

eating healthy on a budget

Eating healthy doesn't mean you have to break the bank. Nourish your body and get the most for your budget. Below are suggested tips to help you better plan meals, navigate the grocery store and shop smart for healthy foods.

Get the best price

Check the local newspaper coupons, store online ads, or grocery store sale ads to see which items are on sale for that week.

Create a weekly game plan

Plan recipes that incorporate on-sale food items. Use the meal planner handout to help organize your recipes for the week. If broccoli is on sale, try making a chicken broccoli casserole. Leftover broccoli can then be added as a side dish for a meal later in the week. Be sure to add eggs and beans to your menu. These are two low-cost, high-protein food options.

Stick to the list

Make a list of all the items you need. Keep a running list in your office, on your phone, or near the refrigerator. When you're in the store, do your best to only buy the items on your list.

Buy in bulk

Pantry staples with a long shelf life are great to purchase in bulk and are often more affordable. Budget-friendly foods include brown rice, whole grain pasta, oats, beans, onions and potatoes. Large bags of frozen fruits or vegetables are also great additions to the freezer, just make sure there's enough room first!



Understand the price tag

Price tags can tell you a lot about how much you're spending.

- **Retail:** How much you pay for each item.
- **Unit Price:** how much an item costs per pound, quart, unit etc.

Don't shy away from canned or frozen

Fresh isn't always best. In fact, frozen and canned produce offer just as much nutritional value, if not more, compared to fresh produce. Look for low-sodium produce varieties both on the shelf and in the freezer.

Compare brands

Store brands are typically less expensive than name brands, but the quality is often just as comparable. Compare brands to see which saves more money with purchasing.

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Buy in season

Seasonal produce is often cheaper. Apples and bananas are almost always the same price year-round. Popular seasonal produce includes:

- **Summer:** Berries, corn, lettuce, peppers, tomatoes.
- **Fall:** Apples, carrots, celery, some berries, squash.
- **Winter:** Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, oranges, potatoes, squash.
- **Spring:** Lettuce, peas, radishes, sugar snap peas.

Make your own convenience meals

Pre-packaged meals can be costly. When you're feeling your best, prepare a large batch (or two) of your favorite recipe. Freeze in individual containers. Use throughout the week or when energy levels are low and you don't feel like cooking. It can also be fun to invite friends or family members over for a cooking party and prepare multiple meals to freeze for days when cooking isn't a high priority.

Be creative with leftovers

Remember, cooking is an art. Don't be afraid to stray from typical recipes to clean out the fridge at the end of the week. Sometimes that's when the best recipes are created. Combine leftover chicken with a bag of frozen vegetables for a quick stir-fry. Whip up burrito bowls with leftover rice by adding black beans, cheese and salsa. Microwave extra potatoes and stuff with broccoli and cheese for a comforting baked potato.