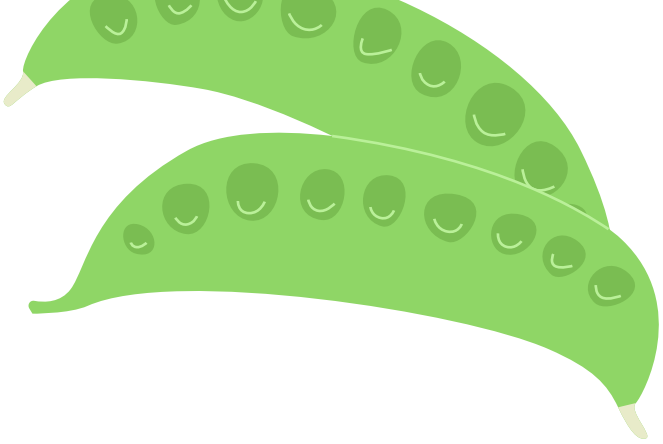
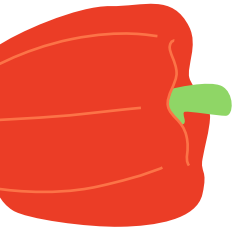


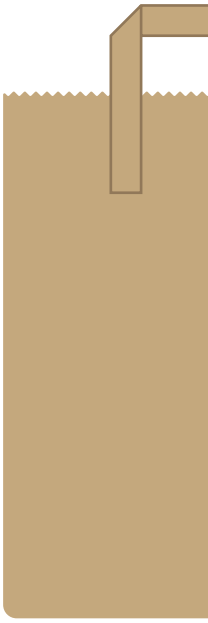




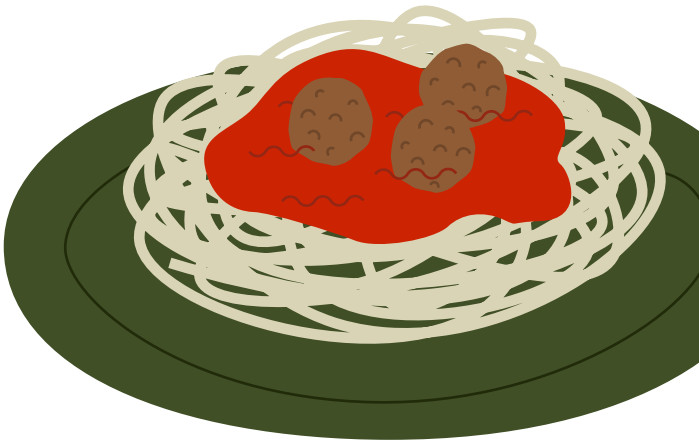
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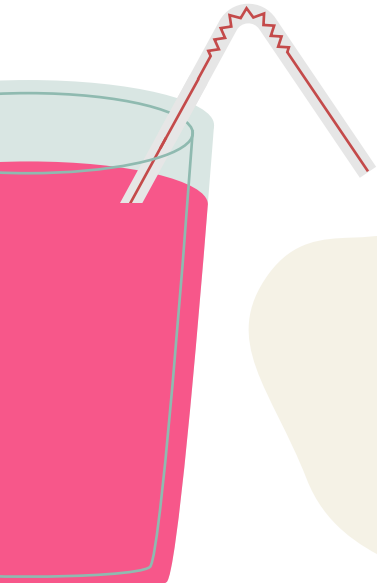


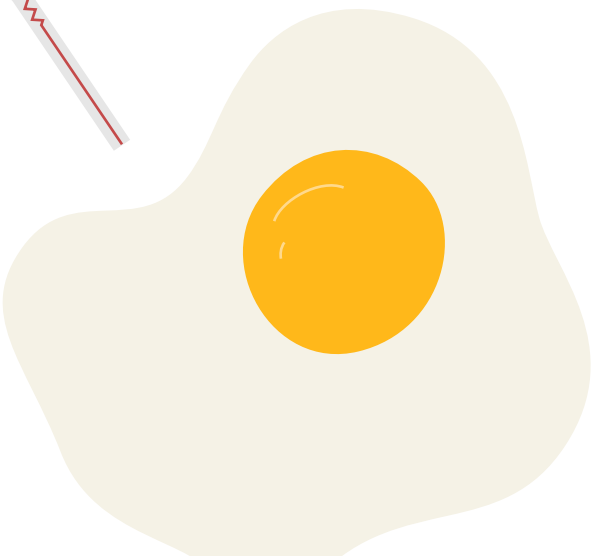
EATING HEALTHY ON A BUDGET















BUDGET-FRIENDLY BIG-BATCH FOODS

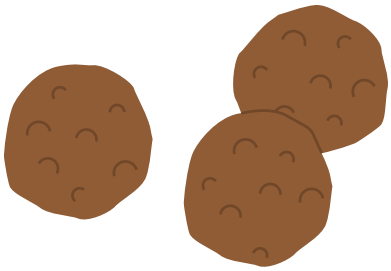
If you want to save money, try cooking in bulk. Once a week (or even once a month), prepare several big-batch recipes and freeze them in smaller portions. This will save time and money in the long run. Choose recipes that freeze well, and learn how to freeze and thaw foods safely.

Freezer-Friendly Foods

Here are some foods that freeze well:



- **Casseroles, sloppy joes, lasagna, and chili**: Cook 2 to 3 times the amount in the recipe. Freeze single-serving or family-sized portions in microwave-safe containers.
- **Sauces**: The cost of jars of sauce can add up. Instead, make your own large batches of tomato, barbecue, or pesto sauces. Freeze the sauce in muffin tins or ice cube trays. Then pop out the portions of frozen sauce and place them in freezer-safe bags. If you prefer jarred sauces, save money by buying them in a large jar and freezing smaller portions.
- **Soups and chowders**: Make a double batch of chowder or lentil, split pea, beef, bean, chicken, or vegetable soup. Freeze the soup or chowder in sealed containers (1 quart or smaller), and thaw as needed in the refrigerator.



- **Meatballs and burgers**: Prepare a large number of hamburger patties or meatballs. Freeze meal-sized amounts in freezer-safe plastic bags or containers.
- **Stocks**: Stocks add flavor to dishes. Cook a double batch of chicken, fish, beef, or vegetable stock, then freeze it in small containers or freezer-safe bags in amounts of ½ to 1 cup.
- **Muffins and rolls**: Store-bought muffins and rolls can be costly, and they can be high in calories. Instead, bake and freeze healthier options, like whole wheat rolls or bran muffins.

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CHOOSING FREEZER CONTAINERS

Think about how many people you will need to feed. To feed a family, you will need containers that hold several portions. Choose containers that are freezer-safe and microwave-safe and close tightly. Re-sealable freezer bags are also a good option.

HEALTHY RECIPE SITES

Check these sites for budget-friendly big-batch recipe ideas:

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep
- USDA, SNAP-Ed Connection: snaped.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/recipes
- What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl: www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov
- American Cancer Society: American Diabetes Association, Diabetes Food Hub: www.diabetesfoodhub.org
- American Heart Association: http://recipes.heart.org/en
- American Institute for Cancer Research: www.aicr.org/healthyrecipes
- Feeding America: http://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/healthy-recipes

- **Cookies and brownies**: Bake a double or triple batch of cookies or brownies and freeze them. You can also freeze raw cookie dough for later use. To freeze dough, roll it into a log shape, and wrap it tightly in waxed or parchment paper. When ready to bake, unwrap the frozen log, cut the dough, and bake as directed in the recipe. Baking time may be slightly longer if dough is frozen.

Safety Tips for Freezing and Thawing

- To safely freeze cooked food, start by dividing it into shallow containers. Allow the hot food to cool slightly, but do not leave the food at room temperature for longer than 2 hours. (During warmer weather, foods should be refrigerated within 1 hour.) Place the food, which can still be warm, in the refrigerator and cover it loosely. Once cooled, tightly seal the containers and place in the freezer, or freeze the food in sealed freezer bags. Label the container or bag with the date and name of the food. You can store most prepared food safely in the freezer for up to 3 to 4 months. Beyond that time frame, their quality may suffer.
- Do not defrost food at room temperature (for example, on the countertop). Instead, safely thaw food in the refrigerator. To make sure food thaws in time, place the frozen food in the refrigerator the night before you want to use it. A microwave may also be used to thaw foods, but these items need to be cooked immediately after thawing.
- Some foods can go straight from the freezer to the stove or oven. For example, frozen peas or hot dogs can be cooked in water in a saucepan, and frozen pizzas or egg-based dishes can go into the oven. Be sure to reheat prepared foods to an inside temperature of at least 165° Fahrenheit.
- Once a food is defrosted in the refrigerator, use it within 2 to 3 days. Check www.foodsafety.gov for more information on safe freezing and thawing of prepared foods.

