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10 Dirt Cheap Bodybuilding Foods for Bulking on a Budget

POSTED BY ALAIN GONZALEZ ON DECEMBER 31, 2012 IN BUILD MUSCLE | 18,142 VIEWS | 13 RESPONSES

We all know that eating like a bodybuilding can become very expensive. In fact, this is one of the largest complaints I hear from most of my readers and clients. But that fact is, eating to build muscle doesn't have to break the bank. You see, when I first started training, like most, I was young and broke and I certainly couldn't afford to put extra food in the fridge over paying my rent. Naturally, I had to learn to economize while still getting in the proper nutrients. With that said, today I want to share my **top 10 cheap mass-building foods for bulking on a budget**.

The foods on this list are all essential, nutrient dense, and best of all they are inexpensive. These food items are in no particular order and are all beneficial in their own way. If you are a college student, jobless teen, or just as broke as I was at one point, then these inexpensive mass building foods should become a staple in your diet.

Top 10 Bodybuilding Foods on a Budget

Whole Eggs: Eggs are a rich source of natural protein. Not only are they healthy, calorie dense, and cheap, but they are extremely versatile. You can use them for omelets, sandwiches, scramble them, fry them, and the list goes on. It's also important to note that eggs are high in BCAAs, which aids in muscular growth and development.



Peanut Butter: Besides being packed with protein, essential fatty acids, vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber. Peanut butter is also known to help support the repair of muscles after injury. It makes an ideal addition to your meal replacement or bedtime shakes. And the best part of all, it makes this list because it is dirt cheap!

Beans: One cup of black beans contains about 230 calories with less than 1 gram of fat and a whopping 15 grams of protein. With over 40 grams of carbohydrates, black beans are ideal for any hardgainer who finds it hard to meet their daily caloric requirements. If that wasn't enough of a reason to bring this mass building food into your diet, 1 can of beans can be purchased for as little as 0.99!



Tuna: Tuna is one of the best foods you can eat if you want to build lean muscle. Not only has it got more than 20% protein but it's cheap and rich in natural essential oils. If you don't like the taste or smell of tuna (like me), then mix it with some mustard.

Body Fortress Whey: This is the fastest absorbing protein and can become easily consumable for those of us who don't have time for full meals. One serving of whey protein can contain over 50 grams of protein. But I am sure that in most cases Whey Protein Powder does not fit in a low-budget bodybuilding diet plan. However, while doing some shopping at a local Wal-Mart some months ago, I discovered a 2 lb tub of whey protein powder for about \$15. Now that's cheap!

Ground Meat: Ground meat has the same amount of protein in it as steak but it's much cheaper. Like eggs, ground meat is very versatile and can be made into beef patties for burgers, chili to feed you for a week or even tacos and burritos. Those are my personal favorites. One thing to remember though, always get the premium mince. The normal stuff has way to much fat in it. (>20%)



Chocolate Milk: Muscle is built outside of the gym and ample recovery is critical. Most brands of chocolate milk supply around 20 to 25 grams of carbohydrates and between 8 and 11 grams of protein (per 8 oz.), which makes for an optimal post-workout replenishment choice. This source contains two types of protein: Casein and whey. Casein is a slow digesting protein that does wonders for preventing muscle breakdown and whey is a fast digesting protein that makes for speedy absorption.

Cottage Cheese: 12g protein/100g. This power-packed snack is a great source of both casein and whey protein. For newcomers to the world of fitness, whey protein is not only a staple protein source for bodybuilders, but it's also a key food in building muscle and burning fat. Casein on the other hand is a slower digesting protein, which makes cottage cheese the optimal bedtime choice to help keep your body in an anabolic stage overnight.

Chicken: Chicken has a good protein to fat ratio. The average 6 oz. chicken breast is approximately 200 calories, 40 grams of protein and only 2 grams of fat. It's one of the most versatile foods for salads, wraps, sandwiches or even on its own. Although chicken breast is typically not cheap, buying frozen chicken in bags is easily affordable for even the most broke college students.

Whole Wheat Pasta: Foods such as multi-grain and whole wheat pastas may not sound like a muscle builder's top food choice, but they are great sources of energy. Whole wheat products are usually low in sugar and calories, making them a good choice for those trying to burn fat and build muscle. But get this, the multi-grain pasta that I purchase is also packed with over 15 grams of protein...and it costs me \$2.00 for an entire box.



Bulking on a Budget

Another thing I would recommend for anyone who is “bulking on a budget” is buying in bulk. This is the most effective technique to economizing your diet. You may say “I can’t afford to buy in bulk”, but the reality is, you can’t afford NOT to!

