

CAMPUS

Coffee: Making a nice brew for sanity

Marcel Pellerin
Reporter

Is every activity you do fuelled with a cup of Joe? Need that one cup in the morning to jump start your personality? If so then you may be addicted to coffee, or caffeine. Contact your doctor today, or if you use the clinics, don't bother they're too much of a hassle.

An alarming amount of students are seen running back and forth from class carrying various cups; everything from the old faithful like Tim's to the Starbucks. What people have in these cups I assume is coffee, but then again I only drink the stuff when liquor is involved so who knows how normal people do it.

When asked, Joel Gallant had plenty to say about his "compulsion" for drinking coffee.

"I'll probably drink two of the large or "Supremo" sizes daily, depending on my classes that I have. I used to brew coffee all the time, my first year when I was living in Brown's Court I'd drink a pot a day pretty easily, but now I've switched to only buying it. I blame the Starbucks - I understand why they're on every corner in some places...It's just so good. When I'm only left with debit

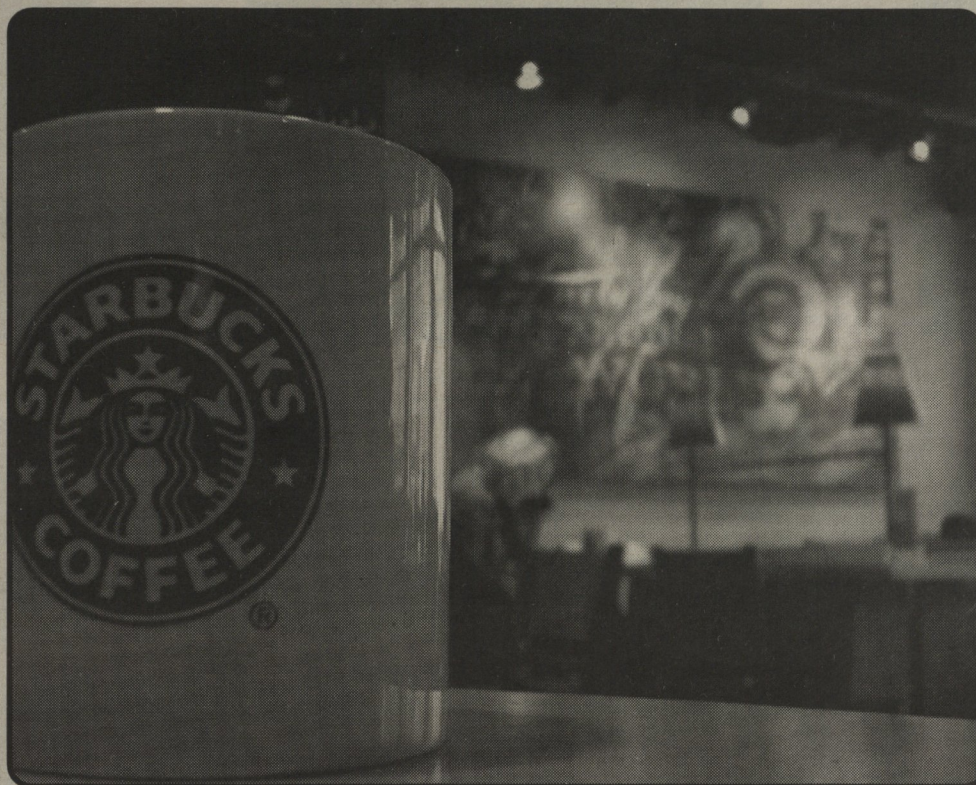


Photo: Google Image Search

*How much Starbucks coffee do *you* drink?*

though, I will purchase the terrible Ritazza deals. Well... it's not terrible - but it's not nearly so sweet. The only beef I have with the Starbucks cups is the whistle produced by their lids. The little air-escaping-while-you're-drinking hole is very small and must

be enlarged if you want to drink in silence. One of the ladies at Starbucks knows me now, not by name, but it sure makes me feel like an addict.

I don't use those Starbucks terms, because they make no sense. A small is a "tall"?! No, no. It's just elitist insanity."

And Sheryl Mahar a second year science student took the time to talk. "Coffee?" she joked. "Yeah, I used to be addicted to it. But then I just started taking caffeine pills because the coffee wasn't strong enough. Eventually, things got so bad that I just crushed the pills and snorted them. Then the lines went from caffeine to cocaine. This is off the record, right?"

In defence of Coffee: it can relieve a headache, which is good news for all of us boozers, and coffee has been thought to reduce the risk of cancer, Parkinson's disease and type II diabetes, but those are still in research stage.

The downside of drinking coffee: it keeps you awake at night, and you have withdrawal from caffeine. Coffee can give you the jitters, make you urinate a lot and may cause your heart to beat rapidly or irregularly.

If you're a jitter bug like Sheryl who drinks a tonne of coffee, that's the first sign on the downside so drink more and hope you're fighting off cancer.

Fair Trade Fare

Jaime Constable
Reporter

Many of us love bananas, but how can we be sure we're not chowing down thanks to the forced labour of a 7-year-old child? The only way to be truly certain is to buy fair trade products.

Fair Trade farming practices are carefully monitored by the Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International, (FLO) and by groups of farmers like the ones in St. Vincent who work together to meet the demands of upwards of 1,000 tons of bananas per week.

Reg Phalen is a UPEI Alumni who is part of the Sea Spray cooperative of Atlantic organic farmers. Phalen took over the family farm and started growing organic grain crops, vegetables and blueberries in

the mid 1970's, and he spent some time last winter in St. Vincent, helping the farmers switch to organic practices.

"The Fair Trade standardization ensures that a country's specific pricing system gives producers a fair return for their products, that farm labourers are paid fair wages and that there is no child labour involved," said Phalen. Many Fair Trade farms are also going Organic, which will virtually eliminate the exposure of workers, and of produce, to toxic chemicals such as insecticides and herbicides.

Currently the big fair trade crop in the Caribbean is bananas. "90% goes to Europe, and that's been increasing since the last five years," said Phalen. "Consumers in England are more

willing to pay a better price, because they are more assured of positive social conditions." One to two per cent of the return on Fair Trade products gets invested back into social institutions such as schools, and that totalled \$1 million last year in St. Vincent alone.

In Canada, the primary market for Fair Trade products is in coffee, and sugar, but not many fruits. "Fair Trade hasn't been pushed enough here," said Phalen. "It will take a bit more education and promotional work here for that to happen."

Canadian stores continue to import bananas from companies such as Dole and Chiquita, who both have shady pasts. Chiquita has faced allegations of bribery and tax schemes,

and Dole, accusations of failing to respect basic workers rights.

Even the organic industry is being exploited, as corporate giants like Wal-Mart and Monsanto are getting in on a piece of the organic pie. Many big businesses are finding loopholes in the certification legislation and taking advantage of these so they can cut production costs and cash in big by using the organic label. For example, in some countries, there is no specification against child labour in the organic certification.

The Fair Trade market provides a tidy solution for those wanting to import exotic fruits and other foreign goods while maintaining healthy moral boundaries. The Europeans have already made it work, now all Canadians need to do is present the demand for these products, becoming supporters for fair prices, fair wages and fair treatment for farms and farmers not only in this country, but worldwide.