University of Idaho Extension

Slashing Household Expenses - Groceries

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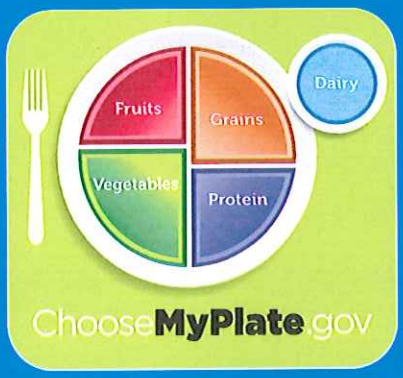
Let's eat for the health of it



Start by choosing one or more tips to help you...

Build a healthy plate

Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt

Eat the right amount of calories for you

Be physically active your way

Build a healthy plate

Before you eat, think about what goes on your plate or in your cup or bowl. Foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and lean protein foods contain the nutrients you need without too many calories. Try some of these options.

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

- Eat red, orange, and dark-green vegetables, such as tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, in main and side dishes.
- Eat fruit, vegetables, or unsalted nuts as snacks—they are nature's original fast foods.

Switch to skim or 1% milk.

- They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but less fat and calories.
- Try calcium-fortified soy products as an alternative to dairy foods.

Make at least half your grains whole.

- Choose 100% whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, and pasta.
- Check the ingredients list on food packages to find whole-grain foods.

Vary your protein food choices.

- Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate.
- Eat beans, which are a ***natural*** source of fiber and protein.
- Keep meat and poultry portions small and lean.

Keep your food safe to eat—learn more at www.FoodSafety.gov.

Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt

Many people eat foods with too much solid fats, added sugars, and salt (sodium). Added sugars and fats load foods with extra calories you don't need. Too much sodium may increase your blood pressure.

Choose foods and drinks with little or no added sugars.

- Drink water instead of sugary drinks. There are about 10 packets of sugar in a 12-ounce can of soda.
- Select fruit for dessert. Eat sugary desserts less often.
- Choose 100% fruit juice instead of fruit-flavored drinks.

Look out for salt (sodium) in foods you buy—it all adds up.

- Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals—and choose the foods with lower numbers.
- Add spices or herbs to season food without adding salt.

Eat fewer foods that are high in solid fats.

- Make major sources of saturated fats—such as cakes, cookies, ice cream, pizza, cheese, sausages, and hot dogs—occasional choices, not everyday foods.
- Select lean cuts of meats or poultry and fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing food.*

*Examples of solid fats and oils

Solid Fats	Oils
Beef, pork, and chicken fat	Canola oil
Butter, cream, and milk fat	Corn oil
Coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils	Cottonseed oil
Hydrogenated oil	Olive oil
Partially hydrogenated oil	Peanut oil
Shortening	Safflower oil
Stick margarine	Sunflower oil
	Tub (soft) margarine
	Vegetable oil

Eat the right amount of calories for you

Everyone has a personal calorie limit. Staying within yours can help you get to or maintain a healthy weight. People who are successful at managing their weight have found ways to keep track of how much they eat in a day, even if they don't count every calorie.

Enjoy your food, but eat less.

- Get your personal daily calorie limit at www.Choose**MyPlate**.gov and keep that number in mind when deciding what to eat.
- Think before you eat...is it worth the calories?
- Avoid oversized portions.
- Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass.
- Stop eating when you are satisfied, not full.

Cook more often at home, where *you* are in control of what's in your food.

When eating out, choose lower calorie menu options.

- Check posted calorie amounts.
- Choose dishes that include vegetables, fruits, and/or whole grains.
- Order a smaller portion or share when eating out.

Write down what you eat to keep track of how much you eat.

If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so sensibly—limit to 1 drink a day for women or to 2 drinks a day for men.

Be physically active your way

Pick activities that you like and start by doing what you can, at least 10 minutes at a time. Every bit adds up, and the health benefits increase as you spend more time being active.

Note to parents

What you eat and drink and your level of physical activity are important for your own health, and also for your children's health.

You are your children's most important role model. Your children pay attention to what you ***do*** more than what you ***say***.

You can do a lot to help your children develop healthy habits for life by providing and eating healthy meals and snacks. For example, don't just ***tell*** your children to eat their vegetables—***show*** them that you eat and enjoy vegetables every day.

Use food labels to help you make better choices

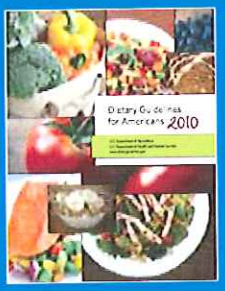
Most packaged foods have a Nutrition Facts label and an ingredients list. For a healthier you, use this tool to make smart food choices quickly and easily.

Check for calories. Be sure to look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually consuming. If you double the servings you eat, you double the calories.

Choose foods with lower calories, saturated fat, *trans* fat, and sodium.

Check for added sugars using the ingredients list. When a sugar is close to first on the ingredients list, the food is high in added sugars. Some names for added sugars include sucrose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, and fructose.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans



The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* are the best science-based advice on how to eat for health. The Guidelines encourage all Americans to eat a healthy diet and be physically active.

Improving what you eat and being active will help to reduce your risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, and obesity. Taking the steps in this brochure will help you follow the Guidelines.

For more information, go to:

- www.DietaryGuidelines.gov
- www.Choose**MyPlate**.gov
- www.Health.gov/paguidelines
- www.HealthFinder.gov

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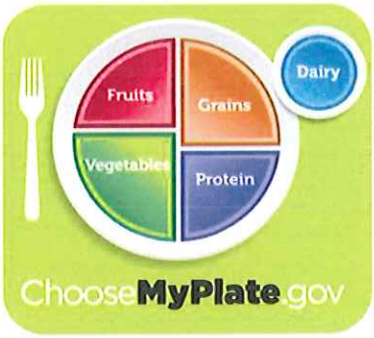
HHS Publication number: HHS-ODPHP-2010-01-DGA-B

June 2011

Getting Started with MyPlate

ChooseMyPlate.gov

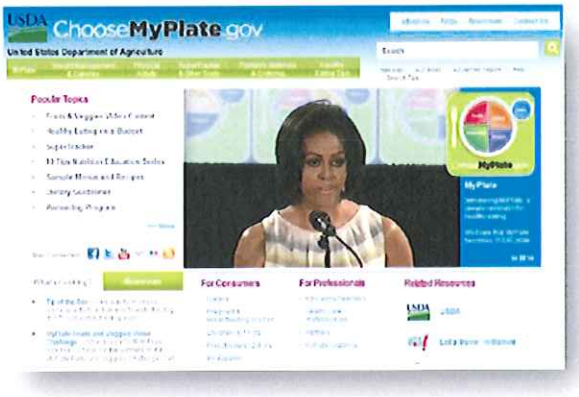
MyPlate Icon



- MyPlate is part of a larger communications initiative based on *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* to help consumers make better food choices.
- MyPlate is designed to *remind* Americans to eat healthfully; it is not intended to change consumer behavior alone.
- MyPlate illustrates the five food groups using a familiar mealtime visual, a place setting.

ChooseMyPlate.gov

- The website features practical information and tips to help Americans build healthier diets.
- It features selected messages to help consumers focus on key behaviors. Selected messages include:
  - **Balancing Calories**
    - Enjoy your food, but eat less.
    - Avoid oversized portions.
  - **Foods to Increase**
    - Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
    - Make at least half your grains whole grains.
    - Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.
  - **Foods to Reduce**
    - Compare sodium in foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals—and choose foods with lower numbers.
    - Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

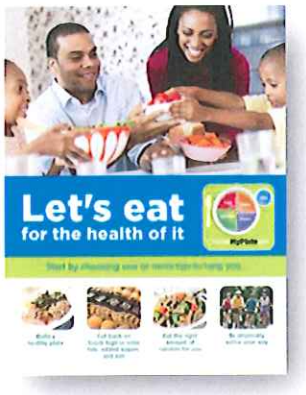


- ChooseMyPlate.gov includes much of the consumer and professional information formerly found on MyPyramid.gov.

USDA
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

Revised August 2012

Consumer Resources



Let's Eat for the Health of It

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines Brochure

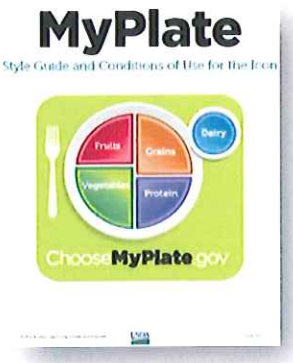
This brochure contains practical strategies to make healthy food choices. The Brochure highlights themes from the Guidelines such as *Balancing Calories, Foods to Reduce,* and *Foods to Increase.* This resource is available online as a PDF.

10 Tips Nutrition Education Series

The 10 Tips Nutrition Education Series provides consumers and professionals with easy-to-follow tips in a convenient, printable format. Educators can use them to support existing lessons, and consumers can choose one or more of these tip sheets to start making small changes toward healthier eating. These and many other printable items are also available in Spanish.

Also on the Web

- Sample Menus for a Week
- Food Group Based Recipes
- Historical Development of Food Guidance
- Nutrition Communicators Network for Partners – Application Forms
- All print-ready content



MyPlate Style Guide

USDA encourages the use of the MyPlate icon in a variety of applications, including textbooks and other educational materials. Any educator or consumer interested in using the image should refer to this Guide for all appropriate information.

Eating on a Budget — The 3 P's

Plan

- ✓ Plan meals and snacks for the week according to an established budget.
- ✓ Find quick and easy recipes online.
- ✓ Include meals that will "stretch" expensive food items (stews, casseroles, stir-fried dishes).
- ✓ Make a grocery list.
- ✓ Check for sales and coupons in the local paper or online and consider discount stores.
- ✓ Ask about a loyalty card at your grocery store.

Purchase

- ✓ Buy groceries when you are <u>not</u> hungry and when you are not too rushed.
- ✓ Stick to the grocery list and stay out of the aisles that don't contain items on your list.
- ✓ Buy store brands if cheaper.
- ✓ Find and compare unit prices listed on shelves to get the best price.
- ✓ Purchase some items in bulk or as family packs which usually cost less.
- ✓ Choose fresh fruits and vegetables in season; buy canned vegetables with less salt.
- ✓ Pre-cut fruits and vegetables, individual cups of yogurt, and instant rice and hot cereal are convenient, but usually cost more than those that require a bit more prep time.
- ✓ Good low-cost items available all year include:
  - Protein — beans (garbanzo, black, cannellini)
  - Vegetables — carrots, greens, potatoes
  - Fruit — apples, bananas

Prepare

- ✓ Some meal items can be prepared in advance; pre-cook on days when you have time.
- ✓ Double or triple up on recipes and freeze meal-sized containers of soups and casseroles or divide into individual portions.
- ✓ Try a few meatless meals by substituting with beans and peas or try "no-cook" meals like salads.
- ✓ Incorporate leftovers into a subsequent meal.
- ✓ Be creative with a fruit or vegetable and use it in different ways during the week.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
September 2011
USDA

10 tips
Nutrition Education Series

smart shopping for veggies and fruits

10 tips for affordable vegetables and fruits

It is possible to fit vegetables and fruits into any budget. Making nutritious choices does not have to hurt your wallet. Getting enough of these foods promotes health and can reduce your risk of certain diseases. There are many low-cost ways to meet your fruit and vegetable needs.

1 celebrate the season

Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor, and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer's market is a great source of seasonal produce.

2 why pay full price?

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales, coupons, and specials that will cut food costs. Often, you can get more for less by visiting larger grocery stores (discount grocers if available).

3 stick to your list

Plan out your meals ahead of time and make a grocery list. You will save money by buying only what you need. Don't shop when you're hungry. Shopping after eating will make it easier to pass on the tempting snack foods. You'll have more of your food budget for vegetables and fruits.

4 try canned or frozen

Compare the price and the number of servings from fresh, canned, and frozen forms of the same veggie or fruit. Canned and frozen items may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with "low sodium" or "no salt added" on the label.

5 buy small amounts frequently

Some fresh vegetables and fruits don't last long. Buy small amounts more often to ensure you can eat the foods without throwing any away.

6 buy in bulk when items are on sale

For fresh vegetables or fruits you use often, a large size bag is the better buy. Canned or frozen fruits or vegetables can be bought in large quantitites when they are on sale, since they last much longer.

7 store brands = savings

Opt for store brands when possible. You will get the same or similar product for a cheaper price. If your grocery store has a membership card, sign up for even more savings.

8 keep it simple

Buy vegetables and fruits in their simplest form. Pre-cut, pre-washed, ready-to-eat, and processed foods are convenient, but often cost much more than when purchased in their basic forms.

9 plant your own

Start a garden—in the yard or a pot on the deck—for fresh, inexpensive, flavorful additions to meals. Herbs, cucumbers, peppers, or tomatoes are good options for beginners. Browse through a local library or online for more information on starting a garden.

10 plan and cook smart

Prepare and freeze vegetable soups, stews, or other dishes in advance. This saves time and money. Add leftover vegetables to casseroles or blend them to make soup. Overripe fruit is great for smoothies or baking.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.

DG TipSheet No. 9
June 2011

10 tips
Nutrition Education Series

eating better on a budget

10 tips to help you stretch your food dollars

Get the most for your food budget! There are many ways to save money on the foods that you eat. The three main steps are planning before you shop, purchasing the items at the best price, and preparing meals that stretch your food dollars.

1 plan, plan, plan!

Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or stir-fries, which "stretch" expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you need to buy.

2 get the best price

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales and coupons. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop. Look for specials or sales on meat and seafood—often the most expensive items on your list.

3 compare and contrast

Locate the "Unit Price" on the shelf directly below the product. Use it to compare different brands and different sizes of the same brand to determine which is more economical.

4 buy in bulk

It is almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk. Smart choices are family packs of chicken, steak, or fish and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables. Before you shop, remember to check if you have enough freezer space.

5 buy in season

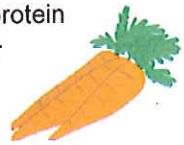
Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add to the freshness! If you are not going to use them all right away, buy some that still need time to ripen.

6 convenience costs... go back to the basics

Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, and instant rice, oatmeal, or grits will cost you more than if you were to make them from scratch. Take the time to prepare your own—and save!

7 easy on your wallet

Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein food. For vegetables, buy carrots, greens, or potatoes. As for fruits, apples and bananas are good choices.



8 cook once...eat all week!

Prepare a large batch of favorite recipes on your day off (double or triple the recipe). Freeze in individual containers. Use them throughout the week and you won't have to spend money on take-out meals.

9 get your creative juices flowing

Spice up your leftovers—use them in new ways. For example, try leftover chicken in a stir-fry or over a garden salad, or to make chicken chili. Remember, throwing away food is throwing away your money!

10 eating out

Restaurants can be expensive. Save money by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for "2 for 1" deals. Stick to water instead of ordering other beverages, which add to the bill.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.

DG TipSheet No. 16
December 2011

Sample Menus for a 2000 Calorie Food Pattern

Use this 7-day menu as a motivational tool to help put a healthy eating pattern into practice, and to identify creative new ideas for healthy meals. Averaged over a week, this menu provides the recommended amounts of key nutrients and foods from each food group. The menus feature a large number of different foods to inspire ideas for adding variety to food choices. They are not intended to be followed day-by-day as a specific prescription for what to eat.

Spices and herbs can be used to taste. Try spices such as chili powder, cinnamon, cumin, curry powder, ginger, nutmeg, mustard, garlic powder, onion powder, or pepper. Try fresh or dried herbs such as basil, parsley, cilantro, chives, dill, mint, oregano, rosemary, thyme, or tarragon. Also try salt-free spice or herb blends.

While this 7-day menu provides the recommended amounts of foods and key nutrients, it does so at a moderate cost. Based on national average food costs, adjusted for inflation to March 2011 prices, the cost of this menu is less than the average amount spent for food, per person, in a 4-person family.

DAY 1

BREAKFAST

Creamy oatmeal (cooked in milk):
- *½ cup uncooked oatmeal*
- *1 cup fat-free milk*
- *2 Tbsp raisins*
- *2 tsp brown sugar*

Beverage: 1 cup orange juice

LUNCH

Taco salad:
- *2 ounces tortilla chips*
- *2 ounces cooked ground turkey*
- *2 tsp corn/canola oil (to cook turkey)*
- *¼ cup kidney beans**
- *½ ounce low-fat cheddar cheese*
- *½ cup chopped lettuce*
- *½ cup avocado*
- *1 tsp lime juice (on avocado)*
- *2 Tbsp salsa*

Beverage:
1 cup water, coffee, or tea**

DINNER

Spinach lasagna roll-ups:
- *1 cup lasagna noodles(2 oz dry)*
- *½ cup cooked spinach*
- *½ cup ricotta cheese*
- *1 ounce part-skim mozzarella cheese*
- *½ cup tomato sauce**

1 ounce whole wheat roll
- *1 tsp tub margarine*

Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

SNACKS

2 Tbsp raisins
1 ounce unsalted almonds

DAY 2

BREAKFAST

Breakfast burrito:
- *1 flour tortilla (8" diameter)*
- *1 scrambled egg*
- *⅓ cup black beans**
- *2 Tbsp salsa*

½ large grapefruit
Beverage:
1 cup water, coffee, or tea**

LUNCH

Roast beef sandwich:
- *1 small whole grain hoagie bun*
- *2 ounces lean roast beef*
- *1 slice part-skim mozzarella cheese*
- *2 slices tomato*
- *¼ cup mushrooms*
- *1 tsp corn/canola oil (to cook mushrooms)*
- *1 tsp mustard*

Baked potato wedges:
- *1 cup potato wedges*
- *1 tsp corn/canola oil (to cook potato)*
- *1 Tbsp ketchup*

Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

DINNER

Baked salmon on beet greens:
- *4 ounce salmon filet*
- *1 tsp olive oil*
- *2 tsp lemon juice*
- *⅓ cup cooked beet greens (sauteed in 2 tsp corn/canola oil)*

Quinoa with almonds:
- *½ cup quinoa*
- *½ ounce slivered almonds*

Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

SNACKS

1 cup cantaloupe balls

DAY 3

BREAKFAST

Cold cereal:
- *1 cup ready-to-eat oat cereal*
- *1 medium banana*
- *½ cup fat-free milk*

1 slice whole wheat toast
- *1 tsp tub margarine*

Beverage: 1 cup prune juice

LUNCH

Tuna salad sandwich:
- *2 slices rye bread*
- *2 ounces tuna*
- *1 Tbsp mayonnaise*
- *1 Tbsp chopped celery*
- *½ cup shredded lettuce*

1 medium peach
Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

DINNER

Roasted chicken:
- *3 ounces cooked chicken breast*

1 large sweet potato, roasted
½ cup succotash (limas & corn)
- *1 tsp tub margarine*

1 ounce whole wheat roll
- *1 tsp tub margarine*

Beverage:
1 cup water, coffee, or tea**

SNACKS

¼ cup dried apricots
1 cup flavored yogurt (chocolate)

Sample Menus for a 2000 Calorie Food Pattern (cont'd)

DAY 4

BREAKFAST
1 whole wheat English muffin
1 Tbsp all-fruit preserves
1 hard-cooked egg
Beverage:
1 cup water, coffee, or tea**

LUNCH
White bean-vegetable soup:
1 ¼ cup chunky vegetable soup with pasta
*½ cup white beans**
6 saltine crackers*
½ cup celery sticks
Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

DINNER
Rigatoni with meat sauce:
1 cup rigatoni pasta (2 oz dry)
2 ounces cooked ground beef (95% lean)
2 tsp corn/canola oil (to cook beef)
*½ cup tomato sauce**
3 Tbsp grated parmesan cheese
Spinach salad:
1 cup raw spinach leaves
½ cup tangerine sections
½ ounce chopped walnuts
4 tsp oil and vinegar dressing
Beverage:
1 cup water, coffee, or tea**

SNACKS
1 cup nonfat fruit yogurt

DAY 5

BREAKFAST
Cold cereal:
1 cup shredded wheat
½ cup sliced banana
½ cup fat-free milk
1 slice whole wheat toast
2 tsp all-fruit preserves
Beverage:
1 cup fat-free chocolate milk

LUNCH
Turkey sandwich
1 whole wheat pita bread (2 oz)
3 ounces roasted turkey, sliced
2 slices tomato
¼ cup shredded lettuce
1 tsp mustard
1 Tbsp mayonnaise
½ cup grapes
Beverage: 1 cup tomato juice*

DINNER
Steak and potatoes:
4 ounces broiled beef steak
⅔ cup mashed potatoes made with milk and 2 tsp tub margarine
½ cup cooked green beans
1 tsp tub margarine
1 tsp honey
1 ounce whole wheat roll
1 tsp tub margarine
Frozen yogurt and berries:
½ cup frozen yogurt (chocolate)
¼ cup sliced strawberries
Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

SNACKS
1 cup frozen yogurt (chocolate)

DAY 6

BREAKFAST
French toast:
2 slices whole wheat bread
3 Tbsp fat-free milk and
⅔ egg (in French toast)
2 tsp tub margarine
1 Tbsp pancake syrup
½ large grapefruit
Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

LUNCH
3-bean vegetarian chili on baked potato:
¼ cup each cooked kidney beans, navy beans,* and black beans**
*½ cup tomato sauce**
¼ cup chopped onion
2 Tbsp chopped jalapeno peppers
1 tsp corn/canola oil (to cook onion and peppers)
¼ cup cheese sauce
1 large baked potato
½ cup cantaloupe
Beverage:
1 cup water, coffee, or tea**

DINNER
Hawaiian pizza
2 slices cheese pizza, thin crust
1 ounce lean ham
¼ cup pineapple
¼ cup mushrooms
1 tsp safflower oil (to cook mushrooms)
Green salad:
1 cup mixed salad greens
4 tsp oil and vinegar dressing
Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

SNACKS
3 Tbsp hummus
5 whole wheat crackers*

DAY 7

BREAKFAST
Buckwheat pancakes with berries:
2 large (7") pancakes
1 Tbsp pancake syrup
¼ cup sliced strawberries
Beverage: 1 cup orange juice

LUNCH
New England clam chowder:
3 ounces canned clams
½ small potato
2 Tbsp chopped onion
2 Tbsp chopped celery
6 Tbsp evaporated milk
¼ cup fat-free milk
1 slice bacon
1 Tbsp white flour
10 whole wheat crackers*
1 medium orange
Beverage: 1 cup fat-free milk

DINNER
Tofu-vegetable stir-fry:
4 ounces firm tofu
½ cup chopped Chinese cabbage
¼ cup sliced bamboo shoots
2 Tbsp chopped sweet red peppers
2 Tbsp chopped green peppers
1 Tbsp corn/canola oil (to cook stir-fry)
1 cup cooked brown rice (2 ounces raw)
Honeydew yogurt cup:
¾ cup honeydew melon
½ cup plain fat-free yogurt
Beverage:
1 cup water, coffee, or tea**

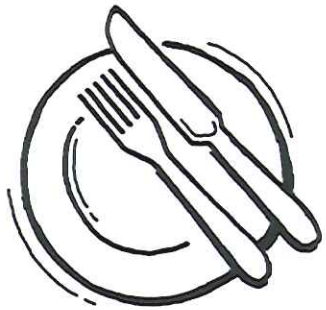
SNACKS
1 large banana spread with
2 Tbsp peanut butter*
1 cup nonfat fruit yogurt

Notes:

*Foods that are reduced sodium, low sodium, or no-salt added products. These foods can also be prepared from scratch with no added salt. All other foods are regular commercial products, which contain variable levels of sodium. Average sodium level of the 7-day menu assumes that no salt is added in cooking or at the table.

