

Better Dog Care

Creating Healthy Lifestyles for Canines

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The Cost Of Feeding Homemade Dog Food

I'm frequently asked if it isn't expensive to feed a homemade diet. Unfortunately there's no easy answer, since it all depends on how much you'll have to pay for the ingredients you need.

Buying in bulk (e.g. at warehouse stores or restaurant supply places) is always less expensive than purchasing items in small quantities at retail. Freezer space is another limitation – the more prepared food you can store, the more you can buy in bulk, and the more you save. Of course cost also depends on the size of a dog, and how many of them you have to feed.

I calculated the following example for a budget conscious home-cooked diet, which will show you that feeding this way is not necessarily outrageously expensive. The food ingredients can be commonly found at any supermarket, pricing is based on standard conventional products (not organic – of course choosing organic foods will increase cost considerably) from national grocery chain stores in my West Los Angeles neighborhood, so in many areas of the country I'm sure they would be even less expensive. I did not shop around to find the absolutely lowest possible prices.

The few supplements needed to ensure proper nutritional balance are by no means exotic either, but they are generally much cheaper when purchased online than locally at full retail prices. My calculation includes 5 items marketed for human consumption (higher quality than pet food grade stuff), of which only small amounts are used in each batch, so the containers you buy initially will last a long time. For a dog without any special nutritional needs no other supplements would need to be given in conjunction with this recipe.

The cost per batch of this homemade diet came to \$33 (rounded up), which provides approximately 13,390 kcal in 22.8 pounds of food. Weight may vary a little bit depending on how much water is used for cooking. To give you an idea of how much this is in terms of store-bought commercial pet food: a little more than 27 13.2 oz cans.

Nutrition details (diet suitable for adult maintenance):

Analysis, estimated on "as fed" basis:

Protein:	7.1%
Fat:	4.8%
Fiber:	1.1%
Moisture:	73.2%
Ash:	0.7%
Omega 6 to Omega 3 fatty acid ratio:	5.35:1
Calcium/Phosphorus ratio:	1.34:1

Caloric content per kilogram (2.2 lbs): 1,292 kcal
Caloric content per 13.2 oz can serving: 483.5 kcal

Approx. cost per batch of food:	\$33.00
Approx. cost per 1,000 kcal:	\$2.46
Approx. cost per kilogram (2.2 lbs):	\$3.184
Approx. cost per 13.2 oz can serving:	\$1.912

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Cost breakdown by size of dog:

Dog's weight	Days a batch of food lasts (depending on activity level)	Daily Feeding Cost (based on days one batch lasts)
10 lbs	30 – 57	\$0.58 – \$1.09
20 lbs	19 – 36	\$0.92 – \$1.73
30 lbs	15 – 27	\$1.21 – \$2.27
40 lbs	12 – 23	\$1.46 – \$2.75
50 lbs	10 – 19	\$1.70 – \$3.20
60 lbs	9 – 17	\$1.92 – \$3.61

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