

Cutting Grocery Expenses

Adapted from “Cutting Expenses Guidebook”, USU Extension*

Red tips make the biggest difference in the shortest time.

Yellow tips help keep grocery spending in order.

Green tips build a financial foundation and create good habits.

RED

- **Use food you already have.** Start by using the food you already have on hand. Plan your meals around the items in your pantry and fridge before going to the store.
- **Minimize your trips to the store.** This can help you avoid making impulse purchases that can add up.
- **Use available resources.** Check if you’re eligible for free or reduced school lunch programs or SNAP benefits and consider local food pantries if necessary.
- **Repurpose leftovers.** Get creative with leftovers by turning them into casseroles or soups to stretch your food budget.

YELLOW

- **Use cash.** Take a fixed amount of cash with you to the store. Shopping should end when the cash is gone. This helps prevent overspending.
- **Use online shopping.** Load your online cart and keep an eye on your total as you go. This strategy helps you avoid impulse purchases that can add up quickly.
- **Buy generic brands.** Generic brands are usually as good as branded products but at a significantly lower cost. By opting for generic or store-brand items, families can save up to \$1000 per year.

GREEN

- **Plan meals ahead of time.** Meal planning reduces food waste and unplanned trips to the store. It can also save time and decrease stress associated with meal time.
- **Shop with a list.** Make a shopping list and stick to it when at the grocery store. Avoiding unnecessary purchases helps keep you on a budget.
- **Shop alone and when you are not hungry.** People tend to buy more when they are hungry or have others with them.
- **Take advantage of case sales.** Stock up on items you eat frequently when they are on sale.
- **Use smaller plates to control portion sizes.** To avoid uneaten food, use smaller plates and control portion sizes.

*<https://extension.usu.edu/finance/files/EFWCuttingExpensesGuidebook.pdf>

