

Healthful Eating On a Budget

Do healthy foods really cost more?

It depends on how you compare foods:

- Price per calorie (unhealthy foods cost less)
- Price per edible weight (healthy foods cost same or less)
- Price per typical portion (healthy foods cost same or less)



Money-saving tips for shopping:

Before you shop:

- Do a quick clean-out of old or expired foods.
- Take inventory of what you already have on hand.
- Make a list of what you know you need.
- Plan for foods/ingredients to do double-duty.
- Shop alone, when possible (more people = more spending).
- Don't go hungry (or everything will look yummy!)
- Shop online to cut back on impulse purchases .

When you shop:

- Opt for generic or "off brand" products whenever possible.
- Use unit prices to help you compare costs of similar products.
- Use a store savings card or app.
- Use coupons wisely (they don't always give you a "deal").
- Buy in bulk with caution (it's only a deal if you'll use all of it).
- Check expiration dates to ensure you can use it in time.

After you shop:

- Store foods using the "first in, first out" method.
- Prep what needs to be prepped to ensure it gets used (e.g. cut and wash produce).
- Double-check expiration dates.

Money-saving tips by food group:

Grains:

- Buy plain oats and flavor yourself (skip the packets).
- Make your own baking mix (skip the boxed mixes).
- Pop popcorn in the microwave using a brown paper lunch bag (skip the ready-to-microwave bags).

Produce:

- Only buy fresh produce you will use.
- With fresh produce, buy in-season to minimize costs.
- Supplement fresh produce with canned and frozen produce.
- With frozen vegetables, skip the microwave-ready bags (they usually cost more).

Dairy:

- Try ultra-pasteurized milk, which has a longer shelf life (organic and shelf-stable milks are usually ultra-pasteurized).
- Get more protein with Greek or Skyr yogurt.

Protein:

- Adjust your idea of a “meal” (we don’t as much meat as we think, which is the costliest part of a meal).
- Go meatless a couple times a week.
- Try canned chicken, tuna or salmon.
- Buy meats on sale and freeze for later.

Fats:

- Stick with less expensive nuts, such as peanuts.
- Make your own salad dressings using oil and vinegar.
- Use sparingly – a little goes a long way!