**Unless indicated, all beverages are unsweetened and without added cream or whitener.

Italicized foods are part of the dish or food that precedes it.



Sample Menus for a 2000 Calorie Food Pattern (cont'd)

Average amounts for weekly menu:

Food group	Daily average over 1 week
GRAINS	6.2 oz eq
Whole grains	3.8
Refined grains	2.4
VEGETABLES	2.6 cups
Vegetable subgroups (amount per week)	
Dark green	1.6 cups per week
Red/Orange	5.6
Starchy	5.1
Beans and Peas	1.6
Other Vegetables	4.1
FRUITS	2.1 cups
DAIRY	3.1 cups
PROTEIN FOODS	5.7 oz eq
Seafood	8.8 oz per week
OILS	29 grams
CALORIES FROM ADDED FATS AND SUGARS	245 calories

Nutrient	Daily average over 1 week
Calories	1975
Protein	96 g
Protein	19% kcal
Carbohydrate	275 g
Carbohydrate	56% kcal
Total fat	59 g
Total fat	27% kcal
Saturated fat	13.2 g
Saturated fat	6.0% kcal
Monounsaturated fat	25 g
Polyunsaturated fat	16 g
Linoleic Acid	13 g
Alpha-linolenic Acid	1.8 g
Cholesterol	201 mg
Total dietary fiber	30 g
Potassium	4701 mg
Sodium	1810 mg
Calcium	1436 mg
Magnesium	468 mg
Copper	2.0 mg
Iron	18 mg
Phosphorus	1885 mg
Zinc	14 mg
Thiamin	1.6 mg
Riboflavin	2.5 mg
Niacin Equivalents	24 mg
Vitamin B6	2.4 mg
Vitamin B12	12.3 mcg
Vitamin C	146 mg
Vitamin E	11.8 mg (AT)
Vitamin D	9.1 mcg
Vitamin A	1090 mcg (RAE)
Dietary Folate Equivalents	530 mcg
Choline	386 mg

Eating Healthy on a Budget
The Consumer Economics Perspective

Can people eat healthier and spend less money?

- USDA issues four Food Plans (Thrifty, Low-Cost, Moderate-Cost, and Liberal) that show people how to eat a healthy diet at various cost levels. By following USDA's Low-Cost Food Plan, a family can eat a healthier diet, including more vegetables and fruits, at less than what they are spending on food.

- The average American family of four (married couple with two children) spent approximately $185 per week on food (away and at home) in 2009. This spending does not buy a nutritious diet. The most recent results of USDA's Healthy Eating Index, a report card on the American diet, shows most people have a diet that needs improvement (average Index score is 58 out of 100). Average intake of vegetables is 1.47 cups per day (about 59 percent of the recommendation) and average intake of fruits is .84 cups per day (about 42 percent of the recommendation).

- By following USDA's Low-Cost Food Plan, people could save money and consume a healthier diet. The Low-Cost Food Plan is a nutritious diet that in November 2010 cost $175 per week for a family of four (married couple age 20-50 and two children age 6-8 and 9-11). Of this total amount, 40 percent goes to vegetables and fruits. Unlike the typical diet, the Plan meets USDA Food Pattern recommendations for vegetables and fruits. For the family of four, the range per person is 2 - 3.5 cups of vegetables per day and 1.5 - 2.5 cups of fruits. Contrary to popular opinion that a healthier diet costs more, it is possible for people to eat healthier, including more vegetables and fruits, and spend less on food.

- USDA's Low-Cost Food Plan not only contains more vegetables and fruits than what people are presently eating, it contains more whole grains and lower fat/skim milk products than what people are eating. It contains much less fats, oils, and sweets than what people are eating.

- USDA maintains a recipe finder database (see http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/USDAFoodPlansCostofFood.htm) that contains low-cost food choices that follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and are relatively easy to prepare. Food choices or recipes are organized by menu item (e.g., main dish, side dish, soup) and intended audience (e.g., older adults, Hispanics, parents of young children).

Are fruits and vegetables so expensive that people cannot afford to eat a healthy diet?

- A recent Produce Marketing Association report "The Cost of the Recommended Daily Servings of Fresh Produce" shows people can meet vegetable and fruit recommendations for about $0.50 per cup. The average price per cup equivalent across all fresh produce is $0.42 for vegetables and $0.56 for fruits (based on 2009-10 data). Nationally, the average retail price for fresh vegetables and fruits recommended for a 2000 calorie diet (4.5 cup equivalents) is $2.18.

- In the total U.S., the least expensive fresh vegetables were potatoes, lettuce, eggplant, prepared cooking greens, summer squash, carrots, and tomatillos (options costing less than $0.42 per cup equivalent).

- In the total U.S., the least expensive fresh fruits were watermelon, bananas, apples, pears pineapple, and peaches (options costing less than $0.56 per cup equivalent).

- Opting for the least expensive choices available in a single store can significantly drop the average price of fresh vegetables and fruits. According to a USDA study, opting for frozen or canned vegetables and fruits may also lower costs.

How can people actually know what foods are healthful choices and that they are likely economical as well?

- To help consumers implement the 2010 Dietary Guidelines, USDA introduced a 7-day menu as a motivational tool that can help them put a healthy eating pattern into practice.

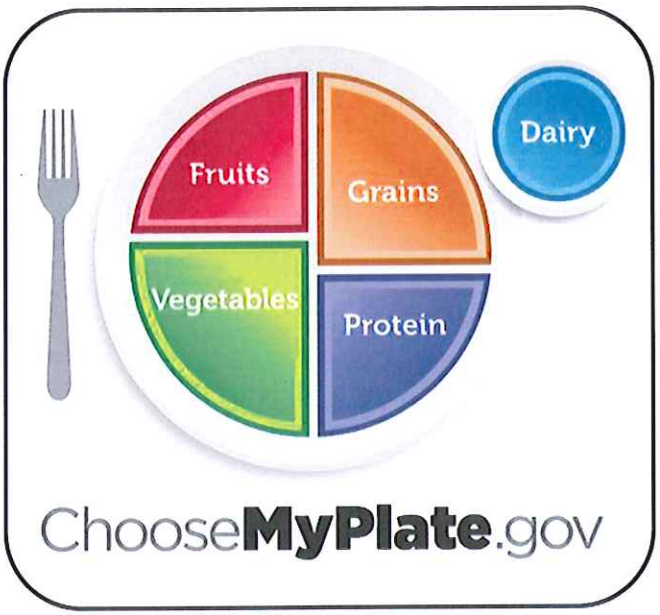
- Averaged over a week, this menu identifies foods that provide the recommended amounts of key nutrients. Based on national average food costs, adjusted to 2011 prices, the cost of this menu is less than the average amount spent for food, per person, for a 4-person family. For a 2,000 calories menu, the average food cost is $6.65 per day per person.

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
September 2011
USDA

USDA
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
USDA Blog
~Reaching Out, Every Day in Every Way~

Nutrition Doesn't Have to Be Expensive

Posted by Dr. Mark Lino, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, on August 25, 2011, at 11:19 AM



Recent news articles have reported that a healthy diet is expensive if one were to consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. As the senior economist with the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) with over 20 years of experience in the area of food economics developing food plans and market baskets, I agree. Depending on the food choices, a healthy diet can be relatively expensive.

However, there is a compelling fact that these news reports fail to highlight — a healthy diet can be relatively ***in***expensive. Now some readers of this blog may think that this is another case of economic double talk or spin, but healthy foods come in a variety of forms and a range of prices that likely fit just about anyone's budget.

To help consumers choose a diet that conforms to the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, CNPP recently introduced a 7-day menu plan to help consumers improve their diet; you can find it at ChooseMyPlate.gov. Averaged over a week, this menu provides food choices that meet the recommended amounts of key nutrients. Based on national average food costs, adjusted to 2011 prices, the cost of this menu is less than the average amount spent for food, per person, for a 4-person family. For example, the average food cost for a 2,000 calorie diet is $6.65 per person per day.

According to a USDA study, the total costs for satisfying the USDA food pattern quantity and variety recommendations for fruits and vegetables in the Dietary Guidelines vary from day-to-day, but average just under $2.00 per day or, approximately, 40 to 50 cents per cup-equivalent, using 2008 prices for commonly consumed fruits and vegetables.

Many of the most commonly consumed fruits and vegetables – such as apples, bananas, navel oranges, fresh whole carrots, onions, and potatoes — cost less than 40 cents per cup-equivalent. A recent Produce Marketing Association report "The Cost of the Recommended Daily Servings of Fresh Produce" shows people can meet vegetable and fruit recommendations for about 50 cents per cup. The average price per

cup-equivalent across all fresh produce is 42 cents for vegetables and 56 cents for fruits (based on 2009-10 data). Nationally, the average retail price for fresh vegetables and fruits recommended for a 2000 calorie diet (4.5 cup equivalents) is $2.18.

In the total U.S., the least expensive fresh vegetables were potatoes, lettuce, eggplant, greens, summer squash, carrots, and tomatillos. The least expensive fresh fruits were watermelon, bananas, apples, pears, pineapple, and peaches. According to a USDA study, opting for frozen or canned vegetables and fruits may also lower costs.

These studies show it is possible to eat a healthy low-cost diet or one that costs less than what people are presently spending. In fact, some of the studies showing that a healthy diet is expensive also admit in their discussion section that a healthy diet can be ***inexpensive, depending on the food choices a person makes.*** This is the key – choosing healthy, low-cost foods.

For guidance, USDA has a website that helps people make these choices. It's called The Recipe Finder Database. The site contains numerous recipes that are low cost and follow dietary recommendations. Weekly household menus can be built from these recipes.

In addition to selecting healthy, low-cost foods, I find that people need to build good shopping skills. These skills include doing comparison pricing, using coupons, buying fruits and vegetables in season, and storing produce bought in bulk in a way that preserves them safely for use over a longer period of time.

Of course, the selection of healthy foods, whether they be the higher or lower cost options, depends on people having access to such foods. This is an area of concern and one that USDA continues to address. In addition, many people in the United States have no income or fall below the poverty threshold. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) provides these people with the means to choose low-cost healthy foods.

To learn more about healthy eating, go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

USDA's Nutrition Assistance Programs: *Eat Right When Money's Tight*

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE JANUARY 2012

CHECK OUT

- **MyPlate** at **www.ChooseMyPlate.gov** Features practical information and tips to help Americans build healthier diets. MyPlate is designed to remind Americans to eat healthfully.
- **Community Corner** on the SNAP-Ed Connection at **www.snap.nal.usda.gov** Find information, tips, and tools for making healthy lifestyle choices.
- **Recipe Finder** at **http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov** Contains over 600 low cost, nutritious, and delicious recipes in both English and Spanish.
- **The SNAP pre-screening tool at www.snap-step1.usda.gov** See if you qualify for SNAP benefits and how much you might receive.
- Find the **location of your nearest SNAP office** at **www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm**

Now More Than Ever, USDA's Nutrition Assistance Programs Can Help

Many families are concerned about the rising cost of food. Read on for tips on how to stretch your food dollars through budgeting, food selection, and low-cost recipes. If you are struggling to put food on the table, USDA's nutrition assistance programs may help.

Use foods you already have to plan menus. Add missing foods to your shopping list.

Resources: Available For Food

- Know how much money you have to spend on food.
- Make a shopping list based on the money you have to spend.
- Buy only the amounts of fresh foods you can use before it spoils.
- Consider frozen or shelf stable items that last longer.

Planning: Making Meals With Foods On Hand

Before going to the grocery store, check what foods you already have.

Once you know what foods you have, ask these questions:

- What meals and recipes can I make using the foods I have?
- Can I mix foods together to make a tasty and nutritious meal?
- Which foods do my family need for good health?

Then:

- Plan what recipes you will make using your list of foods.
- Use other foods on your list such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains to complete the menu.
- Once you plan your menus, make a new list for missing foods you need to buy.

~Turn the page for more tips on low-cost, healthy shopping.

Shopping: Before, During, and After

Before Shopping

- Make a shopping list. This helps you stick to your budget.
- Plan your meals. Planning helps put leftovers to good use.
- Look for coupons, sales, and store specials.
- For added savings sign up for the store discount card.

During Shopping

- Don't shop when you are hungry. It's easier to stick to your shopping list.
- Try store brands. They usually cost less.
- Compare products for the best deal.
- Check sell by dates. Buy the freshest food possible. It lasts longer.

After Shopping

- Store food right away to preserve freshness.
- Freeze food to prevent spoiling.
- Divide foods into small portions for children and elderly to prevent waste.
- Use foods with the earliest expiration dates first.

Fruits and vegetables are usually less expensive when they are in season. Farmer's Markets always carry what is in season.

Tips: Best Buys for Cost and Nutrition

Breads and Grains

- Look for bargains on day old bread. It costs less but is still nutritious.
- Buy regular rice, oatmeal, and grits instead of instant to save on money, sugar, and calories.

Vegetables and Salad

- Buy large bags of frozen vegetables. Seal tightly in the freezer between uses.
- Avoid pre-bagged salad mixes. They are usually more expensive and spoil faster.

Fruits

- Buy fresh fruits in season when they generally cost less.
- Frozen and canned fruits are a smart choice all year round.

Low-Fat Milk Products

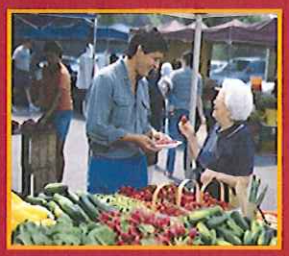
- Buy fresh, low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese in the largest size that can be used before spoiling. Larger containers cost less than smaller sizes.
- Ultra-pasteurized milk has a longer expiration date and won't spoil as fast.

Meat and Beans

- Dried beans and peas are a good source of protein and fiber. They last a long time without spoiling.
- Chuck or bottom round roast has less fat and is cheaper than sirloin.
- Look for specials at the meat counter. Buy meat on sale for big savings.
- Buy meat in large bulk packages to save money. Freeze portions you might not use right away to prevent spoiling.

Look for bargains on day old bread. It costs less but is still nutritious.

USDA's nutrition assistance programs provide assistance to millions of American households struggling to balance their budgets.



For more information, visit the SNAP-Ed Connection Web site.

USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs Can Help Make Ends Meet

You may qualify for more than Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. If you get SNAP benefits and have children in school, they qualify for free lunch and breakfast. If you are low-income and pregnant, breastfeeding, a new mom or have children under five years old, you might qualify for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a Federal program that provides food to low-income persons. For more information on these programs, contact:

SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

- For: Eligible low-income people and their families
- Call 1-800-221-5689
- To find your nearest SNAP office visit: www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm

WIC - Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

- For: Eligible low-income pregnant or breastfeeding women, new moms, and children under age 5
- Visit: www.fns.usda.gov/wic/contacts/tollfreenumbers.htm

School Nutrition Programs

- For: Eligible low-income school-aged children
- Contact your local school or school district

TEFAP - The Emergency Food Assistance Program

- For: Eligible low-income persons
- Visit: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/tefap_eligibility.htm

Resources for SNAP Partners, Educators, and the Community

The SNAP-Ed Connection is an online resource center which contains information on healthy eating, using your food dollar wisely, and over 600 low cost recipes in English and Spanish. Visit the SNAP-Ed Connection at:

http://snap.nal.usda.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People.™

Fruits and Vegetables

"Eat your fruits and vegetables." You've likely heard this statement since childhood. Research shows why it is good advice:

- Healthy diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.
- Fruits and vegetables also provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health.
- Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and are filling.

Did you know that ½ of your plate each meal should be fruits and vegetables? To find out the amount of each food group you need to eat daily, visit ChooseMyPlate.gov (http://www.choosemyplate.gov/) (http://www.cdc.gov/Other/disclaimer.html).

Nutrient information for fruits and vegetables

- Fruits and vegetables are sources of many vitamins, minerals and other natural substances that may help protect you from chronic diseases. Eating fruits and vegetables of different colors gives your body a wide range of valuable nutrients, like fiber, folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C. This chart of Nutrition Information for Fruits and Vegetables (http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/nutrient-info.html) provides examples of fruits and vegetables that are sources of specific nutrients.

Not sure how many fruits and vegetables you should be eating each day?

- Visit the Fruit and Vegetable Calculator (http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/howmany.html). Here you can calculate your fruit and vegetable recommendations based on your calorie needs for your age, sex, and activity level. This site also has helpful tips and photographs of 1/2 cup and 1 cup fruit and vegetable examples.

Curious as to whether fruits and vegetables can help you manage your weight?

- Take a look at this How to Use Fruits and Vegetables to Help Manage your Weight (http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/healthyweight/healthy_eating/fruits_vegetables.htm) brochure and learn about fruits and vegetables and their role in your weight management plan. Tips to cut calories by substituting fruits and vegetables are included with meal-by-meal examples. You will also find snack ideas that are 100 calories or less. With these helpful tips, you will soon be on your way to adding more fruits and vegetables into your healthy eating plan.

Food safety basics for fruits and vegetables

- To prevent foodborne illness, review Food Safety Basics for Fruit and Vegetables (http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/foodsafety.html) . As you strive to meet your individual fruit and vegetable consumption recommendations, remember that proper handling and preparation can reduce the risk of food contamination and foodborne illness.

Related Resources

The State Indicator Report on Fruits & Vegetables, 2009 - [PDF-1.23Mb] (http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/StateIndicatorReport2009.pdf) provides national and state-specific information on fruit and vegetable (F&V) consumption and policy and environmental supports. The behavioral indicators are derived from objectives for F&V outlined in *Healthy People 2010*. The policy and environmental indicators measure a state's ability to support the consumption of F&V through increased access, availability, and reduced price in schools and communities. The report can be used to inform decision makers and track progress.

The National Action Guide - [PDF - 160KB] (http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/NationalActionGuide2009.pdf) summarizes the national data on F&V consumption, policy, and environmental supports and provides potential actions that government and business leaders, coalitions, community-based organizations, and professionals can take to improve Americans' nutrition along with resources for taking action.

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Content source: Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333, USA
800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348 - Contact CDC–INFO

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Browse by Subject

Recipe Finder
National SNAP-Ed
Resource Library
State Gates
Photo Gallery
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Tools

Recipe Finder

Español | View cookbook | View shopping list

We invite you to search the database of recipes submitted by nutrition and health professionals and organizations. Nutrition educators in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other FNS nutrition assistance programs and their partners are encouraged to use the database to support their nutrition education messages.

SNAP-Ed Connection is pleased to announce a new Build a Cookbook feature to the Recipe Finder! You can create your own personalized cookbook by adding recipes you've selected from the Recipe Finder database, or you can choose one of our fixed cookbook options that use pre-selected recipes based on several categories. Start building your cookbook today!

- About the Recipe Finder Database
- Recipe Review Criteria
- NEW! Build a Cookbook
- Add a Recipe
- Recipe Finder Cost Data: Questions and Answers
- Food Demonstration Tips
- Tips For Involving Children In The Kitchen
- Food Safety Tips
- ChooseMyPlate.gov

Search by ingredient:

Search

Having trouble finding a recipe by ingredient? View a list of ingredients.

Search by recipe name:

Search

Browse all recipes alphabetically
Browse all recipes by rating
Browse all recipes by author

Search by the following categories:

Choose search items from the categories below then use the search button at the bottom of the page to view the results.

Audiences

- ☐ American Indian
- ☐ General
- ☐ Middle Eastern
- ☐ Parents of Teens
- ☐ Southern
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Older Adults
- ☐ Parents of Young Children
- ☐ Vegetarian

Cooking Equipment

- ☐ Blender
- ☐ No Cooking Required
- ☐ Skillet
- ☐ Toaster
- ☐ Microwave
- ☐ Oven
- ☐ Stovetop / Hot Plate
- ☐ Wok

Menu Items

- ☐ Appetizers
- ☐ Breads
- ☐ Main Dish
- ☐ Sauces / Condiments / Dressings
- ☐ Snacks / Sandwiches
- ☐ Beverages
- ☐ Desserts
- ☐ Salads
- ☐ Side Dishes
- ☐ Soups / Stews

Themes

- ☐ Food Resource Management
- ☐ Ready in 30 Minutes or Less

Topics

- ☐ Eat Calcium-Rich Food
- ☐ Eat More Fruits and Vegetables
- ☐ Eat Less Saturated Fats, Trans Fats and Cholesterol
- ☐ Eat Whole Grains

Last Modified: Jan-29-2013

Find recipes with a total cost less than ($): **Find recipes with a serving cost less than ($):**

Recipe costs are based on information provided by AC Nielsen

Search Clear form

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Plan

FROM OUR BLOG: POSTS ON PLANNING

Healthy Snacks for Kids Don't Have to Cost More

Mar 5, 2013 -- I am not against my children having cupcakes for a friend's birthday or candy here and there it's all about...

It's Not Just a Piece of Candy

Mar 5, 2013 -- As a mother of a 2 and 4 year-old, I am quickly learning about how snacks are an integral...

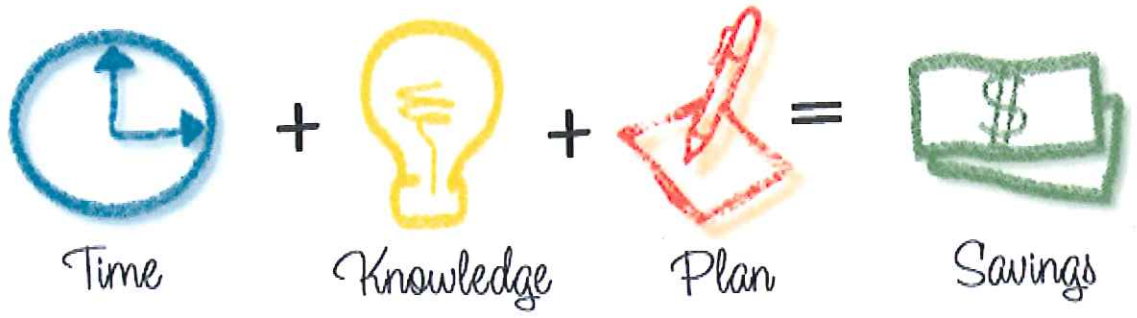
Go Green in the Kitchen

Feb 25, 2013 -- Many of the ways we recycle, reuse, and reduce to save energy can also save us money. While I...

More from our blog

Why plan first?

Spending too much on food? Spend a little time and energy with the ideas on this site, and you can save a chunk change every month. Save food dollars by substituting more of your time and knowledge to make a plan for savir money.



What would you do with an extra $75 a month? If you spend $500 a month on groceries, the tips and ideas be can help you save $75 a month (15%). But it will take a little effort on your part, and some practice. Before long, y efforts will start to pay off and you'll hear a little more coin jingling in your pockets.

Have your plan ready!

In the next step, Shop, you will get tips and tricks to save while you are at the store.

4 Rules of Food Shopping

1. Use grocery store ads.
2. Make a menu plan.
3. Make a list.
4. Use unit pricing.

- Diary - One couple takes the challenge to track their meals and spending. Read about their food expenses menus, and experiences in Reflections on Eating the Thrifty Diet Plan
- Is money really tight? - Review a list of food assist resources

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Menu planning

There are many ways to plan menus. If you have kids, invite them to help. They might enjoy creating menus with markers and paper, or on the computer.

