



20 Ways to Save Money on Your Groceries

Healthy eating doesn't have to be expensive. Here are 20 ways to help you save money on food.

1. See what's on sale. Look at grocery store flyers, newspaper ads and online to see what items are on sale.

2. Make a grocery list and stick to it. Your grocery list should include the ingredients that you need to make healthy meals and snacks. Make a menu plan to help you put together your grocery list so you buy only what you need.

3. Use coupons wisely. Coupons can help you save money only if you will actually eat or use the food. Check the expiry date on the coupons.

4. Bring a calculator. As you shop, add up your grocery bill to help you stay on budget.

5. Shop at grocery stores or supermarkets. These stores offer more variety and usually cheaper prices than convenience stores or small specialty shops.

6. Get to know the food prices. Write down the regular prices of foods you buy often. This will help you figure out which stores have the best prices and if you are getting a good deal on sale items.

7. Avoid shopping when you're hungry. When you shop on an empty stomach, everything suddenly looks delicious! You may be more tempted to buy unhealthy choices and foods you don't need.

8. Get to know the supermarket layout and where the healthy foods are located. On the perimeter (or outside aisles) of the store you will usually find the fresh vegetables, fruit, fish, lean meat, eggs and lower fat milk products. Go to the inside aisles for other nutritious staples such as grain products, beans, nuts, seeds,

peanut butter and whole grains. Skip the aisles with the pop, candy and chips.

9. Buy in season. Vegetables and fruit are cheaper when they are in season. Avoid waste by buying fresh fruit at different stages of ripeness. Choose some fruit that is ripe and ready to eat, and some that will ripen in a few days. That way you'll have enough time to eat all your purchases.

10. Buy frozen or canned. When fresh is out of season or too expensive, buy frozen or canned vegetables and fruit. They are just as nutritious. If using canned vegetables, rinse them under cold water first to wash away some of the sodium.



11. Look high and low – not in the middle. The most expensive items are usually put on the shelves where you can easily see and reach them. Some of the less expensive items may be on the higher or lower shelves. Don't be shy, ask for assistance with items that are out of reach.

12. Look at the "best before" and expiry dates. Choose foods with a best before or expiry date that will give you enough time to eat it all and prevent waste.

13. Check out the "reduced" section. Reduced vegetables are good for soups and stews. Ripe bananas are perfect for making muffins or banana bread. Day old bread is fine for eating and makes good French toast or grilled sandwiches. Ripe melons can be diced and frozen, or pureed to make smoothies.

14. Choose store brands. No-name or store brand items are nutritious and are usually cheaper than the brands with fancy packaging. Try no-name or store brand products such as cereal, pasta, vegetables and canned goods.

15. Compare the unit price for similar items. The unit price tells you how much something costs per "unit" or per 100 grams (g) or 100 milliliters (mL). Don't worry



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about using a calculator to figure this out. You can usually find the unit price in small print under the main price. This price can help you compare whether a large or small size of an item is a better buy.

Here's an example where the smaller can of tomatoes has the lower unit price and is a better buy than the larger can.

- Small canned tomatoes 540 mL \$1.09
- The unit price is 20.2 cents/100 mL

- Large canned tomatoes 796 mL \$1.69
- The unit price is 21.2 cents/100 mL

Here's an example where the larger box of cereal has the lower unit price and is a better buy than the smaller box of cereal.

- Small cereal box 260 g \$4.19
- The unit price is \$1.61/100 g

- Large cereal box 400 g \$4.99
- The unit price is \$1.25/100 g

16. Buy from the bulk bins. The bulk bins are good for ingredients such as dried herbs, spices, rice, pasta, flour and different whole grains. Buy only the amount that you need to save money. (If you have food allergies, be aware that bulk bins are not allergy-safe).

17. Stock up on the basics. Rice, pasta, low sodium canned fish, and dried legumes (beans, lentils, peas) all have a long shelf life. Stock up when they are on sale, but only if you have space to store them at home. See the Food Handlers' Storage Guide to find out how long food can last in your refrigerator, freezer and cupboard.

18. Store your food properly at home. Prevent waste by storing foods properly. Apples turn soft quickly if you leave them at room temperature, so keep them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper. Store mushrooms in a paper bag, not in a plastic bag. Keep potatoes in a cool, dark, dry place away from the onions.

19. Make your own meals. Whenever you can, make your own meals. It is less expensive than buying ready-

to-eat, prepared meals. If you need practice cooking, see what programs your local public health unit has to help you get comfortable in the kitchen.

20. Grow your own. If you can, grow your own vegetables and herbs in the summer – even if you don't have a backyard. Tomatoes, lettuce, basil, radishes, cucumber, spinach and many others can be grown in containers on a sunny balcony.

<https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Budget/20-Ways-to-Save-Money-on-Your-Groceries.aspx>



Tips for Planning Meals on a Budget

Are you trying to save money on food? If so, start by planning your meals for the next few days or week ahead. It takes a bit of time, but it will help you save money later. Here are some tips to get you started.

Make a menu. Decide which recipes you will make for lunch and dinner. When you have a plan, you will be less likely to spend money on fast food or convenience meals.



