



## A pricey cut

We look at the prices consumers have to pay in order to keep their hair in peak condition in salons and barbers around the country.

### AT A GLANCE

Our findings.

Cheaper cuts.

Problem cuts.

In 2007, the CAI carried out a price survey to see what consumers were spending on a trip to the hairdresser or the barber. At that time, Dublin was found to be the most expensive place to get a haircut. In spring 2010, the CAI carried out a similar price survey to see what had changed. In April and May we visited, called or checked online the prices of a random selection of hair salons in Dublin and in other cities and towns around the country. We also checked the prices in a random selection

of barber shops around the country.

### Our findings

Dublin remains an expensive place to visit a hair salon, particularly if you are having highlights done along with a wash, cut and blow-dry. Toni & Guy on Dame Street in Dublin charges up to €210 for a half head of highlights, wash, cut and blow-dry. There are, however, bargains to be found in Dublin. 'Just Cuts' on Bachelor's Walk charges from just €15 for a wash and cut for a woman

and a full head of highlights starts at only €60.

Most hair salons offer the option of having your hair washed and blow-dried without a cut. This is generally not a cheap service to avail of and can cost up to €35 for customers with long hair.

However, wash and blow-dries for under €20 were found in Galway, Carrigaline, Gorey and Sligo. There were very few instances where we found that women were offered the option of a dry cut. Most salons we asked said a dry cut

is only available for a fringe trim. They say that they can't cut the hair very well if it is not washed beforehand and that their staff are only trained to cut wet hair. We think that this is often just a method of getting customers to pay the full price and that customers should be given a choice.

### Setting prices

The price of a wash and blow-dry is often determined by the length of the customer's hair, which may be classified as short (s), medium (m) or long (l) on a price list. Some hair salons also determine prices on the basis of the stylist's qualification; the services of more qualified stylists will cost you more. We would advise consumers to ask for a lower level stylist if they don't want a hefty bill.

### Hair chain prices

There are Peter Mark hair salons in towns and cities all over the country. Some cities, like Dublin, have more than one branch and the prices vary (sometimes widely) between each salon. The company attributes the price differentiation to the varied rents, rates and staffing overheads of each salon. It should be noted that there is an ongoing 20% discount in all Peter Mark salons around the country. Toni & Guy also has several branches in locations in Dublin and in some other cities and large towns, and again, we noticed a similar

trend whereby customers are charged different rates depending on which branch they visit.

### Cheaper cuts

If you are fed up of being charged steep prices for haircuts, check if there are any mobile hairdressers operating in your area (see [gumtree.ie](http://gumtree.ie) for ads). These hairdressers will see regular clients either in their own home or in the client's home. They generally charge less than salon prices and most will do dry cuts. Many Polish and Asian hair salons have also opened up over the past few years and these may be worth checking out. They are trying hard to compete with other salons and many advertise low prices for their services; for instance, 'Max' Polish hair salon on Dublin's Liffey Street Lower offers dry cuts for women for €15 and a wash and blow-dry for €15.

If all else fails, check online. Websites such as [boards.ie](http://boards.ie), [trovo.ie](http://trovo.ie), [beaut.ie](http://beaut.ie), [whoseview.ie](http://whoseview.ie) and [ratemyarea.com](http://ratemyarea.com) have discussions and recommendations on different hairdressing salons and barber shops located in areas all around the country.

### Barber shops

The cost for men to cut their hair is significantly lower than for women, especially if they visit a barber shop rather than a unisex hair salon. There are plenty of hair salons which cater for

extra styling for men but be ready to pay for it! The prices vary widely and usually depend on the type of hairdresser visited and the type of treatment received. The offers range from the simple blade cut to a consultation, wash, cut and blow-dry and there may even be a head massage thrown in.

Our price survey has revealed vast differences in the prices of men's hairdressing in unisex salons compared to barber shops. The dearest men's haircut we saw was in Toni & Guy in Dublin for €63. The cheapest cut for a man in a unisex hair salon was Lynda Maher's Hair Studio in Carlow where it costs from €10. The cheapest dry cut for a man was found in Dillon Hair Studio on Dublin's Wellington Quay for just €4.99. Cuts are available for €7 in Just Cuts Barbers in Rathmines in Dublin 6 and men are also charged only €7 for a dry cut in Ali's Barbershop in Limerick. The cheapest men's wash and cut was also in Ali's in Limerick at a price of just €10. The dearest barbershop cuts we saw cost €20-€26 in Knights in the Stephen's Green Shopping Centre in Dublin 2 and The Grooming Rooms on South William Street, Dublin 2 charges €35 for a wash and cut and €25 for a dry cut.

Alternatively, for men who have had enough of forking out for a 'professional' cut in a barber shop every few weeks, there are products available that enable you to do the job yourself at home. Hair trimmers and clippers are available in

HAIR SALONS COMPARED					
salon (prices €)	ladies wash, cut & blow-dry	wash & blow-dry	highlights (half head) & blow-dry	highlights (half head) & wash/cut/blow-dry	men's cut and blow-dry
Redcats, Galway SC	45	22-28	70	105	20
Zenith, Galway	35-50	19-26	70+	85+	17.50-20
Toni & Guy, Galway	49-70	27-31	87-106	136+	40-53
Hermans, Dundrum, D14	49.50-59.50	26-29	110-122	130-42	20-26
Peter Mark, Henry St, D1 <sup>1</sup>	49	27-31	95.50-114.50	117.50-132.50	32.50
Peter Mark, Stephen's Green SC, D2 <sup>1</sup>	58-78	30-34	105.50-124.50	133.50-148.50	42
Toni & Guy, Dame St, D2	62-85	31	130-150	190-210	46-63
Carrigaline Hair Studio, Cork	35+	18+	70+	80+	12+
Toni & Guy, Cork	50-70	29	105+	155+	41-52
Peter Mark, William St, Limerick <sup>1</sup>	45.50-48.50	26.50-30.50	95.50-114.50	114.50-129.50	31
Marbles, Cruises St, Limerick	55-80	28-35	95-100	125-130	35-40
Hair Stop, Gorey, Co. Wexford	40	19-22	72.50-85	95-105	15
Salon 2, Sligo	40-50	19-24	75-80	90-95	15-25
Lynda Maher Hair Studio, Carlow	35+	20	75+	85-90	10+
Zeba, Maynooth	47-60	28-35	95	145	30-35