Meal planning basics

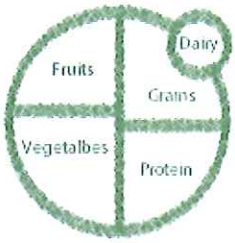
Use these basic methods to help you plan meals.

Eat right with the plate method

An easy way to make sure you're eating the right amount of food is to use the "plate method."

5 day meal planner

Use up what you have as you plan for the next five days.



Is your diet balanced?

Here's a tool to help plan nutritious meals and snacks.

Meals for entertaining on a budget

We have celebration and party planning ideas and recipes for birthdays, barbeques, holidays, and more.

- 5-day meal planning worksheet
- MyPlate - Super Tracker Menu Planner
- Tips for packing lunches...for kids and others
- What does a sack lunch cost?
- 14 prepare & freeze meals: order "Healthy Meals in a Hurry" booklet
- What's for Lunch? It's in the Bag
- MyPlate Lunch Bag Ideas
- Say YES to family meals!
- Meal planning using use-up list and menus
- 3 steps to quick healthy meals
- Making a meal with what's on hand
- Thrifty weekly menus

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How to make your master list

Control spending and avoid impulse buying by making a list of the items needed. Then stick to it.

Whether your list is a printed, organized masterpiece, or on the back of an envelope, the time spent making the list is less than returning to the store for a forgotten item. Fewer trips to the store mean less chances for impulse buying.

List Basics:

- **Organize your list according to the store layout.** This will save you time in the store and reduce the temptation to buy foods not on your list.
- **Look over the recipes you plan to use.** Be sure you have the necessary ingredients.
- **Check the cupboards, refrigerator and freezer for foods on hand.** Are there staple items – flour, sugar, coffee, salt, rice – which should be added to the list?
- **Develop a form you can photocopy or print** for weekly use. If there are foods and other items that you must have every week, give yourself a reminder by making them a permanent part of your master list. For example, if you usually buy carrots, write carrots under your vegetable category heading. Then, if you need carrots that week, circle that item.
- **Post an ongoing list** and jot down items as your supply gets low.

Sample Lists

- Grocery list by store aisle - rearrange the aisles to fit your store, add your weekly musts, use extra space to write in specials
- Grocery List by category - Excel | pdf
- Grocery list to circle - Word | pdf
- Tosca's master grocery list - a sample list used by one busy family

Envelope Grocery Lists
From Minnesota Extension ... print, fold and staple/tape this paper together to make an envelope for your grocery list. You can put any coupons you have inside the envelope to keep everything all together.

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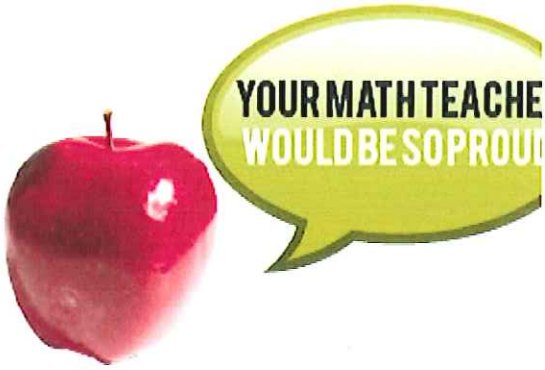
Compare unit prices for best buy

The "unit price" tells you the cost per pound, quart, or other unit of weight or volume of a food package. It is usua posted on the shelf below the food. The shelf tag shows the total price (item price) and price per unit (unit price) f the food item.

Find the best buy

- Unit prices tell you the cost of one unit, such as an ounce.
- Find unit price labels on the shelf edge right under the package.
- Use unit prices to compare costs of different brands of the same food.
- Unit pricing makes it easy to compare the prices of different sizes of the same brand.
- Use unit prices to compare different forms (such as fresh, canned, or frozen) of the same food.
- Choose the food that has the lowest price per unit to save money.



Be aware of downsizing. A trend in recent years is for manufacturers to keep the same sized packaging and sa product price, but reduce the quantity of product inside the package. This trend has been most commonly seen i paper products, baby food, coffee and cleaning products.

Price books help you keep track of the price as well as the quantity or weight you are buying.

Lesson Choose the best deal

GROCERY LIST BY STORE LAYOUT

Aisle 1 Fresh fruits/vegetables	Aisle 6 Beverages-coffee, tea, juice, soda	Aisle11 Crackers, chips, snack foods
Aisle 2 Dried, canned fruits/vegetables, soup	Aisle 7 Baking supplies	Aisle 12 Dairy, eggs, cheese
Aisle 3 Deli meat, bacon, ham	Aisle 8 Meat counter	Aisle 13 Frozen foods
Aisle 4 Condiments, jelly, honey	Aisle 9 Paper supplies	Aisle 14 Cereal
Aisle 5 Salad dressing, croutons, pickles	Aisle 10 Cleaning supplies	Aisle 15 Bread

Groceries

Produce	Meat	Bread / Cereal / Pasta	Canned Goods	Spices / Condiments	Cooking / Baking

Dairy	Frozen	Box	Snacks	Beverages	Baby

Cleaning Supplies	Kitchen Supplies	Personal Supplies	Pet	Misc.	Notes

GROCERY LIST

FRUITS
apples
avocados
bananas
berries
cherries
cantaloupe
watermelon
grapefruit
grapes
lemons
oranges
peaches
pears
kiwi
pomegranate

FRESH VEGETABLES
broccoli
cauliflower
carrots
celery
garlic
lettuce
cucumbers
peppers
squash
tomatoes
artichokes
okra
mustard greens
radishes
leeks

SEAFOOD
crab
shrimp
fish
scallops

MEATS
bacon
beef
chicken
deli meats
hot dogs
pork
turkey

FROZEN
pizza
garlic bread
bean burgers
waffles
ice cream
desserts
cool whip
vegetables
juice
chicken
burgers

BREAKFAST
cereal
oatmeal
pancake mix
cereal bars
granola

Dairy
biscuits
butter
cheese
cream
cream cheese
dip
eggs
egg substitute
yogurt
milk
skim milk

DRINKS
kool-aid
orange juice
coffee
beer
tea
wine
tomato juice
pineapple juice
apple juice
V-8
soda

CAN & JAR ITEMS
applesauce
beans
broth/bouillon
canned fruit
canned veggies
chili
jam/jelly
peanut butter
soups
pickles
olives
hot stuff
spaghetti sauce

PASTA & RICES & DRY
rice
red beans and rice
yellow rice
hamburger helper
macaroni & cheese
noodles
spaghetti
lasagna
elbow macaroni
potatoes au gratin
scalloped potatoes

BREADS & PASTRY
bread
rolls
bagels
muffins

CONDIMENTS
BBQ sauce
ketchup
mustard
soy sauce
honey
sugar
salt
pepper
oil
PAM
relish
pickles
hot sauce
steak sauce
vinegar
salad dressings
olives
hot relish
mayonnaise

SNACKS
candy
popcorn
crackers
jello
puddings
tortilla chips
potato chips
pretzels
Doritos
peanuts
cookies
granola bars

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Dairy/Eggs/Juice	Fruits, beans and Vegetables	Meats	Toiletries/paper goods/other	Snacks	Cereal and breads	Condiments	Cleaning supplies
Milk	Canned diced tomatoes	bacon	Toilet paper	Ice cream	Whole grain white bread	Ketchup	Lysol
Soy Milk	Potatoes	Ground beef	Paper towels	Pot pies	Sara lee delightful	Mustard	Cleaning wipes
Eggs	Onions	Ground turkey	Printer toner	Hot pockets	Cinnamon toast crunch	Hot Sauce	Swifter pads
Deli Cheese (sliced)	Apples	Turkey sausage	Sandwich bags	Beef jerky	Shredded wheat	Barbeque sauce	Swifter spray
Shredded Mozzarella	Bananas	Hot dogs	Gallon bags	Fruit snacks	Frosted Flakes	Tea bags	Carpet cleaner
Shredded Colby jack	Strawberries/other berries	Deli meat	Trash bags	Chips	Cinnabons cereal	Honey	Dishwashing liquid
Shredded Cheddar	Melons	Sardines	Hand soap	Crackers	Oatmeal	Pickles	Dishwashing detergent
American Cheese slices	Grapes	Tuna	Deodorant	Nutty bar	Hamburger buns	Peanut butter	Laundry detergent
Yogurt	Pineapple	Steak	Vaseline	Granola bars	Hotdog buns	Jelly	Fabric Softener
Sour cream	Oranges	Pork chops	Aloe vera	Bagels	Pancake mix	Salt	Magic eraser
Orange juice	Dry beans	Chicken thigh meat	Lotion (Matt)		Biscuits	Pepper	Scrubbers
Apple juice	Kidney beans	Chicken breasts	Lotion (Boys)		Cinnamon rolls	Onion powder	
Grape juice	Lima beans	Chicken legs	Shampoo		Pop tarts	Garlic powder	
Lemonade	Black-eyed peas	Chicken wings	Soap		Toaster strudel	Flour	
V-8 Splash	Greens	Salmon	Body wash		Cake/brownie mix	Canola oil	
Capri suns	Cucumbers	Catfish	Aluminum foil		Waffles	Olive oil	
Butter	Lettuce	Tilapia filets	Cling wrap		Rice	Thyme	
Margarine	Broccoli	Shrimp	Batteries		Spaghetti noodles	Sage	
Cream cheese	Frozen French fries		Light bulbs		Bread crumbs	Cumin	
	Tomato		Filters		Tortillas	Ginger	
	Green onions		Toothpaste			Oregano	
	Green peppers		Toothbrush			Baking powder	
	Asparagus					Baking soda	
	Canned fruit					Yeast	
	Canned cherry pie filling					Sugar	
	Canned apple pie filling					Chocolate chips	

	Frozen corn					Syrup	

Dairy/Eggs/Juice	Fruits, beans and Vegetables	Meats	Toiletries/paper goods/other	Snacks	Cereal and breads	Condiments	Cleaning supplies
	Canned corn					Soy sauce	
	Black beans					Sesame oil	
	Refried beans					Vinegar	
						Worchestshire sauce	
						Spaghetti sauce	
						Cinnamon	
						Oyster sauce	
						Vanilla	
						Liquid smoke	
						Season packets	
						Brown sugar	
						Miracle whip	
						Chocolate syrup	
						Caramel syrup	
						Parmesan cheese sprinkles	
						Croutons	
						Chicken broth	
						Beef broth	
						Salad dressing	
						Salsa	

Print on an 8 x 11 sheet of paper. Fold in half and tape ends to make an envelope.

FOODS TO HAVE ON HAND

Breads/Cereals/Grains
Bread
Cereal
Crackers
Flour
Macaroni
Popcorn
Rice/Wild Rice
Spaghetti
Tortillas

Fruits/Vegetables
Canned vegetables& fruit
Canned tomatoes
Fruit juice
Onions
Potatoes
Tomato paste
Tomato sauce
Celery
Carrots

Baking Products/Seasonings
Baking powder
Baking soda
Chili powder
Cinnamon
Onion or garlic powder
Pepper
Salt
Dry onions

Dairy
Cheese
Milk

Meat/Eggs/Legumes
Dried beans (or canned)
Eggs
Ground Beef
Peanut butter
Tuna

Other
Ketchup
Margarine
Sugar
Vegetable Oil

Put coupons in this envelope from grocery store ads, magazines, newspapers, websites, etc. Take it with you to the store.

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Grocery Store Shopping List

Fresh Fruits& Vegetables	Canned Foods
Baking Products& Seasonings	Breads, Cereals & Grains
Frozen Foods	Meat, Poultry& Fish
Dairy & Refrigerated Foods	Other

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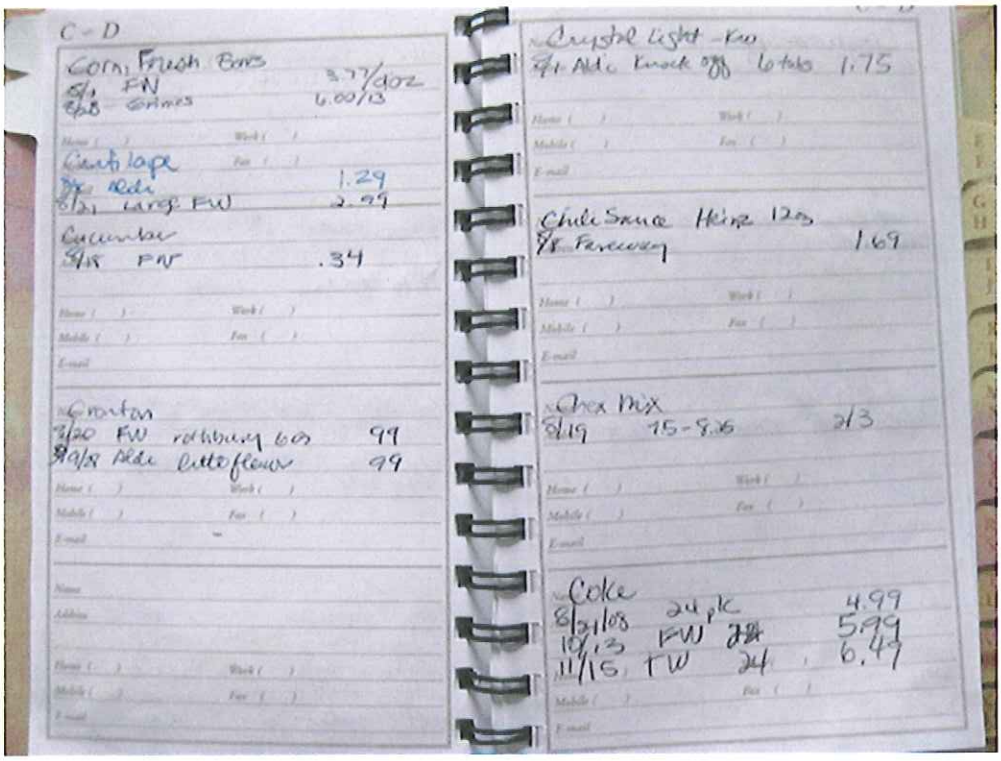
Sample price book

Compare price
Check store ads for sales (many are also online – check out your store's homepage)

- Specials and seasonal foods can help save money.
- Compare ads among stores to find where you can save the most on your list.
- Be aware that specials and coupons are designed to get you to make an impulse buy.
- Be sure that the items you select are things you need and will use. Even with special prices, refunds and coupons, some foods may not be within your budget.

Use a price book

- Use a price book to find real deals. This simple system helps you monitor the prices of frequently purchasec products. Make your own price book:
  - Find or buy a small address book or notebook.
  - Write down the product name, package size, price, store and date.
  - Compare the written prices to advertised specials. After a few weeks you'll know the best prices and b able to stock up so you never pay the "regular price."



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What's in season

Some fruits and vegetables are less expensive when they are "in season" -- meaning they are just ripe from the fields. When the supply for a food like sweet corn in the summer, apples and squash in the fall is plentiful, the co goes down.

A trip the local farmers' market will give you clues about what is in season in your area. Produce in grocery stores is a less reliable indicator of food is in season because most fresh fruits and vegetables are available year-round.

Here are a couple of lists of seasonal fruits and vegetables. The first one is based on Iowa and the other is a national list.

- Fresh Vegetable Guide
- Nutrition Through the Seasons

When it comes to good nutrition, all forms of fruits and vegetables are nutritious -- fresh, frozen, canned, dried, and 100% juice.

- Most frozen and canned foods are processed within hours of harvest, so their flavor and nutritional value are preserved.
- Studies show that recipes prepared with canned foods had similar nutritional values to those prepared with fresh or frozen ingredients.
- Frozen foods also require little preparation-washing and slicing is already done.

Buy locally grown vegetables during primary growing seasons for best quality

April: asparagus, radish

May: asparagus, green onions, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, peas, radish, spinach, turnips

June: asparagus, beets, bok choy, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, collards, green onions, kale

July: beets, bok choy, cabbage, chard, cucumber, new potatoes, snap beans, summer squash, sweet corn, tomatoes

August: beets, bok choy, carrots, chard, collards, cucumber, eggplant, kale, lima beans, muskmelon, onions, peppers, snap beans, summer squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, watermelon

September: beets, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, lima beans, muskmelon, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, radish, snap beans, spinach, summer squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnips, watermelon, winter squash

October: beets, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, cucumber, eggplant, garlic, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, onions, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, radish, snap beans, spinach, summer squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, turnips, winter squash

Wash 'em first

Raw produce can carry bacteria or viruses that will make you sick. The bacteria can come from the soil, people who handle the produce, or from the knives and cutting boards in your home.

Follow these steps to prepare fresh vegetables:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before starting to prepare any food item.
- Use clean cutting boards, knives, and other equipment. If it is necessary to use the same equipment with raw meat, poultry, or fish, be sure to wash with hot, sudsy water before using for vegetable preparation.
- It is best to wash most produce just before using.
- Wash all produce, even if you plan to peel it. (Bacteria on the surface can be transferred to the edible portion inside.)
- Wash produce under running water. Soap or produce rinses are not necessary. Use a scrub brush on firm vegetables. Lettuce, spinach, kale, and chard may need to be rinsed several times to remove soil or sand.
- Dry vegetables with clean paper towels, or let air dry on a rack set over a pan.
- Store washed salad greens in clean, clear plastic bags or clean containers.

Check these Web sites:

ISU AnswerLine—
www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline
ISU Food, Nutrition and Health—
www.iastate.edu/healthnutrition
ISU Extension Distribution Center—
www.extension.iastate.edu/store
Iowa Farmers' Market Directory—
www.agriculture.state.ia.us/farmermarket.asp

Prepared by Barbara Anderson, nutrition and health field specialist; Alyson Miller, former dietetic intern; Catherine Strohbehn, Ph.D., R.D., extension specialist; and Diane Nelson, extension communication specialist.

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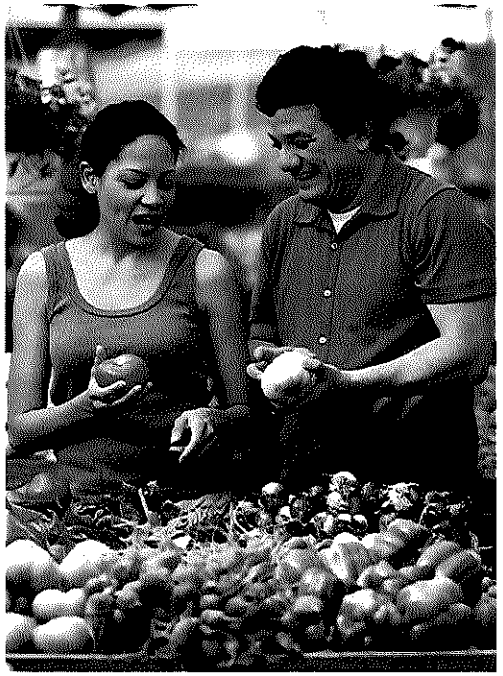
Fresh Vegetable Guide



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Eat your vegetables!

It's true what they say about vegetables—they are excellent sources of vitamins A and C, folic acid, and other nutrients, such as fiber and potassium.

Research shows that eating vegetables can lower the risk of some chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, diverticulosis, type 2 diabetes, cataracts, macular degeneration, and certain types of cancer.

Eating a variety of vegetables of different colors—dark-green leafy products, such as fresh spinach or spring salad mix; yellow or red squash and tomatoes; and even purple eggplant or kale—increases the mix of vitamins and minerals in your diet, and can lead to a healthier you!

These foods are rich sources of vitamins A and/or C and/or folic acid (folate) and/or potassium.

****Find more information about specific vegetables at www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition/foodrecipeactivity/food***

Vegetable**	Look for ...	Storage tips
Asparagus*	Firm, plump, straight spears with compact tips; medium green color with purple tinge; (white stalks are often tough)	Wrap cut ends in damp paper towel; put in plastic bag; store in refrigerator crisper up to 4 days
Beans (snap)*	Tender, crisp, well-shaped, smooth, velvety skin	Store in plastic bag for 4 or 5 days
Beets*	Smooth, hard, round, deep color; smaller size usually more tender	Cut off greens before storing in refrigerator up to 2 weeks
Bell peppers*	Firm, bright color, heavy for their size; no brown or soft spots	Store 3 to 4 days in refrigerator
Bok choy*	Thick, fleshy, firm stalks with bright-colored whole green leaves	Store in plastic bag in refrigerator for 1 to 2 days
Broccoli*	Dark green to purple buds, tightly closed, with firm stems; avoid heads with yellowing	Store in plastic bag in crisper drawer for 3 to 5 days
Brussels sprouts*	Firm, compact, bright green heavy for size	Store in refrigerator for 3 to 5 days
Cabbage*	Crisp, firmly packed head that is heavy for its size and does not smell too strong	Tightly wrap in plastic and refrigerate; flavor and odor increases with storage
Carrots*	Firm, bright orange color, smooth, well-shaped	Keep in plastic bag in refrigerator up to 2 weeks
Cauliflower*	Firm, compact, creamy-white heads with florets tightly pressed together; avoid heads with brown spots on florets	Keep in plastic bag in refrigerator about 1 week
Chili peppers	Firm, plump, shiny skinned, with fresh smell; no soft or brown spots	Refrigerate in plastic bag up to 7 days
Cucumber	Firm, deep green color, well-shaped, small to medium in size; no soft or yellow spots	Refrigerate up to one week
Eggplant*	Firm, shiny skin, heavy for size, green stems; no soft spots or wrinkled skin	Keeps in refrigerator up to 4 days
Greens* (chard/collard/kale/mustard)	Deep green color; fresh, plump, crisp leaves; no thick stems or strong odor	Refrigerate in plastic bag for 3 to 5 days
Kohlrabi	Small, smooth bulb-stems, firm green leaves	Remove leaves; store in refrigerator for several weeks
Leaf lettuce* (romaine, butterhead)	Bright color, crisp leaves; no decay or browning	Store whole heads in plastic bag for 3 to 5 days
Onions (green)	White bulb and crisp green tops	Store in refrigerator for 3 to 4 days
Onions (red, white, yellow)	Blemish-free, dry, shiny, firm, tightly closed neck	Store in loosely woven bag, in a cool, dark, dry area
Peas*	Bright green pods filled with pearl-shaped peas	Store in plastic bag in refrigerator for 3 to 4 days
Potatoes*	Firm and smooth, few eyes, blemish-free; no sprouts, soft spots, or green coloring	Store in cool, dry place for 2 weeks; cut out any green areas and trim any sprouts before using
Pumpkin*	Rock-solid, firm, full stem, matte skin	Store in cool, dry place; thick-skinned keeps longer than thin-skinned
Spinach*	Deep green-colored, crisp leaves	Refrigerate in plastic bag for 2 to 3 days
Summer squash* (patty pan, zucchini)	Small to medium size, shiny skin, solid flesh	Refrigerate in plastic bag for 2 to 3 days
Sweet corn	Bright green, snug-fitting husk; evenly spaced, plump kernels visible when husk peeled back	Refrigerate in tightly wrapped plastic bag for 1 to 2 days
Tomatillos*	Shiny, firm, dry, with snug husks, green color	Refrigerate unhusked in paper bag up to 1 month
Tomatoes*	Firm, fully colored, plump, green stems; no brown spots	Place stem-side down at room temperature; refrigerating causes flavor loss
Winter squash* (acorn, butternut)	Rock-solid, firm, full stem, matte skin, heavy for size; no soft spots or bruises	Store in cool, dry place; thick-skinned will keep longer than thin-skinned

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Coupon common sense

If you have access to a computer, check for coupons online.

