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The Top 10 Best Budget Cards of All Time

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Building on a Budget
Friday, October 29, 2004



PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

I guess you could say I've been around the block once or twice -- or five times. My friends know me to often wheel and deal at a tournament site when I need some cards or am just looking to build my collection. I tend to have a pretty good bead on the values of most things **Magic**, and that's one reason why I write this column -- because it just comes naturally.

Oh, heh, I guess you were expecting me to talk about *Champions of Kamigawa* this week, with the awesome release tournaments coming up and all...

Well, I promise you that I will talk about one thing *Kamigawa*, but first...

I present to you the top 10 Best Budget Cards of all time!

10) Mogg Fanatic

This guy is just a workhorse. He attacks, he blocks, and he shoots. He worked a lot differently back in the day before the rules changes, but he is still just as strong (some might even argue stronger!). You will find few creatures as good as this one that come so cheaply.

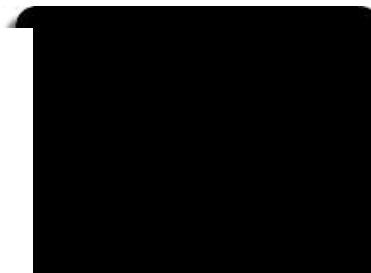


9) Duress

This card is phenomenal; it still sees play today in Extended in decks chock-full of rare goodies. Why? Because you can use this common card to negate many more powerful cards -- a great strategy when you are on a budget. **Duress** your **Timetwister**? That's pure profit!

8) Impulse

Impulse has recently been reprinted, except they split it into several cards and made them all worse. This should give you a hint as to the power this card holds. Back in the day, it was hard to find a blue deck without 4 of these. They were a cheap way to make your deck far more consistent.





7) Fireblast



You're at 8? Double **Fireblast** time! I think this card may have won more matches than any other three budget cards combined. **Fireblast** has a way of being the last thing you see out of an opponent. Who could pass up that juicy 4 Damage for no mana whatsoever?

6) Sakura-Tribe Elder

Ah ha! A *Champions of Kamigawa* card, at last! Sure, this guy may be new, but don't mistake his power level. The Tribe Elder has an effect much more powerful than many cards that came before him. Just compare him to **Rampant Growth** or **Diligent Farmhand**. The elder is sure to become a staple of Budget decks for years to come.



5) Hymn to Tourach

You know how **Duress** was great? Well this one is better! It's like a double **Duress** but random, so it can hit anything, including lands! This was a staple of all good discard decks right up until we weren't allowed to play with it anymore. Still, if you're running a casual game, then this should be a fair game. Show off the power of Tourach!



4) Brainstorm

This card is just a bit nutty. It has sometimes been compared to the best card in **Magic** – **Ancestral Recall**. The key is combining it with a shuffling effect such that you aren't stuck drawing the bad cards again. This is the best library manipulation available to a budget player (or a non-budget player, for that matter!)



3) Counterspell

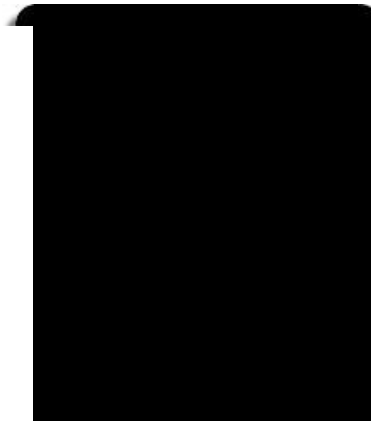
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2) Wild Mongrel

This guy was the one that I thought would surely take the top spot as the best budget card ever printed. Mongrel is so good! He is one of the best creatures ever made, and he's common to boot! His ability lets you turn dead cards into combat strength, and this also makes him really hard to block/remove. This guy can win games all on his own. There are several decks built around him, some of which are sure to show up at Pro Tour Columbus this weekend!

Drum roll please....

The best budget card to ever be printed is.....





1) Llanowar Elves

Ah, Llanowar, sweet Llanowar! There is nothing quite like a first turn **Llanowar Elves**, except of course, a **Birds of Paradise** (in my opinion, the best creature in **Magic**). So it is no wonder that the Birds' kid brother **Llanowar Elves** would take the top spot. **Llanowar Elves** is akin to a **Time Walk** in most budget decks. You simply just accelerate right past your opponents, and get a creature to boot. I am sure that some people will disagree with me here, but for those of you who have been around long enough, I know you respect this elf as much as I do.

Honorable Mentions

Bonesplitter

This card is like a renewable 2 power creature that is very hard to kill. It also makes your creatures tougher to block without trading. **Cranial Plating** could also be mentioned here, but that's only good in one deck. I think we all know which deck that is...

Deftblade Elite

This card may be the best aggressive 1-drop common in the game. Unfortunately, utility is what makes creatures good in budget decks, not aggressiveness...that's how guys like **Mogg Fanatic** and **Llanowar Elves** beat him out on the list. If you are comparing him with any casting cost, then **Wild Mongrel** just whoops him in a race.

Whenever you need help powering up your budget decks, look to these cards and find ones that do similar things. Although it's no **Brainstorm**, **Serum Visions** is pretty good. **Hinder** is no **Counterspell**, but it does very similar things. **Distress** is no **Duress**, but it isn't bad by a longshot.

Well, that's all, and I promise that soon I will be able to talk more about *Champions of Kamigawa* Budget decks!

Until next time, bounce back with more than you had before!

- Nate Heiss

BuildingOnABudget and nateheiss on **Magic Online**



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