

Eating Healthy on a Budget

Tips to Stretch Your Food Dollars

Choose Nutrient-Dense Foods

These include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans, dairy, eggs, nuts, and lean meats.

These may look like they cost more up front, but will pay off because they will keep you fuller longer due to fiber, so you don't need to buy as much. They also have vitamins and minerals to keep you healthy, which will lower medical costs.

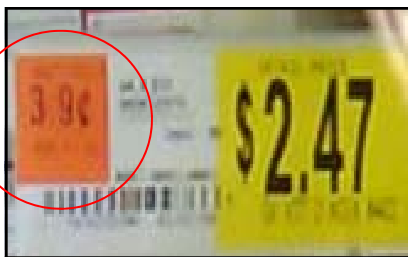


Shop the Outer Edge

The edges of the grocery store have fresh foods with the most nutrients. The inside shelves are loaded with processed foods that may seem inexpensive, but may not be healthy or cost effective.

Frozen fruits and vegetables are a perfect, low-cost substitute for fresh.

Check the Price per Pound



Look at the price tag in the grocery store to see if larger is cheaper or to compare brands. The small number in the corner typically tells the price per pound (or price per ounce). This is the best way to compare products, no matter the size. It is found by dividing the price by the number of ounces in the package—but the math is done for you!








Helpful Hints

- Shopping when you're hungry can result in high fat, sugar and salt purchases.
- Skip the bagged chips and choose to pop your own popcorn.
- Buy onions in a 3-pound bag and store them in a dark cabinet. They last and are cheaper than when they are bought individually!



Smart Protein Choices

Grocery shopping is a time to choose foods wisely that will feed and nourish you and your family. Here's a list of protein sources to look for that will significantly reduce your total food cost and increase your nutrient intake!

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| <p>Beans and Lentils</p>  | <p>Beans come in many flavors and sizes. They add volume to and stretch soups, stews, side dishes, and salads. Dried beans are the most cost-effective buy. A 1-pound bag, soaked overnight and cooked, yields about 5–6 cups cooked, whereas a 1-pound can of precooked beans yields about 1³/₄ cups. Precooked beans are still a great, inexpensive protein source.</p> |
| <p>Eggs</p>  | <p>This is another inexpensive but versatile source of protein. You can make eggs for breakfast as well as any other meal. Try them hardboiled, in a frittata with vegetables, or in fried rice. If you are watching your cholesterol, eat only the whites.</p> |
| <p>Sardines</p>  | <p>Looking for omega-3 fatty acids? This inexpensive fish is packed with nutrients—and omits the mercury since it is low on the food chain. Add it to salads straight from the tin. Water-packed light tuna is also a good choice.</p> |
| <p>Dairy Products</p>  | <p>These low-fat or fat-free animal products have a good source of many nutrients such as calcium and vitamin D. As a whole they may seem expensive, but are less than \$1 per serving. When buying yogurt, select the large container instead of the individual sizes for a lower price.</p> |
| <p>Chicken</p>  | <p>This popular protein can be costly when purchased already cut. Cut it up yourself to save. Grill or bake the breasts, braise (slow-cook in liquid) the thighs and legs, barbeque the wings. Use the carcass to make your own stock. Save vegetable trimmings and scraps in a freezer safe bag until it's full. Put the carcass and vegetables in a large stock pot and cover with cool water. Bring to a boil, then slowly simmer for 1–2 hours. Strain and make into a soup or freeze in ice cube trays for a later use.</p> |
| <p>Seeds</p>  | <p>The next time you have a pumpkin or squash, save the seeds. Clean and wash the seeds, dry them, sprinkle with olive oil and salt, and roast. Seeds make a great, free snack packed with nutrients.</p> |
| <p>Tofu</p>  | <p>This can be used in both savory and sweet recipes. You can highlight it in a dish by dicing up firm tofu and searing it, or cover it up by pureeing silken tofu into soups, smoothies, or desserts.</p> |

Make it a meal:

- Combine your protein source with fruits and vegetables. Try to eat a rainbow of fruits and vegetables everyday to get the maximum nutrients available. They are rich in fiber to help you stay full.
- Add whole grains. Complement your protein source with whole grains that contain fiber. Great, economical choices include brown rice, whole grain pasta, corn tortillas, oatmeal, polenta, and millet.