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DIABETES MEAL PLANNING

People with diabetes can save money and stay healthy by choosing whole grains, fruits, vegetables, low-fat/fat-free sources of dairy, and lean protein foods. Here are 2 simple ways to cut costs and make healthy food choices:

- **Purchase fewer high-calorie foods and those with added sugars** (like chips, cookies, cakes, and candy).
- **Cut your portion sizes**. Eat reasonable portions of foods and drinks to help keep blood glucose (sugar) at healthy levels.

Keep reading for more shopping and cooking tips!

PORTION CHART*

Bread: 1 slice



Rice or pasta: ⅓ cup, cooked



Potato: 1 small (3 ounces)



Beans, lentils, peas, or corn: ½ cup, cooked



Fat-free or low-fat milk: 1 cup



Apple or banana: 1 small (4 ounces)



Cooked nonstarchy vegetables: ½ cup



Raw nonstarchy vegetables: 1 cup



**The carbohydrate amount varies by food group.*

At The Market

- Choose plain frozen vegetables instead of those with sauces, which can cost twice as much and have more calories, fat, and sodium.
- Buy quarts of low-fat or fat-free yogurt instead of smaller containers. Divide each quart into individual servings.
- Buy snacks, such as unsalted nuts, in large packages and divide into your own single-serve bags. Single-serving packages of snacks cost more per serving.
- Choose fresh fruits in season, or buy frozen fruit or canned fruit packed in water or 100% juice, instead of canned or frozen fruit in syrup or with other added sugars.
- Buy heads of lettuce or other greens instead of packaged, chopped, or washed greens.
- Choose a package of quick-cooking oats instead of instant or single-serve packages of oatmeal. Add your own toppings, such as fruit and nuts.
- When possible, buy dry beans instead of canned. Dry beans cost less per serving. Beans provide dietary fiber, which helps keep blood glucose levels stable.

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SIMPLE BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE

Makes 8 servings
(2 tablespoons each)

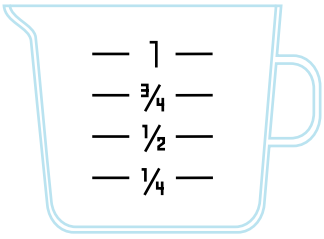
Ingredients:

- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¾ cup olive oil (or other vegetable oil)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

In a small bowl, combine vinegar, salt, and pepper.

Slowly whisk in oil. Store in the refrigerator.





- Choose healthier snacks like unsalted nuts, fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat or fat-free yogurt, whole wheat crackers, and reduced-fat cheese.

In the Kitchen

- If you buy canned fruit in syrup, drain and rinse the fruit before you serve it. The syrup can cause blood glucose levels to rise.
- Start meals with a tossed green salad or broth-based soup, such as vegetable or bean soup. These foods help fill you up.
- Snack on homemade trail mix. Mix a handful of unsalted nuts, dried fruit, and whole grain cereal. Store in small packages for an easy grab-and-go treat.
- Pack your own lunch for work or school instead of buying meals when you're on the go.
- Instead of frying foods in large amounts of oil, use healthier cooking methods, like baking, broiling, poaching, boiling, steaming, or grilling.
- Measure portions of carbohydrate foods like whole grain pasta, bread, brown rice, beans, lentils, peas, and corn (see Portion Chart for examples). Eating smaller amounts of these foods will help keep blood glucose in a healthy range and cut costs.
- Go meatless several days of the week. Protein foods like eggs, tofu, beans, peas, and lentils are usually cheaper than most meats and poultry.
- Use cheaper cuts of lean meat to make stews and chili. Add vegetables, beans, and some shredded cheese for a healthy, balanced meal. Make a double batch and freeze half for later.
- Save money by making your own vinaigrette dressing (see recipe). Homemade dressing usually has less calories, sugar, and salt than store-bought types.

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EATING HEALTHY ON A COLLEGE BUDGET

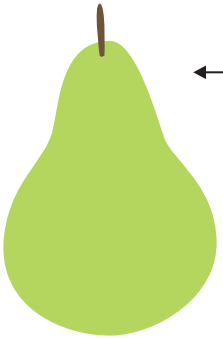
As a college student, you might find it difficult to eat healthy on a budget. Take advantage of refrigerators, microwaves, and stoves in dorms and apartments to prepare healthy foods that cost less than eating out. Keep reading for tips for making healthier food choices on a college campus.

In Your Dorm Room

With access to a microwave, mini-fridge, and blender, you can make easy breakfasts and grab-and-go snacks that can help you save cash. Here are some quick and easy ideas:

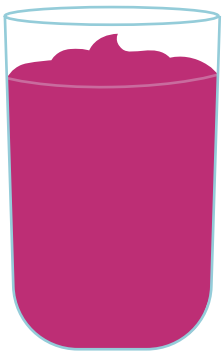


- Buy bulk bags of whole grain cereal, dried fruit, and nuts. Store in clear plastic bags or containers so you will see these foods when you're thinking about what to eat.
- If you find yourself throwing away fresh milk because it doesn't get used before it spoils, buy nonfat dry milk instead. It costs less and lasts longer. Or buy smaller containers of perishable foods like milk and yogurt.
- For breakfast or a snack, microwave a bowl of quick-cooking oats mixed with low-fat milk or water. Add 2 tablespoons of dried fruit or chopped nuts for flavor and nutrition.



- At the store or farmer's market, look for less-expensive fresh fruit, such as apples, oranges, bananas, and pears. In-season fruits are usually less costly. Unsweetened canned fruit cups are another option to have fruit at any time.
- Buy lower sodium, canned soups instead of instant noodle soups (such as ramen), which are loaded with salt.
- Enjoy any of these sandwiches for a quick lunch or dinner:
  - Lean deli meat on 100% whole wheat bread with tomato and mustard

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- Peanut butter and jelly on whole grain bread
- Shredded cheese and sliced tomato inside a whole wheat pita

For a quick, healthy smoothie, blend together fresh or frozen fruit, low-fat or fat-free yogurt, and 100% fruit juice or low-fat milk.

In Your Apartment Kitchen

If you know where to shop and what foods to buy, you can save a lot of money by cooking in your apartment. Here are some tips to get you started:



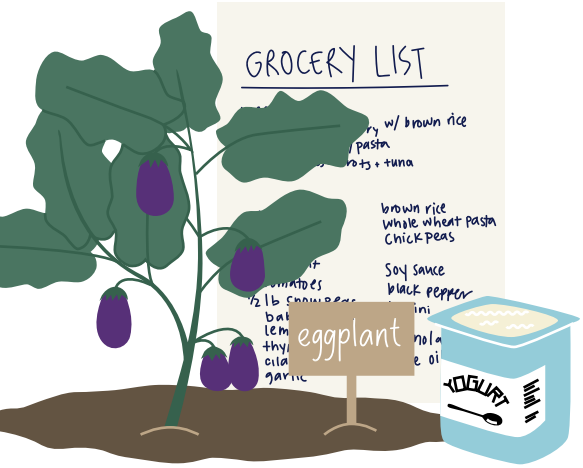
- Look for a discount supermarket in your area. Sign up for a free membership card to get store coupons and discounts.
- To manage your time wisely, set aside some time each week to write a menu and shopping list. Having a list with you at the market will also help you avoid impulse purchases.
- Fresh meat, fish, and chicken can be costly. Instead, choose lower priced protein foods more often, such as tuna canned in water, eggs, and peanut butter. Look for meats on sale and freeze in smaller, well-wrapped packages so they are ready when you need them.
- Invest in a small coffee maker or buy instant coffee instead of going out for high-priced (and often high-calorie) coffee drinks at the local coffee shop.
- Skip snacks with added sugars and saturated fats or *trans fats*, such as cookies, cakes, and chips. Instead, choose healthier snacks like whole wheat pretzels, fruit, vegetables, nuts, low-fat or fat-free yogurt, and cheese sticks.
- Prepare a recipe that serves 4 or more and freeze individual servings for later use. This will cost less than most packaged meals.
- Have a potluck dinner with friends. Suggest a healthy dish to each person. Enjoy the company of your friends while saving money on food.
- Pop your own popcorn instead of buying microwave popcorn. (Try the recipe to the left.)

EASY AIR-POPPED POPCORN

Place ¼ cup unpopped popcorn kernels in a brown paper lunch bag. Tightly fold over the top of the bag several times. Microwave on high for about 2 minutes or until the popping slows. Enjoy plain or add a sprinkle of salt, butter powder, or grated parmesan cheese.

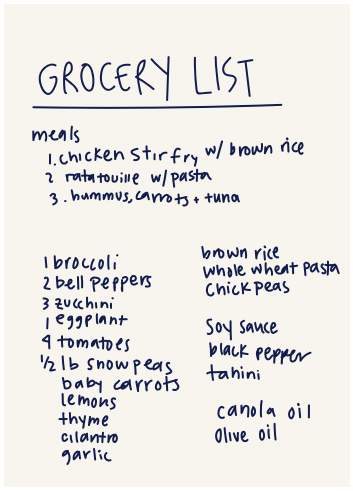


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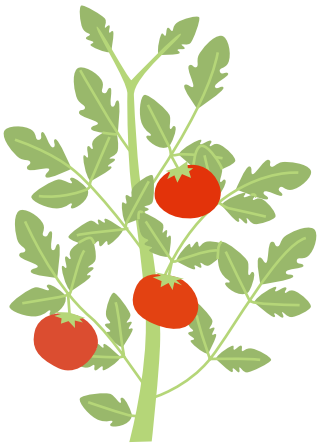
FEEDING YOUR FAMILY

With a little extra planning, your family can eat healthy snacks and meals while sticking to your budget. Here are some budget-friendly and healthy ideas.



