

Grocery Budgets & Inflation

With rising costs of inflation, building a budget that fits in with the rising cost of groceries can be difficult. If this is something you struggle to do, here's some ways you can fight the inflation costs and cut the costs in your grocery budget.

Tip number one is to shop from your shelves! Have you ever bought a few things of pasta and then had them sit on your shelf for a while because you just didn't know what to do? You can cut your grocery budget by creating recipes from your own shelves. To do this, create an inventory of what you have in your pantry, in your freezer, and in your fridge. Then, you can search out by specific ingredients to find recipes that include those in your monthly budget.

Tip number two is to create a monthly meal plan. This may seem daunting, especially if you generally shop on a two-week or one-week basis, but creating a list of all the meals, including snacks, lunches, and breakfasts will give you a picture of what your month will look like.

Tip number three comes with tip number two – adjust and plan again! After you have created the meal plan create a list of the ingredients needed for those meals. Add those ingredients to an online store cart or app (based on the grocery store you shop at most, or one similar). If the costs of those ingredients are more than what your budget is, reorganize your shopping and meals. There may be some items for meals that cost a bit more and that may mean you need to adjust or find another meal to make that is less expensive.

Tip number four is to buy in bulk, when it makes sense. Although it makes a lot of sense to buy in bulk when you have a need for a large amount of ingredients, you may not always be getting the best of deals. Be careful making sure that what you are buying in bulk is a good cost. You can do this by price comparing between bulk stores and regular stores and finding what the individual cost of the item is and if that is less than it would be at a regular store.

The last tip, number five, is to organize your fridge and cabinets so you use what you buy. Have you ever bought something and forgotten to eat it? Or had it get shoved to the back of your fridge making it hard to see and buying a duplicate? Keeping a fridge organized makes it easy to see what you have in stock and what you need, which reduces the amount of extra spending you do by allowing you to not buy duplicates and eat what you have.

Inflation rates have been crazy, and it can be hard to manage a grocery budget when items you normally purchase keep having rising prices. However, it isn't completely unmanageable. It may take some more planning, and extra time, but you can utilize these tips and make your grocery budget a little bit more manageable.

For more tips on how to spend smart and keep your budget on track, visit:

<https://extension.usu.edu/finance/>