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# 55 WAYS TO SAVE AT THE GROCERY STORE

Most everyone is looking for ways to save money. Eating a nutritious diet is very important to health and it is unwise to cut corners by giving up nutritious foods. The good news is that you can live on a tight budget and still have a nutritious diet, if you shop carefully. Be smart and get the most for your food dollar by adopting the following practices.

### GENERAL TIPS:

1. Choose the grocery store that will give you the most for your money.
  - a. A large supermarket will nearly always have lower prices than small stores, because they can buy their stock in larger quantities.
  - b. You usually have to pay higher prices in convenience stores.
  - c. Never buy food from a dirty store, even at discount prices. The food may not be clean and fresh.
2. Take a detailed grocery list with you to the store.
3. Buy only what is on the grocery list except in the following cases:
  - a. A food item is on sale, or at a lower price, and can be substituted for some food on your list. The food substituted should give similar nutrients.
  - b. If staples or a favorite family food is on sale, buy a larger quantity than planned. Be sure it can be eaten before it spoils and you have storage space.
4. Compare prices by using cost per unit of various foods. The "Unit Price" is usually listed on the grocery shelf.
5. If possible, buy yourself a miniature hand calculator so you can add up the cost of your groceries as you shop.
6. Shop alone....leave the children in the car with another adult or at home. Children want everything they see. Also, they may distract you from your effort to shop wisely.
7. Beware of impulse buying...stick to your grocery list.
8. Do not shop when hungry. This tempts you to buy expensive snacks and ready-to-eat foods.
9. Compare the prices of different brands of canned, frozen, and bottled items. Divide the cost by number of ounces and compare cost per ounce or use the "Unit Price" on the shelf. Many cheaper brands may be just as good in flavor and the same in nutrients.
10. Consider quality as well as price. The cheapest is not always the best buy. Try one can of a cheaper brand to see if your family likes it.
11. Store brands are usually a better buy than highly advertised brands, and they are usually of good quality.
12. Compare the cost of different forms of the same food—for example, canned, frozen, and fresh vegetables. Make comparisons on a ready-to-serve basis.
13. Always check weights. Size and shape of containers may be deceiving.
14. Avoid unwanted leftovers by buying as nearly as possible the exact amount needed for a recipe.
15. Dietetic products and specialty foods (as in Health Food Store) are usually more expensive and may offer no advantages.



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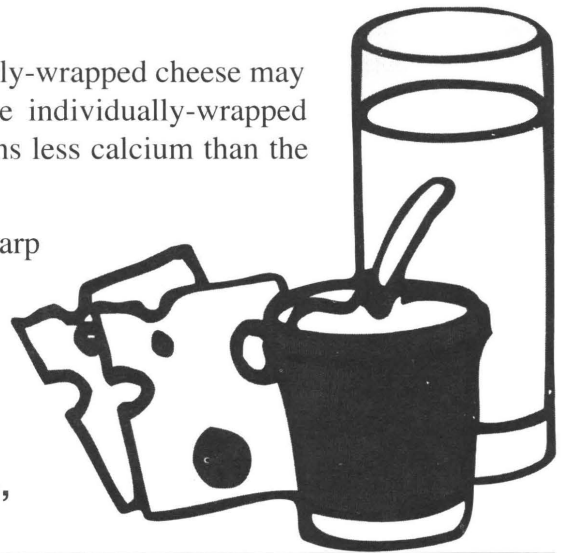
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16. Read labels to see what you are paying for. In the ingredient list, the ingredient listed first is the one present in the largest quantity. Most canned and packaged foods will have the nutrient value listed. Don't waste money on foods that provide only fat, sugar, and calories.

