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Calgary

End of an era? Why wing night prices are soaring

Calgary pub owner says more restaurants are opting for half-priced wing specials over cheap by-the-wing deals

[Emma Kilburn-Smith](#) · CBC News · Posted: Sep 26, 2026 8:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: September 28

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Cooks serve up plates of wings in the kitchen at Side Street Pub and Grill in Kensington. (Emma Kilburn-Smith/CBC)

Wednesday has a few claims to fame: it's the eponym of the infamous gothic daughter of the Addams Family, a celebrated mid-week "humpday" milestone, and historically, the day when pub-goers could chow down on wings for mere pennies. These days though, those cheap wing nights are getting harder and harder to find.

Not too long ago, it wasn't unheard of to find 10 or even 20 cent per wing specials on Calgary menus, but customers these days are unlikely to find that kind of pricing.

As for what deals are out there right now, Roman Storoschuck is a local expert on the matter. He's one of the people behind wingnightdeals.ca,

a website that tracks wing night deals at pubs and restaurants across Canada, including here in Calgary.

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"There are different ways that wings are priced, either by wing or by pound... By single wing probably the range would be anything from 30 to 40 cents to a dollar... a dollar-ten or a dollar-twenty, maybe something in that range. If we're looking at a pound of wings, you could go as low as six or seven bucks on the quite low end and probably as high as 14 or 15 or probably even higher in some places," says Storoschuck.



Roman Storoschuck chowing down on some of his favourite chicken wing flavours at MugShots in southeast Calgary: Raspberry Chipotle and the Garlic Parmesan. (Emma Kilburn-Smith/CBC)

Mike Shupenia owns Side Street Pub and Grill in Kensington. He says the cost of chicken wings from suppliers has been rising, and as a result, he's seeing more restaurants shift from per-wing and per-pound pricing to half-priced wing deals.

"Eight years ago, all of a sudden our chef's like, 'Hey just to let you know, we're losing money on wing night now.' So when you get to the point where you're losing you're like 'well we'll bump it up 10 cents' and then all of a sudden you're bumping it up to 50 cents and now even 50 cents you're still losing money or breaking even barely, so half-priced wings were invented."

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Why 'wing nights' aren't as cheap as they used to be

There are plenty of nightly specials on chicken wings around town, but where is Calgary's best deal? Whatever happened to 10-cent wings? The CBC's Emma Kilburn-Smith went looking for answers.

There are a number of factors that influence supplier cost, including tight supply, but there's more to it than that, according to Kevin Grier, a Livestock and Meat Market Analyst.

He says Canadian demand for chicken — which factors in the amount that we eat combined with how much we're willing to pay for it — is excellent. He also says the restaurant industry and the way it responds to a shifting economy plays a role in determining the cost of meat.

"Another reason for the volatility of wings is if the restaurant traffic cuts back and that has an impact on wing prices, and conversely, maybe because restaurant traffic is pulling back, maybe the restaurateurs want to entice us back by offering cheap wings."

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Raymond Bucknell is an instructor at the Butchery and Charcuterie program at SAIT. He's been a butcher for 27 years and remembers when wings were considered a by-product item.

"When I first started, we put all the chicken wings into a five-pound bag and sold them for two or three dollars a pound, they were nothing ... they were just like extras."

Raymond says wings have since exploded over the past 30 years, but he's noticed wing nights are not what they used to be on college campuses, where he works, and where they once used to reign supreme.

"Students are having a harder time now than ever before ... I think that because wings are more expensive, because things like beer are more

expensive, because eating out is more expensive, they probably don't have the same social value that they used to."

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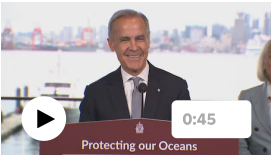
He also has a theory for why pub-goers might notice such a price discrepancy between restaurants: it could have to do with where they're sourcing their chicken from. Some places pay more for local and organic chicken, while some of those really cheap wings could be imported, either from out of the province or from elsewhere in the world, likely South America, according to Bucknell.

Restaurant owners are about to face another challenge to keeping wing night costs low. Bucknell says they're expecting the cost of chicken to go up by 25 per cent over the next few months.

But for some, wing nights will always be a popular social activity, no matter the cost, in large part because it's about so much more than a tasty snack — and a good deal. Storoschuck, who devotes a lot of time to tasting and chatting about wings, says he's part of more than one wing night group chat (believe it or not).

"It's a social thing ... it's not just going for drinks. Going for drinks is nice but when you add the chicken wings to it, it's an added factor ... people have their favourite flavours, their favourite spots, and I'm also a big fan of trading wings. I'll order some and you order some, we'll switch one and it has this very communal element to it."

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