

By Zagat Staff | August 5, 2011



Eating on a budget has never been easier, thanks to a host of restaurants tuning out top-notch cheap eats. From towering burgers and sandwiches to next-level noodles, here are some of the country's most affordable meals — all for the price of a \$5.00 or less.



ALLAS: Build-your-own burger atugg Burger

The burger at this Mesa Linda joint is easily one of the best and tastiest deals in town. Your burger comes with any combination of 11 toppings including premiums like bacon, mushrooms and fried onion strings plus cheese for just seven bucks. Add in a drink and fries for an even \$10.

Price: \$7; \$10 burger, fries and drink

9540 Garland Rd.; 214-584-6261



LOS ANGELES: Roast Beef Sandwich Meal at Top Round

All of the sandwiches are less than \$8 at this fast-casual sandwich hut, but you can get a full meal — a slow-roasted roast beef sandwich, curly fries and a soft drink — for 10 bucks or less. That just means there's room for frozen custard. This is chef-driven fast food, so the lean-choice roast beef is cooked slow and low, the buns are butter-toasted and there's always a little jus involved. If you want to amp up the sandwich, get it with homemade cheese "wiz," horseradish cream or Provel.

Price: \$9.15 (for the meal)

1000 S. La Brea Ave.; 323-549-9445



Price: Sold by weight at \$32/kg (a four-inch square rang up for around \$5)

240 Second Ave. S.; 206-209-2231

SEATTLE: Pizza at Pizzeria Gabbiano

These crispy, crackerlike Roman-style slices are the perfect vessels for a whole host of seasonal toppings, changing hourly at this lunch-only spot. The inventive toppings like puttanesca or squash blossom may sound intimidating, but that's offset by the fact that they'll cut the crusts off if you like, just like mom used to do.



Price: \$3.99

1211 Lincoln Rd.; 305-534-8226

MIAMI: Fried Chicken Taco at Huahua's Taqueria

Chef Todd Erickson aims to please at his casual taqueria in South Beach serving inventive Mexican dishes like this well-known taco. Made with fried chicken, chunks of jalapeño cornbread, cabbage and a housemade chile ranch dressing, one bite of this tasty taco and you'll see this dish is worth the hype.



Price: \$9-\$10

1625 Sansom St.; 215-867-8181

PHILADELPHIA: Hummus at Dizengoff

Mike Solomonov's hummus at Zahav is a revelation, and now it's available for fast-casual sit-down or takeout at this bright Center City storefront. With a rotating roster of seasonal toppings (hello beet-pistachio!) your order comes with Israeli pickles and a fluffy, fresh-out-of-the-oven pita.



Price: \$10

3200 Pecos St.; 720-885-5069

DENVER: Paris 1910 Torta from Poco Tortería at Avanti Food and Beverage

The newly unveiled Avanti Food and Beverage, a collective culinary hall in LoHi, is a food lover's utopia, with seven different restaurants serving up everything from arepas to shawarma. The best bang for the buck, though, goes to Poco, Kevin Morrison's torteria. There are eight torta variations, plus specials on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, and while the majority of them ring in at more than \$10, the Paris 1910 — filled with smoked ham, Oaxaca cheese, poblano béchamel, arugula and two yolky eggs — is exactly \$10, a huge bargain given its mammoth size. And the liberally salted fries that come alongside are some of Denver's best.



HOUSTON: Dan Dan Noodles at Mala Sichuan

Dig into a hearty bowl of the dan dan noodles at this Sichuan standout. The bouncy boiled noodles are served in a chile oil and sesame paste sauce with spiced ground pork, boiled spinach and scallions. Be careful; there's a bit of a spicy kick.

Price: \$4.95

Multiple locations



SAN DIEGO: Açai Bowl at Swami's Cafe

Healthy doesn't have to mean hungry and these fruit-filled bowl fill you up without weighing you down. Available for breakfast, lunch or as a snack, the kitchen layers açai with sliced bananas, fresh berries, housemade granola, coconut flakes and bee pollen. This bowl easily feeds two people or one very hungry yogi.

Price: \$7.95

Multiple locations



BOSTON: Street-Style Hot Dog at The Painted Burro

The Davis Square Mexican restaurant offers up this all-beef hot dog covered in cabbage and jalapeño slaw, chicharrónes, chipotle ketchup and agave mustard on a grilled roll. If that wasn't enough, it's accompanied by a pork charro and pickled veggie salad.

Price: \$9

219 Elm St., Somerville; 617-776-0005



ATLANTA: Soup/Entree Combo at Lee's Tofu House

The global eats found on Buford Highway offer a wonderland of low prices and big flavors. One of the best deals right now is at Korean newcomer Lee's Tofu House, where the combo comes with a selection of bubbling-hot soup and rich, savory meat. Choose from kimchi, hot tofu or hangover soup, among others, and go for a bulgogi or pork dish. Dive into the dazzling array of banchan that arrive in an endless stream at the table.

Price: \$8.99

5301 Buford Hwy. NE; 770-797-5153



NEW YORK CITY: Edamame Avocado Toast at Dominique Ansel Kitchen

Dominique Ansel may be a master of sweets (including Cronuts) but he also knows a thing or two about creating a beautiful savory dish. At his latest West Village outpost, this dish gussies up trendy avocado toast with edamame, fresh ricotta, mint and radish and serves it atop a poppy seed brioche.

Price: \$8.50

137 Seventh Ave. S.; 212-242-5111