## **MILK, CHEESE, YOGURT, AND OTHER MILK PRODUCTS**

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17. Fresh skimmed or low-fat milk may cost slightly less than fresh whole milk, but gives all the nutrients of whole milk, except the fat. Most of us would benefit from reducing the fat in our diet.
18. Instant nonfat dry milk may cost less per serving than fresh milk and can save you a great deal of money if you use it for cooking or drinking. Mix it half and half with fresh milk for drinking and get the flavor of fresh milk.
19. Evaporated milk may be less expensive than fresh milk. It can be used for cooking or for whipped topping.
20. Be sure to check the "sell by" date on fresh whole, low-fat, and skimmed milk to make sure you can use it before it spoils. If milk has been kept cold, it will usually stay fresh for 2 or 3 days after the "sell by" date.
21. Milk in gallon or half-gallon containers is usually less expensive than quarts or pints. Get the largest size you can use in four to five days. Do NOT put milk products in the grocery cart until last.
22. When buying cheese, remember that pre-sliced, individually-wrapped cheese may be more expensive than bulk or store-brand cheese. The individually-wrapped cheese is cheese "food" rather than pure cheese. It contains less calcium than the pure cheese.
23. Sharp cheddar cheese is more expensive than medium sharp which is more expensive than mild cheese.
24. Loaf, processed cheese spread is less expensive than regular cheese and works well in dishes like macaroni and cheese. It is usually lower in calcium than the real cheese.



## **MEAT, POULTRY, FISH, EGGS, DRY BEANS, & NUTS GROUP:**

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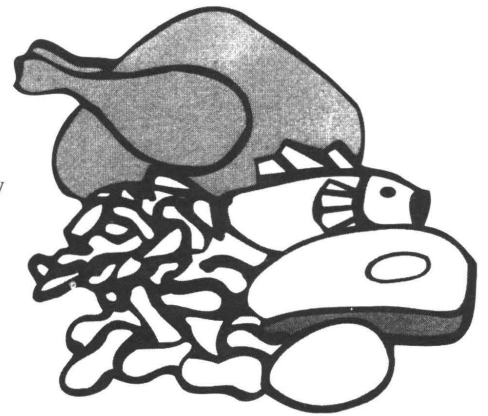
25. Chicken and turkey are usually less expensive, but contain more protein and nutrients than many other meats. They are also lower in saturated fats and cholesterol than many meats.
26. When buying a whole chicken, save money by cutting it into parts yourself.
27. The less tender cuts of beef such as round, chuck, and shoulder are less expensive, but are as nutritious as the more tender cuts. Cook them right...braise or stew...and they are just as delicious.
28. Liver is nearly always a good buy. It is high in nutrition and usually cheaper than many other meats. Beef liver costs less than calves' liver. Pork liver is less expensive and is highest in iron. One disadvantage is that liver is high in cholesterol.
29. Ground beef (hamburger) is usually a good buy, if it is fairly lean. Extra lean ground beef will yield more meat when cooked and is lower in calories, saturated fat, and cholesterol than regular ground beef.
30. When comparing the cost of meat, compare cost per serving and NOT cost per pound. Sometimes a

piece of boneless, lean meat may be a better buy than a cut of meat with a lot of fat and bone which is lower in price per pound.

31. To figure the cost of meat per serving, divide the price per pound by the number of servings one pound will yield. A 3-ounce portion of cooked lean meat is a serving. Go by the following in deciding how many 3-ounce servings you can get from various cuts of meat, fish, and poultry.
- a. Lean, boneless meat: Extra-lean ground beef, liver, fish fillet, lean boneless roast, and ham and canned meats = 4 to 5 servings per pound.
  - b. Small bone-in meat: Such as chuck, round and rump roast, turkey and chicken breast, stew beef = 3 to 3 1/2 servings per pound.
  - c. Large bone-in meat: Boston Butt (pork) roast, pork chops, whole chicken and turkey, drum sticks, thighs, whole or ham halves = 2 to 2 1/2 servings per pound.
  - d. Bony meat: Spareribs, pigs feet, hamhocks and chicken wings = 1 to 1 1/2 servings per pound.