- Use coupons when items are discounted or on sale.
- It's perfectly legal to use a store coupon and a manufacturer's coupon at the same time.
- Ask for rain checks if a store coupon is out.

Caution: Most cents-off coupons offered by stores or manufacturers are for the more expensive, highly processed foods or for foods in abundant supply. Don't use a coupon to justify buying a food that your family doesn't need or that costs more than a store brand, even with the coupon savings.

Coupons are usually available for sugary snacks and convenience foods. Have you ever seen a coupon for apples or milk? Use coupons only for items you would normally buy.

The Coupon Clinic

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10 tips to save at the grocery store

Top 10 for saving at the grocery store:

1. **Priorities First.**
   Fill your cart with the basics first—vegetables, fruit, protein and milk. These foods are nearly always found a the outside walls of the store.

2. **Arrange your list according to the store layout.**
   This will save time and prevent backtracking. If you need something in the center aisles, dash in for specific items, then return to the outside walls.

3. **Pay for food, not convenience.**
   You save money when you buy the basic ingredients in your recipes/meals—apples, ground beef, milk, carr rather than pre-prepared items.

4. **Don't even go there.**
   Stay out of the empty calorie aisles (potato chips, crackers, candy, soda, deli), usually found in the center of store.

5. **Buy—or at least try—the store or generic brand.**
   Sometimes the only difference between store brand and name brand is the label; sometimes it's more. The way to know if you'll like a product is to try it.

6. **Look up, look down.**
   Food companies pay to display their products at eye level. Look on higher and lower shelves for less expen products.

7. **Pay attention at the checkout.**
   Make sure you got the sale price, the checker punched in the right code on your produce and that you leave with everything you paid for.

8. **Know the regular prices of items you generally buy.**
   This way you will recognize when an advertised special is really a bargain.

9. **Ask for a rain check.**
   If a specially priced item is sold out, ask for a rain check. It allows you to purchase the item at the sale price

later date.

10. **Check your receipt.**
Make sure your prices and coupons are scanned correctly. Sale items, especially, are often entered incorre into the computer.

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Compare unit prices for best buy

The "unit price" tells you the cost per pound, quart, or other unit of weight or volume of a food package. It is usua posted on the shelf below the food. The shelf tag shows the total price (item price) and price per unit (unit price) f the food item.

Find the best buy

- Unit prices tell you the cost of one unit, such as an ounce.
- Find unit price labels on the shelf edge right under the package.
- Use unit prices to compare costs of different brands of the same food.
- Unit pricing makes it easy to compare the prices of different sizes of the same brand.
- Use unit prices to compare different forms (such as fresh, canned, or frozen) of the same food.
- Choose the food that has the lowest price per unit to save money.

Be aware of downsizing. A trend in recent years is for manufacturers to keep the same sized packaging and sa product price, but reduce the quantity of product inside the package. This trend has been most commonly seen i paper products, baby food, coffee and cleaning products.

Price books help you keep track of the price as well as the quantity or weight you are buying.

Lesson Choose the best deal

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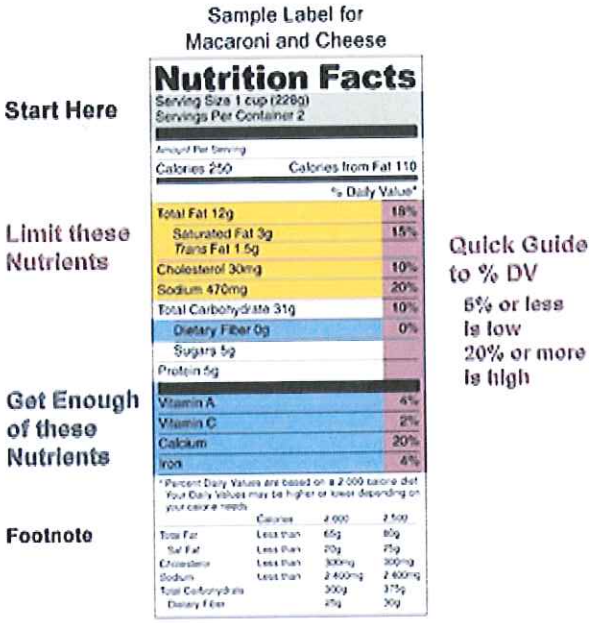
Read food labels

Food labels list the ingredients and valuable nutritional information, which is helpful in judging the nutritional qual a food item.

Nutrition facts. Compare nutrition facts labels to find the best value, help you make healthy choices at the groce store, compare foods and products and plan healthy meals.



Check expiration dates. Avoid buying a food that is past its prime. If it's on sale and near its expiration date, us soon. Find out what the dates on food products really mean.

Example -- Avoid dumping a half gallon of soured milk down the drain: Save $2.50.

Learn More

- What do the dates on food labels mean?

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How long to keep

What do the dates mean? Start saving money right now by making a date with your fridge! Just by opening the fridge door and checking the 'use by' dates on what's inside, you can begin saving money.

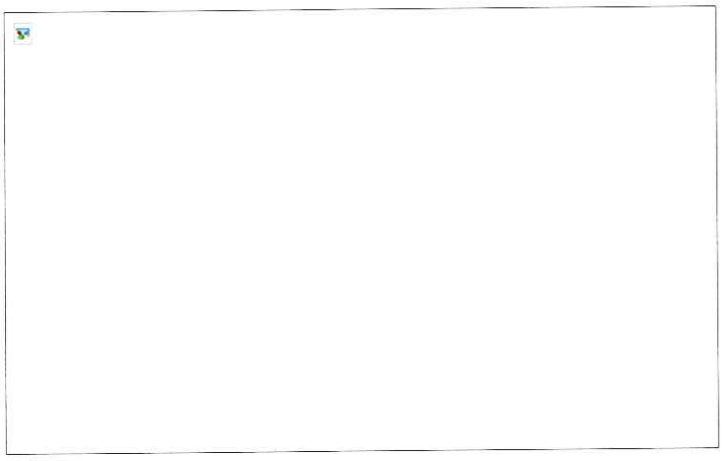
How often do you find that the 'use by' date on a packet of ham or bag of sausages has been and gone and you end up throwing it away? Meat, fish and ready meals are often the most expensive things we buy, so it helps to get into the habit of regularly checking the dates on perishable items in your fridge. Move them into the freezer if you don't think you'll have time to eat them or cook them for tonight's supper.

When you get home with your shopping, it is a good idea to transfer as much as you can straight into the freezer. If you have large packets of chicken pieces or fish, divide them up and freeze individual portions.

Dates on food labels. Many foods have a date stamped on the label. These dates can help you choose foods that are fresh and safe to eat. You will see different dates on different types of foods.

- The **"Pull-By" or "Sell-By"** date is used on foods like milk, cheese, and packaged meats. It is the last date the product should be sold. These foods are usually stored in the refrigerator. They will stay fresh and safe for few days after this date if you store them properly.
- **"Freshness" or "Best-If-Used-By"** dates are used on products like bakery goods or packaged cereals. The date is the last day the product can keep its best quality. After this date, the food may lose some of its freshness and nutritional value.
- An **"Expiration" or "Use-By"** date is the last date the food should be eaten or used. It is used mostly on products such as refrigerated dough and yeast.
- A **"Pack"** date is the date the food was manufactured or processed and packaged. This type of date is used for foods that can be kept for a long time, like canned goods.

How to Tell if Your Food Has Gone Bad



- Vegetable and fruit storage chart
- Cleaning the kitchen cupboard: toss or save?

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Take the shopper's pledge

Plan Your Food Budget

Step 1.

Dollars needed for food each month.

How much do you spend for food each month? Include cash and food stamps. $_____

Step 2.

Dollars for major once-a-month shopping for foods that will keep/won't spoil. $_____

Step 3.

Dollars for fresh foods each month.

Subtract Step 2 (dollars for once-a-month shopping trip) from Step 1 (dollars needed for food each month). How much is left? Write it here. $_____

This is your monthly amount for fresh foods.

Step 4.

Divide monthly dollars for fresh foods (Step 3) by 4.

Weekly dollars for fresh foods. $_____

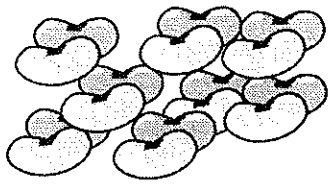
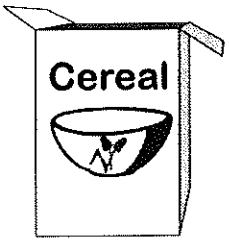
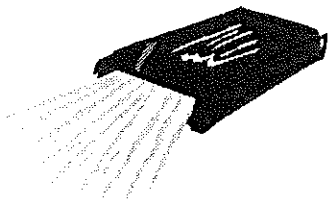
This is how much you can spend each week for vegetables, fruits, meat, milk, bread, and other items you must buy fresh.

Once-a-Month Shopping List

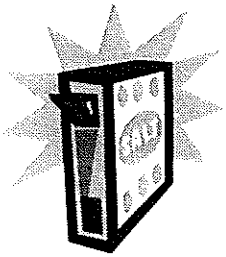
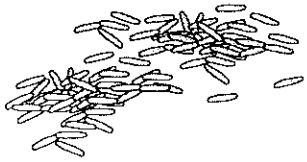
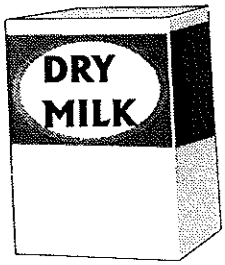
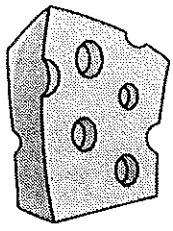
List foods you will buy for this month that will keep for a long time.

Item	Price
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____
_____	$ _____.____

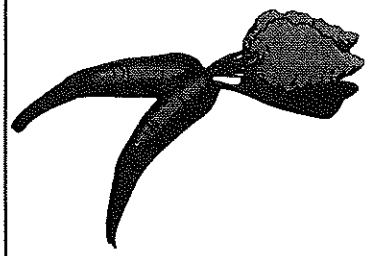
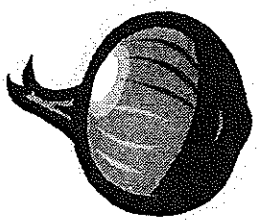
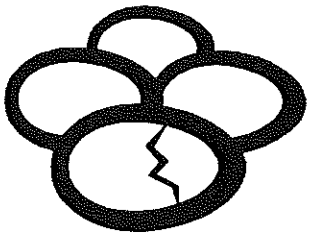
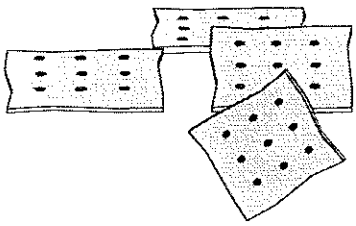
Monthly Food Shopping:
Foods That Keep for a Long Time

Item	Size	Price
 Dried beans	_____	_____
 Canned vegetables	_____	_____
 Peanut butter	_____	_____
 Cereal	_____	_____
 Cornmeal	_____	_____
 Pasta	_____	_____

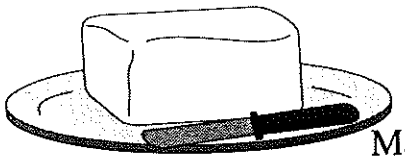
Monthly Food Shopping:
Foods That Keep for a Long Time

Item	Size	Price
 Flour	_____	_____
 Sugar	_____	_____
 Salt	_____	_____
 Rice	_____	_____
 Non-fat dry milk	_____	_____
 Cheese	_____	_____

Monthy Food Shopping:
Foods That Keep for a Long Time

Item	Size	Price
 Canned fruit	_____	_____
 Carrots	_____	_____
 Onions	_____	_____
 Potatoes	_____	_____
 Eggs	_____	_____
 Crackers	_____	_____

Monthly Food Shopping:
Foods That Keep for a Long Time

Item	Size	Price
 Oil	_____	_____
 Margarine	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Plan a Meal

Step 1

Write a menu for a meal.

Step 3

List all foods needed for this meal.

Step 2

Check that the meal fits your family:
- Do I know how to make it?
- Can I afford the ingredients?
- Does my family like these foods?
- How much do I need to make?

Check your meals for variety:
- Food groups
- Taste
- Texture
- Color
- Temperature

Step 4

Cross off foods you have on hand.

Make a grocery list.

Grocery Shopping List

Fresh Fruits/Vegetables

Dried Beans and Peas

Canned Fruits, Vegetables, and Other Canned Foods

Milk and Cheese Products

Bread, Cereal, and Pasta

Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs

Frozen Foods

Others

Grocery Shopping List

Fresh Fruits/Vegetables

Dried Beans and Peas

Canned Fruits, Vegetables, and Other Canned Foods

Milk and Cheese Products

Bread, Cereal, and Pasta

Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs

Frozen Foods

Others

Thrifty Meals for Small Families Fact Sheet

Ideas for Planning Thrifty Menus

Bulletin #4331

1865 THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE Cooperative Extension

If you like, use the sample menus in *Planning Thrifty Meals for Small Families* for a week or two. Then start to plan your own menus. To stick to your food budget,

- choose low-cost foods;
- use smaller amounts of meat, poultry and fish;
- Feature grain products;
- alter favorite recipes;
- avoid waste: plan for leftovers;
- make your own convenience mixes.

Choose Low-Cost Foods

Low-cost meals do not have to be dull or lack variety. There are many low-cost, nutritious foods from which to choose. In fact, many favorite foods are low in cost. These foods are used in the sample menus.

Some foods (soda pop, candy, alcohol, coffee and tea) are not in the menus because they are both high in cost and low in nutrients. Some convenience foods, such as pastries and prepared foods, aren't in the menus either. Convenience foods sometimes cost more than similar foods you make at home. To get nutritious meals at low cost, you want most of your food money to pay off in nutrients.

Check weekly grocery ads in your paper to find the best buys.

Ground beef or turkey, chicken, beef chuck steak, and turkey parts are usually good meat buys.

Plain frozen and canned vegetables often cost much less than vegetables sold with seasonings and sauces

Hamburger on whole wheat roll

Turkey potato salad
Noodles
Lettuce wedge with dressing
Toasted hamburger rolls

Beef and peppers
Rice
Chopped broccoli
Apple cobbler

Chicken stew
Chopped kale
Muffins
Bread pudding

Use Smaller Amounts of Meat, Poultry and Fish

Meat is a good source of several nutrients, but most meats are more expensive than other foods. Try combining small amounts of lower-cost meats, poultry and fish with bread, cereal, rice, pasta or potatoes for hearty main dishes. Dry beans, dry peas, eggs and peanut butter can be used often in casseroles, soups, salads and snacks. They provide the same nutrients as meat at lower cost, and may be lower in fat, too.

To save time, cook enough beans for a few recipes. Cooked beans will keep 3 to 5 days in the refrigerator. Or when you are short on time, you may want to use canned beans even if they cost more.

NOON
Pork or sliced turkey sandwich
Bean vegetable combo

EVENING
Ground beef patties
Macaroni and cheese salad
Celery sticks
Biscuits

SNACK
Toast with peanut butter

Potatoes in this main dish salad stretch food dollars by making the turkey go further.

Meat alternates, including cooked, dry beans and peanut butter, are used in different ways to add variety at low cost.

NOON
Turkey-potato salad on lettuce
Biscuits

EVENING
Bean tamale pie
Lettuce wedge with dressing
Crackers
Peanut butter cookie

SNACK
Cereal
Fat-free milk

Some people think foods such as bread, rice, potatoes and pasta are high in calories. It's not true. It's the toppings we often put on these foods, such as butter, margarine and sour cream, that make them caloric.

Feature Grain Products

Enriched and whole-grain products are among the most economical sources of many vitamins and minerals. They can be a real plus in your diet. The sample menus in the bulletin #4330, *Planning Thrifty Meals for Small Families*, may use more grains than you now eat, but you may be surprised at the different ways they are used.

MORNING
Banana
Oatmeal
Toasted biscuit
Milk

NOON
Grilled cheese sandwich
Carrot sticks

These menus use a lot of low-cost cereals, bread, rice and pasta foods. Such foods provide many nutrients at bargain prices.

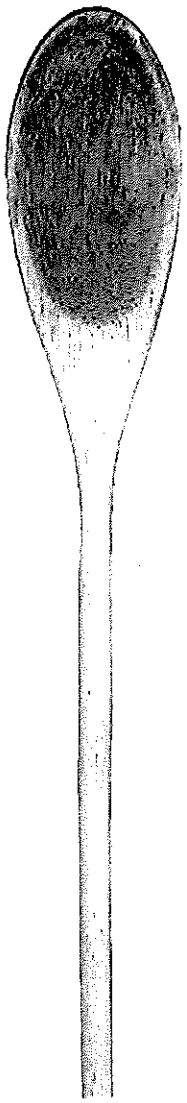
EVENING
Turkey Spanish rice
Green beans
Apple wedges
Toast
Peanut butter cookie

SNACK
Cornmeal chips

Alter Favorite Recipes

You don't have to throw out the recipes and cookbooks that you have been using for years. Altering recipes to substitute low fat ingredients for high fat ingredients doesn't have to change the taste of your food.

Simple changes can make your food lower in fat and lower in calories, so it's healthier for you. Here are a few examples to try.



Recipe Substitutions	
If your recipe calls for	**Use this instead**
Whole milk	Fat-free milk
Evaporated milk or cream	Evaporated skim milk
1 cup of butter or margarine	1/2 cup margarine plus 1/4 cup prune puree. (For some baked foods, you can substitute applesauce, plain yogurt or prune butter or puree for equal amounts of fat. Try it out to see what works best for you.)
Shortening or lard	Soft margarine (The texture of some baked goods is changed significantly when light margarine is used, and so is not recommended for baking.)
Mayonnaise or salad dressing	Nonfat or light mayonnaise or salad dressing; mustard in sandwiches
1 whole egg	1/4 cup egg substitute or 2 egg whites
Cheese	Lower fat cheeses
Cream cheese	Nonfat or light cream cheese
Sour cream	Nonfat or lowfat sour cream or yogurt
Fat for greasing pans	Nonstick cooking spray
1 ounce baking chocolate	3 tablespoons cocoa powder plus 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
Regular bouillon or broth	Low-sodium bouillon and broth
Pork bacon	Turkey bacon, lean ham or Canadian bacon
Pork sausage	Ground skinless turkey
Ground beef or pork	Ground skinless turkey

Applesauce muffins → *Use lower fat substitutes when baking.*

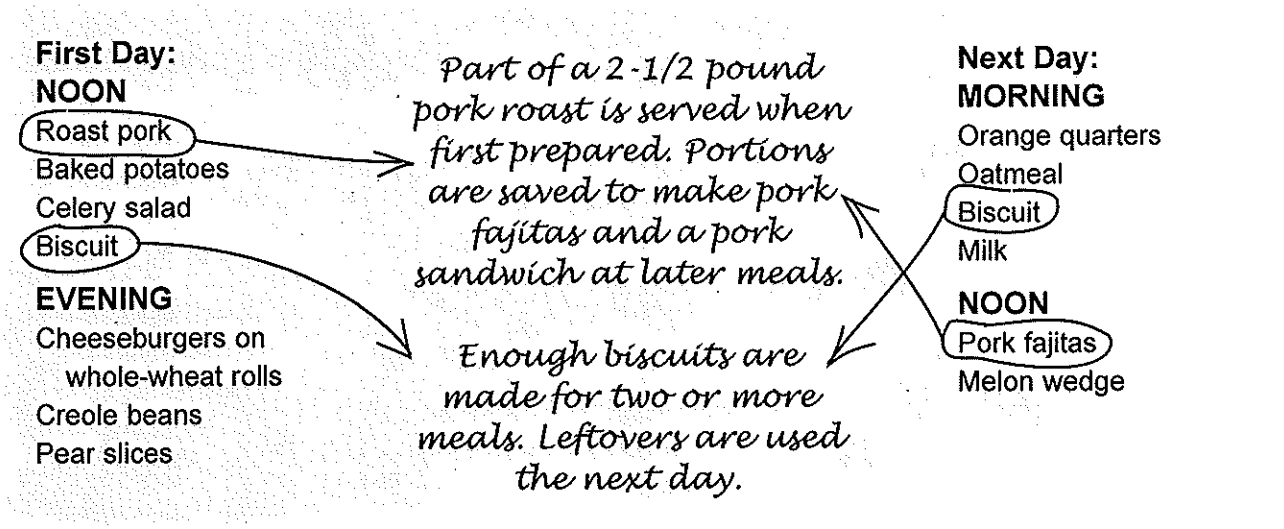
Fat-free milk → *Use fat-free milk to drink and in cooking.*

Ground turkey patties → *Use ground turkey in place of ground beef.*

Avoid Waste: Plan for Leftovers

Planning for leftovers can save you time!

Many foods don't come in packages small enough for one or two people. Buying larger packages than you really need sometimes results in wasted food. And that means money down the drain. To avoid waste, try the "planned-over" idea. "Planned-over" means planning ahead to buy or prepare amounts of food that give you servings for more than one meal. Simply, planning for leftovers. For example, consider preparing a recipe for four and serving it twice. Or try cooking a large cut of meat or whole chicken. Eat some, and save the rest to use in other main dishes. The menus in bulletin #4330, *Planning Thrifty Meals for Small Families*, include planned-over recipes for braised turkey and beef chuck steak (Week 1). The menus for Week 2 include planned-over recipes for pork roast. "Planned-over" ideas like the two from the menus below can help.



Look for other recipes made from mixes in other Extension publications.

Make Your Own Convenience Mixes

Everyone needs to get meals on the table fast sometimes. But store-bought convenience foods can be expensive. To help solve the problem, you can make your own low-cost convenience foods. The biscuit mix recipe in bulletin #4334, *Thrifty Recipes: Salads and Soups, Breads and Desserts* is used in the menus to make muffins, apple cobbler and biscuits. This mix will keep up to three months in the refrigerator. There is a pudding mix and a meatball mix, too.

Other fact sheets in this series include:

- Planning Thrifty Meals for Small Families, Bulletin #4330
- Buying Food for Thrifty Small Families, Bulletin #4332
- Thrifty Recipes: Main Dishes, Bulletin #4333
- Thrifty Recipes: Salads and Soups, Breads and Desserts, Bulletin #4334

Prepared by Nellie Hedstrom, Extension nutrition specialist
Source: "Thrifty Meals for Two: Making Food Dollars Count," USDA Home and Garden Bulletin #244.

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FCS 5007

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

Stretching Your Supermarket Dollars[1]

Mary N. Harrison[2]

There are many things that you can do to stretch your supermarket dollars. Try some of the following suggestions.

Before You Go to the Store

Check What's At Home

Your major reason for going to a supermarket is to buy food, so check your refrigerator and pantry before going. You may be able to combine a food on hand with an ingredient to be bought to make another meal without spending much money. When checking supplies on hand, list staple items that you are out of.

