary. At the same time, these cities are home to strong, deeply rooted coffee cultures, where independent cafés offer quality espresso at a fraction of the price. In response, **Starbucks appears to adopt a more competitive pricing strategy in these markets**, tailoring its prices to align with both local expectations and the reality of what consumers are willing to pay.

Methodology

To compile this report, we set out to compare the price of three popular coffee drinks, Americano, Caffè Latte, and Iced Caffè Latte, across European capitals, and to assess their affordability based on local wages. Our goal was to create a "coffee index" that reflects how long an average worker in each country would need to work in order to afford a single cup.

We began by listing all countries from the European Union and the United Kingdom, together with their capitals, excluding those where Starbucks is not present. For consistency, we focused only on Starbucks menu prices, which were collected using local delivery platforms such as Takeaway, UberEats, and Volt. We then identified the five most and least expensive cities for each drink.

To calculate affordability, we gathered the latest data on average monthly or weekly net salaries and standard working hours per week from government sources, as well as Eurostat and Wikipedia. Using this data, we derived average hourly wages and calculated the number of minutes a person would need to work to afford each type of coffee in their capital city. The results were then ranked to reveal the cities where coffee is most and least accessible relative to income.

Data Source: Takaway, Uber Eats, Wolt, Wikipedia, Eurostat

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