32. It is often more economical to buy a large cut of meat and divide it into several meals or servings than to buy the component cuts separately. EXAMPLE: Buy a pork loin roast and cut it into pork chops.

33. Compare the cost of frozen and canned meats, fish, and poultry with fresh meat, fish, and poultry. The canned may cost less per serving than the fresh since there is usually no waste in the canned product. One disadvantage of canned meats is that salt has been added and, thus, they are higher in sodium than fresh, unsalted meat.



34. Meats that have already been breaded will cost more. Do your own breading.
35. When buying eggs, compare the cost of medium and large. If the price of large eggs is more than 7 cents above the medium, medium size are the best buy.
36. Buy clean, uncracked, Grade A eggs. When shopping, open cartons to check for cracked eggs.

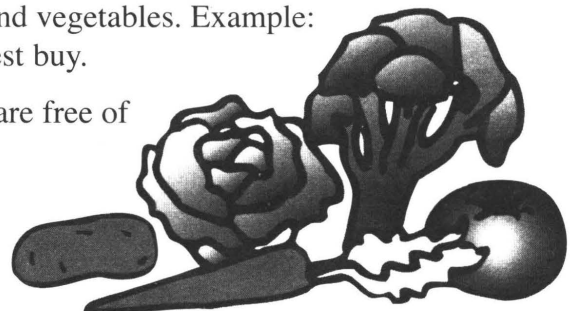
## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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37. Fresh fruits and vegetables are the most economical when they are in season.
38. If not in season, the canned and frozen forms of vegetables and fruits may be cheaper than the fresh ones and are just as nutritious.
39. Compare cost of fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables and fruits on a ready-to-serve basis. Remember - fresh ones will have some waste in peeling and stems.
40. Get to know the desirable characteristics of fresh fruits and vegetables. Example: An orange or grapefruit that is heavy for its size is the best buy.

41. Buy only those vegetables and fruits that look fresh and are free of wilt, bruises, and decay.

42. When buying canned products, DO NOT buy cans that are dented badly (especially in seams) or that are bulging on the ends. The food in such cans may be spoiled and dangerous to eat.



43. Select fruit juices that are high in Vitamin C and other nutrients. Soft drinks and many canned and bottled fruit drinks and punches may have little or no Vitamin C and will provide empty calories in the form of sugar.
44. Buy the form of canned fruits or vegetables which best suits the intended use. Example: Stewed tomatoes may be cheaper than whole; sliced peaches may be cheaper than halves.

## **BREADS, CEREALS, AND PASTA**

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45. Look for enriched or whole grain breads, crackers and other baked goods. You'll get more minerals and vitamins for your money. Whole grain breads and cereals provide the most fiber and some nutrients not found in enriched products.
46. "Day-old" breads cost less and are good for toast, bread crumbs, and stuffing.
47. Substitute enriched, all-purpose flour for cake flour—it costs less. One cup minus 2 tablespoons of all purpose flour equals 1 cup of cake flour.
48. Baked goods that you make yourself from enriched flour may provide more iron and B- Complex Vitamins than the ready-to-eat items. They will usually cost less and may taste better than ready-to-eat products.
49. Make your own cakes, pies, cookies, muffins, etc., from "scratch" at home. Mixes and convenience products usually cost more. An Extension Agent or Program Assistant can give you recipes for making your own mixes.
50. Regular enriched rice and other cereals cost less than the instant or pre-cooked form.
51. Hot cereals cost less per serving than ready-to-eat cereals.
52. Whole grain cereals offer the most nutrition for your money. Sugar-coated cereals and those with fancy flavors and shapes usually cost more than plain forms and are not as nutritious.
53. Individual-serving-size boxes of cereal cost more per serving than a large box.
54. Compare cost of different brands and sizes of cereals to see which is the lowest in cost per ounce. Many store brands are available and are tasty and nutritious.
55. Pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, noodles) is a good buy from the standpoint of price and good nutrition. Plain shapes of pasta are usually less expensive than fancy shapes.