There you have it, 10 cheap mass building foods. Don’t let a tight budget be the reason you don’t achieve your fitness goals. If you have any cheap mass building foods that you would like to share, please leave a comment in the section below!

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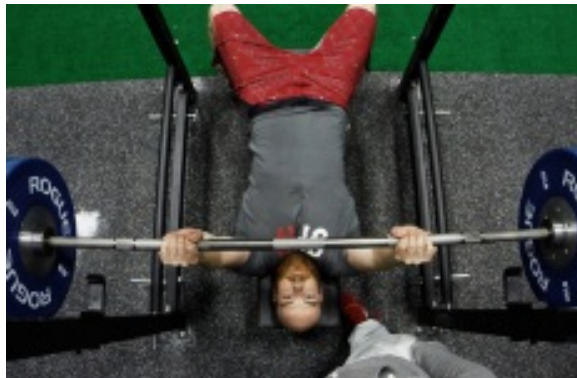
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13 Responses



Rich Bailey January 6, 2013 at 12:55 pm | [Permalink](#)

Alain,

Thanks for the food budget tips

How do I stop the gas from all the protien.

Rich 6' 40yrs ectophorm Future personal trainer

[Reply](#)



A.b February 23, 2016 at 8:46 pm | [Permalink](#)

Its an ancient Mexican family secret !!

You throw in a whole garlic

(NOT just a single clove) with the beans, Mom then throws the garlic out because it served its purpose.

(Anti-carminative = eliminating Gas/Flatulence.)

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Labodega April 6, 2013 at 3:57 am | [Permalink](#)

Great list of foods im definitely and taking notes on this 🙌 im also subscibed to your youtube channel, great videos alain.

[Reply](#)



Alain Gonzalez April 9, 2013 at 2:55 pm | [Permalink](#)

Thanks for the support and the feedback 😊

[Reply](#)



Giovanni romero May 9, 2013 at 7:36 pm | [Permalink](#)

Hey Alain you have really motivated me to really get into transforming my body, i have been using a lot of the techniques you have showed so far and I feel them working pretty good Thanks a lot!!!

[Reply](#)



Alain Gonzalez May 22, 2013 at 7:48 pm | [Permalink](#)

Thanks for sharing! I appreciate the feedback and I am glad to help 😊

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cheap foods for college students[Weight Loss Training | Weight Loss Training](#) November 15, 2015 at 8:06 am | [Permalink](#)

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[...] you are spending way too much money on groceries because muscle-building foods are expensive, then make sure you read this article from top to [...]



Luke Cafferty January 20, 2017 at 5:54 pm | [Permalink](#)

Hey Alain,

I love this post! I actually did an infographic on this recently, but not all the foods are necessarily budget oriented.

Let me know what you think: <http://www.strengthauthority.com/10-foods-great-for-building-muscle/>

Thanks!

[Reply](#)



Alain Gonzalez January 22, 2017 at 9:50 pm | [Permalink](#)

Just checked it out. Looks solid, brother.

[Reply](#)



David Gonzalez November 15, 2017 at 9:42 pm | [Permalink](#)

What's up Alain, I stumbled across this site looking for info on bodybuilding, (I am starting out at age 40) . And from what I have read so far, like the bulking on a budget info , dude your right on it! Your answers and info give hope to us 40+ year old guys out here! Thanks! Keep up the good work!

[Reply](#)



Alain Gonzalez November 16, 2017 at 3:23 pm | [Permalink](#)

Thank you so much for the kind words, brother! Glad you're finding the information helpful 😊

[Reply](#)



David Gonzalez November 17, 2017 at 4:16 am | [Permalink](#)

Hey Alain, its David that 40 year old again , well I just had to ask , what's your opinion on supplements like Taurine, L Arginine, and Citrulline for a 40 year old male starting out a workout routine. I currently am taking whey and creatine, but was wondering if I should supplement with these also?

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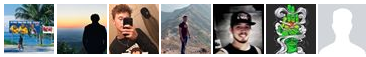



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ABOUT ALAIN GONZALEZ

My name is Alain Gonzalez and I am **NOT** a bodybuilder; however, I have managed to gain over 27 lbs of drug free muscle in record time and I am here to show you how you can as well

My goal is to help over 1 million naturally skinny guys to build muscle and achieve a physique they never thought possible. I offer simple, science based, fluff free training and nutrition advice for anyone who has struggled to put on any weight in the past.

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