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Plan your meals around foods that are on sale. Check store flyers, newspaper inserts and coupon sites online. You may be surprised at the good buys available. Just be sure to buy and plan for foods that you will actually use so that they don't go to waste.

Plan at least one meatless meal a week. Legumes (beans, lentils, dried peas), eggs, tofu, peanut butter and canned fish offer great tasting protein at a good price.

Check your pantry, refrigerator and freezer. Look at the expiry dates of the foods and ingredients you already have on hand. Which ones do you need to use up? Look for recipes that use those foods and ingredients.

Enjoy grains more often. Grains such as rice, pasta, barley and couscous are inexpensive and can be used in many different recipes. Try them in soups, stews and salads.

Avoid recipes that need a special ingredient. Some recipes call for a special ingredient that you may not have. How much does that ingredient cost? Does it come in a small or big package? Can you use it in other recipes before it goes bad? It may not be worth the money to buy an ingredient if you are only going to use it once. Leave the ingredient out or try the recipe with an ingredient that you already have at home. It's fun to experiment while cooking and you may surprise yourself with the finished dish.

Plan to use leftovers. Think about how you can use leftovers. If you're cooking roast chicken with rice and vegetables for Sunday night's supper, then make chicken sandwiches for Monday's lunch. On Tuesday, use the bones to make a chicken soup and toss in any leftover vegetables and rice.

Make extras. Don't let a big bunch of carrots or celery go to waste. Use it all up by making an extra big pot of soup. If ground beef is on sale, make two batches of lasagna instead of one. Serve one batch for dinner, and freeze the other batch in meal-sized portions for another time. Know what your family likes to eat. Encourage your

family to share their favourites and help with menu planning. That way you can look for favourite ingredients and foods when they go on sale.



Best Buys at the Grocery Store

It's easier to save money when you know which foods can cost less. Taking the time to prepare and cook your own food is another great budgeting tip. Use this guide to help you save money whenever you go shopping.

Some vegetables and fruit are good buys all year round - like apples, onions, carrots, cabbage, beets, mushrooms and potatoes. Buy fresh fruit and vegetables, and cut them up yourself. Buy canned or frozen 100% juice made from concentrate instead of pre made juice.

Buy plain, unsweetened oatmeal or cereal, and add your own fresh or dried fruit, cinnamon, nuts and seeds. Add honey or maple syrup for sweetness.

Buy rice and barley. Visit the bulk store so you can buy grains in the amount that you need. (If you have food allergies, be aware that bulk food stores are not always allergy-safe).

Bake your own muffins instead of store bought.

Use crushed cereal or cracker crumbs instead of pre made bread crumbs.

Buy plain rice and noodles. Rice can be made in large batches and frozen in individual portions for when you need an "instant" meal.

Buy low fat evaporated milk or skim milk powder. Buy plain, low fat yogurt and add your own fresh or frozen fruit.



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Buy block cheese and grate it or slice it yourself.

Instead of pre-seasoned or marinated raw meat, poultry or fish., buy unseasoned items and add your own low sodium marinades and seasonings.

Buy pot roast, stew beef, chuck roast or pork shoulder – braise them or cook them in stew to keep the meat tender and juicy.

Try meat alternatives such as beans, lentils, dried peas, unsalted nuts, seeds, nut butters and tofu. If using canned beans, peas or lentils, rinse them first to wash away some of the sodium.

Buy regular ground beef – drain off the fat after cooking. Buy a whole chicken and cut up the parts. Buy chicken thighs instead of chicken breast.

Make your own soups – look online for recipes, or visit a second hand book store for cook books. Make your own sauce using canned tomatoes, herbs and spices.

Brew a pot of your favourite tea and chill in the fridge. Add lemon slices and sweeten to your preference.

Ways to Save Money Around the House

View Coupons as Money

When you realize a \$10 coupon for something you need is the same as someone giving you \$10 in cash towards your purchase, you'll start to see the value of coupons and savings in a whole new way.

Make Your Own Cheap Wall Art

Affordable wall decor is at your fingertips when you transform some of your favorite photos into a collage of cool black and whites, frame beautiful fabric scraps, utilize your kid's artwork, or paint your own scenes.

Be Your Own Barista

We all know how much coffee shops can cost, so brew

your own at home and take a to-go mug with you in the morning. Invest in small hand-frothers, syrups, or just use cinnamon or other common flavorings to fancy things up.

Pack Your Lunch

Sure it might seem easier to grab lunch while out, but brown bagging can save you a lot of cash each week. It's also especially helpful for those who just can't step out of the office or need more will-power to stick with a healthy lunch.

Recycle for Cash

There are many bottle depots out there that will gladly take your empties for refund. Save up for a month and take your bottles in for a quick cash out.

Stick to Shopping Lists

Always make a list and stick to it when setting out for the grocery store, mall, or online shopping. You are less likely to make random buys when something is not on your list.

Make Your Own Flavored Beverages

Save money on expensive bottled drinks and use a pitcher of regular water or basic seltzer and flavor with slices of lemons, oranges, cucumbers, or berries.

Don't Keep Up With the Joneses

Don't just spend because you want to be the one with the best gadget or are trying to outdo the neighborhood. Make sure your spending is not just for the sake of appearance, but instead is for things that truly matter.



Happy Shopping!



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