

Instant wins

How we test

Our researchers served 896 cups of coffee to find three Which? Best Buys

In August 2009, eight instant coffees were put through a rigorous testing process, using a panel of 224 members of the public.

Each coffee was tasted by more than 100 people. The products were blind-tested so tasters wouldn't be influenced by the brand or packaging.

Our researchers prepared the coffees according to on-pack instructions and the

tasters were free to add milk and sugar.

We asked the tasters to rate each instant coffee for taste, aroma and appearance.

The coffees we tested were: Aldi Alcafe Rich Roast, Asda Rich Roast, Lidl Granarom, Morrisons Full Roast, Nescafé Original, Sainsbury's Full Roast, Tesco Classic Rich Roast and Essential Waitrose Rich Roast Coffee.



Lower-priced instant coffees from Aldi and Sainsbury's give Nescafé a run for its money

Some supermarket coffees taste as good as the leading brand, despite being half the price, according to our test that pitted Nescafé Original against own-label rivals.

We asked 224 consumers to rate Nescafé Original and own-label instant coffees from seven supermarkets: Aldi, Asda, Lidl, Morrisons, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.

All the coffees scored three stars for taste – bar those from Asda and Morrisons, which were less popular with tasters – but there are differences that set three coffees apart as Best Buys.

The Best Buys are Alcafe Rich Roast from Aldi (best supermarket in the 2009 Which? Awards), Sainsbury's Full

Roast and Nescafé Original – but price separates them.

While you'll pay around £4.45 for a 200g jar of Nescafé Original, the Sainsbury's and Aldi coffees are less than half the price, at £1.57 and £1.49 respectively.

If you and your partner each drink two cups of coffee a day, you could save £54 a year by switching from Nescafé Original to Aldi's Alcafe Rich Roast – or £50 a year by choosing Sainsbury's Full Roast.

These savings should be good news for most of you. When we surveyed 2,409 Which? members in July 2009, nine out of ten said that they drink coffee – and most do on a daily basis.



We surveyed 2,409 Which? members about their coffee-drinking habits

Best Buy coffees



Best Buy Aldi coffee could save you £54 a year if you switch from Nescafé

Nescafé Original 65% £4.45

Taste ★★★★★
Aroma ★★★★★
Appearance ★★★★★

Our top-scoring coffee got good marks for taste and aroma, and scored particularly highly for appearance, making it a great all-rounder for a quick coffee with friends. Our testers particularly liked the 'smooth, mellow taste' and they praised its 'lovely aroma' and lack of bitter aftertaste.



Sainsbury's Full Roast 60% £1.57

Taste ★★★★★
Aroma ★★★★★
Appearance ★★★★★

Sainsbury's was the best-performing of the big-name supermarkets in our test. Its instant coffee got three stars for taste, aroma and appearance, with tasters complimenting its 'appetising' stronger taste. One tester said that the coffee's 'very pleasant flavour' made it 'nice to drink any time of day.'



Aldi Alcafe Rich Roast 60% £1.49

Taste ★★★★★
Aroma ★★★★★
Appearance ★★★★★

Described as 'smooth' and 'immediately enjoyable', Aldi's Alcafe Rich Roast proves that great-tasting coffee doesn't have to come at a premium. This instant scored consistently well across each of our categories, and its all-round appeal was captured by one tester, who said: 'It looks and smells wonderful.'

OTHERS ON TEST

Lidl Granarom
59% £1.49



Taste ★★★★★
Aroma ★★★★★
Appearance ★★★★★

The 'smooth' and 'pleasant' flavour of Lidl's instant coffee was praised by our panel of testers.

Tesco Classic Rich Roast
59% £1.57



Taste ★★★★★
Aroma ★★★★★
Appearance ★★★★★

Testers liked the Tesco coffee's 'nice blend of aroma and taste' and found it 'a refreshing drink' overall.

Essential Waitrose Rich Roast 58% £1.48^a



Taste ★★★★★
Aroma ★★★★★
Appearance ★★★★★

Although testers were generally positive, some felt this coffee's 'nutty' and 'strange' flavour was unusual.

Morrisons Full Roast
54% £1.57



Taste ★★★★★
Aroma ★★★★★
Appearance ★★★★★

With lower star ratings across the board, some tasters felt this coffee was 'weak' and left a 'bitter aftertaste.'

Asda Rich Roast
52% £1.57



Taste ★★★★★
Aroma ★★★★★
Appearance ★★★★★

This had a strength that underwhelmed our tasters, ranging from 'too weak' to 'hardly any flavour.'