

Blood money, bologna and yogurt: Lincoln on two dollars a day

By Kevin Cowan
Staff Reporter

Walking out of the plasma center, blood money in hand, you've got a serious decision to make. Do you spend the cash on multiple beers or do you, being the rational college transient, allocate the \$10 towards basic nutrition.

"But what will 10 bucks buy in the way of food," you think to yourself. You can't even walk into a fast food joint without spending at least \$4... can you?

Of course you can. In fact, that 10 bucks, coupled with the other 20 you'll receive for opening your veins to the plasma vampires will feed you for a week — seven days — and you can still have five bucks to squander at the bars.

If you can live on one meal a day, there are places in Lincoln where you can eat for under \$2.23 a day. That comes out to \$15.61 a week which still leaves a few dollars for those much-needed necessities. If you need more than that, get a real job.

But forget that. On to the inexpensive fast food joints.

The Loft. Best hokie prices in town hands down. Prices start at \$1.24 for a German bologna and cheese hoagie and escalate, depending on the variety, to a whopping \$1.90 for a roast beef, pepperoni, ham and cheese super hoagie. So, start with a German bologna and cheese sandwich, throw in a pile of chips (25 cents) and a monstrous cup of Coke and you come out at \$2.20. Not a bad deal for a well-filled stomach. And as hoagies tend not to digest quickly, you'll be full for several hours before you have to start rummaging around in Pizza Hut's garbage cans for your next meal. The best part is, the Loft's prices are always this cheap... no specials to wait for.

W.C. Franks. I know quite a few people who cringe when hot dogs are mentioned. All those nasty little horror stories about all 'n whatever thrown into the little weenie, so you have to make a choice, cost or contents. Think of it this way, chances are frankfurters won't kill you and they probably have fewer diseases than a public toilet seat. When you look at it that way a footlong doesn't sound all that bad. Footlong. A beastly weenie.

Yes, at W.C. Franks you can get a footlong with one topping, chips and a medium drink for \$2.26. Three cents

over the \$2.23 ceiling but who counts pennies when you're hungry? If you're willing to knock your food budget to \$2.74 on Thursdays, you can get all the footlongs you can eat, with all the toppings (cheese, chili, nacho cheese) you can stomach, as well as chips and a medium drink. However, if you're into summer starvation you can purchase a mini-frank, a topping and a large drink for \$1.23. Not a bad deal.

Tastee's. This place isn't downtown but as far as being cost effective, Tastees is on top. Forty-nine cents for a tastee. You can get three of the unique creations and a large drink (though, don't be fooled). Large is a relative term. And Tastee's large drinks do leave something to be desired — only about six ounces — and still be under \$2.23, the magic number. Or provoke variety and get a tastee, onion chips and large drink for just around the same price.

Oh, yes. Now all the vegetarians are screaming that food is not all hot dogs, hoagies and hamburgers: they're right. So for the yogurt freaks who have yet to try some of the yogurt bars in Lincoln, here's a sample that fits nicely into our moot budget.

Yogurt Pump. Not a great deal of diversity here, but the yogurt's good and there are a couple combinations that fit the bill. A twelve ounce cup of yogurt with three different toppings will run you about \$2.07. Opt for one topping and you can include apple juice for a grand total of \$2.32.

T.C.B.Y. Seemingly head honcho in the kingdom of yogurt. For gurniks, The Country's Best Yogurt offers a Belgian waffle with vanilla yogurt, granola and carob cashews, for a measly \$2.20.

"But where's the soft drink?" you say.

Let's face it kiddies, with a dandy special like that, you'll just have to settle for water.

Just a portion of the fast food restaurants available in urban Lincoln. Of course, there are more. But part of the "on the edge" excitement of summer survival is finding out just where those outrageously under-priced holes in the wall do business. Anyway, you can eat in those places for the same prices every day of the week.

There are, however, a few ultra-cheap specials that do deem themselves worthy of mention.

Amigos. Specials everyday. Though on Tuesdays you can get one of the more interesting maxi-American creations: the crisp meat burrito. Ya know how, when you're eating Mexican fast food in the car, that the lettuce and refried beans always seem to end up in your lap? Well, for only 79 cents you can get two of these car-lunch companions and a drink, and still stay under the not written in stone, \$2.23. Besides being really high in cholesterol, which all fast food addicts severely need, you can eat crisp meats on the run and not make too much of a mess.

Taco Johns. More Mexican food — basic tacos. Two twilight tacos run every night and all day on Tuesdays. You can much down three tacos and a medium drink (to eat the cup is optional) for \$2.18. Simple. Straight-forward. The only problem is Mexican food tends to digest quickly. So, onto fast food with substance.

P.O. Pears. An over-grown hamburger and large handful of fries for \$1.99. Probably the most common special in Lincoln. With one large Sunday competitor...

Sams. Three burgers for a buck. They make McDonalds look like gourmet cuisine, but they're the cheapest substance available for only one dollar. The trick to surviving on Sams burgers is to order them plain. That way they have to be made fresh — they don't have as much time to gel.

Now that you've thought all this through, your journey from the plasma center has probably landed you in the vicinity of a bar. Before you go make this jump into budget poverty, better go have "just one beer" and think it over.

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The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board Monday through Friday in the fall and spring semesters and Thursdays in the summer sessions, except during vacations.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Harrison Schultz, 474-7660.

Subscription price is \$35 for one year. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, Neb. 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE.
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