Helpful Tips

- Always make a shopping list before you shop. Planning ahead saves time and money.
- When shopping with kids, try to stay focused and buy what is on your list. Have kids help select foods on your list to get them involved and distract them from asking for extra items that may not be on your list.
- Shop when you are not hungry. You will be less likely to buy things that are not on your list.
- Purchase prepared foods (like frozen dinners, packaged rice or pasta mixes, breaded or battered meats, and desserts) sparingly. They can be costly, and many are high in salt, added sugars, and unhealthy fats. Instead, find a few simple and healthy recipes that your family enjoys.
- Save time and money by making one meal for the whole family instead of cooking for each family member.



- Grow your own herbs and vegetables in your garden or window box.
- Have your kids help plan and prepare meals.

Healthy Snacks

- **Fruit:** Fruits cost less when they are in season. For example, eat oranges in the winter and berries in the summer. Find a local farmers market to save even more money. Keep fruit that is not perishable in a bowl on the countertop so it is within reach.



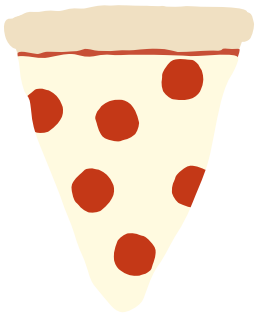
- **Yogurt:** Buy larger tubs of low-fat yogurt. Then divide it into 1-cup servings. Top with whole grain cereal, fresh fruit, or chopped nuts or granola. For children under the age of 4, nuts may be a choking hazard unless finely chopped.

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HEALTHY RECIPE SITES

Check these sites for budget-friendly recipe ideas:

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep
- USDA, SNAP-Ed Connection: http://snaped.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/recipes
- What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl: www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov
- American Cancer Society: American Diabetes Association, Diabetes Food Hub: www.diabetesfoodhub.org
- American Heart Association: http://recipes.heart.org/en
- American Institute for Cancer Research: www.aicr.org/healthyrecipes
- Feeding America: http://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/healthy-recipes



- **Eggs:** Keep hard-boiled eggs in the refrigerator for an easy grab-and-go snack.
- **Trail mix:** Combine nuts and dried fruits with whole grain pretzels or whole grain cereal. Keep small portions in airtight containers.
- **Popcorn:** Air-pop popcorn for a low-calorie, high-fiber, and inexpensive snack.

Meal Ideas

- **Beef stew:** Cook an inexpensive cut of beef (like chuck or shank) in a slow cooker with potatoes, onions, and other vegetables from your pantry or freezer. Make a double batch and freeze half for another week.
- **Pasta:** Mix whole grain pasta with frozen or in-season vegetables and a tomato sauce. To save money, use canned tomatoes when fresh ones are not in season.
- **Soup and sandwich:** Dish up warm bowls of bean, tomato, or chicken soup (look for lower sodium canned soups). Serve with grilled cheese or turkey sandwiches on whole wheat bread.
- **Tacos and burritos:** Cook up some lean ground beef, ground turkey, or shredded chicken and add taco seasoning. Use soft corn or flour tortillas and fill them with the cooked meat; add veggies like corn, lettuce, and tomato; add pinto beans; and top with some grated cheese and salsa.
- **Pizza:** Purchase or make your own dough. Top with tomato sauce, vegetables, and low-fat cheese. To save more money, use leftover vegetables and buy a block of cheese to grate at home.
- **Tuna casserole:** Make this family favorite with tuna packed in water and a can of lower sodium, fat-free creamed soup, such as mushroom or chicken. Save money by buying large (12-ounce) cans of tuna instead of several small cans. If you use cheese, use just a little (about 2 tablespoons per serving). This saves money and limits saturated fat and calories.

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GLUTEN-FREE LIVING

If you need to follow a gluten-free diet, you may find it hard to keep within your budget buying special gluten-free foods. Here are money-saving tips that will keep you on track with your budget and dietary needs.

Meal Planning and Sharing Tips



- **Plan meals**: Some gluten-free foods, such as gluten-free flours, cereals, and breads, may be more expensive. Check for sale items in weekly grocery ads so you can add these items to your meals.
- **Collect recipes**: Once you find a recipe that you like, file it so you can access it easily. Many gluten-free recipes are also available online.
- **Buddy up**: Buy gluten-free products in bulk and, if possible, split the cost with another family.
- **Have a swap**: Get together with other gluten-free friends or families and have a potluck dinner. Use this time to swap recipes and meal and snack ideas.



Shopping Tips



- **Choose foods that are naturally gluten free**, such as fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils, lean meats, dairy products, and eggs.
- **Look for sales** on pantry items like dry beans, rice, and canned goods, such as tomatoes.
- **Try gluten-free whole grains**. These may be less familiar but options like amaranth, buckwheat, quinoa, sorghum, millet, teff, and brown rice are healthy and tasty grain choices. You can cook with these grains or with flours made from them.
- **Read labels when buying packaged foods**. Some packaged foods contain added gluten, sugar, and salt. Look for packages labeled “gluten free” and make sure the foods were not processed in a facility with wheat. If you are unsure if a food contains gluten, do not buy it.
- **Choose in-season produce**. Fruits and vegetables that are in season cost less.

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GLUTEN-FREE RECIPE FINDER

- **Beyond Celiac:** www.beyondceliac.org|/gluten-free-diet
- **National Celiac Association:** https://nationalceliac.org/gluten-free-recipes/
- **Gluten Intolerance Group:** www.gluten.org/resources/recipes
- **Celiac Disease Foundation:** celiac.org/live-gluten-free/gluten-free-recipes/

- **Skip packaged snacks**. Instead, make your own gluten-free snacks, like trail mix or hummus, which only take minutes to prepare.
- **Buy foods in bulk or use coupons**. To find coupons, check product websites.

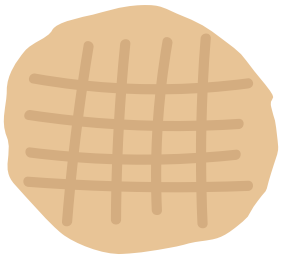
Tips to Avoid Cross-Contact

Contact with a food that contains gluten will contaminate gluten-free foods. Even a small amount can be harmful to a person who needs to avoid all gluten. Here's how to keep foods safe:

- Store gluten-free foods in separate cupboards or on separate shelves.
- Buy separate containers of spreads, such as peanut butter, jelly, mayonnaise, and other foods eaten on bread.
- If possible, have separate cutting boards, pasta strainers, baking pans, measuring cups and spoons, serving spoons, and tongs. Otherwise, be sure to clean well after use with gluten-containing foods.

Cooking Tips

- **Make soup**: Soups are an easy way to use leftover vegetables, gluten-free grains, beans, peas, lentils, and lean meats.
- **Bake and freeze**: Once or twice a month, bake items like gluten-free bread, muffins, and pizza crust. They freeze well and are cheaper than the packaged varieties.



- **Mix up some cookie dough**: Prepare gluten-free cookie dough from scratch using a gluten-free flour mix. Bake cookies now or roll the dough in a log, wrap it tightly, and freeze for another time.
- **Go meatless**: Chicken, beef, and pork can be expensive. Aim for at least one or two meatless meals a week. At these meals, enjoy less-expensive protein foods like eggs, tuna, tofu, beans, or lentils.
- **Bookmark your favorite gluten-free recipe sites**: Search recipes for many gluten-free options. See just a few ideas in the Recipe Finder box.

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GROCERY SHOPPING

When you plan ahead and shop wisely, you can buy plenty of healthy foods without breaking the bank.

Get Organized

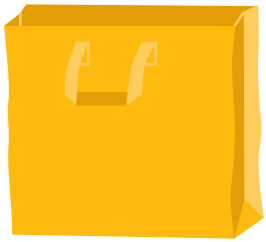
Planning for each trip to the grocery store is half the battle. Before hitting the market, keep these tips in mind:



- Plan your meals on a weekly or monthly basis. Use a calendar to stay organized, and set a reasonable weekly or monthly food budget.
- Look through your refrigerator, freezer, and pantry to see what you already have and what you need. Then create a shopping list based on recipes you like and the foods you have on hand.
- Plan a meatless meal 1 or 2 nights a week. Tofu, eggs, beans, and nuts are healthy protein foods that are good for your wallet, too.
- Look for discount markets and membership warehouses in your area. You may find deals at membership warehouses, but warehouse prices are not always the lowest. Warehouse stores may also tempt you to buy more than you need. Buy food you know you will use, or split bulk items with a friend.



