

Fruits & Veggies on a Budget



Getting More for Your Money

With careful meal planning, smart shopping, and a few tweaks in storage and preparation techniques, you can make the most out of your grocery budget by always including fruits and vegetables in your meals. They are an excellent value for the money! Check out these tips and get the most for your money from fruits and veggies.

MEAL PLANNING to Fit Your Budget

Preparing meals and eating at home saves money and gives you the opportunity to enjoy meals with your family. Plan ahead to save time and you will be less likely to resort to pre-prepared or take-out foods that cost more.

Start with this ...

- Make a grocery list, and stick to it to avoid spending money on unnecessary items.
- Include frozen, canned and dried forms of fruits and vegetables on your list. They are all nutritious and handy for quick-fix meals.
- Make sure you have staples that you use on a regular basis on hand.

Then try this ...

- Plan for fruits or vegetables to be the CENTER of the plate ... and then add protein and grains. Some vegetable-grain combinations don't require additional protein but when you do add meat or cheese, think of it as flavoring.
- Plan meals around fruits and vegetables that go a LONG WAY. Plan to include fruits and vegetables you can grab as quick snacks or turn into soups and casseroles that you can eat a couple of times during the week.

Fruits & Veggies on a Budget



Storing Your Fruits & Veggies so They Do Not Go to Waste

Refrigerator

Apples (< 7 days) Figs
Apricots Honeydew
Cantaloupe

(Unwashed in a Single Layer)
Blackberries Raspberries
Blueberries Strawberries

(Unwashed in a Plastic Bag)
Broccoli Green Onions
Carrots Lettuce
Cauliflower Peas
Corn Radishes

(Store in a Paper Bag)
Mushrooms Okra
Artichokes Lima Beans
Asparagus Leafy Vegetables
Beets Leeks
Brussels Sprouts Plums
Cabbage Spinach
Celery Sprouts
Cherries Summer Squash
Grapes Yellow Squash
Green Beans Zucchini
Herbs (not basil)

Countertop

Apples (< 7 days) Tomatoes
Bananas

Basil Mangoes
Cucumbers Oranges
Eggplant Papayas
Garlic Peppers
Ginger Persimmons
Grapefruit Pineapple
Jicama Plantains
Lemons Pomegranates
Limes Watermelon

Cool, Dry Place

Acorn Squash Pumpkins
Butternut Squash Spaghetti Squash
Onions* Sweet Potatoes
Potatoes* Winter Squash

***Keep away from each other**

Counter/Fridge

(Ripen on Counter, then Refrigerate)

Avacodos Pears
Nectarines Plums
Peaches
Kiwi

High Ethylene Producers: Keep away from other fresh produce to slow down ripening/spoilage.



Fruits & Veggies on a Budget

SHOPPING for Fruits and Vegetables and Sticking to Your Budget

- ⇒ **Buy in season.** Although most fresh fruits and vegetables are available year-round, some are less expensive when they are in season. Also, keep in mind that different forms of fruits and vegetables are nutritious, so canned and frozen forms are OK too!
- ⇒ **Buy more.** When there are specials on fruits and vegetables, buy extra. They can be frozen, or you can prepare a dish to *be* frozen for a busy night's dinner. Do not buy it if you will not use it or you will just be tossing money in the garbage.
- ⇒ **Do not shop when you are hungry.** You may be tempted to buy things that are not on your grocery list.
- ⇒ **Comparison shop.** The larger size is not always the best price.
- ⇒ **Limit or avoid expensive snack foods, desserts and soft drinks** that provide little or no nutrition value for your money.

- ⇒ **Compare the value ...** you get more nutrients from the fruits and vegetables.

What You Get for \$1*	Nutrition Value for Your \$\$
4 oz. bag chips	Calories from fat, salt
1 ¼ pound carrots	Vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants
2 small cookies	Calories from fat and sugar
3 small (2 ¾ in) apples	Vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants
2 liters soda	Calories from sugar

Fruits & Veggies on a Budget



Preparing Fruits & Veggies: Adding Variety while Saving \$\$\$

- ⇒ **Prepare more so you have leftovers.** Use them for lunch, or create a new dish.
- ⇒ **Replace half the meat.** Substituting half the meat in a recipe with beans and/or vegetables will reduce fat and increase fiber, as well as save you money.
- ⇒ **Forget the takeout food.** Keep canned and frozen fruits and vegetables on hand for a quick-fix meal.
- ⇒ **Use fruits and vegetables as snacks.** It's easy to have fruits and vegetables available as 'grab and go' snacks.
- ⇒ **Try this yummy and simple salad:**

Three-Bean Pasta Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 (15-oz.) can three-bean salad, chilled
- 8 oz. whole-grain pasta
- 2 c. grape tomatoes
- 1 tsp. dried dill weed



Directions:

- Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain. Rinse with cold water and place in a medium-sized bowl. Add undrained three-bean salad, tomatoes and dill. Mix gently, cover and chill.

5

