

## Cheap Eats

### Keys to unlocking the inner frugal gourmet



College is a time to think of food differently. At home you may wake up, have a nice breakfast, grab a sandwich for lunch then meet with the family for some quality time around the dinner table.

The life of the world-class university student is not quite so organized: wake up; drink a 20-ounce bottle of Mountain Dew in hopes of not falling asleep during software engineering lecture; eat something involving grease and cheese on the way home from the library; supplement with fresh candy.

Then the late night urge to snack appears, with absolutely no consideration to the fact that the pizza joints have already closed. It's up to whatever is hiding in the pantry — so often a lone box of Pop Tarts — or one of their more economically priced cousins.



GRAY WHITTEN  
staff writer

Those thin frosted shingles become a food group of their own for some people, myself included. Perhaps an analysis of a few of the many varieties available to the starving intellectual who doesn't like noodles is appropriate.

#### • Pop-Tarts

The granddaddy of them all. Made by the good folks at Kellogg's and advertised relentlessly, Pop-Tarts clock in at roughly 25 cents a tart. When lightly heated these really are tough to beat. One can assume all those sales profits have been put to good use in the ever-growing field of tartology. With evenly spread frosting and filling that almost fills the edges, Pop-Tarts score big in all categories. Try melted butter for an added taste treat.

#### • Toastettes

Brought to you by the people responsible for the Oreo — Nabisco. Toastettes, like Pop-Tarts, come eight to a box and score a 22-cent-per-tart ratio. Generally softer and less flavorful, I didn't receive the same cinnamon joy that I did with the first example. And to be honest, the translucent brown frosting does nothing for its aesthetic appeal.

Chalk it up to the cheapest per-tart price of the three brands sampled. You get what you pay for.

#### • Toast'ems

The food scientists at Flavor Kist labs may have had spies over at Nabisco. Toast'ems are very similar to the Toastette. The fact that the names are slightly different helps promote this theory.

Featuring the most generous frosting distribution of the three brands and filling that seems to actually be made from ingredients found in the natural world, Toast'ems do stand out a bit. At 27 cents a tart, they are the most expensive. Maybe they need the cash to pay off their shiny new web site.

Pop Tarts are the sentimental favorite, but for pure chewing satisfaction don't overlook the Toast'ems. And if you're one of the lucky students who's financial situation demands you decide between a super-sized lunch and a load of laundry, there's always Toastettes. Hopefully this will help some lost

souls out there realize the way to tart-induced happiness. Or at least avoid 4 a.m. hunger pangs. Set the toaster oven for low, and heat 'em up.



### I'd Like to Buy the World a (Cheap) Coke

BY CHRIS MARTIN

Good or evil. Ford or Chevy. PC or Mac. Coke or Pepsi. In a dichotomized world with only two sides of the fence, these are the choices one must make.

For those engaged in academic pursuit, a multi-faceted world of infinite choices unfolds like a paper fortune teller. One choice available to the financially embarrassed student is generic soda pop. As shame evaporates from the collegiate mind, so to dries up the social suicide involved in being spotted drinking a generic cola.

#### H-E-B Our Own Original Cola

Appearance: Their "original" is packaged much like the "classic" Coca-Cola. Seal on the front reads "Value & Service Since 1905," which one hopes is not how long it's been sitting on the shelf. Beware the skunky cola.

Taste: Low aftertaste, which is good, but also low taste, which is bad.

#### Parade Cola

Appearance: Diagonal geometry in 1970s aesthetics. The most generic looking of the bunch, like one of those sitcom cans that simply says "Cola." A definite reputation buster.

Taste: Like swishy hair tonic.

#### Albertson's A+ Cola

Appearance: Clean and simple, like a friendly neighborhood checkout boy. Features a large "A+" logo set in grunge type, bringing

graphic designer David Carson's pathetic aesthetic to the grocery store aisles of America.

Taste: Slightly rubbery, like a dog chew toy.

#### Sam's American Choice Cola

Appearance: It's Mom, Charlie Brown, a Ford Festiva, professional wrestling and apple pie all rolled into one.

Taste: Nicely sweet. It's the cola next door.

#### H-E-B Our Own Original Dr. B

Appearance: Again, I must question the originality of any red-dish-brown can with a medical degree that didn't come from Waco.

Taste: It's cough syrup! Hey, that explains the "Dr.," right?

#### Dr. Parade

Appearance: Cool gradient stars at the bottom of the can. Cool like having to wear a Johnny Carson sports jacket

Taste: It tastes, I swear, exactly like a fresh-out-of-the blister pack Star Wars action figure smells.

#### Albertson's A+ Dr. A+

Appearance: Traditional red-dish-brown can, but with shocking blue square housing A+ logo. A generic cola unashamed.

Taste: Free and easy. Absolutely no hint that you are drinking carbonated prune juice.

#### Sam's American Choice Dr Thunder

Appearance: The only "Dr." with no period at the end. Background art is nearly identical to Dr. B can, including vertical lettering. However, the only thing that should be called "Dr Thunder" is a Lynrd Skynyrd single or a cool rival Mercury Cougar on "The Dukes of Hazzard."

Taste: Sweeter than A+, not as sweet as H-E-B.



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