- Buy a coupon organizer and use it to file coupons. Throw out coupons when they expire. Download coupons and use a store loyalty card to get the best prices on food you buy regularly.
- Check out grocery store fliers and websites for weekly sales. Plan meals and snacks around items that are on sale. Try not to get sidetracked by items you don't need.



- Take reusable grocery bags with you each time you shop. Some stores offer discounts when you re-use bags.

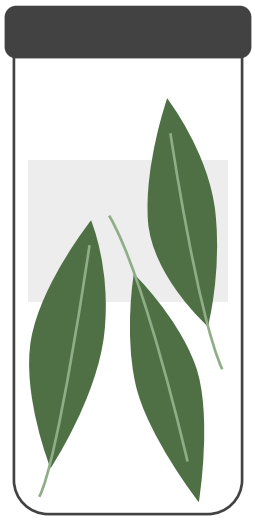
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COMPARING UNIT PRICES

Here are shelf tags for two package sizes (16 and 32 ounces) of the same food. The larger package costs more. But its unit price (in this case, the price per ounce) is lower. This makes the larger package a better deal if you will use the entire contents.







At The Market

Supermarkets may seem designed to make you overspend, but there are ways to stay on budget. It may take a bit more time, but advance planning and careful shopping can help you save:

- Skip items that are easy to make at home, such as soup, pasta sauce, and salad dressing. Spend money on convenience items like mustard and bread.
- Pay attention to the **unit price**, which appears on the shelf tag next to the item's price. Compare the unit prices of similar products or different sizes of the same product to find the cheapest option. This can help you find the better bargain.
- Instead of foods packaged in single servings, buy larger containers. When you get home, divide foods like raisins, nuts, applesauce, crackers, and whole wheat pretzels into your own small containers or bags.
- Buy a block of cheese instead of shredded or sliced cheese. You save money by grating or slicing cheese at home.
- Skip meats that are cubed, pounded, or seasoned before they are sold. Instead, choose plain cuts of lean meat, poultry, and fish for big savings. When meats, fish, or poultry are on sale, buy extra. When you get home, divide the packages into smaller portions and freeze for future use.
- Prepare produce at home to save money. Pre-cut or peeled fruits and vegetables tend to be quite expensive.
- Buy dried herbs instead of fresh, especially when fresh herbs are not in season. Dry herbs will work in most recipes calling for fresh, but use smaller amounts.

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HEALTHY BREAKFASTS

Eating a healthy breakfast every morning is possible, even when you're eating on a budget. Here are some tips and tasty breakfasts to try.

Planning a Healthy Breakfast

- For a balanced breakfast, try to include foods from at least 3 of these food groups:
  - **Grains**: Whole grain choices include whole wheat bread, whole grain cereal, and oatmeal.
  - **Fruits**: Choose frozen fruit; canned fruit in water or 100% juice; dried fruit; or seasonal fresh fruit.
  - **Vegetables**: Breakfast is a good time to use up leftover veggies, or choose fresh or frozen types.
  - **Protein foods**: Choices include beans, lean meats, chicken, fish, tofu, and eggs. Eggs are one of the most budget-friendly and nutrient-packed protein foods.
  - **Dairy**: Choose low-fat or nonfat milk, yogurt, or cheese.
- Limit foods with **saturated fat** or ***trans* fat**. These fats can increase the risk of heart disease. Instead, use small amounts of healthy oils like olive or canola oil or soft (tub or squeeze) margarine that contain no *trans* fats.
  - Saturated fat is found in bacon, sausages, and other fatty meats; butter; whole milk; most cheeses; cream and half-and-half; coconut oil; palm oil; and palm kernel oil.
  - *Trans* fat may be found in stick margarine and other foods with partially hydrogenated oil as an ingredient.
- Limit **added sugars**. Syrups, fruit drinks, pastries, sugary cereals, and breakfast bars contain added sugars. To find out if sugar has been added, you can check the ingredient list to see if sugar is an ingredient. You may also find Added Sugar listed in the Nutrition Facts under the Total Carbohydrates.
- Stretch your dollars with the healthy breakfast ideas on the next page.



Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

Serving size **2/3 cup (55g)**

Amount per serving

Calories **230**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	**10%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**5%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 160mg	**7%**
Total Carbohydrate 37g	**13%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**14%**
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	**20%**
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

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FRUIT SMOOTHIE

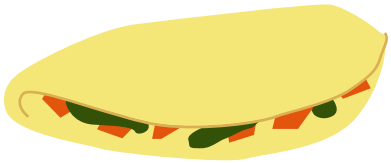
Blend bananas, berries, or other fruits with ½ cup nonfat or low-fat yogurt and some milk. Add a tablespoon of peanut or almond butter for extra protein.

Food groups: Fruits, dairy, and protein foods

VEGETABLE OMELET

Add leftover cooked veggies, like broccoli, spinach, green peppers, and mushrooms, to a two-egg omelet. Top with shredded reduced-fat cheese, and add canned beans for extra protein.

Food groups: Protein foods, dairy, and vegetables



OATMEAL

Buy a large package of rolled oats instead of costly single-serve packages. Top cooked oatmeal with banana or apple slices, raisins, or dried apricots. Or add canned fruits packed in water or 100% juice. Mix in peanut butter or sprinkle with chopped nuts for added protein.

Food groups: Whole grains, fruit, and protein foods.

CEREAL AND MILK

Choose a whole grain cereal with fat-free or low-fat milk. Top with fresh, seasonal fruit. Buy whole grain cereals in bulk or as generic items.

Food groups: Whole grains, dairy, and fruits



BREAKFAST WRAP

Scramble an egg and wrap in a warmed whole-grain tortilla along with shredded, reduced-fat cheese. Add salsa or other veggies as desired.

Food groups: Whole grains, dairy, protein foods, and vegetables

YOGURT PARFAIT

Buy cups of fat-free yogurt on sale or purchase it in larger tubs. Alternate layers of yogurt, granola, and fresh or dried fruit. Low-fat, store-brand granola tends to be cheaper, or use coupons.

Food groups: Dairy, whole grains, and fruit

COTTAGE CHEESE BOWL

Buy low-fat cottage cheese in a tub. Top ½ cup with fresh fruits like melon, pineapple, or grapes. Or add canned fruit (like peaches or pears) packed in water or natural juices. For added crunch and protein, sprinkle with your favorite nuts, such as almonds, walnuts, or pecans.

Food groups: Dairy, fruits, and protein foods

WHOLE GRAIN PANCAKES OR MUFFINS WITH EGGS

Save money by making your own pancakes or muffins. Choose recipes that use whole grains (like whole wheat flour), fat-free or low-fat milk, and healthy oils, like canola. Serve with fruit and balance it out with a hard-cooked or scrambled egg.

Food groups: Whole grains, fruit, and protein foods

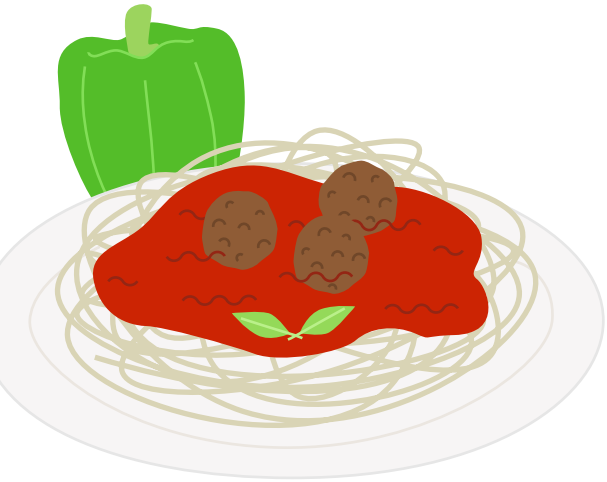


BREAKFAST BAR

Purchase whole grain breakfast bars in bulk. Choose bars with whole grains and dried fruit as ingredients. For a balanced breakfast, also include plain, low-fat yogurt sweetened with fresh, canned, or frozen fruit.

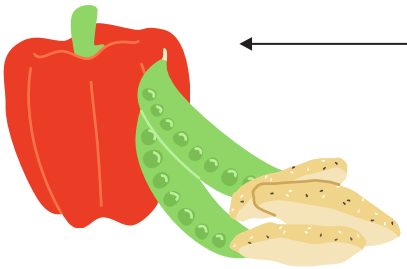
Food groups: Whole grains, dairy, and fruits

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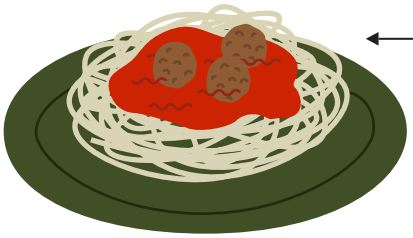
HEALTHY DINNERS

Creating a budget-friendly dinner takes some planning. To save time and money, take an hour during the weekend to plan weeknight dinners and create a shopping list. Here are 4 simple dinner ideas and a recipe to get you started.