Check Grocery Ads

Most newspapers carry ads each week for major food stores in their areas. Some stores also advertise on television and radio. Use these ads to compare products and prices from different stores.

In an effort to attract customers, food stores often feature "specials" (items at reduced prices) and "loss leaders" (items sold below cost). These may be bargains that will save you money if these are items that you use. Remember, however, not all advertised items are specials or loss leaders. Also, compare the prices of comparable products.

For produce consider freshness and quality. For meats consider grade, closeness of trim for fat, and bone.

Clip Coupons

Manufacturers and food retailers often use coupons to promote the sale of certain products. Clip and save coupons for products you will be buying. Circle the expiration date of each coupon so that you may use it before it expires. Coupons are sometimes used to promote the sale of new products. However, most are for highly advertised brands. Coupons can save you money on items that you use. However, using a coupon does not guarantee the item will sell for less than another brand or a store brand. Compare costs.

Plan Your Meals

Make a draft meal plan for the week. Keep in mind bargains and specials. Remember to plan nutritionally balanced meals. A plan will save you preparation time, money and can ensure better meals.

1. This document is FCS5007, one of a series of the Family, Youth and Community Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date: November 1, 1981. Revised: December 2005. Visit the EDIS Web Site at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

2. Mary N. Harrison, professor, Consumer Education, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

Develop your shopping list from your plan and add the list of staples you need to buy.

Make A Shopping List

Organize your shopping list by food type and department. For example, list all meats together. Do the same with other types of products such as canned foods, dairy products and cleaning supplies. This helps you to avoid forgetting things and having to make another trip to the store.

When making the list, keep in mind the store layout if you know it. For example, if the produce is located on the right at the front of the store, list your fruits and vegetables first. Don't make the list too rigid. Example, you may list "green vegetable, broccoli." When you are in the store, look at the green vegetables. Compare what is available, quality, and cost. Buy broccoli if it is the best buy. But, if another green vegetable is a better buy, purchase it.

Stick to your list. Add to it only if you see special bargains that will save money. Make substitutions when better buys are found.

Select The Store With Care

Most stores have some bargains. Rarely does one store have all the best buys. One store may have good buys on meat, another on canned goods. A third store or market may have the freshest fruits and vegetables. If stores are not located near each other you may shop one store one week and buy enough bargain items for two or three weeks. The following week shop the other store.

Remember, prices do vary from store to store. Prices change, so keep alert. Shop in the stores that offer the best prices and services for the kinds of products that you buy.

When to Shop

Shop Alone If Possible

When your mate or children go shopping with you generally the total bill increases. Children often pressure parents to buy items advertised on television or that they see and want. This can cause unplanned spending. Some people are excellent shoppers, but unfortunately many aren't. Often a husband will add gourmet or non-essential items to the grocery basket or select other impulse items.

Shop When Stores Aren't Crowded

If possible, avoid peak crowded times such as Friday afternoon and Saturday. Crowded stores mean long lines and sometimes distractions while shopping.

Avoid Shopping When Tired Or Hungry

When you are tired you'll buy anything to "get through and go home." You may have to make another trip to the store for forgotten items. If hungry, you'll probably overbuy, especially prepared foods.

Shop Weekly Or Less Often

Plan your shopping so that you can buy groceries for a week or more at one time. You spend more money if you go to the store several times during the week.

In the Store

Don't Rush Shopping

Give yourself enough time to compare and think about the best buys and to find bargains. If rushed you may not be able to concentrate on getting the most for your money. Remember, grabbers are usually losers in the shopping game.

Keep Priorities Straight

Wheel your cart past "empty calorie" foods such as nibblers, candies, soft drinks. Look for foods that are nutrition packed. You want value for your dollars.

Buy In Quantities That Are Most Economical For You

Consider your family size, eating patterns, and storage space. If you are shopping for one or two people, it may be unwise to buy the largest size package even if it costs less per unit. Look for the best buy in the size package you can use before it becomes stale.

Read Labels: Know What You Are Buying

Labels provide much useful information. Read the list of ingredients. Ingredients are listed in the order of their predominance by weight. If water is listed first and sugar second, the product is mostly water and sugar. Most food products carry nutritional labeling. Use this information to choose foods to help balance your diet.

The quantity of contents is listed on a product's label or package. Read the amount. Do not rely on appearance. Appearance can be misleading.

Consider The Packaging

Some products have excessive packaging which contributes to landfill problems. Others have containers that do not break down in the environment. Over packaging, such as individual servings, often increases the cost of the product. Consider how a product is to be stored and used. Choose the package that best protects the product and the environment and meets your needs.

"Cents Off" and Introductory Offers Can Save Money

By law, products labeled "cents off" must be reduced the designated amount in price. If these items are on your shopping list they may save you a little money.

Provide Your Own Labor

Not all "convenience" foods cost more, but some do. There are many services that you can provide for yourself to save money. For example, cut up your own chicken, slice and grate your own cheese, or slice your own fruit.

Stock Up On Staples When Prices Are Especially Good

If staple items are on sale at bargain prices, and you have adequate storage space, it's a good time to stock your pantry. Buy only the amount that you can use before the food becomes stale.

Compare Costs Of Various Forms Of Food

Supermarket prices vary among retailers, brands, and markets. Fresh produce varies more in price than other forms of food. Because of the nation's highly commercialized marketing system most types of fresh produce are available throughout the year.

To get the most food for the least amount of money compare the various forms, such as canned versus fresh, frozen, dehydrated, and partly or completely prepared. Compare the cost per edible measure.

Locally grown fruits and vegetables are usually very reasonable priced when they are in season (and they taste great)! However some may require extra preparation time and there may be some waste (ex: corn shucks). Locally grown produce is usually sold at "Farmers Markets" and in small food stores. Major chains rarely carry local produce because of limited supplies.

Consider the cost of the form of food that fits your needs. You may be making a peach cobbler. Sliced peaches or canned "broken pieces" may be your best buy for the cobbler.

Compare The Cost Per Serving Of Various Foods

It is important to compare the cost per serving. For example the amount of fat and bone varies from one cut of meat to another. Ground beef provides 4 servings per pound while spare ribs give 1 1/2 servings per pound.

Compare The Unit Price of Various Forms, Brands and Sizes

When you have determined the least expensive form of food, compare the unit price of various sizes and brands. The unit price is the cost per unit of weight or measure, for example, cost per ounce. Often the larger size containers offer the best unit price, but not always. If a brand sells more small size containers than large ones the smaller ones may cost less per unit. Also, store brands usually cost less, but not always. Compare unit prices.

Most supermarkets make it easy for shoppers to compare prices by providing unit pricing. Unit price information is printed on a label attached to the shelf directly below the product. Money can be saved by using this information.

Use Open Dating Information

Many products are stamped with a date. Most open dates are shelf removal or quality assurance dates. If a product will be stored for some time before being used, buy it as fresh as possible. If the food is to be used immediately, the date isn't as important.

Reduced For Quick Sale

Often products reduced in price are good buys. For example, day-old bread usually sells for about half the regular price. Products that are reaching their "sell by" dates are often reduced in price. Most perishable products carry a "sell by" date. This enables the shopper to select items that can be used before they spoil. Some stores reduce the price on meats that have turned dark, or ham that has changed color. If they are to be used immediately they may be bargains. Overripe bananas may be a bargain at a few cents per pound if they are to be used immediately, but a poor investment to use the following day. Carefully inspect any product reduced in price to be sure it is a bargain to you. Make sure it will not spoil before you have a chance to use it.

Avoid Impulse Buys

Unplanned purchases can wreck your budget. Don't be unduly influenced by big displays, or fancy ads. These are designed to promote sales. Just because an item is sold in a bin or on a promotional table does not guarantee it is reduced in price. Compare it with similar "regular priced" products to see if it is a bargain.

Check To See If Multiple Priced Items Are Less Expensive

Compare the price of items that are regularly priced individually with their total cost if sold in multiples to be sure there is a price reduction. For example if the individual item sells for 59 cents each and 3 are advertised for $1.29, there is a price reduction of 48 cents.

In the above example, with today's computers you may also be able to buy only one item at the reduced price of 42 cents.

Checking Out

Watch to be sure breakable and crushable items are correctly bagged. Also, food items that are easily bruised must be carefully packed. Bananas crushed by a can of peas aren't very appetizing.

On the Way Home

It is important that foods be carried home from the grocery as quickly as possible. Special care should be given to make sure frozen foods do not thaw. Highly perishable foods such as meats and milk should be handled with care to ensure they stay cool. Fragile foods such as eggs and fresh produce should be placed so that they will not be bruised or crushed on the trip home.

When you reach home put foods away quickly. Frozen and refrigerated foods should be handled first.

FCS5101

UF UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

Stretching Your Dollars: Controlling Your Grocery Bill[1]

Mary N. Harrison[2]

When money gets tight, it is time to be creative. Think positively. This is an opportunity to demonstrate your shopping skills -- to show how competent you are!

Know How Much You Have to Spend

The first step in managing your dollars is to know how much money you have to spend. The next step is to develop a spending plan and establish a maximum amount to spend in each category. How much do you have to spend for groceries for one month? Divide your money into four parts. Now you know how much is available to spend each week.

Know What You Must Purchase with Your Grocery Money

Your supermarket bill will include various food and non-food items.

Non-food purchases include things such as cleaning and laundry products (soaps, detergent), paper products (napkins, toilet tissue), grooming supplies (toothpaste, shampoo), and household supplies (light bulbs, waxes, polishes).

Know Your Needs

Before going supermarket shopping, check to see what you have on hand available for use. Then, make a list of items you will need for the week.

There is a difference in what you want and what you need. You may want steak, but your need is meat -- and there are meats that cost less than steak!

Make a Shopping List

To organize your shopping, make a list. A shopping list helps make sure that you get the things you need and helps you avoid overlooking a product that would require an extra trip to the store.

- Keep the list handy in the kitchen so you can write down the items needed as supplies run low.

1. This document is FCS5101, one of a series of the Family Youth and Community Sciences Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date December 1, 2001. Revised: December 2005. Visit the EDIS Web Site at http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu.

2. Written by Mary N. Harrison, professor, Consumer Education; reviewed by Jo Turner, professor, Family and Consumer Economics, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.

- Include basic staples when they need replacement.
- List the weekly-advertised specials that fit into your menu. Include staples that are on special if you have storage space and you can use them before the quality deteriorates.

Look for Bargains

Check newspaper ads for special prices. Stores often sell some merchandise at reduced prices to attract customers who will usually buy other merchandise. Note the price and store on your shopping list. Before going shopping, plan a menu for a week so you will know which foods to buy.

Use Coupons, Rebates, and "Cents-Off" when Advantageous

Manufacturers and stores issue discount coupons. Most stores that sell the product accept the manufacturers' coupons. You can only use store coupons at the specified store.

Most coupons offer savings on name brand products. Coupons can save you money if you normally buy that specific product at its regular price. If a store brand (or another brand) sells for less, the coupon may not save you money.

Mail-in refund coupons are popular. But remember to receive a rebate you must mail in proof of purchase and usually the sales receipt. It is easy to neglect mailing the request. View rebates with caution. Remember you must follow through to receive the rebate, and you must pay the postage when requesting the rebate. Rebates are not always paid.

Know When and Where to Shop

Try to shop when the stores are not crowded. Shop alone if possible (children and mates often add to the bill). Take advantage of farmers' markets and roadside stands to buy less expensive, locally-grown produce. Compare prices at competing supermarkets. Choose the one that has the best prices for items you buy.

Some bakeries and stores have "day-old" outlets that sell bakery products for about half price or less. These products are leftover from a day or so earlier. Some super markets also sell day-old products.

Do Comparison Shopping

Compare the cost of food products in different forms (for example, canned, fresh, and frozen). Compare competing brands including store brands. Many of the store brands are from the same processors as the national brands but usually sell for a lower price.

Compare cost per unit of competing products. The unit price is marked on the supermarket shelves beneath the products.

Consider the Packaging

Packaging is important in keeping foods and other products fresh and protecting them from soil and contamination during handling. It is important to select products that are not over-packaged.

Think about how the product is to be used. When and under what conditions do you use the product.

For example, individually-wrapped slices of cheese are great for children who will "build" their own sandwiches on a picnic table. It is excess packaging of cheese if the cheese is for general home use.

Consider buying concentrated forms of products. The smaller container reduces waste. Others sell refills in more environmentally-friendly packages. Remember, "Just a few packages" discarded by many people has resulted in overflowing landfills. Every discarded package counts.

Read the Label

Some call the label the window to the product. Federal regulations require certain label information, including the:

- Common name of the product
- Contents

- Amount of product, and
- Name and address of manufacturer, processor or distributors.

Food product labels include:

- Net weight including solid and liquid content (for example, peas and juice),
- Ingredients that make up the product (listed in decreasing amounts by weight).

The nutrition information tells the shopper:

- How many servings are in the container
- How many calories it contains
- The amount of sugar, fat, vitamins, minerals, and
- Information needed to make nutritious choices.

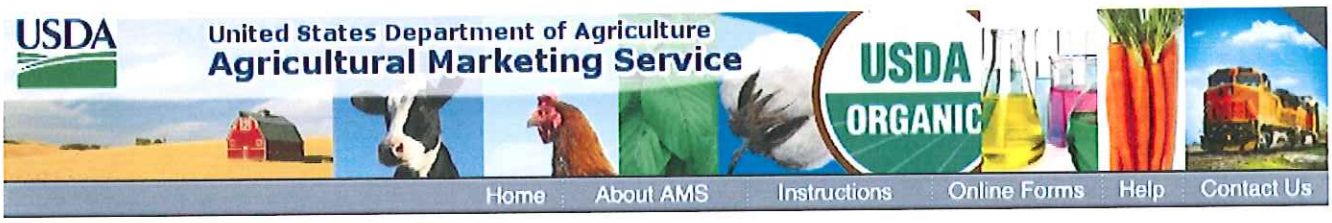
Use Open Dating Information

Dairy products and some other products are required to carry an open, shelf removal date. Other products (for example, cereals) voluntarily use a shelf-removal date to ensure quality.

When shopping, think about the length of time you will store the item before using it. Look for a date that is as distant as possible unless you plan to use immediately. Shelf removal dates are quality assurance dates. They are not a "do not use after" date. Products are usually still usable for some time following their shelf-removal date.

Buy and Prepare Foods in Usable Quantities

Do not waste food. For those living alone, divide food into serving sizes after preparing. Label and freeze the individual servings. If you do this for several foods, it is easy to select a varied menu and you reduce preparation time.



Farmers Markets Search

Dynamic version

The USDA National Farmers Market Directory, maintained by AMS Marketing Services, is designed to provide members of the public with convenient access to information about U.S. farmers market locations, directions, operating times, product offerings, and accepted forms of payment. Market information included in the Directory is voluntary and self-reported to AMS by market managers, representatives from State farmers market agencies and associations, and other key market personnel.

While AMS Marketing Services updates market listings in the USDA National Farmers Market Directory throughout the year on request from market stakeholders, the program also actively solicits new and updated market information from farmers market stakeholders each spring in order to keep the listings in the Directory as accurate and comprehensive as possible. Despite these efforts to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the data, there is no way to ensure that each individual farmers market listing in the Directory is completely accurate and up to date at any given point in time. To make it easier for users of the Directory search engine to evaluate the likelihood that market information provided in the Directory is still current, each market listing contains a date stamp at the bottom of the record. To avoid disappointment, users may wish to contact the listed market representative or consult the market's own website, if available, before planning a visit.

Users of this Directory search engine can also take advantage of both a national map of farmers markets (static) and state-specific maps of farmers markets (interactive). To see a state-specific map, please select a state from the Select box at the top of the state column below, and a link will appear for that Sate's map. For additional information on how to use the Farmers Market search engine page, please select the Instruction tab at the top of the page.

For those users who are interested in obtaining copies of the entire Directory dataset, an exportable Excel file of farmers market listings is available for download by selecting the Export to Excel button at the bottom of this page. An identical version of this dataset is also available from data.gov.

If you discover any market information that should be added, updated or removed from the Directory or have any additional questions, please contact our Farmers Market Directory team at directoryupdates@ams.usda.gov, and we will handle your request at the earliest opportunity

How To Use the National Farmers Market Directory Search Engine:

- To filter markets by location, enter a zip code and choose a distance, then click search.
- To filter markets by market name, enter part or all of a market name in the box above the market name column and press 'Enter'.
- To filter markets by types of products carried, click the 'Products Available' tab and select individual product categories. Only markets that reported having those product categories will be displayed. (Please note that the availability of products on any given market day may shift from season to season)
- To filter markets by accepted methods of payment, click the 'Payment Accepted' tab and select one or more methods of payment. Only markets that reported accepting those methods of payment will be displayed.
- To filter markets by location type, click the 'Market Location' tab and select location types from the options listed in the pull-down menu. Only markets that reported their type of market location will be displayed.
- To filter markets by those offering winter operating hours (e.g., open at least one market day between November and March), click the 'Winter Markets' tab and select the "show only winter markets" box.

Search near ZIP: Distance: 5 miles

search by zip code, add optional limiting criteria below.

Add Criteria:

Market Name: State: All

Market Location:

Select Market Location Type

Products Available:

- [ ] Baked goods
- [ ] Cheese and/or dairy products
- [ ] Crafts and/or woodworking items
- [ ] Cut flowers

- [ ] Eggs
- [ ] Fish and/or seafood
- [ ] Fresh and/or dried herbs
- [ ] Fresh fruits and vegetables
- [ ] Honey
- [ ] Canned or preserved fruits, vegetables, jams, jellies, preserves, salsas, pickles, dried fruit, etc.
- [ ] Maple syrup and/or maple products
- [ ] Meat
- [ ] Nuts
- [ ] Plants in containers
- [ ] Poultry
- [ ] Prepared foods (for immediate consumption)
- [ ] Soap and/or body care products
- [ ] Trees, shrubs
- [ ] Wine, beer, hard cider

Payment Accepted:

- [ ] Credit Card
- [ ] WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (WIC-FMNP)
- [ ] WIC Cash Value Vouchers
- [ ] Senior Farmers Markets Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
- [ ] Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Winter Markets:

- [ ] Show only winter markets

Search by criteria only.

State Contacts: Select a state State contact

Related Topics
- Latest News and Transcripts
- Farm Bill 2008
- Dietary Health
- Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships
- Farmers Markets
- Food Assistance
- Food Distribution
- Food Labeling and Packaging
- Food Quality
- Food Recalls
- Food Safety
- Food Security
- Homeland Security
- Gov Benefits

Food Assistance

Food assistance programs increase food security and reduce hunger by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
The WIC program helps safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age five who are at nutritional risks by providing nutritious foods to supplement diets, information on healthy eating, and referrals to healthcare.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
SNAP serves as the first line of defense against hunger by helping low-income families buy nutritious food.

SNAP-ED Connection
The SNAP-Ed Connection is a resource system for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program nutrition education providers.

School Meals
The School Meals Program provides nutrition education and nutritious meals, such as breakfast, lunch, and after-school snacks, to children in order to promote learning readiness and healthy eating habits.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
The Summer Food Service Program is the single largest federal resource available for local sponsors who want to combine a feeding program with a summer activity program.

Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program (FANRP)
The Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Program analyzes food assistance programs to determine the diet and nutritional outcomes and well-being of needy Americans.

Issues in Food Assistance
The Issues in Food Assistance are a series of reports created to address a variety of topics related to the USDA food assistance programs.

Food Assistance Research Briefs
The Food Assistance Research Briefs are a series of briefs that provide concise and timely insights from recent research of Federal food assistance programs. These briefs look at issues currently facing food assistance programs specifically targeted towards children.

Food Stamp Nutrition Connection (FSNC)
The Food Stamp Nutrition Connection is a resource system for Food Stamp Program nutrition education providers.

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Works Resource System
The WIC Works Resource System provides nutrition service tools for health and nutrition professionals.

Office of Research and Analysis (ORA)
The Office of Research and Analysis conducts program analysis and assessment that informs policymaking and management of Federal nutrition assistance.

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion

3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food at Home at Four Levels, U.S. Average, February 2013[1]

Age-gender groups	Weekly cost[2]				Monthly cost[2]			
	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan
Individuals[3]								
Child:								
1 year	21.60	29.00	32.90	39.90	93.50	125.50	142.30	172.70
2-3 years	23.40	29.60	35.80	43.60	101.40	128.20	155.30	189.00
4-5 years	24.40	30.90	38.20	46.40	105.80	133.90	165.40	201.10
6-8 years	31.30	42.90	52.00	61.20	135.60	185.70	225.30	265.10
9-11 years	35.70	46.70	60.40	70.40	154.60	202.40	261.50	305.10
Male (M):								
12-13 years	38.10	53.80	67.30	78.80	165.00	233.10	291.70	341.20
14-18 years	39.20	55.00	69.20	79.70	169.60	238.20	300.00	345.30
19-50 years	42.30	54.60	68.30	83.80	183.10	236.70	296.20	362.90
51-70 years	38.60	51.50	63.70	76.90	167.10	223.00	276.00	333.40
71+ years	38.90	51.10	63.40	78.00	168.40	221.40	274.60	337.90
Female (F):								
12-13 years	38.10	46.40	55.80	68.00	165.30	201.20	241.70	294.90
14-18 years	37.60	46.80	56.40	69.50	162.80	202.70	244.30	300.90
19-50 years	37.60	47.40	58.60	74.70	163.00	205.60	253.90	323.70
51-70 years	37.10	46.20	57.40	68.70	160.70	200.30	248.60	297.50
71+ years	36.50	46.10	57.10	68.70	158.30	199.60	247.50	297.50
Families								
Family (M&F) of 2:[4]								
19-50 years	87.90	112.30	139.60	174.30	380.70	486.50	605.00	755.30
51-70 years	83.20	107.50	133.20	160.10	360.50	465.60	577.00	693.90
Family of 4:								
Couple (M&F), 19-50 years and children—								
2-3 and 4-5 years	127.70	162.60	201.00	248.50	553.40	704.30	870.80	1076.70
6-8 and 9-11 years	146.90	191.60	239.30	290.10	636.30	830.30	1036.90	1256.90

[1]The Food Plans represent a nutritious diet at four different cost levels. The nutritional bases of the Food Plans are the 1997-2005 Dietary Reference Intakes, 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and 2005 MyPyramid food intake recommendations. In addition to cost, differences among plans are in specific foods and quantities of foods. Another basis of the Food Plans is that all meals and snacks are prepared at home. For specific foods and quantities of foods in the Food Plans, see *Thrifty Food Plan, 2006* (2007) and *The Low-Cost, Moderate-Cost, and Liberal Food Plans, 2007* (2007). All four Food Plans are based on 2001-02 data and updated to current dollars by using the Consumer Price Index for specific food items.

[2]All costs are rounded to nearest 10 cents.

[3]The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person—add 20 percent; 2-person—add 10 percent; 3-person—add 5 percent; 4-person—no adjustment; 5- or 6-person—subtract 5 percent; 7- (or more) person—subtract 10 percent. To calculate overall household food costs, (1) adjust food costs for each person in household and then (2) sum these adjusted food costs.

[4]Ten percent added for family size adjustment.

This file may be accessed on CNPP's home page at: http://www.cnpp.usda.gov.