Note: <sup>1</sup> 20% off

BARBERS COMPARED		
barber (prices €)	dry cut	wash and cut
Knights, Stephen's Green Shopping Centre, D2	20-26	26
Just Cuts Barbers, Rathmines, D6	7	12
The Grooming Rooms, Dublin	25	35
Sam's Barbers, D1	n/a	25
Dillon Hair Studio, Wellington Quay	4.99 – 7	on request
Sweeney Todds, Co. Dublin	10	15
Retro Barbers, Limerick	17	19
Ali's Barber, Limerick	7	10
The Baldy Barber Shop, Cork	11-13	17.50
Bladez Barber Shop, Cork	15	15
Dave's Barber Shop, Shandon Street, Cork	8	n/a
Alfie's Barber Shop, Sligo	12	15
Kozzy's Barber Shop, Galway	15	18
Fat Tony's Barber Shop, Galway	15	20
Marble City barbers, Kilkenny	14	16

Boots and Argos and online from websites such as [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com). There are even short videos on YouTube that show you how to cut your own hair! It may take a bit of getting used to and you may have to ask a family member or a friend to finish any stray bits of hair at the back but when you add up what you could save, it may well be worth the investment.

### Student cuts

There are many hair salons which offer students discounts of up to 20% on haircuts but these are often only available at off-peak times such as weekdays or mornings. These student discounts should not be confused with student cuts, sometimes advertised as 'model classes', which are open to anybody who is willing to let a trainee hairdresser cut and/or colour their hair. If you take part in one of these classes, you are likely to pay only a fraction of

what you would normally pay for a haircut and sometimes they are free. The classes normally take place at off-peak times such as before 5pm and on weekdays only. And don't expect to be out within an hour or two; you could be there for up to six hours if you are having a colour done.

There are usually signs in the windows of hairdressers running these classes. The House of Colour has branches in Dublin 1 and Dublin 2 ([www.houseofcolour.ie](http://www.houseofcolour.ie)) and its website advertises as follows: 'Free haircuts; our training centre is always on the lookout for hair models. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 10.00am - 4.00pm every week and your cut and blow-dry is free of charge.'

The Peter Mark Academy and Training Centres also run classes from Monday to Thursday, 09:00 - 17:00 (see [www.petermark.ie](http://www.petermark.ie)) and Toni & Guy also has a training academy in Dublin (see [www.toniandguy.ie](http://www.toniandguy.ie)). Other academies in

Dublin include the Robert Chambers Academy on Grafton Street, the L'Oreal Academy in Dublin 2 and the David Marshall Academy on George's Street. The Bellissimo Academies in Limerick and Galway are also worth a try (see [www.bellissimo.ie](http://www.bellissimo.ie)).

Simply call whichever salon is nearest to you and ask what classes they have available and how much it costs. You may have to wait a few weeks or even a month to get an appointment. A supervisor will finish the cut and should also come over and check the cut while the student is working. If you are unhappy, don't be afraid to complain and ask for the cut or colour to be fixed if necessary.

### Problem cuts

It is very important to know exactly what you want done before you visit a hair salon, particularly if you are having your hair cut or coloured by someone new. Try to communicate what you want as clearly as possible to avoid any confusion. You could bring along a picture from a magazine and ask the stylist if the look would suit your features. You should also ask the stylist for tips on how to style your hair yourself and for any tips on how to maintain your look.

If things don't turn out as you had hoped and you feel you got a bad haircut, you are within your rights to ask the salon to fix this. If you have a picture to show what you asked for and this is clearly a discrepancy between the picture and what you got, it will make this easier. If your hair has been cut too short and the style can't be changed, ask for a refund or a credit note for your next appointment. It is important to make your complaint before you leave the salon. Speak directly to the stylist first of all to give them the chance to rectify the problem. If this doesn't work to your satisfaction, then speak to a manager or write a letter of complaint to the owner.

The Charges (Hairdressing) Display Order, 1976 requires hairdressers to display their prices at the entrance. The sign should be legible, with lettering of at least six millimetres in height and of proportionate width, and up-to-date. If the price charged is different to that displayed, there may be a breach of the legislation. If no price list is displayed, this too may be an offence. The National Consumer Agency is responsible for enforcing this legislation.

## choice comment

Haircuts can be expensive - there is no doubt about that. It is important to be aware of the price gaps that exist in the industry and to note that there are cheaper alternatives available if you shop around. We feel that hairdressing salons should break down their services by price and let their customers choose exactly what they do and do not want. If you have shorter hair you won't necessarily want a blow-dry after your hair-cut, or if you are in a hurry or have already washed your hair, you should have the option of having a dry cut without the extras. Likewise, people getting their highlights done should be able to eliminate the blow-dry element afterwards if they so choose, as this would make an expensive service slightly more affordable for them. If you have short hair, always ask for a discount; nothing ventured, nothing gained. And students and OAPs should also request lower rates whether they are advertised or not.