Stir-Fry

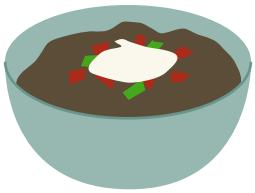
- In a large wok or sauté pan, heat 1 to 2 tablespoons of canola oil over medium-high heat. Add 6 ounces of tofu, skinless chicken pieces, or lean beef, and cook several minutes until browned. Then stir in thinly sliced or chopped vegetables, such as onions, broccoli, peppers, cauliflower, garlic, and carrots, and continue to cook for about 5 minutes until the veggies are slightly softened. Add flavor with low-sodium soy sauce, rice vinegar, or red pepper flakes.
- This recipe makes 2 servings. Serve with ½ cup of rice per person. Try brown rice for extra dietary fiber.
- **Money-saving tip**: Choose whole, in-season vegetables and slice them at home. Frozen vegetable blends are also a low-cost time saver.



Pasta and Meat Sauce

- Cook pasta according to the package directions. Try whole grain pasta for added dietary fiber. Serve 1 cup of cooked pasta per person.
- For the sauce, cook 85% or 90% lean ground beef. If you buy ground beef that is less than 85% lean, drain the grease from the beef after cooking. One pound of ground beef will serve 4 people. Mix the cooked ground beef with canned or jarred tomato sauce. Serve the pasta and meat sauce with a salad or seasonal vegetables on the side.
- **Money-saving tip**: Buy several boxes of whole wheat pasta when it is on sale.

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HOMESTYLE CHICKEN SOUP

Makes 6 quarts.

Ingredients:

5 pounds whole chicken, cut into pieces

4 medium yellow onions, peeled and quartered

4 celery stalks, cut into thirds

6 carrots, peeled and halved

Handful of fresh parsley sprigs or thyme (or 1-2 tsp dried)

2 cups cooked egg noodles or rice

Salt and black pepper to taste

Directions:

Place chicken, vegetables, and herbs in a 16-quart stockpot and add 7 quarts cool water. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 3 to 4 hours, uncovered. Strain the broth through a colander into a large bowl or pot and return to stock pot.

Once cooled, debone and chop chicken, carrots, celery, and onion and add to broth along with cooked noodles or rice. Serve immediately. Store leftovers in small containers in the refrigerator for another meal to be eaten within 3 to 4 days, or freeze for up to 4 months.

Tip: Reserve any extra chicken for casseroles or salads.

Chili

- In a large pot, combine cooked beans (like black, kidney, pinto, or navy beans) with canned tomatoes and chopped vegetables, such as onions, garlic, peppers, and mushrooms. Add cooked ground turkey, chicken, or lean beef, or try cubed, firm tofu. For extra dietary fiber, add leftover whole grains, like cooked brown rice, whole grain barley, or whole wheat couscous. Add chili seasonings, such as chili powder and cumin.
- Top bowls of chili with small portions of shredded, reduced-fat cheese, low-fat sour cream or plain Greek yogurt, bacon bits, or black olives.
- **Money-saving tips**:
  - To save more money, choose 1 or 2 toppings at most.
  - Buy a small block of cheese and shred it at home.
  - Make a second meal using leftover chili on baked potatoes.

Tuna Casserole

- Classic tuna casserole uses simple ingredients you can stock in your kitchen or pantry: canned tuna packed in water, low-fat milk, pasta, and bread (for making crumbs). Try whole wheat bread and pasta for an extra fiber boost.
- Add fresh, seasonal vegetables or frozen chopped broccoli or peas.
- For extra flavor, use a splash of chicken or vegetable stock. Instead of using packaged stock, make your own once a month and freeze it in small portions.
- **Money-saving tips**: Look for sales on larger (12-ounce) cans of tuna, frozen vegetables, and pasta. Also check out store brands—they tend to cost less than name brands.

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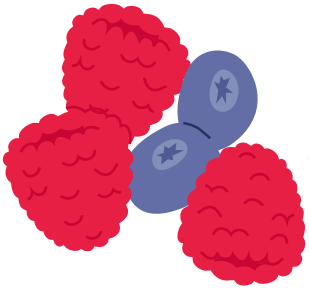


HEALTHY LUNCHES

The cost of going out for lunch can add up quickly over a month. Bringing a lunch to work or school can trim your budget and it is usually healthier. By making your own lunches, you can control portions and choose healthier ingredients. Plan satisfying lunches that have at least two of the following food groups:



- **Protein foods**: Good choices include lean meats, chicken or turkey without the skin, eggs, beans, fish canned in water, nut butter, and tofu. Be aware that many deli meats are high in salt.
- **Dairy**: Good choices include fat-free milk, low-fat yogurt, and reduced-fat cheeses. To save money, buy large tubs of yogurt and divide into your own single-serving containers.
- **Grains**: Choose breads, crackers, and pastas with a whole grain (like whole wheat) listed as the first ingredient. Whole grains like brown rice, cracked wheat, or quinoa, tossed with vegetables, chopped nuts, and a low-fat dressing, make tasty salads.



- **Fruits**: Choose in-season fresh fruits, dried fruits, or fruits canned in water or natural juices.
- **Vegetables**: Choose in-season fresh vegetables. To save money, prep your own veggies at home instead of buying pre-cut vegetables like carrot sticks.

Here are 5 lunch ideas to get you started:

Leftovers



- Wrap leftovers in a corn or whole wheat tortilla or in a sandwich wrap. Try fillings like beans and rice, chili, stew, or chicken. Add some lettuce and reduced-fat cheese, and then pack fresh fruit or vegetables to balance the meal.
  Food groups: Grains, protein foods, dairy, and fruits or vegetables

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TIPS FOR PACKING AND STORING A LUNCH

- Make lunches the night before to save time in the morning.
- Keep lunches in a refrigerator or an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack. Lunches with perishable foods that sit at room temperature for over 2 hours may not be safe to eat and should be discarded.
- Instead of buying a drink in a can or bottle, pack water or another beverage in an insulated bottle.
- Save money by packing foods in reusable containers instead of plastic bags. Wash thoroughly after each use.

Tuna Salad

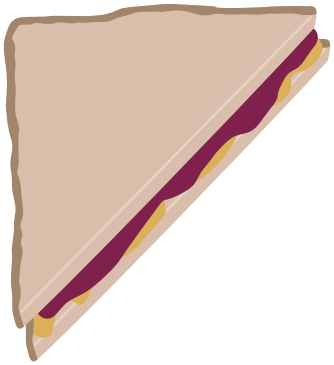
- Create a salad with chopped lettuce or spinach, 3 ounces of canned tuna packed in water, sliced apple, and 1 or 2 tablespoons of light vinaigrette or mayonnaise. Add some shredded cheese, or pack some string cheese to round out this lunch.
  Food groups: Protein foods, fruit, dairy, and vegetables

Mediterranean Sandwich

- Spread 2 tablespoons of hummus in a whole wheat pita pocket. Add 1 ounce of reduced-fat Swiss cheese, sliced cucumber, and chopped tomatoes. Toss cucumber and tomato in 1 teaspoon olive oil and lemon juice for extra flavor. You can also make your own hummus to save more money.
  Food groups: Protein foods, grains, dairy, and vegetables

Yogurt Parfait

- Start with plain or flavored low-fat Greek yogurt. Then pack your favorite toppings in small containers or sealable bags, such as granola, whole grain cereal, fresh or dried fruit pieces, and nuts. As another option, try making a parfait with savory add-ins such as cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, olives, and avocados.
  Food groups: Dairy, grains, protein foods, and fruits or vegetables



PB&J

- Spread 2 tablespoons of peanut butter plus 1 or 2 teaspoons of jam on 100% whole wheat bread for a perfect lunch. Add low-fat yogurt and fruit as side dishes. Mix up this classic sandwich and try other nut or seed butters, such as almond, hazelnut, or sunflower butter. You can also add banana slices, raisins or dried cranberries, or some chopped nuts or seeds to add flavor and nutrition to your sandwich.
  Food groups: Protein foods, grains, dairy, and fruit

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HEART-HEALTHY EATING

Eating with your heart in mind may help prevent and treat heart disease. To follow a heart-healthy diet, choose foods low in saturated fat and sodium, and avoid *trans* fat found in some highly processed foods. Certain foods and nutrients can help to protect your heart, such as omega-3 fats in fish, healthy fats in nuts, and certain minerals in fruits and vegetables. Use these tips to stay on track with your heart-healthy diet and your budget.

AT HOME

Before heading to the market, do your research and plan ahead:

- **Make a shopping list**. Take a few minutes to make a list of the foods you need to buy. A list helps you avoid buying foods you already have at home.
- **Use coupons**. Look through weekly grocery ads and gather coupons from manufacturer websites. Keep the coupons organized by expiration date and throw out those that are expired. Check out apps that help find and store coupons.
- **Plan meals**. Find heart-healthy recipes online, in magazines, or in cookbooks. Plan heart-healthy meals using your coupons and ads for grocery store sales.
- **Try meatless**. Plan 2 or 3 meatless meals a week. Look for recipes for tofu, beans, lentils, vegetables, and whole grains. These foods are often cheaper than meat and do not have saturated fat, cholesterol, or *trans* fat.

