

Eating Healthy on a Budget

- **Beverages:** Do you really need bottled water? A water filter pitcher will save money in the long run and you are saving the environment by not pitching all that plastic ☺
- **Condiments:** Buy in Bulk!
- **Canned and Packaged Goods:** Buy store brands. Choose low-sodium canned goods, water-packed meat or tuna, and water-packed or low-sugar canned fruit. Canned tomatoes are a great bargain. Buy whole-grain rice and pasta in large packages instead of small boxes. Stick to serving sizes, then your pasta and rice will last much longer.
 - Pass up the quick cooking rice and microwave packs
- **Meat:** Eat red meat only occasionally. Unfortunately, lean and extra-lean varieties tend to be more expensive than fattier cuts.
 - Consider buying larger packs, so the unit cost of the meat is lower. Freeze what's left.
 - Use less than what a recipe calls for.
 - Lean cuts of meat like the round also tend to be tough cuts. These cook beautifully in the slow cooker, so you can still enjoy relatively inexpensive, fork-tender meat.
 - Make your own seasonings. Much cheaper and saves on sodium!
- **Poultry:** Boneless, skinless chicken breasts can be very expensive. Buy in bulk if you have space. The unit cost of buying chicken in a larger package will be less. Buy plain chicken breasts and season/marinade yourself.
 - Occasionally a whole chicken is cheaper than buying a pound pack of chicken breasts. Roast the chicken and remove the skin before eating it. Use leftovers in soups or sandwiches.
 - Chicken thighs are cheaper than chicken breasts, and so long as you opt for the skinless variety, you won't consume a significant amount of extra fat. Thigh meat is rich, so you don't need as much of it.
- **Fish:** Tilapia and sole are relatively cheap. If the cost is prohibitive, choose frozen fish fillets or fish steaks. Opt for plain fillets rather than breaded or marinated fish. Plain fillets are lower in fat, sodium and other additives. If fresh fish happens to be on sale, buy some for today and some for your freezer.
- **Beans:** Beans are a cheap and wonderful alternative source of protein. Buy dried beans and cook them yourself. Canned beans are usually high in sodium.
- **Dairy:** Buy blocks of reduced-fat cheese and grate it yourself rather than buying packs of pre-shredded cheese.
 - Buy stronger flavor cheeses over milder ones, and use smaller amounts. You'll get the flavor for fewer calories, and your cheese supply will last longer. Pre-sliced cheese is more expensive than blocks. Slice your own!
- **Fruits and Vegetables:** Buy whole carrots and cut them into pieces or shred them yourself. Pre-cut veggies, while convenient, are an expensive way to buy them.
 - Same goes for fruit. Cut cantaloupe or pineapple are much more expensive than buying the whole fruit. Plus, some of the vitamins may be lost if the cut items have been sitting around for a while.
 - Buy in season!
 - When it comes to apples and oranges, it actually does pay to buy the bagged version rather than the loose variety.
 - Eat frozen fruit and veggies. Frozen vegetables can be a very economical way of getting some of your 5-9 servings. Stock up on peas, green beans, chopped frozen spinach, sweet corn and squash.
 - Make your own snack packs instead of buying the pre-packed veggies/dip or apples.
 - Freeze what's on sale!
 - Make your own salad mix.

Consider growing your own veggies!