



# Breakfast Ideas for a Buck

Healthy breakfast choices that are easy on your wallet.

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What makes a healthy breakfast? Some carbohydrates (preferably from whole grains, fruit, and vegetables) plus protein and a little smart fat – and maybe a little fiber to help stave off hunger till lunchtime.

The good news is that there's no reason to skip this important meal -- even if you're financially challenged. I've rounded up 10 healthy breakfast ideas that will cost you about \$1 each (less, in some cases).

In case a fast food chain is on your way to work, I've included five of the more healthful breakfast options, along with five quick and healthful breakfast options you can make at home.

## Fast Food Breakfast Ideas for About a Buck

I found cheap and healthy breakfast ideas at McDonald's, Burger King, and Jack in the Box.

1. McDonald's Fruit 'n Yogurt Parfait: \$1 (from dollar menu) 160 calories, 2 grams fat, 1 gram saturated fat, 0 gram trans, 4 grams protein, 5 mg cholesterol, 85 mg sodium, 1 gram fiber
2. McDonald's Sausage Burrito: \$1 (from dollar menu) 300 calories, 16 grams fat, 7 grams saturated fat, .5 gram trans, 12 grams protein, 130 mg cholesterol, 830 mg sodium, 1 gram fiber
3. Burger King Ham Omelet Sandwich: \$1.08 290 calories, 13 grams fat, 4.5 grams saturated fat, 0 grams trans, 13 grams protein, 85 mg cholesterol, 870 mg sodium, 1 gram fiber
4. Burger King French Toast Sticks, 3 piece: \$1.08 240 calories, 13 grams fat, 2.5 grams saturated fat, 0 grams trans, 4 grams protein, 0 mg cholesterol, 260 mg sodium, 1 gram fiber
5. Jack in the Box Breakfast Jack: \$1.07 290 calories, 13 grams fat, 4 grams saturated fat, 0 grams trans, 16 g protein, 219 mg sodium, 757 mg sodium, 1 gram fiber.

This does not mean I am promoting fast food for healthy meals:) These would be the healthiest choices **IF YOU HAVE NO CHOICE!** It is better than skipping breakfast. We all get in a rush at times.



## 5 Cheap and Healthy Homemade Breakfast Ideas

Here are four easily assembled breakfasts, plus one breakfast recipe, none of which will cost you much more than a buck.

### 1. Mixed Berry Satisfying Instant Oatmeal

Start with Quaker Take Heart Blueberry Flavor. It has less sugar and more fiber than other instant oatmeals. Each serving also has 130 mg of heart-healthy plant omega-3 fatty acids, thanks to some added flaxseed. Make the oatmeal in the microwave (follow instructions on box) with 2/3 cup low-fat milk instead of water (this adds protein, calcium, and vitamin D). Sprinkle 1/3 cup chopped strawberries or frozen raspberries over the top and you've got breakfast.

Here's the price tally:

1 Box Take Heart Blueberry Instant Oatmeal (8 packets per box at \$3): 37 cents

2/3 cup low-fat milk (1/2-gallon at \$1.89): 16 cents

1/3 cup chopped fresh or frozen strawberries/raspberries (2.5 cups per 12 oz bag at \$3): 40 cents

Total: \$.93

### 2. High-Fiber Breakfast Bagel

Start with a toasted 100% whole-wheat bagel or English muffin. Make an egg patty using a brand of eggs higher in omega-3s, plus 2 tablespoons egg substitute or 1 egg white. Whisk egg and egg substitute or egg whites together while heating a small nonstick saucepan over medium-high heat. Coat bottom of pan with canola cooking spray, then pour in the egg mixture. Add a cover to the saucepan (this will cause the egg to puff up and cook on both sides.) Top the bottom bagel with the egg patty. Top the hot egg patty with a slice of reduced fat cheddar cheese (Top with the top half of the bagel and enjoy.

The price tally:

1 whole-wheat bagel or English muffin (packages contain 6 bagels or English muffins at \$2): 41 cents

Egg (with 1 dozen higher omega-3 eggs costing \$2.50): 20 cents

Egg Beaters (32 oz. carton at \$4.50): 15 cents

Cheese (10-slice package of Sargento Reduced Fat Medium Cheddar at \$2.50): 25 cents

Total: \$1.01

### 3. Breakfast Yogurt Parfait

Start with 3/4 cup low-fat vanilla or plain yogurt. Stir in 1/2 cup of fresh fruit (whatever is cheap and in season--such as blueberries, kiwi, orange segments, cantaloupe, or peaches, etc.). Top that with 1/2 cup whole-grain breakfast cereal, such as Grape-Nuts, low-fat granola, or similar. Optional garnish would be a tablespoon or two of chopped nuts.

Yogurt (from a 32-oz. tub at \$3): 56 cents

Fruit: 30 cents

Cereal (with 16, 1/2-cup servings of Quaker Natural Granola, Lowfat, with raisins costing \$3): 19 cents

Total: \$1.05

### 4. Tea & Toast Breakfast

Whole wheat bread is one of the most inexpensive bases for a breakfast. You can pick up a loaf of 100% whole wheat bread with about 20 slices for \$2-\$2.50, or \$.20 to \$.25 per 2-slice serving. You can top your toast with either reduced-fat cheese or natural-style peanut butter, either of which will add some protein and fat to help balance out the carbs. Start by popping 2 slices of 100% whole wheat bread into the toaster. When toasted, add about .75 ounces of reduced-fat cheese OR 1 tablespoon natural-style peanut butter to each slice. Boil water, pour some into a mug, and steep a bag of your favorite green tea for a couple of minutes. Now you have your tea and toast breakfast.

Bread (from 20-slice loaf at \$2.50): 25 cents

Cheese (8 ounce block of reduced-fat cheese at \$2.50): 47 cents

Peanut butter (18-oz. jar containing 15 servings at \$3): 20 cents

Tea (from box of 20 tea bags at \$3.50): 18 cents

Total: \$.90 (with cheese) or \$.63 (with peanut butter)

### 5. Almond Oat Breakfast Bars

If you like to start your day with a moist bakery treat, this cheap and healthy breakfast recipe might be the ticket for you. Each breakfast bar contributes 5 grams of fiber and 6 grams of protein, along with a nice dose of smart fats from almonds. It's 100% whole grain with whole-wheat flour and oats and calls for the absolute minimum of added sugar (1 tablespoon of brown sugar per serving).

Ingredients:

1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons reduced-fat margarine (use a brand with plant sterols added, if desired)

1/4 cup unsweetened applesauce

1/2 cup packed brown sugar

1 large egg (use a brand higher in omega-3s, if available)

1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon almond extract

3/4 cup whole-wheat flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1 1/2 cups quick oats

1/2 cup finely chopped almonds

#### Preparation:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a nonstick 9 x 9-inch square or round baking dish with canola cooking spray.

In large mixing bowl, combine margarine, applesauce, and brown sugar and beat on medium speed. Beat in egg, vanilla, and almond extract.

In separate bowl, combine whole-wheat flour, salt, and baking soda. Add all at once to the margarine-applesauce mixture, and beat on low until well combined. Add oats and almonds and beat on low until blended, scraping sides of bowl after about five seconds. Spread mixture into prepared pan and bake for 15-18 minutes until edges are golden brown but bars are still moist and chewy. Cool and cut into 8 breakfast bars.

Yield: Makes 8 breakfast bars.

Nutrition Information: Per serving: 250 calories, 6 g protein, 34 g carbohydrate, 10 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 26 mg cholesterol, 5 g fiber, 218 mg sodium. Calories from fat: 36%.