AT THE MARKET

Keep these tips in mind as you fill up your shopping cart:

- **Buy seasonally**. Fresh fruits and vegetables are cheaper when they are in season. They are loaded with dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals, and most are fat free.
- **Choose generic**. Name-brand products tend to cost more than generic ones, but you will usually find no difference in nutritional value. To save even more money, look for generic or store brands on sale.
- **Buy lean meat and poultry**. When you buy meat, choose lean cuts and plan for smaller portions (about 3 to 4 ounces cooked per person). Leaner cuts of beef include top round, sirloin, flank steak, and ground beef labeled at least 90% lean. For pork, look for trimmed pork chops or tenderloin. Chicken breast meat is the leanest, but thighs (remove the skin) are often a less-expensive option.
- **Consider canned and frozen fruits and vegetables**. These are available year-round and can be cheaper than fresh produce. Avoid frozen and canned fruits with added sugars and frozen vegetables with butter and sauces.
- **Buy in bulk**. Buy large packages of raw or unsalted roasted nuts and whole grain cereal. Divide into smaller portions at home.
- **Read food labels**. Some brands may be cheaper than others while being just as healthy. Make smart decisions by comparing Nutrition Facts and ingredients for similar items.
- **Skip the baked goods**. Pre-made cookies, cakes, and other bakery foods are usually high in saturated fat and may contain *trans* fat. Buy them sparingly, or make your own healthier versions.

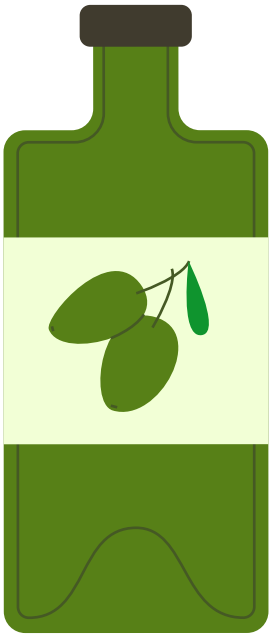
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Heart-Healthy and Budget-Friendly Choices



Here are some foods that are good for your heart and wallet:

- **Oatmeal**: Oatmeal is a good source of dietary fiber, which may help lower cholesterol. Plain rolled oats in a canister are less expensive than single serve packets.
- **Beans**: Packed with dietary fiber, protein, and potassium, beans are good for your heart. Dried beans are cheaper than canned. Remember to soak dried beans overnight before cooking them.
- **Canned fish**: Salmon and other fish, like mackerel, sardines, and tuna, provide omega-3 fats, which make them a heart-healthy protein food. Health experts recommend eating 2 servings of non-fried fish per week. Limit canned albacore (white) tuna to 1 time per week because it is higher in mercury.



- **Brown rice (and other whole grains)**: Brown rice is budget friendly, especially when bought in bulk, and it is a good way to increase your intake of dietary fiber and B vitamins. Try other heart-healthy whole grains, like barley, farro, and quinoa.
- **Nuts**: Nuts are packed with heart-healthy fats, minerals, and the antioxidant vitamin E. If you buy them in bulk, you can save money. Watch your portion sizes—nuts are also high in calories. Look for unsalted nuts for a healthier option.
- **Oils**: Use heart-healthy oils, such as olive or canola, in place of butter and margarine. Look for avocados on sale, which also supply heart-healthy fat.

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MAKE YOUR OWN

You can save money on many foods by making them at home instead of buying them pre-made. When you buy prepared and packaged foods, you pay for the labor and packaging. Make simple foods yourself. Then set a budget to buy items that are more difficult and time consuming to prepare at home.



Easy Foods to Make at Home

Here are ideas for foods to make at home:

- **Salads with protein foods**: Make tuna, egg, chicken, salmon, or shrimp salads for a quick, protein-packed lunch.
- **Soups**: Cook a double batch of chicken, vegetable, beef, or bean soup. Freeze some portions for later.
- **Fruit salad**: Pre-cut fruit costs a lot. Instead, buy fruits that are in season and cut them up at home.



- **Vegetables**: Avoid pricey, pre-cut vegetables like peeled garlic, sliced carrots, or cubed butternut squash. Prep your own vegetables at home.
- **Sandwiches**: Many pre-made sandwiches are loaded with high-calorie condiments and more than one portion of lunchmeat. Instead, try these make-at-home sandwiches:
  - 2 tablespoons peanut butter with 1 to 2 teaspoons of jelly on whole wheat bread
  - 2 ounces deli turkey or ham, with lettuce, tomato, a slice of Swiss cheese, and 2 teaspoons of honey mustard wrapped in a whole grain tortilla or wrap
  - 2 slices low-fat American or Swiss cheese with sliced tomato and cucumber and spicy mustard on toasted whole wheat bread
  - 2 scrambled eggs, lettuce, sliced tomato, and 1 slice of low-fat cheese on a whole wheat English muffin



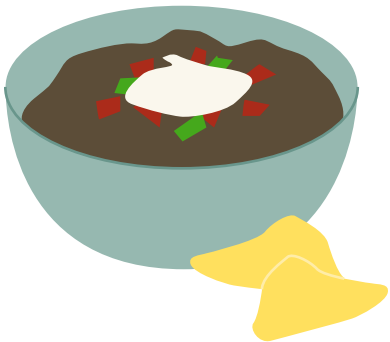
- **Muffins**: Many packaged muffins are oversized and can contain more than 500 calories. Bake your own smaller and healthier versions at home, such as blueberry, banana-nut, or corn muffins.

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RECIPE SITES

Check these sites for budget-friendly recipe ideas:

- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: www.eatright.org/food/planning-and-prep
- USDA, SNAP-Ed Connection: http://snaped.fns.usda.gov/nutrition-education/recipes
- What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl: www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov
- American Cancer Society: American Diabetes Association, Diabetes Food Hub: www.diabetesfoodhub.org
- American Heart Association: http://recipes.heart.org/en
- American Institute for Cancer Research: www.aicr.org/healthyrecipes
- Feeding America: http://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/healthy-recipes



- **Side salads**: Make your own coleslaw, pasta salad, and potato salad. Use no more than 1 tablespoon of oil or mayonnaise per serving to cut back on fat and calories.
- **Macaroni and cheese**: Forget the boxed mixes! Prepare a homemade batch using whole-grain pasta, low-fat milk, and cheese shredded at home.
- **Salad dressing**: Many bottled dressings are loaded with salt and added sugars. Instead, make your own version of balsamic, ranch, or honey mustard dressing.
- **Cookie dough**: Instead of buying pre-made dough, find an easy recipe that takes minutes to prepare. Freeze the dough in cookie-sized portions so they are ready to bake at any time.
- **Pancake mix**: The ingredients in pancakes are cheap and take just minutes to measure out. You can mix together the dry ingredients (like flour, sugar, and baking powder) ahead of time. Then just add the liquid ingredients, such as low-fat milk, oil, and eggs when you are ready to cook.
- **Granola**: Bake a batch of granola with rolled oats, dried fruits, and nuts. Look for healthy granola recipes using the sites listed here.
- **Trail mix**: Mix dried fruit, unsalted nuts, and whole grain cereal for a quick snack.
- **Applesauce**: Slice and simmer apples in a little water until soft. Then mash or puree the apples into sauce. For more flavor, add cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, and a small amount of honey or brown sugar.
- **Flavored oatmeal**: Skip the single-serving packets of flavored oatmeal. Instead, buy plain rolled oats and add your own flavors, such as sliced fruit, peanut butter, or brown sugar and cinnamon.
- **Dips**: Whip up a quick batch of black bean dip or chickpea hummus using canned beans.
- **Popcorn**: In a large saucepan, combine a touch of oil and popcorn kernels to make your own popcorn. Microwave popcorn can be expensive and also can be high in saturated or *trans* fats and sodium.

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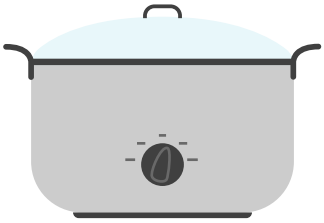
QUICK AND EASY MEALS

With the hustle and bustle of everyday life, saving time in the kitchen is often a priority. The good news is that there are many ways to save time and money when it comes to preparing meals. Read for some easy and healthy meal ideas that will fit your budget?

Saving Money in Your Kitchen

Sometimes you can save time and money in the long run by investing a small amount of time and money now. Here are a few tips to consider:

- **Find recipes and learn new cooking skills**. Buy a used cookbook or borrow one from a friend or the library. Go to websites to help build your quick and easy recipe collection.



