



## Living Frugally: Food & Drink

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Food And Drink, Health And Beauty, LV Daily, Living Frugally, Alexa's Top 5, Weight Loss

### The Cost Of French Fries And Other Junk Food, For Wallet And Waistline

Wednesday, August 11, 2010 Posted By: [Libby Kane](#)



The average American consumes 53 gallons of soda every year, which is about two bathtubs full...and nearly 30 pounds of French fries. In total, we eat almost 2,000 pounds of food, too (as seen by this [awesome infographic](#) from Visual Economics). What the infographic doesn't tell us is exactly how many servings of French fries we have to eat to consume the 29 pounds that's the national average. So, we worked it out: 113 servings. That's fries twice a week, every week—for a whole year.

Treat	Cost Per Serving	Cost Per Pound	Pound Per Year	Total Cost Per Year
French Fries	\$1.50	\$6	29	\$168
Pizza	\$2	\$5	23	\$122
Ice Cream	\$2.50	\$20	24	\$480
Soda	\$1.25	\$1.50	53	\$85
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$855</b>

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### More in Food And Drink

The Perfect Summer Wine (For Under \$15 A Bottle)  
*Wednesday, August 25, 2010*

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Make A \$15 Bottle Taste Like It Costs \$30: Invest In Wine Glasses

### Overindulging Leads To Overspending.

Turns out that our sweet tooth is putting an \$855 hole in our pocket every year, and that doesn't even include chocolate, or pastries, or liquor! Nor does it include a gym membership to work off the extra calories, dentist visits to pry the sugar out of our teeth, or doctor appointments to keep us running smoothly. That's easily an extra thousand dollars per year, just to offset the effects of our eating habits.

### Saving Doesn't Mean Eliminating.

Even cutting back a little can make a big difference for our finances *and* our long-term health. Here's what we calculated:

Treats Per Year	Cost Of Avg. Servings	If You Ate Half That, You'd Save...	Savings In Calories
French Fries (avg servings: 113)	\$168	\$84	13,051
Pizza (avg servings: 61)	\$122	\$61	4,575
Ice Cream (avg servings: 192)	\$480	\$240	17,952
Soda (avg servings: 70)	\$85	\$42	3,150
<b>Total Savings</b>		<b>\$428</b>	

### Little Changes, Big Savings.

Now, we're not saying that everyone eats like the average American (we probably eat way more cheese than the norm!), but this junk food profile does point to areas of our own lives we can seek to improve. 'Cause hey, we shouldn't be stopping by Cold Stone on the way home, anyway.

What's your go-to (healthier) snack when you're craving junk food? Share with the community in the comments below!

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Wednesday, August 18, 2010

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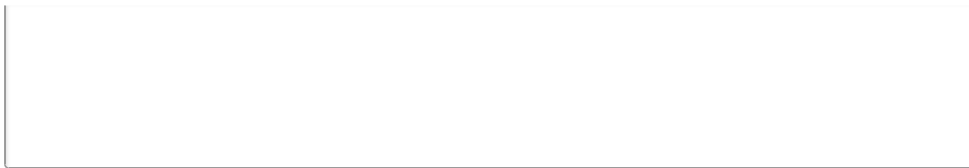
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Rebecca 2 weeks ago

I love apple slices with Nutella or those chocolate covered frozen bananas from Trader Joes :-D !

1 person liked this. [Like](#) [Reply](#)



Alexa 2 weeks ago

I likely drink a diet coke 5-10 times a week for \$1-2 dollars each...really, \$15-20 a week on diet coke? YUCK. I have been filling in with crystal light....Thanks LearnVest!

1 person liked this. [Like](#) [Reply](#)



MidwestMom 1 week ago

Popcorn or pretzels!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Guest 1 week ago

Cashews. And watermelon.  
Excellent article!!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Jojit 1 week ago

Nice infographic, that's a big saving for a year. You can buy vegetables, fruits and supplements with that amount so why fall with those kind of foods, it's unhealthy and adds fat to your tummy. I've started reading blogs from PureandHealthy and saw this topic <http://www.pureandhealthy.com/blog/2010/07/a-gu...> what they have are informative articles.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



CI 2 weeks ago

I prefer my french fries home-made, with real potatoes and the oil of my choice (I like corn or sunflower oil). It's still junk food I guess, but somehow seems healthier, and it's definitely cheaper!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



AB 2 weeks ago


I grab some raisins and a glass of milk. It's amazing how satisfying they are together, and the raisins definitely ease my sweet cravings.

Like Reply

 Okiah 2 weeks ago

I usually have sauteed veggies when I want something really yummy.

Like Reply

 megan 2 weeks ago


ranch rice cakes. nom nom nom.

Like Reply

 Guest 2 weeks ago


Bananas with fat free whipped cream and chocolate sauce -- yum!

Like Reply

 Erika 2 weeks ago

I like to keep Hershey kisses around in a bowl. That way when I'm craving something sweet, I just pop one in my mouth. Even though it is really hard to just eat one!