Issued March 2013

University of Nebraska Lincoln EXTENSION
Know how. Know now.

How $hould You $pend Your Calorie $alary?

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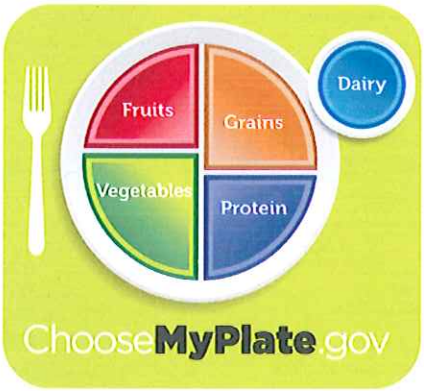
USDA'S MyPlate symbolizes a simple, personalized approach to remind consumers to make healthy food choices and be active every day.



Think of MyPlate as a "calorie salary" guide that helps you get the most health and enjoyment from what you eat. Plan calories the same as major expenses — such as a car, house, or vacation.

Four "budgeting" steps follow:

$tep 1 — Stay Within Your Calorie Budget

Knowing your daily calorie needs based on your age, gender, height, weight, and physical activity level may be a helpful reference point in deciding whether calories consumed are appropriate in relation to the amount needed daily. However, monitoring whether you maintain your weight over time by adjusting calories and physical activity is the most helpful.

Be aware that 100 extra calories per day can add up to a 10 pound weight gain in one year! Examples of 100 calories include:

- 2 tablespoons of sugar, jelly, jam, or syrup
- 1 tablespoon of butter or margarine
- 1/3 large (4-inch diameter) doughnut
- 2/3 can of a regular soft drink

David Bach, author of *The Automatic Millionaire*, popularized the term Latte Factor® to demonstrate the power of saving a few dollars daily by forgoing unnecessary purchases. Over several years, you can save thousands of dollars! The same can apply to calories — by saving a few calories daily, you can save thousands of calories over several years!

11 Ways to Get Physically Active Without Going to the Gym

1. Walk up and down the soccer or softball field sidelines while watching the kids play.
2. Replace a coffee break with a brisk walk. Use a rest room further away from your office.
3. Take a brisk walk around the mall BEFORE you shop.
4. Use the stairs as much as possible — even if you don't need anything upstairs or downstairs!
5. Stand while you're on the phone.
6. Walk while waiting for your plane.
7. Get off the bus or out of your car a distance from your destination.
8. Use your exercise bicycle or treadmill while watching TV.
9. Speed clean your house!
10. Take the dog for a walk — don't watch the dog walk!
11. Dance!

Balance food calories with activity level. Recommended minimum levels of physical activity include:

- **Adults:** 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity weekly (i.e. 30 minutes, 5 times/week) OR 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity weekly (i.e. 15 minutes, 5 times/week)
- **6–17 years:** 60 minutes daily of moderate and vigorous activity
- **2–5 years:** No specific recommendation other than to play actively several times each day

Moderate aerobic activity increases breathing and heart rate somewhat while **vigorous aerobic activity** greatly increases heart rate and breathing. If you are short on time, get active 10 minutes 3 times a day.

$tep 2 — Choose the Most Value for Calorie $alary

Get the most for your "calorie salary" by eating more "nutrient-dense" foods.

Nutrient-dense foods and beverages provide vitamins, minerals, and other beneficial

Continued on next page

from preceding page
substances and relatively few calories without solid fats in the food or added to it and without added sugars, refined starches, and sodium.

Nutrient-dense foods retain naturally occurring components, such as dietary fiber. When choosing foods from the grain group, make at least half your grains whole grains.

All vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seafood, eggs, beans and peas, unsalted nuts and seeds, fat-free and low-fat dairy, and lean meats and poultry are nutrient dense when prepared without solid fats or sugars.

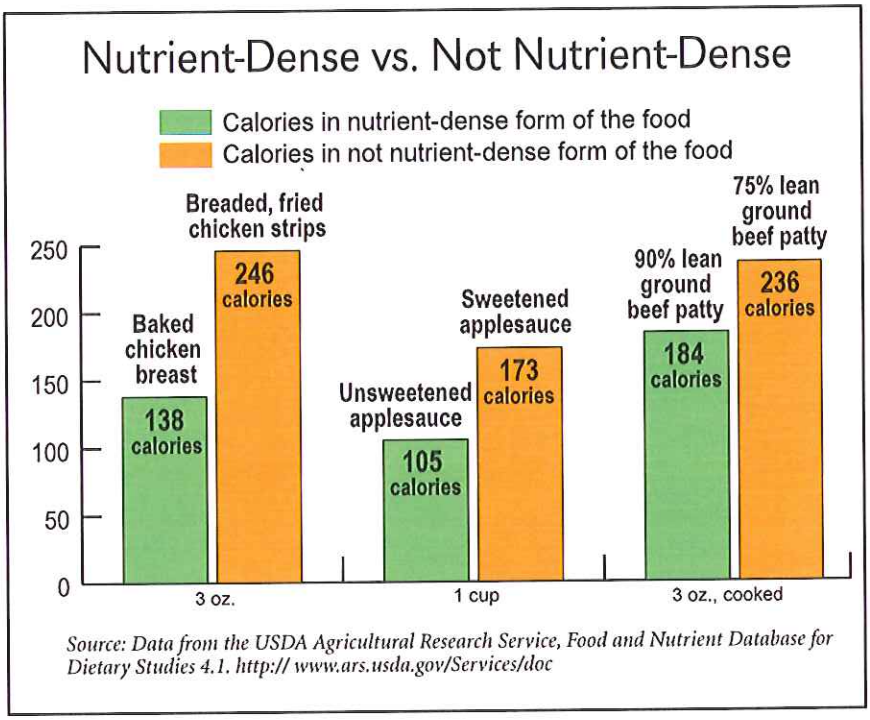
Reducing or eliminating some less nutrient-dense foods saves calories and MONEY!

$tep 3 — Consider the "True Cost" of Poor Nutrition

Foods that do little to meet nutrient needs — even if they're within our calorie salary — can put our HEALTH and MONEY at risk.

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat dairy products for persons aged 2 years and older.

Healthy diets may help reduce or eliminate the need for, and cost of, medications for some people. Also, foods may contain additional substances and provide benefits not available from fortified foods, nutrient supplements, and vitamin/mineral pills. Many interactions occur among food constituents (such as fiber, nutrients, and phytochemicals) that affect disease risk. The "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension" (DASH Eating Plan) clinical study showed:



Source: Data from the USDA Agricultural Research Service, Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies 4.1. http:// www.ars.usda.gov/Services/doc

- fruit and vegetable consumption lowers blood pressure,
- adding low-fat, high-calcium foods to a diet high in fruits and vegetables further lowers blood pressure, and
- even greater reductions occur when sodium intake is restricted.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Healthy eating is associated with reduced risk for many diseases, including several of the leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes."

$tep 4 — Plan a Budget for YOU

Fine-tune what you're already eating to meet MyPlate guidelines. As you "budget," choose foods that taste good as well as are good for you! Spend your "calorie salary" wisely!

References:

- Choose MyPlate at *http://ChooseMyPlate.gov*
- *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010* at *http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAS2010-PolicyDocument.htm*
- *Dietary Guidelines, 2010 at a Glance* Slide Presentation, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
- *Nutrition Facts*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at *www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/nutrition/facts.htm*
- *Selected Messages for Consumers*, USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion at *http://cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicDoc/Selectedmessages.pdf*
- U.S. Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, Department of Health and Human Services, May 16, 2011 *http://geneva.usmission.gov/2011/05/16/sebelius-chronic-diseases-a-growing-health-problem-for-countries-everywhere*

For more information about healthy eating, visit http://food.unl.edu

This is a peer reviewed publication

USDA's Nutrition Assistance Programs: Eat Right When Money's Tight

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE DECEMBER 2008

MyPyramid.gov
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

CHECK OUT:

- MyPyramid at **www.mypyramid.gov** for personalized eating plans, advice to make smart choices from every food group and help to balance food and physical activity.
- *Loving Your Family Feeding Their Future* at **www.snap.nal.usda.gov**. It is available in English and Spanish and provides menus, recipes, and tips on buying and serving healthier foods.
- Recipe Finder at **http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov** for over 100 low cost, nutritious and delicious recipes in both English and Spanish.
- The SNAP pre-screening tool at **www.snap-step1.usda.gov** to see if you may qualify for SNAP benefits and how much you might receive.
- The location of your nearest SNAP office at **www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm**

Now More Than Ever, USDA's Nutrition Assistance Programs Can Help.

Many families are concerned about the rising costs of food. Read on for tips for how to stretch your food dollars through budgeting, food selection, and low-cost recipes. If you are struggling to put food on the table, USDA's nutrition assistance programs may help.

Use foods you already have to plan menus. Add missing foods to your shopping list.

How Much: $ $ Available For Food

- Know the resources you have to spend on food.
- Make a shopping list based on the resources you have to spend.
- Buy only the amounts of fresh foods you can use before it spoils.
- Consider frozen or shelf stable items that last longer.

Planning: Making Meals With Foods On Hand

Before going to the grocery store, check what foods you already have.

Once you know what foods you have, ask these questions:

- What meals and recipes can I make using the foods I have?
- Can I mix foods together to make a tasty and nutritious meal?
- What foods does my family need for good health?

Then:

- Plan what recipes you will make using your list of foods.
- Use other foods on your list such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains to complete the menu.
- Once you plan your menus, make a new list for missing foods you need to buy.

~Turn the page for more tips on low-cost, healthy shopping.

Shopping: Before, During, and After

Fruits and vegetables are usually less expensive when they are in season. Farmer's Markets always carry what is in season.

Before Shopping

- Make a shopping list. This helps you stick to your budget.
- Plan your meals. Planning helps put leftovers to good use.
- Look for coupons, sales and store specials.
- For added savings sign up for the store discount card.

During Shopping

- Don't shop when you are hungry. It is easier to stick to your shopping list.
- Try store brands. They usually cost less.
- Compare products for the best deal.
- Check sell by dates. Buy the freshest food possible. It lasts longer.

After Shopping

- Store food right away to preserve freshness.
- Freeze food to prevent spoiling.
- Divide foods into small portions for children and elderly to prevent waste.
- Use foods with the earliest expiration dates first.

Tips: Best Buys for Cost and Nutrition

Look for bargains on day old bread. It costs less but is still nutritious.

Breads and Grains

- Look for bargains on day old bread. It costs less but is still nutritious.
- Buy regular rice, oatmeal and grits instead of instant to save on money, sugar and calories.

Vegetables and Salad

- Buy large bags of frozen vegetables. Seal tightly in the freezer between uses.
- Avoid pre-bagged salad mixes. They are usually more expensive and spoil faster.

Fruits

- Buy fresh fruits in season, when they generally cost less.
- Frozen and canned fruits are a smart choice all year round.

Low-Fat Milk Products

- Buy fresh, low-fat milk in the largest size that can be used before spoiling. Larger containers cost less than smaller sizes.
- Ultra-pasteurized milk has a longer expiration date and won't spoil as fast.

Meat and Beans

- Chuck or bottom round roast has less fat and is cheaper than sirloin.
- Dried beans and peas are a good source of protein and fiber. They last a long time without spoiling.
- Look for specials at the meat counter. Buy meat on sale for big savings.
- Buy meat in large bulk packages to save money. Freeze portions you might not use right away to prevent spoiling.

Additional Resources

USDA's nutrition assistance programs provide assistance to millions of American households struggling to balance their budgets.

USDA Nutrition Assistance Programs Can Help Make Ends Meet

You may qualify for more than Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. If you get SNAP benefits and have children in school, they qualify for free lunch and breakfast. If you are low-income and pregnant, breastfeeding, a new mom or have children under five years old, you might qualify for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits. The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a Federal program that provides food to low-income persons. Please read on for more information on these programs.

SNAP- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program:

- *For:* Eligible low-income people and their families.
- *For More Information call* 1-800-221-5689.
- To find your nearest SNAP office visit: **www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm**

WIC- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children:

- *For:* Eligible low-income pregnant or breastfeeding women, new moms, and children under age 5.
- *For More Information visit*: **www.fns.usda.gov/wic/contacts/tollfreenumbers.htm**

School Nutrition Program:

- *For:* Eligible low-income school-aged children.
- *For More Information:* Contact your local school or school district.

TEFAP- The Emergency Food Assistance Program:

- *For:* Eligible low-income persons.
- *For More Information visit:* **www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/tefap/tefap_eligibility.htm**

For more information, visit the SNAP-Ed Connection Web site.

Resources for SNAP Partners and Educators

The SNAP-Ed Connection is an online resource center which contains a wealth of information on healthy eating, using your food dollar wisely, and over 100 low cost recipes. Visit SNAP-Ed Connection at:

http://snap.nal.usda.gov

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE Extension SYSTEM

Your Experts for Life

HE-757

ALABAMA A&M AND AUBURN UNIVERSITIES

101+ Ways to Save Food Dollars

Plan

1. Take time to plan your meals and make a grocery list. This usually takes less time than the time spent going back to the store for a forgotten item.

2. Keep paper and pencil in the kitchen to list foods you need.

3. Check kitchen cabinets and refrigerator when making your grocery list.

4. Before going to the grocery store, plan a weekly menu of favorite dishes using healthy foods.

5. Plan some meals without meat. Use dried beans, eggs, or peanut butter as a main dish.

6. Read the weekly food section and check the Sunday newspaper to see what is on sale.

7. Plan your meals to use seasonal foods such as oranges in the winter and peaches in the summer.

8. Finish your grocery list before going shopping. The best memory does not substitute for a well-planned list.

9. Use a grocery list to help manage your stress. For example, do you really like to strain your coffee through a paper towel when you are out of filters?

Shop

10. Shop only once a week. The more trips to the store, the more money you spend. It is hard to purchase only a few items on any trip to the grocery store.

11. Keep in mind that items from convenience stores often cost more.

12. Pick the grocery store with the best prices for foods you buy.

13. Think of mileage. Shopping at many stores may not be worth the extra time and gasoline cost.

14. Check out dollar stores. Canned fruit and snack crackers can be purchased here cheaply.

15. Find a local farmers' market. Fruits and vegetables tend to be fresher and cheaper.

16. Purchase foods at low-cost stores such as food cooperatives or warehouse food stores.

17. Look for grocery stores that offer extra savings on "Seniors Day."

18. Find stores with super food sales during special times such as "Friday and Saturday Blow-out Sales" or "10 Items for $10."

19. Know when to stick to the shopping list. The only time to go off the list is when you can get a good buy such as store sales and double coupon offers.

20. Know when not to use the list. Take the farmers' market approach with fruits and vegetables. Buy what is fresh, cheap, and in season. Adjust your menu to fit these finds.

21. Don't go down every aisle when you shop.

22. Do not shop when you are hungry because you will buy extra food. Better yet, have a small snack before shopping so you won't buy a candy bar at checkout.

23. Shop without your children. Unwanted items can creep into the cart with too many "helping hands." Take turns with a friend for child care.

24. Shop early when the store is not crowded. You will get through the store faster and spend less.

25. Shop when you are not in a hurry. Take the time to compare the price of similar foods and purchase the cheapest. For example, which is cheaper, fruit cocktail or pears? Would it be cheaper to buy an item fresh, frozen, or dried?

26. Bring only the cash you have budgeted to the store. Decide how much you can spend weekly. Bring only that amount with you so you will not be tempted to spend more money.

27. Avoid buying sample foods. Some stores offer "try something new" samples to get you to buy the food. If the food is not on your list, do not buy it. Think about it for a future list when you can use the food in your menus.

Buy

28. Upon entering the grocery store, check store flyer for sale items and stock up!

29. In place of national brands, buy store brands when the taste and quality suit your needs. Compare brands!

30. Compare the unit price of food items. The cost per ounce or per pound helps find the best value.

31. Check the unit price of different size containers of the same food. The largest container is not always the cheapest.

32. Buy items by-the-case to save a lot of money. Make sure you have storage space for the food items.

33. When buying large amounts of food, split the food and cost with a friend. You both will save money.

34. When available, buy bulk foods for about 2 weeks at a time.

35. Avoid buying large amounts of foods that will go bad quickly. Spoiled food is a waste of money.

36. Buy family packs of meats, cheese, poultry, and luncheon meats. Divide into servings, freeze, and use as needed.

37. Buy foods in season to save money. When fruits and vegetables ripen, grocery stores are flooded with these low-cost fruits and vegetables. You will find something year-round that is in season, which makes it affordable.

38. Smaller-sized fruits and vegetables may be cheaper than larger ones.

39. Instead of buying canned fruits and vegetables in large pieces, buy these foods canned in smaller pieces. For example, pineapple chunks and diced tomatoes usually cost less than pineapple rings and whole tomatoes.

40. For best buys of healthy foods, stock up on fruit juices, milk, grits, peanut butter cookies, and popcorn for snacks. Avoid junk foods.

41. Avoid buying single servings of such foods as snack crackers, vegetable juice, and ice cream.

42. Avoid buying foods packaged together, such as cheese and crackers, meat and cheese trays, and frozen garlic cheese bread, when you can buy the items separately for less.

43. When shopping for food, buy nonfood items only if you have extra money for them.

44. Check *sell by* and *use by* dates to be sure you buy fresh foods.

Use Coupons Carefully

45. Be careful when using coupons.

46. If you can save 25 or 50 cents off the price of something you already use, go for it.

47. To use coupons, you usually have to go to a common supermarket, so watch your prices carefully.

48. You can usually buy a food item cheaper at a discount store than you can buy it with a coupon at a big supermarket.

49. If you use a coupon to buy an item you do not need and would not have bought otherwise, you will be spending money you could have spent somewhere else.

50. In the store, use point-of-purchase coupons if the food item fits into your meal plan.

51. Take advantage of manufacturer's rebates by mailing in coupons.

52. Bottom line? Use coupons when they will help you save, but do not become a coupon junkie.

Track

53. Know the regular prices of items you usually buy. A sale will then be easy to spot.

54. Make a cheat sheet so you will know what you usually pay for an item that you use a lot.

55. Remember the trick is to buy on the markdowns. You don't have to change your habits. Just buy when items are at low cost.

56. Sometimes, *buy one, get one free* is not a lot cheaper because the cost of the first item is too much.

57. Make sure all purchases are rung up correctly.

58. Use itemized food receipts when checking out to help track food costs.

59. Divide grocery bill into food and nonfood items to get the cost of food. To make it easy, separate food items and nonfood items when checking out.

60. Compare prices of nonfood items at the grocery store with the same item at a discount store.

Choose Bargains

61. Give those grocery shelves the once-over. Grocery stores put items they most want to sell on the shelves between knee- and shoulder-height. The highest markup items are the ones about chest level. These are easy to grab and toss in the cart.

62. Stick to the edges. In general, the healthier, less processed foods are at the edges of the grocery store. These foods - fruits and vegetables, dairy and meat - are healthy and also go further in the kitchen.

63. Check the clearance section of the grocery store for items such as soap, cereal, and household products. These items may be piled in shopping carts throughout the store. Only buy if you know it is a good deal. Do not buy cans with dents.

64. Shop when the store opens to find the marked down meats. You must come early because the meats get snapped up quickly. Either cook the meat and eat it the same day or freeze it for later use.

65. Shop for meats carefully. Bones and fat on meat cost a lot of money. It is hard to compare prices of meats with bones and extra fat.

66. Use leftover meats for sandwiches instead of buying packaged sandwich meats.

67. Buy day-old bread from the quick sale table or, if available, a bakery outlet. Toast or freeze it for good eating.

68. Buy plain breads and cereals. They are usually better buys than fancy breads and cereals.

69. Buy regular rice. It is usually a better buy than quick cooking rice or fancy rice blends.

70. Quick cooking oatmeal and grits are less expensive and almost as fast as the single serving instant cereals.

71. Buy a head of lettuce and wash it instead of buying lettuce in a bag.

72. Look over all fresh fruits and vegetables. If you are paying full price, make sure all perishable foods are in top shape.

73. Ignore the checkout display. This is the store's last attempt to take your money. Consider checking out magazines at the library. If you ate a snack before shopping, you will be able to resist buying a candy bar.

Keep Food Safe

74. In the grocery store, shop for cold items last. These are frozen vegetables, meats, dairy products, and salad bar ingredients.

75. Try to get cold foods packed together in a bag when checking out. To make it easy, place all meats together, all frozen foods together, and all dairy foods together. When these foods are sacked together, they are easy to spot when you get home.

76. Lessen the time foods are in the car. Keep perishables out of direct sunlight or out of a hot trunk.

77. Put foods away quickly when you get home. Find grocery sacks with the cold items that need to be refrigerated first.

78. Examine bags of potatoes, onions, and fruits. Throw out bad ones. Store potatoes and onions in a cool, dry place. Store fruits and other vegetables in the refrigerator.

79. Go through kitchen cabinets regularly to make sure canned and packaged foods are used before expiration dates.

Prepare at Home

80. Make large amounts of recipes that freeze well such as spaghetti sauce, chili, and soups. Label and freeze them for later use.

81. Recycle the roast! Purchase a large roast on sale. Cook and eat some of it the first night. Freeze the rest for later.

82. Cook a whole chicken and use for more than one meal.

83. Stretch ground meat with bread crumbs, oatmeal, or tomato sauce.

84. Bake more than one item while the oven is hot. Your can cook the main dish, dessert, vegetables, quick breads, or other foods at the same time if they are to be cooked at the same temperature.

85. Do not leave food in the oven overnight. Cooked foods, such as meats, could make you very sick when left at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

86. For drinking, use nutritious, low-cost instant nonfat dry milk. Thoroughly chill it before drinking for better taste.

87. For cooking, use dry milk in place of the more expensive regular milk. Store the box of powdered milk in a large baggie in the freezer. Keep a measuring cup in the plastic bag to make mixing easy.

88. To make milk go twice as far, mix an equal part of instant nonfat dry milk made by the directions with an equal amount of regular milk.

89. Make your own mixes for biscuits, pancakes, and other prepared foods. Already prepared mixes sometimes cost a lot more than homemade mixes.

90. If you are unable to eat ripe bananas right away, use them in muffins. Or freeze the entire banana in the peel for later use. A frozen banana turns black and looks gross but it is safe.

91. Make extra pancakes. Wrap separately, freeze, and reheat in a toaster or microwave.

92. Save bread ends and crusts. Toast them when baking something else. Crush to make bread crumbs; store in the freezer.

93. Make desserts from scratch. They are usually cheaper than store-bought ones.

94. Make iced tea from scratch. Premade iced tea in jugs is expensive; iced tea in bottles is even more expensive.

95. Use a toaster oven, if you have one, when only a small amount is to be baked.

96. Use an electric skillet, if you have one, to "bake" a chicken or roast or to make spaghetti sauce. It is easy to drain the fat from meat—just tilt the skillet slightly.

97. Choose home-popped popcorn for a snack. It is less expensive than microwave popcorn and much cheaper than chips. Hint: Use an electric skillet for popping. Store leftover popcorn in an airtight plastic bag.

98. Make tasty salads using leftover vegetables, fruit, meat, or cereal.

99. Keep a "soup container" in the freezer. Add all vegetable liquids as well as leftover meats and vegetables to create a delicious soup or stew for next to nothing.