- **Invest in a slow cooker**. Simply place your ingredients into the slow cooker before you leave the house in the morning. The food cooks while you are away, saving you time at the end of the day. Another time saver is a pressure cooker.



- **Make double or triple batches of recipes** like soups, sauces, lasagna, chili, and meatballs. Freeze family-size portions to use later.
- **Buy a whole chicken, large roast, or large package of ground meat.** Then, plan to cut the chicken apart and use the bones to make a chicken stock, cut the roast (such as bottom round or tenderloin) into steaks, and portion out ground meat. Be sure to wrap tightly and freeze meat and poultry that you won't use right away.



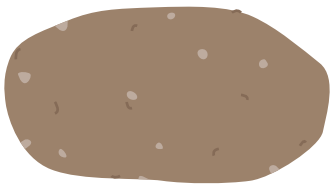
- **Buy in bulk if it makes sense.** Warehouse stores often have good deals on food, but it means buying larger quantities. If you have the storage space and it won't go to waste, then this can save you money in the long run. Also consider splitting the product and cost with someone else.
- **Have a plan for leftovers**. For example, you can bring them to work for lunch the next day.

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HEALTHY RECIPE SITES

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- What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl: www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov
- American Cancer Society: American Diabetes Association, Diabetes Food Hub: www.diabetesfoodhub.org
- American Heart Association: http://recipes.heart.org/en
- American Institute for Cancer Research: www.aicr.org/healthyrecipes
- Feeding America: http://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/healthy-recipes



Saving Money While Shopping

Pick up these versatile and budget-friendly foods on your next shopping trip:

- **Eggs**: Eggs are a cheap option for a speedy meal. In addition, they provide protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, and the antioxidant lutein, which helps promote healthy skin and eyes. Besides scrambling or using them in omelets, you can hard boil eggs to have them ready to use in egg salad, tossed salads, and sandwiches.
- **Bananas**: One medium banana has 105 calories and provides vitamin B-6, dietary fiber, potassium, and vitamin C. Bananas are a healthy topper for many breakfast dishes, like oatmeal, cold cereal, and pancakes. Before they brown, peel and store bananas in the freezer for a quick and delicious frozen treat, or try them in fruit salad, blended in a smoothie, or thaw and use them in banana bread or muffins.
- **Beans**: Beans have dietary fiber, iron, calcium, and zinc. Both dried and canned beans are budget friendly and make great additions to chili, soup, salads, and casseroles. To prepare dried beans, soak and cook them before you eat or use them in recipes. Canned beans like kidney or pinto beans are ready to eat and are often on sale. Drain and rinse canned beans to reduce the salt.
- **Ground beef and turkey**: Some protein foods can be costly, but you can make a thrifty meal if you stick to healthy portions. Stretch ground meat and poultry dishes like chili, sloppy joes, or meat sauce by adding seasonal vegetables and serving with potatoes, pasta, or rice.
- **Potatoes**: When you buy them in larger bags, potatoes are budget friendly. This root vegetable contains vitamin C, vitamin B-6, potassium, dietary fiber, and iron. Leave the skin on whenever possible to get more of these nutrients—just be sure to scrub them well. Enjoy potatoes in chili or soup, or make baked, mashed, or scalloped potatoes.

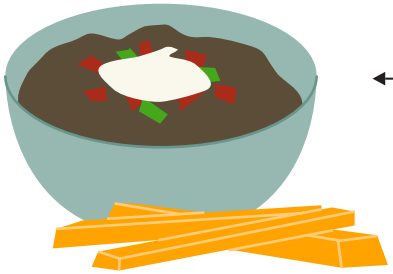
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SNACK IDEAS

Snacks can help maintain your energy between meals and supply nutrients that your body needs. If you choose to include snacks, plan for 1 to 3 snacks each day, and remember to snack only when you are hungry.

Snacks for people who are less active should be 200 calories or less. To fuel more active teens and adults, snacks can contain 200 to 300 calories per serving. Watch the portion sizes to stay on track with your budget and your daily calorie needs. Here are just a few healthy snack ideas!

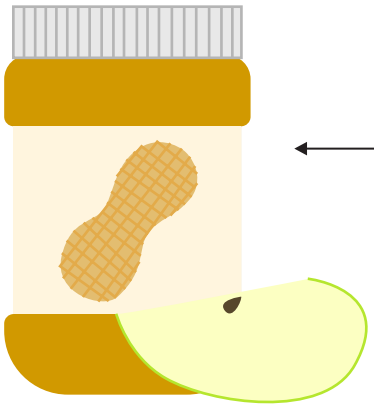


Veggies and Dip (120 calories)

Slice and dip raw vegetables, such as carrots, bell peppers, and cucumbers, in 2 tablespoons of your favorite dressing, such as ranch or French. To save money, choose in-season vegetables. This snack provides dietary fiber, potassium, vitamin C, and beta-carotene.

Almonds (160 calories)

Buy raw or dry-roasted, unsalted almonds in bulk. Stick to 1-ounce portions (about 23 almonds) to keep calories lower and get your money's worth. This snack provides vitamin E, niacin, iron, dietary fiber, and heart-healthy unsaturated fat.



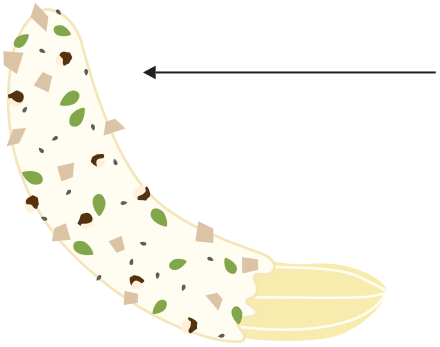
Peanut Butter and Apple (190 calories)

Top 1 sliced apple with 1 tablespoon peanut butter. Compare peanut butter (or other nut butter) products and choose one with less fat, added sugars, and salt. This snack provides heart-healthy unsaturated fat, vitamin E, and vitamin C.

Yogurt and Fruit (155 calories)

Top 6 ounces of fat-free Greek yogurt with ¼ cup fresh or canned fruit. Buy fruit canned in water or natural juices. Save money by buying a large tub of yogurt instead of single-serving containers. This snack provides calcium, protein, and vitamin C.

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Frozen Bananas (100 calories)

Peel bananas and store in the freezer in a resealable container or bag. You can also dip bananas in low-fat yogurt, roll them in crushed whole grain cereal or unsalted nuts, and then freeze. This snack provides vitamin B-6, potassium, vitamin C, and dietary fiber.

Baked Potato and Salsa (180 calories)

Top a medium-size baked potato with ¼ cup salsa. Buy a large bag of potatoes to save money. Store-brand salsas tend to be cheaper and are just as tasty as name brands. This snack provides vitamin C, potassium, dietary fiber, and lycopene.



Trail Mix (200 calories)

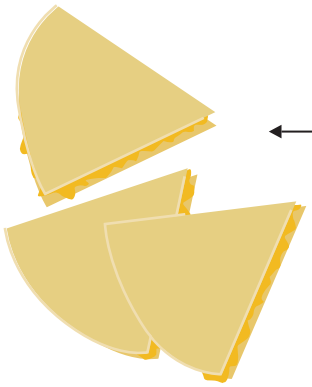
For 1 portion of homemade trail mix, combine the following: 2 tablespoons raisins, ¼ cup whole grain cereal, and 2 tablespoons of peanuts, almonds, or other unsalted nuts. To save money, buy each ingredient in bulk. This snack provides vitamin E, dietary fiber, heart-healthy unsaturated fat, and iron.

Cereal and Milk (200 calories)

Mix ¾ to 1 cup of whole grain cereal with ¾ cup of fat-free or low-fat milk. Buy milk by the gallon to save money. This snack provides calcium, vitamin E, potassium, and protein.

Turkey Roll Ups (180 calories)

Spread 1 teaspoon mustard on two slices of deli turkey. Add lettuce and sliced cucumber to each turkey slice. Roll up and enjoy! Check at the grocery deli to see which brands of turkey are on sale. This snack provides protein, niacin, and selenium.



Mini Quesadilla (200 calories)

Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of shredded reduced-fat cheese on a 6-inch whole wheat flour tortilla. Add some chopped tomatoes, frozen corn kernels, and cooked beans, then heat in a pan or in the microwave. Fold over and it's ready to eat. This snack provides protein, dietary fiber, calcium, and vitamin C.

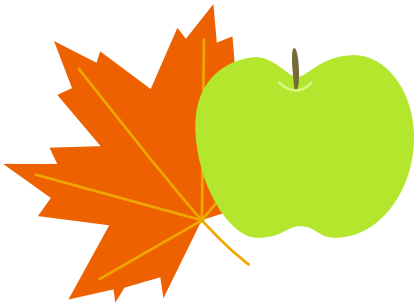
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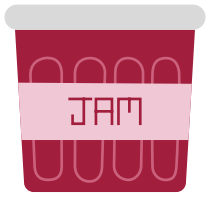


VEGETARIAN MEAL PLANNING

As a vegetarian, you might find it tricky to eat healthy and stay within a budget. The good news is that with a little planning, you can save money and eat well-balanced vegetarian meals that provide enough protein, calcium, iron, and other nutrients. Here are some budget-friendly tips, plus meal and snack ideas that won't break the bank.