Like Reply

 Crbrownie 2 weeks ago


Original Doritos and Virgil's Root Beer (or Virgil's Cream or Orange) soda

Like Reply

 tay 2 weeks ago

Popcorn! Or kids' cereal (like Reese's Puffs) when I'm craving something sweet or chocolatey


Like Reply

 Guest 2 weeks ago

It's disgusting to think about junk food consumption on a large scale, but your analysis here is seriously flawed. You assume that all of these are consumed as "treats," or in addition to a meal. In reality many of the cheapest (and definitely most convenient) food options are the least healthy. Eating fast food is actually a money saving measure as compared to the preparation and frequent (and potentially longer-distance) trips to grocery stores for healthier fare.

Nice link to the infographic, but your post is a disappointing oversimplification.

Like Reply

 Crbrownie 2 weeks ago in reply to Guest

You either pay now for healthy foods or you pay the drug companies to treat the diseases you get by your poor diet. Simply put or not, these foods are a waste financially and for your health.

Like Reply



YUMicecream 2 weeks ago in reply to Crbrownie

Nice point, Crbrownie... I can't even imagine how you could put numbers to the unhealthiness caused by such large-scale consumption of foods that should be treats.

And Guest: It's a sad truth that restricted financial resources lead people to fast food and the ensuing health problems. I doubt LV is trying to belittle people who eat fries by necessity.

1 person liked this. Like Reply



Allison Kade 2 weeks ago in reply to YUMicecream

Hi Guest, and Crbrownie, and YUMicecream,

Absolutely. I totally understand what all of you are saying--as far as what we're trying to say here, we're not trying to say that someone who can only afford a McDonald's dinner should be expected to go to Whole Foods instead. That said, obesity is a real and true problem in America, and it takes a toll both physically and financially. I agree entirely with Crbrownie in that there IS a cost to eating French fries beyond the initial dollars saved. We're not trying to say that people who can only afford fast food should somehow come up with extra money, but I do think it would be fair to say that, even on a tight budget, it is simply not a viable option to eat fries every day.

Also, please keep in mind that we're not telling people to cut consumption of these foods entirely, either. We're simply showing the health and monetary benefit of scaling back.

Hope this helps clarify,

Allison Kade  
Editor at LearnVest

1 person liked this. Like Reply



Guest 2 weeks ago in reply to YUMicecream

No, I don't think LV is trying to belittle people who eat fries by necessity, but I have several problems with this post.

The author also directly equates lower calories with health (see chart of "savings in calories" below description of benefit for long term health). Yes, there is large proportion of Westerners who consume too many calories, but there are also a significant number of people, with or without eating disorders, for whom this correlation is a complete fallacy.

No, your typical fast food meal will not be the healthiest option for a number of reasons, but total calories is hardly an accurate measure. Also remember that many people consume \*more\* calories eating at a "healthy" place (Subway) than an "unhealthy" one (McDonald's).

Let's not further the damaging assumption that all people (or women, LV's target demo) need to eat less calories to be healthy.

Like Reply



Allison Kade 2 weeks ago in reply to Guest

Hi Guest,

I understand what you're saying, certainly. It's definitely possible to consume more calories at Subway than at McDonald's... but, if you think about it, isn't that actually better? A serving of fries has roughly 290 calories, and a turkey breast Subway sandwich has about 280. You

COULD consume more calories at Subway by, say, eating that sandwich and a drink, as opposed to just the fries at McDonald's. If you did, however, you'd almost certainly feel a whole lot more satiated after that sandwich and a drink than just a small serving of fries.

LearnVest would never support an agenda that feeds into negative body image issues and encourages bad eating patterns for young women. That said, obesity IS a real problem in the U.S. The truth is that it is harmful to consume too many calories, and that French fries are--quite objectively--not good for you. Rather than telling our readers to eat fewer calories, we would want them to think about they're eating--and try to eat SMARTER calories. Like, for example, in the Subway vs. McDonald's example.

It's not healthy to eliminate needed calories or to obsess over body image, but it's also not healthy to be unaware about what you're putting in your own body.

2 people liked this.

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## Reactions



JamminJennNYC 1 week ago

From [Twitter](#) via [BackType](#)

The Cost Of French Fries And Other Junk Food, For Wallet And Waistline | LearnVest Blog <http://bit.ly/cTZGu8>



pokemeonceagain 1 week ago

From [Twitter](#) via [BackType](#)

The Cost Of French Fries And Other Junk Food, For Wallet And Waistline <http://bit.ly/ceKABc> #health #healthy  
Think about it...



lvjones090 2 weeks ago

From [Twitter](#) via [BackType](#)

One more retweet from [ejejstanley](#)

RT @LearnVest: The avg American consumes about 2 bathtubs full of soda a year! Find out the cost of junk food for wallet and waistline! <http://su.pr/1UbSPR>



amkade 2 weeks ago

From [Twitter](#) via [BackType](#)

I am almost prouder to produce articles that're controversial... <http://su.pr/1UbSPR> Avg American drinks 2 bathtubs of soda/yr! #health



FITNESSmarianne 2 weeks ago

From [Twitter](#) via [BackType](#)

RT @Learnvest avg American consumes 2 bathtubs full of soda a year! Find out the cost of junkfood on wallet & waistline! <http://su.pr/1UbSPR>



LearnVest 2 weeks ago

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