100. Make casseroles to use leftovers and to offer new foods to your family.

101. Make foods from scratch (homemade). It can be cheaper (and healthier) than store-bought, convenience items.

102. Make sure convenience foods are good buys. Some good buys are canned vegetables and frozen juice. Others, such as ready-made pudding, may cost a lot more.

Be Creative

103. Grow your own fruits and vegetables.

104. Grow herbs in a flowerpot or in a windowsill container.

105. Pick fruits and vegetables at U-pick farms.

106. Can or freeze fruits and vegetables in the summer when they are plentiful. Use them in the winter.

Be Smart

107. Waste less. Use all food before it spoils.

108. Store foods correctly. Poor storage can cause dried out, stale, or molded food.

109. Plan for using leftovers.

110. Take your lunch to work instead of buying it.

111. Avoid vending machines. Pack similar items at home in small bags and bring drinks bought by the case.

112. Put together a snack bag of easy-to-eat items to enjoy in the car or at games.

113. Plan snacks for kids. Carrot sticks are cheaper than candy bars.

114. Entertain with potlucks or inexpensive buffets, such as lasagna and salads.

Eating Out

115. Limit eating out. Regardless of the fast food advertisements, it does cost a lot of money.

116. To save gas money, park the car and walk inside to order. You get a little exercise too!

117. Do not upgrade or super size your order. You are only super sizing your bill and your waistline.

118. When ordering, think smaller. It is not a value meal if you are paying for more than you want.

119. Do not load up on side dishes. Share the fries and you will save money and calories too.

120. Order ice water. It is usually free. To make it tastier, order it with lemon.

121. Eat dessert at home. Dessert is one of the most marked-up items on the menu.

122. If eating in, order the smallest size beverage or even a kid size cup. Most fast food places offer free refills.

123. Look between the buns. The patties are usually very small and the vegetables look limp. Your homemade burgers will look better and, even with the vegetables, be cheaper.

124. Cooking extra and freezing the remainder at home is just as convenient as going to the drive-through.

125. Do not forget your pet. The Styrofoam containers that burgers and entrees are packed in make excellent pet dishes. Just wipe out and take home. Cut the top and bottom apart for two dishes—one for the cat and one for the dog. Toss them out when the edges get worn.

If you are eligible, find help.

126. Apply for an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card through the local Food Stamp Program. Food stamps help single people and families with little or no income to buy food. Look in the U.S. Government pages of the phone book. You can find a listing for food stamps under Social Services Department or Human Services Department.

127. Enroll in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program for supplemental foods for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children to 5 years old.

128. Enroll children in the free or reduced meal plan at school. All public schools offer this plan at lunch, and some schools also serve breakfast.

129. Enroll preschool children in a Head Start program.

130. Enroll children in a summer lunch program through the Summer Food Service Program.

131. Visit a local food bank or community food distribution center.

132. Take advantage of soup kitchens.

133. Use meals-on-wheels programs and nutrition centers for weekday lunches.

134. Take free courses in food selection and preparation provided by experts with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. Also visit your local Extension office for more information on ways to save money. Look under your county section of the phone book for local offices.

135. Make arrangements with a neighbor who fishes for any extras.

136. Call any meat processor during hunting season to see if they have any donated wild game such as venison.

137. Find a neighbor who has a garden and is willing to share or trade.

Sources:
www.frugalliving.about.com
www.lancaster.unl.edu
www.stretcher.com
www.bankrate.com

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE Extension SYSTEM
Your Experts for Life

HE-757

Barbara Struempler, *Extension Nutritionist,* Professor, Nutrition and Food Science, Auburn University

The Nutrition Education Program is sponsored by the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and the Food Stamp Program. These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. Food stamps help people with little or no income buy food. To find out more, contact a county Food Stamp office or a county Extension office. This material was funded by these agencies.

For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

71M, **Reprinted May 2008,** HE-757

Squeezed by rising food prices?

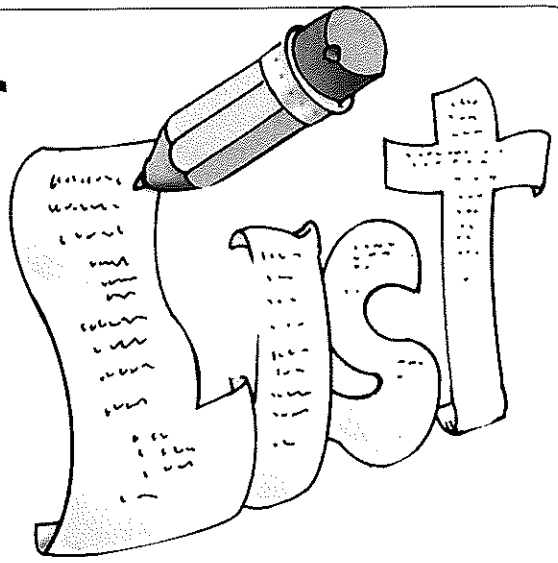
Small changes in your shopping habits can mean **saving money** at the grocery store.

What can YOU do to save?

Check off the tips on this flyer that can work for you and your family.

Remember...changing habits is hard! Try one or two each week. Soon you'll see some relief in your grocery bills!

Before you go to the store...



- ❑ **Make a list.** Why? You'll spend less time in the store. **For every minute in a supermarket, you spend $2.17**, according to the Food Marketing Institute. Also, if you have a list you will make less trips to the store and save gas.
- ❑ **Plan your meals.** Look for specials and seasonal foods.
- ❑ **Where you shop may cost you money.** Bulk food stores may not always be a good choice. You may be tempted to buy foods you don't need and can't store properly. Large food packages make it too easy to eat larger portions.
- ❑ **Use coupons** for foods you need. Sometimes coupons tempt you to buy things you don't need.
- ❑ **Convenience foods can drain your food dollar.** You pay for convenience such as a ready-to-cook chicken breast. If you prepare it yourself, YOU have control over what goes in the food – less fat and salt.
- ❑ Looking for the **best value?** Foods high in fat and sugar, like cookies, chips, doughnuts and soft drinks, have fewer nutrients than nutritious fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk and lean meats. **Remember, the fiber in fruits and vegetables fills you up and keeps hunger away.**
- ❑ **Buy non-food items** like pet food, cleaning supplies and personal care items **from discount stores.** You pay more for these at the grocery store.

Published by University of Missouri Extension

MP905

At the store...

- ❑ **Shop alone.** Shopping without kids can help you avoid the *nag* effect.
- ❑ **Shop on a full stomach** so you are less tempted to buy more.
- ❑ **Consider store brands.** Many taste the same as name brands and are from the same companies as name brands. If you are making a dish where appearance doesn't matter, like using frozen vegetables in a mixed dish, buy a store brand and save money.
- ❑ **Bigger is not always cheaper** especially if you buy a large size food package and throw food away. Bring a calculator to compare unit prices. Sales tags often do not re-compute unit prices.
- ❑ **Shop the outer aisles** where you find nutritious fruits, vegetables, dairy products and meats. The inside aisles are where you find higher priced processed foods and snacks.
- ❑ **Look high, look low.** Bargains are usually on the top or bottom shelves — NOT at eye level.
- ❑ **Track your store's loss-leader items.** What are loss-leader items? They are low-priced items to get you to the store so you buy other higher priced items. Different sections of the store are featured each week. Stock up on each week's loss-leader items, especially things like cereals and juice.

When you get home...

- ❑ **Store food properly.** Food that gets thrown out is money lost. According to a University of Arizona study, households throw away about $600 a year — or ten $60 fill-ups with gas!

Eating out...

- ❑ Eating out **costs money** and **uses extra gas**. Preparing food at home allows YOU to control what goes in your food. Food prepared at home can be healthier. If you have children, involve them in the meal planning and preparation to build their kitchen skills.
- ❑ If you must eat out, **share an entrée**. Or choose appetizers which are smaller portions of food.

Eating at home...

- ❑ **Portion sizes.** Most of us eat larger portions than we need. Serving food on smaller plates and drinks in taller, thinner glasses can help us eat or drink less.
- ❑ **Eat slowly.** Put your fork down between bites. You'll eat less. Try to be the last person who finishes eating!
- ❑ **Repackage large containers** of food into smaller bags and containers. If you must have snacks on hand like cookies, smaller portions help you avoid overindulging.
- ❑ **Keep healthy foods in sight** — like fruits on a bowl in the kitchen or cut-up vegetables in the refrigerator. You and your family are more likely to choose them over unhealthier snack foods.

Preparing food at home...

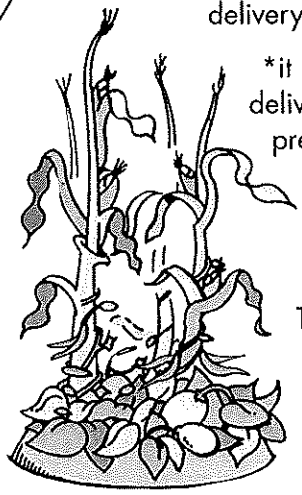
- ❑ **What you don't use, you lose.** If, for example, you are preparing broccoli, cut up the stalk and cook it so it is tender. If you use just the broccoli flowerets you are throwing money away.
- ❑ **Plan leftovers.** Got veggies left over from last night's meal? Throw them in tomorrow's omelette or salad or pizza.
- ❑ **Add meatless meals** to your family's menus. Or make a stir-fry with lots of vegetables and whole grain pasta to fill you up. Don't want to go meatless? **Add a smaller amount of meat** in your stir-fry.
- ❑ **Cook once, eat twice.** Buy enough ingredients to cook more than one meal and freeze meal-sized portions. Now there's no need to buy frozen dinners!

Before you go to work, and at work...

- ❑ **Eat breakfast at home** or **prepare something to take** with you. Food on the road costs more. And sitting in the drive-through lane wastes gas.
- ❑ Foods from vending machines are expensive. **Bring food from home.**

Resources you may not have thought about...

- ❑ **Grow your own food.** If you are on Food Stamps, you can buy seeds and plants with your EBT card. For online information about Food Stamps, go to *www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp/*.
- ❑ **Shop at the local farmers' market.** In season costs less. You may find bargains at the end of the day. To find a Missouri farmers' market near you go online to *agebb.missouri.edu/fmktdir/index.htm*. To find sources of local food in Missouri go online to *foodcircles.missouri.edu/sources.htm*.
- ❑ **Check with your local school** or school district to see if your child may be eligible for free or reduced price benefits for School Meal Programs.
- ❑ **Are you an older adult** interested in receiving meals? Contact your local Area Agency on Aging online at *moaging.com/AAA/Directory.asp*.



- ❑ **If you fall into any of the categories below*** and meet income guidelines, you may be eligible to receive services and nutritious foods from the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program:

*you are pregnant

*you are breastfeeding (up to 1 year after delivery)

*it has been 6 months or less since you delivered your baby, terminated your pregnancy or miscarried

*you have a baby up to 1 year of age or children up to age 5

To find a WIC agency, call TEL-LINK at 1-800-TEL-LINK or 1-800-835-5465, or check with your local health department.

Want more tips?

Go to the **MissouriFamilies** Web site *missourifamilies.org/* and search using "food budget" or "living on less." Or go directly to articles on the food budget at *missourifamilies.org/features/nutritionarticles/budget.htm.*

Contact **your local MU Extension center** (go to *extension.missouri.edu/regions/* to find your local office) for more information or to see if they have classes on nutrition and saving money at the grocery store.

For more information call **MU Extension's Show-Me Nutrition Line** at 1-888-515-0016

Running out of money for food?
Contact your local Food Stamp office or go to: *www.dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp.*

Cindy Fauser, regional nutrition and health specialist, MU Extension's East Central Region, contributed to this publication.
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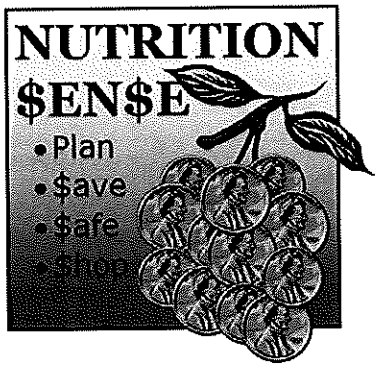
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI Extension ■ Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Michael D. Ouart, Director, Cooperative Extension, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211. ■ University of Missouri Extension is an equal opportunity/ADA institution. ■ *extension.missouri.edu*

FAMILY NUTRITION PROGRAM
MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE



STRETCHING FOOD DOLLARS

Making your food dollars go as far as possible is a matter of knowing what to look for and what to compare. Compare forms of products (for example, concentrated juice vs. ready-to-drink juice) and sizes of packages. Here are some other ways to stretch your food dollars:

✗ Check the price differences between nationally known brands of foods and store brands. In breakfast cereals alone there can be a great difference. For example, an 18-ounce box of nationally known breakfast cereal can easily cost $4.50, which means it costs 25 cents per serving. Store brands may cost $2.25 for a 20-ounce package, or 11 ¼ cents per serving. The difference is mostly in the packaging of the products with few nutritional differences between the two items.

✗ Compare the prices of frozen, canned, fresh, and dried items of the same food.

✗ Compare the number of servings in each food package.

✗ Compare prices at different stores.

✗ Compare prices of similar foods, such as fresh peaches and pears.

✗ Compare larger packages vs. two smaller packages of the same product to get the better value.

✗ Compare the cost of convenience foods vs. the cost of making it from scratch.

Watch Out for Food $nitchers

Impulse buying

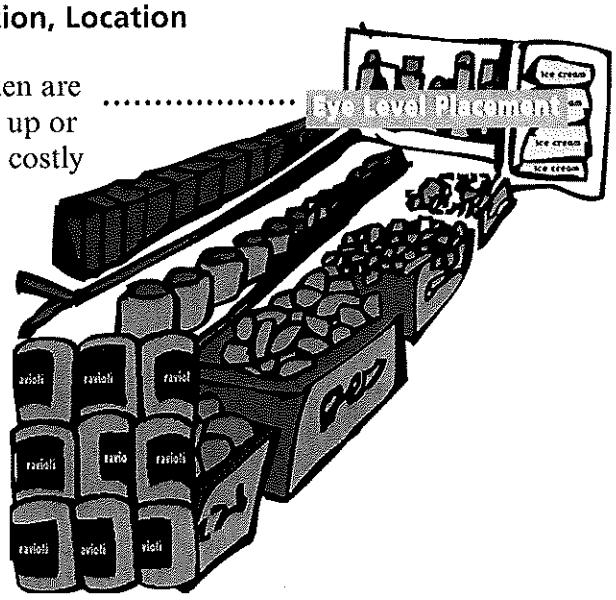
Nonfood items

Foods with low nutritional value

Foods that spoil quickly

Beware of Location, Location, Location

More expensive items often are placed at eye level. Look up or down to find similar, less costly items.



..... Rear of Store
Sale items often are placed at the rear of a store so you have to walk past all the higher-priced items to get to the sale items.

End of Aisle Display .....
These displays attract your attention whether the prices actually are reduced or not.

Beverage Comparisons

Orange Juice

Packaging	Size	Cost
½ gallon from refrigerated section	8 oz.	27¢
1 gallon from refrigerated section	8 oz.	23¢
Single serving from refrigerated section	8 oz.	47¢
Frozen, reconstituted	8 oz.	21¢
Single serving, canned*	6 oz.	45¢
Fresh orange	1 medium	25¢

*Note: This is a 6 oz. serving.

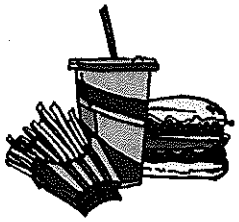
Soft Drink

Size	Cost
12 oz., machine	75¢
12 oz., 6-pack	48¢

2005 prices from a supermarket in Mississippi

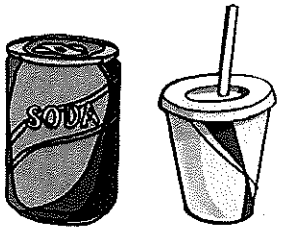
Small Savings Add Up!

Eating Out



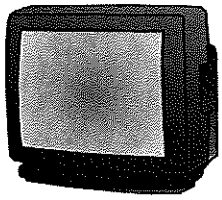
$4 (5 days/week) = $1,040 per year

Soft Drinks



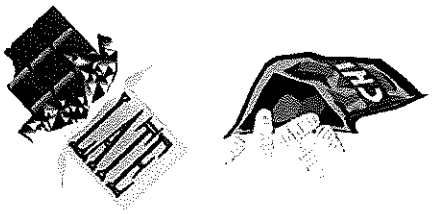
$.75/day = $275 per year

Cable TV



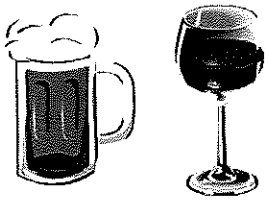
$40/month = $480 per year

Snacks



$1 (3 days/week) = $156 per year

Alcohol

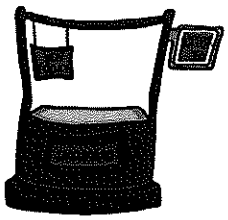


$10/week = $520 per year

Cigarettes

$4/day = $1,460 per year

Lottery Tickets

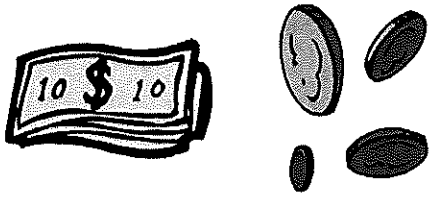


$5/week = $250 per year

Coffee

$.50/day = $183 per year

Little Things Add Up!



Stretching Food Dollars

Use the Beverage Comparisons on page 2 to figure and fill in the costs of the items below.

Type	Cost per Day	Weekly	Monthly	For a Family of 4
12 oz. soft drink (from a machine)				
12 oz. soft drink (from a 6-pack)				
8 oz. orange juice (from 1 gallon)				
8 oz. orange juice (single serving)				
8 oz. orange juice (frozen reconstituted)				

If you have, for example, three 12-ounce servings from the machine per day, how much would it cost per day? Per week? Per month?

What other forms of less expensive drinks might you try taking with you to work?

Mississippi State University Extension Service

msucares.com

Distributed by **Deborah Little, Ed.D.**, Extension Family Nutrition Program Coordinator.

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Information from
Human Environmental Sciences Extension
LEARNING FOR BETTER LIVING

Meal Planning:

Stretching Your Dollar

To make the most of your food dollar, you need to:

- Be aware of the foods your family is eating now.
- Know how much you are spending on food.

Plan your meals. Planning meals one week at a time will help you:

- Save time, energy and money.
- Get adequate nutrition.
- Avoid last minute shopping.

Here are some tips to help when you shop for food:

- Make a shopping list and follow it. Avoid impulse buying.
- Compare stores. Discount food stores and national chains usually offer better prices.
- Shop alone and only once a week.
- To avoid crowds, shop early in the day and early in the week.
- Don't shop when you're hungry.
- If you have the storage space, buy large size packages. Buying larger sizes may save you money.
- Check the unit price label on the shelf to be sure.

Read food labels for ingredients and nutritional information. Compare prices. Know the price of each item before you put it in the basket.

Take time to plan meals, a shopping list and a food budget!

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI Extension

By Alice Henneman, RD, UNL Extension Educator

May is National Egg Month! Eggs are a good source of the highest quality protein, as well as an excellent source of choline which is essential in memory and brain development. And eggs provide varying amounts of all the essential vitamins other than vitamin C. A staple in your refrigerator, they're an unbeatable quick-and-easy meal solution. Turn a package of frozen pasta and vegetables into a mouth watering frittata with this recipe from Mary Torell, Public Information Officer, Poultry & Egg Division, Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

For more free egg recipes or nutritional information on eggs, visit the Nebraska Department of Agriculture Poultry & Egg Division's Web site at www.nebraskapoultry.org or contact Mary Torell at mtorell2@unl.edu or call 472-0752.

Saucy Pasta & Veggie Frittata

(4 servings)

- **cooking spray**
- **1 package (16 oz.) frozen pasta and vegetables in sauce**
- **water**
- **4 eggs**
- **1/4 cup skim milk**
- **sliced cherry tomatoes, optional**

Evenly coat a 10-inch omelet pan or skillet with spray. Add pasta and vegetables in sauce along with water called for on package. Over medium heat, bring to boiling. Cover. Reduce heat to low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until pasta is tender, about 5 minutes. In a medium bowl, beat together eggs and milk until blended. Pour over pasta/vegetable mixture. Add tomatoes, if desired. Cover. Cook over medium heat until eggs are almost set, about 5 to 6 minutes. Remove from heat. Let stand, covered, until eggs are completely set in center and no visible liquid egg remains, about 2 to 3 minutes. Cut into wedges and serve from pan.

Nutritional information per serving of 1/4 recipe using pasta and vegetables in cheddar cheese sauce without optional tomatoes: Calories, 233; Carbohydrates, 23 gm; Protein, 12 gm; Total Fat, 10 gm; Cholesterol, 222 gm; Sodium, 453 gm.

$tretch Your Food Dollar by $pending $mart

NEP
Helping limited-resource families learn to prepare nutritious and safe foods while stretching their food dollars.

Mardel Meinke
UNL Extension Associate

We have all asked, "Where does the money go?" Where do those nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars disappear? Answer these questions to discover ways you manage your food dollars wisely.

1. Does our family limit spending on the "little things"?

Do we routinely buy a soda, cup of coffee or snack from the vending machine or the convenience shop? Do we routinely eat out? Do we have other habits that make money disappear? This can easily add up to $5 or more a day. We don't always think of this spending as part of our food budget. If you invested $5 a day at 10 percent, you would have $1,885 after only one year; $11,616 in five years. Those nickels, dimes, quarters and dollars add up.

2. Does our family have a "spending plan"?

How much can your family spend for food each month? Part of that budget may also include paper and cleaning products, which add to the cost. If your family shops once a week, divide the monthly budget by the number of weeks so your family can stay within the budget. The more trips we make to the store, the more we spend on both groceries and gas.

3. Does our family make a weekly menu plan?

There are many good reasons to make a menu plan, especially for the main meal of the day. Most important, your family is more likely to share important family time by eating at home. Your family also stays healthier by eating a greater variety of foods and saves you money.

Look for specials, use coupons and buy store brands, if less expensive. Also buy in larger quantity if the unit cost is less, storage space is available and you will use the product before it is outdated.

Balance buying more expensive foods with low-cost foods. One woman who was on a limited budget chose to buy steak once a month with the money she saved by stretching her dollars with bulk foods. "Planned leftovers" stretch your food budget, save time and taste good. Look through grocery sale ads and coupon specials to incorporate those foods into your menu plan. Find local sale items by reading advertisements in the newspaper or on-line. Involve your family in suggesting their favorite foods. Include plenty of fruits and vegetables for low calorie, healthy snacks. Find a routine time each week to write down your family's menu ideas.

4. Do we use a shopping list?

Keep a running list of foods to buy as items run low during the week. Keep this list in a handy spot so everyone may add to the list. Look in your cupboards, refrigerator and freezer for foods you need to use.

