

# Don't Drink Your Wallet Dry!

It's hot out, so make sure you're drinking up! In fact, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommends that adult males drink at least 11 cups of fluid a day and females drink 9.

What's in your glass today? You might be a true coffee-crazy, cola-loving American, but water is your best beverage choice for your health and for your money.

However, did you know that bottled water may be draining your wallet dry?

It's true. Many people pay huge amounts of money for bottled water without even realizing how inflated the price is. So, let's take a look at the costs of bottled water when compared to ordinary tap water.



Although service charges, state taxes, and other fees may vary, 1,000 gallons of tap water will typically cost you about \$11. With that amount of water, you could fill approximately 7,570 bottles of water at 16.9 fluid ounces each, with each bottle costing you less than a penny. It's \$0.0014 to be exact!

Assuming you drink three 20-oz bottles of water a day, you'll need 1,095 bottles a year. If you'd fill those bottles with tap water, it'll cost you just \$1.53 a year. This means that, as soon as you've bought a day's worth of bottled water, you've already spent nearly *double* of what an entire year's worth of tap-water drinking would cost you!

Is that water starting to lose its taste yet?

This doesn't mean you need to start chugging down awful-tasting tap water just to save on some costs. Luckily for you, there are many ways to get sweet-tasting water without busting your budget.

Here are some options you may consider:

## **DIY chilling**

If you love the taste and convenience of bottled water, you can save big just by buying your bottles in packs of 24 and refrigerating them at home instead of buying them cold while on the go. Instead of \$1 a bottle, you'll pay just \$0.16. If you drink three bottles a day, you'll pay \$175 a year. It's still a lot more expensive than tap water, but it's also a lot less than paying for cold bottled water.

If you're out of the house for a while each day and you like your water freezing cold, you can freeze the bottles you'll be using later in the day or invest in an insulated bag that keeps beverages cold.

## **Water coolers**

They're not just for catching up on the latest office gossip; water coolers can help you fill all your water needs at home. Of course, you'll need to spring for the machine itself, but after that one-time cost (\$170 on average), you'll only be paying for refills.

Prices vary by companies, but a 5-gallon refill of spring or purified water will run you approximately \$7. Stockpile your refills in the garage and order multiple bottles at once, and you can get discounts as steep as just \$5 a bottle. That's only \$1 a gallon, for cold, delicious-tasting water. With each gallon filling 7.5 water bottles, you're getting more than 37 bottles worth of bottled water for the price of 5 purchased bottles!

### **Pitcher filters**

These handy contraptions snap right onto your pitcher of water and filter it on the spot. You can also purchase a pitcher with the filter already attached. Either way, you'll have your bottled water needs met with just a one-time purchase that averages only \$20.

The downside here is the minimal amount of water a pitcher filter can purify for you in one shot. If you drink large amounts of water or have lots of thirsty people around, this might not be the best option for you. If your water needs are modest, though, a pitcher filter can be a great way for you to get sweet-tasting water inexpensively.

### **Water treatment system**

If you want to be able to get purified water straight from the tap, this is the way to go. Having an indoor water treatment system installed in your faucet will filter your water before you even turn on the faucet. The obvious benefits here are easy access to unlimited amounts of filtered water whenever you need it, plus purified water to cook with and to use for washing your dishes.

These filters run about \$250 to \$400 and usually work with one faucet only. Some companies will actually install a purified water tap alongside your existing faucet instead of filtering it. There are also companies that offer a purification system for all the water in the house, but those will cost several thousands of dollars to install.

### **Take the tap challenge!**

There are many ways to drink up, but tap water still holds its place as the cheapest option. Are you up for a challenge? If it's a safe option in your area, try drinking only tap water for a month. You'll save huge on drinking water costs and it may just become a lifelong habit!

Here are some ways to make tap water more palatable:

- Slice citrus fruits and let them float in your pitcher to give your water a tasty zing.
- Soak some pineapple chunks in your water for several hours and remove before serving.
- Invest in a SodaStream to add some sparkle to your glass.
- Freeze pureed blueberries and strawberries and use them as ice cubes.
- Add some Crystal Light or another calorie-free flavoring mix.
- Steep fresh mint leaves in your pitcher before drinking.

Don't let your hard-earned money get washed down the drain. Drink wisely this summer and save big!

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