

Coffee Vending Machine or Coffee Shop

I was in town for an afternoon, and traipsing around looking to get a good cup of coffee for my troubles. It was a day off, and my quest for a new pair of jeans was failing badly. I didn't want anything with any logos, frilly bits or 'worn looks' – I just wanted a pair of basic yet quality standard jeans. After feeling like a balloon in extra baggy, or uncomfortably squeezed in a pair of super skinny, I'd had enough of 'fashion' and decided to buy something I knew I could rely on – a good cup of coffee.

That too proved slightly or largely impractical. The usual place I went to had closed for 'refurbishment' despite the fact I always thought it was all right and pretty laid back and well – suppose people need something to do.

There was a trendy coffee vending place with an Italian (or Spanish, or Mexican, or Paraguan?) title; now this is fantastic right – I walk in, a massive queue and I'm not kidding you: per woman or man one pram or pushchair, then per pram or pushchair, one or two screaming babies, per scream about 110 decibels of ear splitting aural terror. I walk straight and immediately and totally out.

Phew. Head for the under cover market. Walk past a flash looking [vending machine](#) claiming to sell 'real freshly ground coffee.' Don't quite believe that, so walk on by. Another coffee shop place. Go in, look around, no newspapers, no magazines. Coffee shop guy looks at me, I'm looking back, ahem, right, no eye contact, go out, no way am I paying £2.50 for a coffee then getting nothing to read.

Only three shops down the undercover market there's another coffee shop, but there's something intuitive in me that says don't trust it. I go in anyway, order, grab a newspaper off the rack and sit down in anticipation of a nicely ground fresh coffee. It arrives and well damn your eyes it's instant! I'm fuming. This is an insult beyond my own sense of bewilderment and anger. Rather than lose my temper and storm out, I quietly pay the tab and leave immediately, leaving the staff, if they're bothered or have noticed, that I'm definitely not happy but in a cool, and possibly subversive way.

I walk back along the cobbles and bustle of the market way, and it's that coffee vending machine again. Looks modern, efficient – looks like the guys that made knew coffee vending machines had a lot to live up to. I put the coins in and it makes some convincing coffee making type noises.

Rather than the old, ker-plonk action of delivering a cup, a more subtle cantilever motion gracefully presents the coffee cup from the side, into which is poured first the coffee, then steaming milk. It tastes great. This coffee vending machine does do freshly ground coffee. This coffee vending machine is clever, it works and I nearly attempt to give it a tip.

About the Author

Rich Penrose finds the choice between buying a cheap coffee from [vending machines](#) or buying from an expensive coffee shop to be a tricky decision but the [vending machine](#) usually wins on price, and surprisingly sometimes even on taste!

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