5. Do we read the Nutrition Facts Labels?

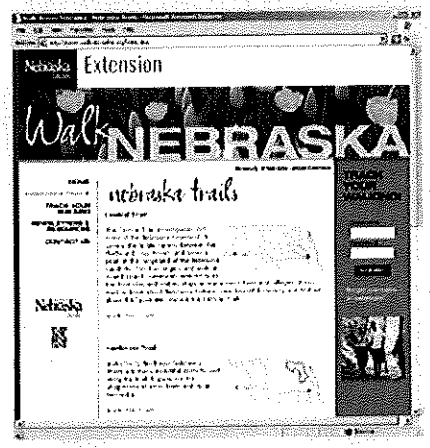
This information is the most accurate way to find out what we are actually purchasing. First look at how many servings are in the container. Recommendations are based on a 2,000 calorie diet, which is considered "average". The Daily Values (DV) listed are for one serving. Look for low-fat, sugar and salt content. Below five percent of the DV is considered low. Twenty percent or higher DV is considered high.

6. Are we paying for the food, not the package?

We pay a lot for packaging of advertised brands, individually packaged foods, canned foods and convenience foods. In fact, 90 percent or more of the cost of a food item may be just for the package. Minimize packaging costs by purchasing more foods in bulk and fresh produce. Limit individual serving-size foods.

If you answer "yes" to five or six of these questions, congratulations! You are Spending Smart.

Walk Nebraska (a Virtual Tour!)



Grab your walking shoes and hit the trail! Take a walk in your neighborhood, at the mall or anywhere at all. Then log on to this University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Web site at http://www.walknebraska.org and convert your mileage into a virtual tour of our state. View eye-catching scenery. Discover interesting facts. Read monthly newsletters for additional information.

Calories Expended in Common Physical Activities

The new MyPyramid recommends we include at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity a day, 10 minutes or more at a time. Physical activity simply means movement of the body that uses energy. Walking, gardening, briskly pushing a baby stroller, climbing the stairs, playing soccer or dancing the night away are all good examples of being active.

How many calories does physical activity use?

A 154-pound man (5'10") will use up about the number of calories listed doing each activity below. Those who weigh more will use more calories, and those who weigh less will use fewer. The calorie values listed include both calories used by the activity and the calories used for normal body functioning.

APPROXIMATE CALORIES USED BY A 154 POUND MAN

Moderate physical activities:	In 1 hour	In 30 minutes
Hiking	370	185
Light gardening/yard work	330	165
Dancing	330	165
Golf (walking and carrying clubs)	330	165
Bicycling (less than 10 miles per hour)	290	145
Walking (3½ miles per hour)	280	140
Weight training (general light workout)	220	110
Stretching	180	90
Vigorous physical activities:	**In 1 hour**	**In 30 minutes**
Running/jogging (5 miles per hour)	590	295
Bicycling (more than 10 miles per hour)	590	295
Swimming (slow freestyle laps)	510	255
Aerobics	480	240
Walking (4½ miles per hour)	460	230
Heavy yard work (chopping wood)	440	220
Weight lifting (vigorous effort)	440	220
Basketball (vigorous)	440	220

Source: MyPyramid at http://mypyramid.gov/pyramid/calories_used.html

Convenience Foods

Some convenience foods can save you time and money. These include:

- frozen juice concentrate
- pancake mix
- cake mix
- spaghetti sauce
- canned soup
- canned fruits and vegetables

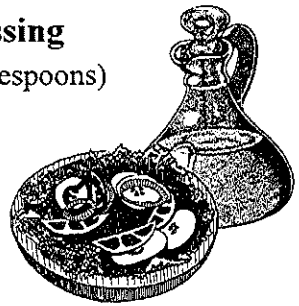
Other convenience foods are expensive and save little time. These include:

- meat "helpers"
- seasoned rice mix
- some frozen dinners
- coating mix for meat and poultry
- salad dressing

Try this easy, low cost recipe for salad dressing.

Sweet Red Russian Dressing

Makes 1 cup (serving size 2 Tablespoons)



1 cup catsup
1/4 cup vinegar
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 Tablespooons brown sugar
1 teaspoon vegetable oil (optional)

Combine all ingredients in a jar with lid and shake well. Refrigerate.

1 serving has 50 calories.

UW Extension

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UW Extension Cooperative Extension • Family Living Programs

Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program

Enter project name
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SHOPPING TIPS

To Stretch Your Food Dollar

Follow These Steps To Get The Most For Your Food Dollar

Plan

- Meals and snacks for several days
- Many different types of food:
  * Bread, cereal, rice and pasta * Vegetables * Fruit
  * Milk, yogurt and cheese * Meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts

Check for

- Food you have on hand and what you will need
- Newspaper ads for weekly specials
- Coupons for items you use

Write

- Grocery list
- Sale price next to item on the list

Get ready

- Take list and coupons
- Avoid shopping when tired, hungry or rushed
- Decide whether to buy a convenience food or make it yourself (see back)

At the store

- Stick to your list
- Compare prices (store brands and sale items may not always be the best buy)
- Check higher and lower shelves for less costly items

At home

- Handle and store food properly to reduce waste

$upermarket $aving$:
16 Tips that Total BIG Bucks!

by Alice Henneman, MS, RD
http://lancaster.unl.edu/food

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It's possible to save money shopping for groceries without cooking everything from scratch, packing your purse with coupons, or purchasing foods in season.

Here are 16 easy tips that total big bucks. An example is given for each with the potential savings from: (1) spending less and/or (2) avoiding losing money through tossing uneaten foods. The possible grand total saved is given at the end of this article. **A dollar saved is even better than a dollar earned: You don't have to pay taxes on it!** Prices are rounded to the nearest 25 cents and may vary by store and region.

1. Keep a grocery list. Gas for an extra trip to the store easily can add a dollar or more to your grocery bill. And the less you shop, the less likely you'll make an impulse purchase. Keep a grocery list where it's easily accessible, such as on the fridge, and remember to take it with you to the grocery store. Stick to your list for added savings, but do stay flexible if you encounter a sale.

EXAMPLE:
1. Gas to drive four miles for an extra trip to the store: **$1.00 (or more!).**
2. Impulse purchase of snack crackers at the store: **An additional $2.50 spent.**

2. Garbage check. We lose money whenever we toss food because it spoiled before we got around to eating it. If leftovers get the "heave ho" because they're left too long, we're putting money in the garbage can. Make planning to avoid tossing foods a priority.

Consider: If wilted lettuce is a frequent occupant of your garbage can, serve more salads at the beginning of the week. If extra mashed potatoes get tossed because they've lingered too long in the fridge, make less next time. Or recycle them as potato patties, shepherd's pie or potato soup within a day or two of making them. Other ideas: Use ripe bananas in banana bread; add juice to smoothies or make popsicles; freeze leftovers for another meal.

EXAMPLE: Tossing a half bag of "tired" lettuce: **$1.00.**

3. Avoid shopping when hungry. Everything looks good on an empty stomach. It's all too easy to buy something to tide us over in the car until we make it home. Eating before shopping not only helps forestall impulse buys, it may save calories. If you're shopping with your kids, feed them, too.

EXAMPLE: Buying an energy bar at the grocery store to tide you over until you get home: **$1.50 spent.**

4. Brown bag it. If you normally eat out at noon, consider brown bagging it at least once a week. The typical fast food meal easily can cost $5.00 or more. Take leftovers from the evening meal to work the next day. Or, a peanut butter sandwich and a piece of whole fruit are quick to pack.

NOTE: You may save money on your children's lunch by having them participate in the school lunch program. They can eat a balanced meal, offered at a reasonable price.

EXAMPLE:
1. Eating a sack lunch once a week: **Save $2.50.**
2. Eating a sack lunch 5 days a week: **Save $12.50.**

5. Coupon common sense. Use coupons only for foods you normally would eat, rather than for "extras." Don't miss out on potential sources of valuable coupons. Check your grocery receipt – sometimes there are great coupons on the back that help save money. Also, if you have access to a computer, check online for coupons. For starters, check the Web site of the store where you shop or of products you use. Often the Web site address for many foods is given on the product label.

If possible, shop on double or triple coupon days when a store increases the value of coupons. Grocery store loyalty cards may be another source of savings, offering in-store discounts to cardholders.

EXAMPLE:
1. Using two 50-cent coupons for items you DO use: **Save $1.00.**
2. NOT buying that NEW dessert mix: **Save $2.00**

6. Check expiration dates. Avoid buying a food that is past its prime. If it's on sale and near its expiration date, use it soon.

EXAMPLE: Avoid dumping a half gallon of old, soured milk down the drain: **Save $2.50.**

Know how. Know now.

7. Small scale experiments. Before trying a new food, buy the smallest size of package. If your family doesn't like the food, you're not stuck with a big box.

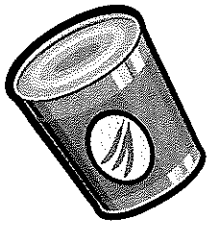
EXAMPLE: Buying a small container of a new spice that you later discover your family won't eat: **Save $1.50.**

8. Costly convenience foods. How much time do you really save when buying a convenience food? It takes just a few seconds to mix your own sugar and cinnamon rather than buying it pre-mixed. Microwaving a bowl of regular oatmeal rather than pouring hot water over a pre-measured package adds only a few minutes.

You're likely to save by cutting fruits and veggies yourself. Plus, the precut ones won't keep as long.

EXAMPLE: Buying a carton of old-fashioned or quick oatmeal that provides 30 servings vs. buying 3 boxes instant oatmeal that contain 10 packets each: **Save $5.50.**

9. Staple food stock up. Invest in staple foods when they're on sale. Buying a boatload of bananas (and other perishable foods) isn't a very good long-term investment. Stocking up on staples such as reduced-price canned tuna or tomato sauce can be. Remember: Check expiration dates.



EXAMPLE: Stocking up on 10 cans of food reduced by 20 cents apiece: **Save $2.00.**

10. Bulking up when the price is right and you can use it. First, do the math and check if you actually do save by buying a larger package. The cost of two foods of the smaller size may be a better price than the larger one. Plus, will you use the food while the flavor is still tasty? Always check it out. If the larger size meets your criteria, go for it!

EXAMPLE: Buying a 5-pound bag of rice instead of a 1-pound bag: **Save $1.50.**

11. Store brand savings. Store brands are comparable in nutrition to name brands. And, taste-wise, there may be little difference. In some comparisons, they have been preferred over the name brands.

Some store brands may vary more in size, color, or texture than name brands. This may be unimportant, however, depending on use. A less than perfect-appearing vegetable may be just fine if used in a casserole or soup.

Store brands and lower-priced brands tend to be positioned on the top and bottom shelves. The national brands are more likely to be on the middle shelves.

EXAMPLE: Buying just two store brands and saving 50-cents on each: **Save $1.00.**

12. Prevent food flops. Check preparation methods for unfamiliar foods. Perhaps that tropical fruit looked enticing at the store. If you're don't know how to prepare it or where to find information once you bring it home, think again. Or, that new cut of meat – do you slowly roast it or can it be grilled? Either way, find out or risk a food flop.

Often the produce person or the meat manager at the store can give you some tips. Many produce departments have books with descriptions of all the items, what they taste like, how to prepare them, etc.

EXAMPLE: Avoiding that purchase of self-rising flour and finding it won't work in your recipe: **Save $2.50.**

13. Beware of snack attacks. Unless you're fairly active and need the calories, enjoy snacks, such as chips, cookies, candy, etc. in limited amounts. You'll save money and may lose unwanted pounds at the same time!

EXAMPLE: Buy one less bag of chips weekly: **Save $2.00.**

14. Shop the specials. Plan your menus around sale items, especially more expensive purchases such as meat.

Buying several packages of meat on sale and freezing it may save quite a bit. "It is safe to freeze meat or poultry directly in its supermarket wrapping but this type of wrap is permeable to air," advises the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS). "Unless you will be using the food in a month or two, over wrap these packages as you would any food for long-term storage using airtight heavy-duty foil, (freezer) plastic wrap or freezer paper, or place the package inside a (freezer) plastic bag." When repackaging family packs into smaller amounts, USDA/FSIS also recommends these wraps.

While raw ground meat maintains optimum quality in the freezer for 3 to 4 months, larger pieces of meat like steaks or chops maintain optimum quality for 4 to 12 months. At 0 degrees F, frozen foods remain safe indefinitely. Thaw meat in the refrigerator on a plate on the bottom shelf so it doesn't drip onto other foods.

EXAMPLE: Buying meat on sale: **Save $2.00.**

15. Think before you drink: Buy a reusable water bottle and fill it with tap water. Your investment soon pays for itself. Limit amount of soft drinks and fancy coffees.

EXAMPLE: Drinking tap water vs. buying a 12 pack of bottled water: **Save $4.00.**

16. "Checkout" temptation. OK, you've almost made it to the finish line … don't stumble now as you approach the checkout lane. As you're waiting in line, think twice before buying some last-minute temptation.

EXAMPLE: Resist a magazine with a new diet: **Save $3.50.**

GRAND TOTAL: The more of these tips you use and the more foods you use them with, the more you can save. Case in point: If you used each of the preceding examples in ONE shopping trip a week, you could save as much as $40 a week. **Multiply that by 52 weeks and the savings would be … TA DA! … over $2,000 yearly!**

Reviewed by: Cindy Brison, Sarah Doerneman, Jennifer Dunavan, Shannon Frink, Cindy Goody, Kayla Hinrichs, Lisa Kopecky, Toni Kuehneman, Jennifer Meyer, Amber Pankonin, Joan David Sather, Kathy Tack, Kathy Taylor, Jennifer Yen, Jessica Wegener and Linda Wetzel. *10/2008*

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Cooperative Extension Service

Spending Less, Eating Better

A Shopper's Guide

28 summary tips for saving money when buying food are offered.

- Circle 3 tips that you will put into action this week.
- Add on other tips you find useful in the following weeks.
- Keep practicing the tips you find useful until they become habits.
- Add any other useful tips in the blank boxes at the end.

1. WEEKLY SHOPPING PLAN

- Divide grocery money into weekly amounts.
- Take only the amount of food monies you plan to spend.

2. CHECK NEWSPAPER ADS

- Watch for sale items.
- Buy extra staples when the price is low.

3. CHECK YOUR INVENTORY

- Check your refrigerator, freezer and cupboards for foods and supplies you have at home.

4. EAT BEFORE YOU SHOP

Hints about Keikis:

- Shop when rested.
- Shop when less crowded.
- Allow keiki to add one item to your shopping list.

5. USE STORE OR BRAND COUPONS

- Use for foods you need when the price is right.
- Take coupons when shopping.

6. KNOW STORE LAYOUT

7. BE AWARE OF MARKETING TECHNIQUES

- End of aisle displays.
- Items at checkout counter.
- Sweet cereals at children's eye-level.

8. RESIST BUYING EXTRAS

9. LIMIT CONVENIENCE FOODS

- Prices are higher and often nutrients are lower.
- Example, frozen prepared meals may have added fat, salt and sugar.

10. READ THE LABELS

- Look for:

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size
Servings Per Container
Amount Per Serving

11. SEE THE LIST OF INGREDIENTS

- Ingredients are listed in order from the most to the least amount found in the product

12. CHECK DATES FOR FRESHNESS

- Dates on packages tell you when a food was packed or the last day the store can sell it.

13. EAT MEAT LESS OFTEN

- Meats can be expensive and high in fat.
- Use beans, lentils or tofu more often for family meals.

14. BEST BUYS IN MILK

- Non-fat, dry milk and evaporated skim milk are especially good in cooking.

15. CHOOSE BROWN OR ENRICHED RICE

- These contain more nutrients and fiber.

Spending Less, Eating Better

A Shopper's Guide

16. PLAN MEALS AROUND SPECIALS

- If ground beef and chicken are on sale, how about chili and roast chicken for two dinners?

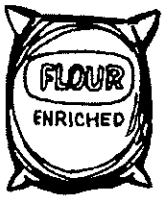
17. MAKE A SHOPPING LIST

- Make your shopping list based on your meal plan, inventory and specials.

18. KNOW YOUR PRICES

- Choose one or two stores with the best prices.
- Check open markets and wholesale outlets.

19. STOCK UP ON SALE ITEMS



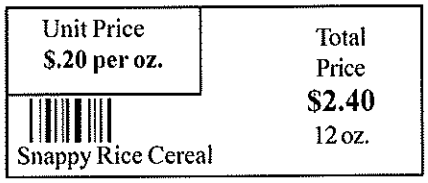
20. COMPARE PRICES

- Compare prices of fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables. Net weight includes liquid in the can.

21. BE SURE TO CHECK

- scanner for price errors
- receipt for accuracy
- your change before leaving the store

22. USE UNIT PRICING



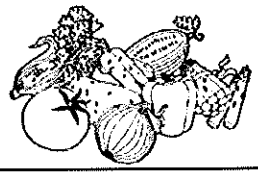
23. TRY STORE BRANDS

- Value
- Lower prices
- No national advertising

24. PURCHASE BREADS AT THRIFT STORES

- Bargain prices
- Select 100% whole grains

25. BUY FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN SEASON



26. KNOW GRADES OF MEAT

- Less expensive, lower grades of meat are great for stews, soups and stir frys, and are just as nutritious.

27. TRY GROUND TURKEY OR GROUND CHICKEN

- Economical
- Less fat than regular ground beef
- Tastes good

28. START A HOME GARDEN

- Buy some seeds and grow your own vegetables.

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Shopping, Cooking & Meal Planning

Food Shopping and Meal Planning

Find a wealth of information, resources, and tips for healthier ways to plan and shop, for you and your family.

Top 10 Reasons to Shop at a Farmers Market

Why shop at a farmers market? Fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruits and vegetables are just a few reasons. See what this Nutrition.gov registered dietitian has to say to shoppers and farmers.

Food Labels

Find out how to use food labels to make healthy food choices, what organic labeling tells you, how to look for trans fats, and more...

Recipes

Need a new healthy, delicious recipe? Start here to find fruit and vegetable recipes, Native American recipes, commodity food recipes and more.

Ethnic Cooking

Browse through cultural and ethnic food and cooking resources and recipes including Latino, Native American, African American and more...

Food Storage and Preservation

Resources to help you store and preserve your foods safely, while preserving nutrients and quality.

Emergency Food Supplies

Keep your food and water safe during emergencies and severe weather! Find information and resources to help you be ready.

Commonly Asked Questions - Shopping, Cooking and Meal Planning

Find answers to questions about food labeling, farmer's market locations, budget recipes, food preservation and safety and more...

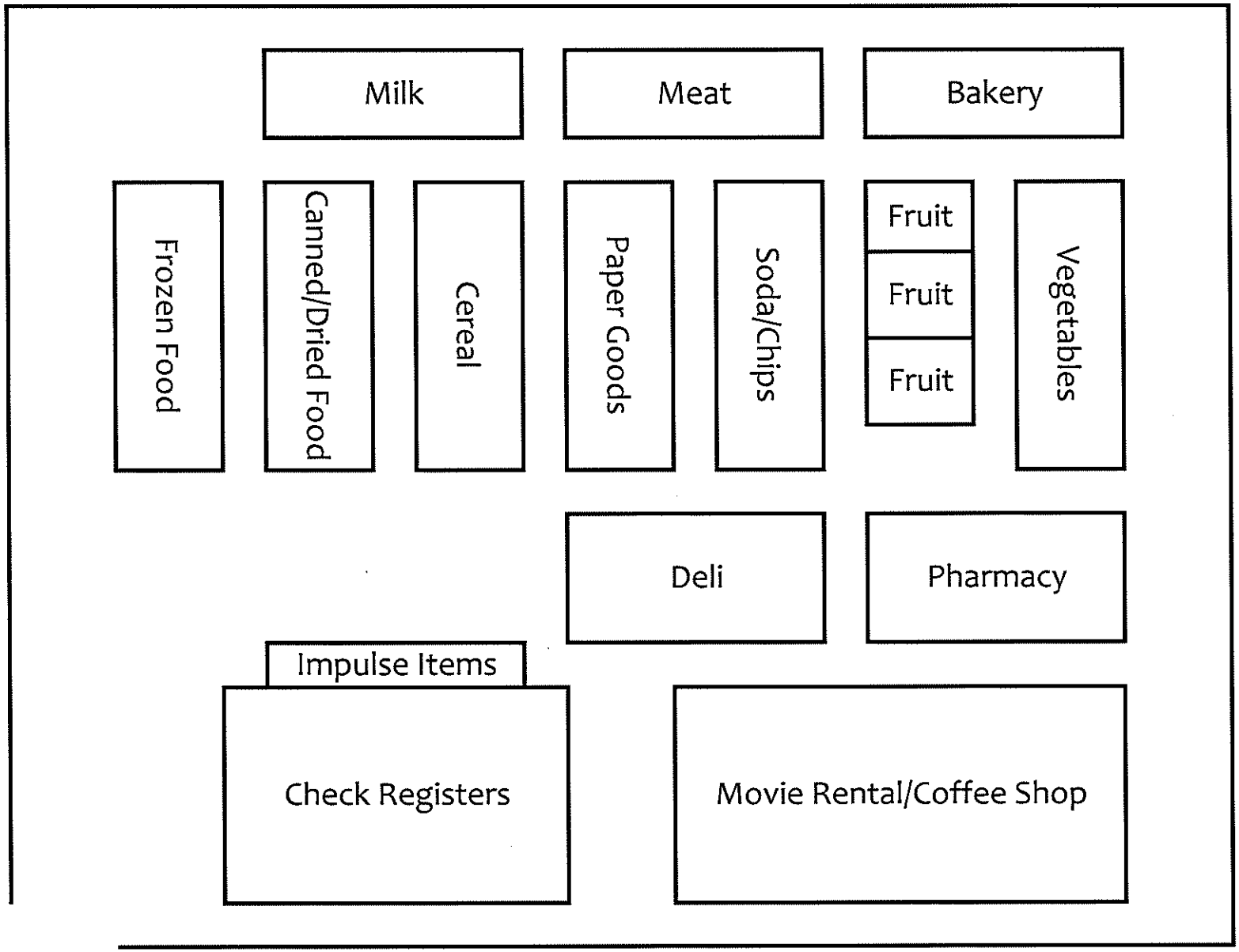
Shopping, Cooking & Meal Planning

Food Shopping and Meal Planning
- Build a Healthy Diet with Smart Shopping
- Farmers Markets
  - Farmers Market Food Safety

Food Labels
Recipes
Ethnic Cooking
Food Preparation and Safety
Food Storage and Preservation
Emergency Food Supplies
Commonly Asked Questions (FAQs)

Last Modified: Apr-03-2013

Map of the Grocery Store



Shopping Practices

	Never	Sometimes	Always	Points
Things I do at home:				
Prepare most or all meals at home instead of eating away from home.				
Look to see what I have on hand.				
Read store ads before making a meal plan.				
Clip coupons for foods I normally buy.				
Make a detailed list.				
Put sale price beside items on sale.				
Indicate what items have a coupon.				
Plan to buy a variety of foods from all the food groups.				
Think about buying foods that are lower in cost.				
Organize list to avoid driving down all the aisles.				
Things I do at the store:				
Take a list.				
Buy only items on my list.				
Read Nutrition Facts labels.				
Compare costs: canned, frozen, fresh; National vs. store brand.				
Use coupons for foods I normally buy.				
Make grocery shopping my last stop, so I can take the food home quickly to store it properly.				

Your Shopping Practices Total _____

For every "Always" you marked, give yourself 3 points in the points column.
Every "Sometimes", gets 2 points.
Every "Never", gets 1 point.
Total your score to see how your shopping practices rate.