Money-Saving Tips







- **Plan meals**. Take time each week to plan menus and write out a shopping list.
- **Buy in bulk**. Choose large packages of foods with long shelf lives, like whole-grain pasta, brown rice, whole-grain cereals and flour, dried fruit, nuts, beans, peas, and lentils. If a large package is too much food, split it with another family.
- **Buy local**. Locate and visit your local farmers' markets.
- **Eat seasonally**. Fruits and vegetables that are in season tend to cost less.
- **Grow your own**. Herbs are easy to grow and do not take up much space. For larger gardens, try tomatoes, cucumbers, beets, carrots, lettuce, and radishes.
- **Preserve produce**. Freeze or can fruits and vegetables when they are in season and at their cheapest.
- **Shop sales**. Check local store ads for sales on staples like beans and rice. If you like shopping online, remember that online grocers also have sales.
- **Choose store brands**. They tend to be much cheaper than name brands.
- **Cook and freeze**. Cook double or triple batches of soups, stews, casseroles, sauces, and baked goods and freeze some for later.

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STOCK YOUR KITCHEN

Vegetarian meals can be quick and easy if your kitchen is well-stocked.

Refrigerator:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Dairy or soy foods (milk, yogurt, cheese, tofu, tempeh)
- Other plant-based milks (almond, rice, oat)
- Eggs

Freezer:

- Unsweetened frozen fruits
- Frozen vegetables without added sauces or salt
- Veggie burgers or crumbles

Cupboards:

- Whole-grain cereals, oats, breads, pasta, and crackers
- Whole grains, such as whole grain barley, quinoa, sorghum, farro, and polenta
- Canned or dried beans, such as pinto beans, black beans, and chickpeas
- Brown and wild rice
- Low-sodium vegetarian broth and soups
- Canned vegetables with no added salt
- Peanut butter, other nut butters, and tahini (sesame seed spread)
- Canned fruit packed in juice or water
- Texturized vegetable protein (TVP)

Breakfast Ideas

- Top low-fat, fat-free, or soy yogurt with seasonal fruit and chopped nuts.
- Mix oatmeal with fresh fruit and chopped nuts.
- Serve whole grain cereal with nonfat or low-fat milk and fresh, seasonal fruit. If you don't drink cow's milk, use a plant-based beverage, such as soy, rice, or almond milk that is fortified with calcium and vitamin D. Look for sales on these milk alternatives.
- Toast whole wheat bread and top with peanut butter and jam or low-fat cottage cheese.
- Make a smoothie by blending fresh seasonal fruit or frozen fruit with low-fat or nonfat milk, a milk alternative, or low-fat yogurt.

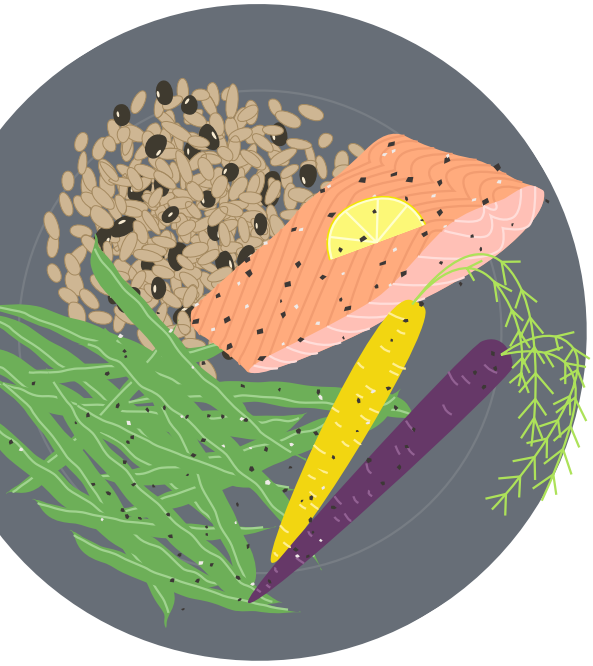
Lunch and Dinner Ideas

- Make a pot of soup with leftover vegetables, potatoes, beans, or lentils.
- Use whole wheat or corn tortillas to make burritos stuffed with rice, beans, low-fat cheese, and seasonal vegetables.
- Stir-fry vegetables and tofu and serve over brown rice or noodles.
- Top whole grain pasta with homemade tomato sauce, low-fat cheese, and seasonal vegetables.
- Make a sandwich of hummus, whole-wheat pita bread, and raw or grilled vegetables.

Snack Ideas

- Top a baked potato or sweet potato with salsa, baked beans, or vegetarian chili.
- Air pop a batch of popcorn or pop in covered pan with a small amount of oil.
- Spread peanut butter or hummus on raw vegetables.
- Make your own trail mix with unsalted nuts, whole grain cereal, and dried fruit.
- Build a fruit parfait with layers of low-fat, fat-free, or soy yogurt and seasonal fruit; sprinkle with chopped nuts.

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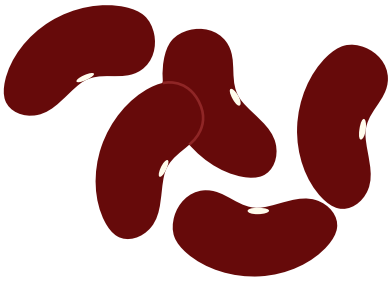


MANAGING YOUR WEIGHT

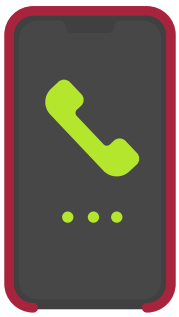
Losing or maintaining weight may seem like a challenge in itself. Doing so on a budget may make it seem even harder. Luckily, a healthy eating plan to help you lose and maintain your weight **can** be affordable! Here are some tips to get you started.

At Home

- **Plan ahead**. Set aside time to find healthy recipes, plan menus, schedule meals, and write out a shopping list before you shop. When you have a plan, you are more likely to seek out healthy foods.
- **Watch portion sizes**. Fill half your plate with vegetables and fruits. Split the other half equally between lean protein foods and grains. (Choose whole grains most of the time for dietary fiber and more nutrients.)
- **Avoid fad diets**. These diets are usually short-lived because they're hard to follow. Some can also be costly if it requires special foods or supplements. Your best (and cheapest) bet is to stick to a healthy eating plan.
- **Create a support group**. Create your own support group with friends or family and exchange tips, recipes, and success stories to stay motivated.



- **Go meatless once or twice a week**. Choose meat-free meals, such as dishes based on beans, eggs, whole grains, vegetables, or tofu. Keep in mind that meatless dishes that are fried or use lots of cheese, cream, butter, or oil will be high in calories.
- **Pack a lunch**. Instead of going out for lunch, pack your own using leftovers or less-expensive ingredients from home. Making your own lunch helps to control calories and it can save a lot of money in the long run.



- **See a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN)**. An RDN can give you advice and support as you manage your weight, as well as offer tips about your food budget. Go to **www.eatright.org** to find an RDN in your area.

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SIMPLE STEPS TO CUT CALORIES AND BOOST NUTRIENTS

1. **Fill up on fiber-containing foods,** such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans and peas, and nuts and seeds. These foods can help satisfy your appetite with fewer calories.
2. **Include protein with your meals and snacks** to help you feel full longer. Examples include low-fat Greek yogurt, reduced-fat cheese, lean meat and poultry, eggs, and nuts.
3. **Shrink your portions** to help reduce calories. Reducing usual portions by about ¼ to ⅓ can add up to big calorie (and cost) savings.
4. **Limit foods higher in saturated fat and added sugars.** This means cutting back on foods that supply calories with few nutrients, which also tend to cost more, such as baked goods, fried foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, and desserts.



At The Market

- **Skip prepackaged meals**. Instead, stick to your shopping list of ingredients to make your own meals.
- **Buy fresh, seasonal produce**. Fresh, in-season fruits and vegetables tend to be cheapest and are an essential part of any healthy eating plan. Look for produce on sale at the market each week or shop at your local farmers' market.
- **Save on protein foods**:
  - Meats, poultry, and fresh seafood tend to be more costly. Save money and control calories by sticking to smaller portions (3 to 4 ounces per serving). Also, buy less-expensive protein foods like eggs, canned fish, or beans and lentils.
  - Whole chickens are cheaper than chicken breasts. You can cut the chicken up and divide it into meal-size portions at home. Remove chicken skin before eating to reduce saturated fat and calories.
  - Buy large packages of meat or poultry to save money over time and freeze extra portions in sealed freezer-safe bags for future use.
- **Buy in bulk**. Larger packages of food tend to cost less per unit than smaller ones. Pantry staples like olive oil, brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, and nuts are some good choices to buy in bulk. If a large package is too much, split it with another family.

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