
About.com Dogs

The Cost of Dog Ownership

Can You Afford a Dog?

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The cost of owning a dog is about more than just the expense of food. Unfortunately, many people do not take the time to [budget](#)¹ for a dog before getting one - and this can lead to trouble down the road. Can you afford a dog? Learn your limits [before you get a dog](#)² to help you make the right decisions. Financially providing for your dogs is a big part of being a [responsible dog owner](#)³.

The cost of owning a dog can be estimated at \$700-3000 per year (see the chart at the bottom of this page). There are ways to [save money](#)⁴ depending on the choices you make. Contributing factors include your dog's size and age, the region in which you live, your own lifestyle, and your dog's individual needs.

Initial Investment

Consider costs when [choosing a dog](#)⁵. Any new dog or puppy will come with substantial expenses. If you decide to purchase a [purebred](#)⁶ dog from a breeder, you can expect to spend \$500-2000, give or take. Spend the extra money on a quality dog from a **reputable and professional** breeder, not a "backyard breeder." It will cost you less in the long run because the dog will be healthier (and it's the right thing to do).

If you like [mixed-breed dogs](#)⁷ and you want to do your part to help dogs in need, then get your dog from a reputable shelter or rescue group. If you still want a purebred, there are plenty of breed-specific rescue groups. Adopting from a shelter or rescue can cost as little as \$50-200. You are most likely to get a healthy dog when adopting from a **reputable** shelter or rescue group. Be aware that dogs with unknown histories might come with illnesses, so you may spend a bit extra on veterinary care at first if you adopt from a "questionable" shelter.

Regardless of where you get your new dog, the very first thing you should do is get that dog to a good [veterinarian](#)⁸. Depending on the need for [vaccines](#)⁹, preventive medications and special treatments, that first visit will likely cost you anywhere from \$50-300, so be prepared. Vet bills for a young puppy will likely range from \$100-300 depending on the puppy's health and the region in which you live.

Your next major expense: [dog supplies](#)¹⁰. These include dog food, leashes, collars, beds, toys and so on. You also need to think about obedience classes and/or [training](#)¹¹ resources. Bottom line - the first year with your new dog can cost as much as two times the typical annual cost of subsequent years, so be prepared.

Food and Treats

It is important to feed your dog a high-quality [dog food](#)¹² and healthy dog [treats](#)¹³. This will likely cost anywhere from \$20-60 per month (\$250-700 per year). Food expenses vary based on the size and energy level of your dog as well as the quality of the food.

Toys

Dog toys are an important part of your dog's mental stimulation and [exercise](#)¹⁴. Though some of us may indulge, you can probably plan on spending \$25-150 per year. If you are like those of us who cannot resist a cute toy, this figure can become several hundred dollars higher. Another reason you may spend more on toys: a very destructive dog may go through toys faster, so if you have one of these dogs, invest in the toys designed for "tough chewers".

Beds

Every dog deserves a cozy [bed](#)¹⁵, and keeping one or two around the house will cost you \$50-200 a year. Prices go up in relation to size and quality. Getting durable, high-quality and easy-to-clean dog beds can extend the life of the beds and keep costs down in the long run.

Leashes and Collars

Your dog must have *at least* one [leash](#)¹⁶ and one [collar](#)¹⁷ (with ID tags). Depending on size and quality, most dog owners spend \$20-50 per year on leashes and collars.

Grooming

Your dog's grooming needs are largely based upon the type of hair coat he has. Smooth coated, short-haired dogs require little more than [basic grooming](#)¹⁸, while dogs with constantly growing hair will need to visit the groomer on a routine basis. Between the cost of [grooming tools](#)¹⁹ and visits to the groomer, you can plan on spending anywhere from \$30-500 a year.

Routine Veterinary Care

Routine veterinary care is a huge part of [keeping your dog healthy](#)²⁰. Plan on going to the vet for wellness check-ups once or twice a year, and budget for \$100-300 yearly. Vet costs will be higher if your dog develops a healthy problem. This is especially the case as your dog [grows older](#)²¹. You may also consider purchasing [pet insurance](#)²² for your dog.

Preventive Medications and Supplements

All dogs need medications to prevent heartworms, fleas, ticks and other parasites. Your veterinarian will guide you towards the best products based on your climate and your dog's needs. Some dogs will also benefit from vitamins and supplements. In general, you will probably spend \$100-300 per year for these items.

Obedience Classes or Training Resources

Though most dogs will only go to obedience school in their first year or two, [training](#)²³ is something that should be ongoing throughout your dog's life. Whether you are buying books and DVDs for at-home training, or you enroll your dog in obedience classes, budget at least \$25-300 per year for training needs.

Pet Sitters or Boarding

Most people will need to leave their dogs behind once or twice a year. Typically, this will cost about \$100-300 a year. However, if you travel frequently, expect to spend much more. [Boarding](#)²⁴ tends to cost less than hiring a pet sitter, but many dog owners prefer the individual attention a [pet sitter](#)²⁵ can offer and think it is worth the extra expense. Alternatively, if you decide to [travel with your dog](#)²⁶, you can expect your travel fees to increase.

Emergencies and Other Unexpected Expenses

No one can predict the future - the unexpected occurs in life all the time. As a good dog owner, you should do your best to be ready for life's little surprises. [Emergencies](#)²⁷, chronic illnesses, [disasters](#)²⁸ and other unplanned expenses can amount to hundreds or even thousands of dollars per year. The best way to stay prepared is to set aside extra money in savings, if possible. In a perfect world, dog owners would never have to make choices for their dogs based on money alone - it should be about what is best for their dogs. With proper planning, (and a little luck) you can provide for your own dog and live a long and happy life together.

Basic Cost of Owning a Dog

Yearly Expense		
Type of Expense	Food and Treats	250 - 700
	Toys	25 - 150
	Beds	50 - 200

Leashes and Collars	20 - 50
Grooming	30 - 500
Routine Veterinary Care	100 - 300
Preventive Medications and Supplements	100 - 300
Training Classes or Resources	25 - 300
Petsitters or Boarding	100 - 300
Yearly Total	\$700-2800
Approximate Monthly Cost of Owning a Dog	\$60-235

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