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Help to Stretch your Grocery Budget!

Every time you walk into the grocery store these days; it seems prices have gone up yet again. With costs surging and budgets remaining the same, the need to buckle down on spending is necessary for many people.

Sometimes, healthy foods are the first to be knocked off the list due to cost, however, it doesn't have to be that way. Eating healthy doesn't have to break the bank. There are ways you can get in your daily nutrition without sacrificing all your hard-earned money. With a little planning and knowledge, you can enjoy nutritious foods and stay within a budget.

Here are 10 tips to help stretch your grocery budget.

1. Plan your meals

The No. 1 tip for people when they're looking to both eat healthily and save money is to meal plan. Even if all you plan is your dinners, you'll find that it really can make a difference. Knowing what you'll be eating reduces last-minute trips to the grocery store, time spent looking for something to eat in your refrigerator or pantry, and the cost of eating out. Try to plan meals with common ingredients to help decrease the need to buy different ingredients every week.

2. Make a grocery list — and stick to it

Once you have your meals planned, take inventory of what you already have on hand and make a list of all the ingredients you'll need for the week. Shopping with a list helps ensure that you get everything you need so you don't have to make multiple trips to the store throughout the week. Sticking to your list helps decrease impulse buying, which can add up quickly.

3. Cook at home

Eating out night after night is expensive and can really add on to a food budget. Making meals at home from scratch, or semi-scratch, is a tried-and-true way to help decrease costs.

4. Shop in season

Produce that's in season tends to be on sale, so when something is in season, add it to your cart.

5. Buy in bulk

This can also result in fewer grocery store trips because you have more food on hand to last you longer.

6. Use frozen or canned fruits and vegetables

Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables tend to get passed over because people think they're not as nutritious as fresh produce. That's simply not true. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables have the same nutritional profile as their fresh counterparts because they're picked at their peak ripeness and either flash frozen or canned to preserve their nutritional value.

7. Grow your own produce

Growing a garden full of fresh produce is not only cost-effective, but it also feels good knowing where your food came from and how it was grown.

8. Try store brand

Purchasing the same product of generic or store brand compared to name brand can save you about 20% to 30% on your grocery bill

9. Swap in more plant-based proteins

Meat, poultry, and seafood are often the highest cost of a meal. Swapping those for plant-based proteins such as beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds can cut costs while still providing you with the nutrients you need.

10. Make use of leftovers

Cook once and eat twice or more. Eating leftovers for lunch is a great way to skip the costs of eating out. Another way to use leftovers is to make a large or double batch of a meal and freeze some to have another night.

Roasted Vegetables

- 1 russet potato, chopped
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and chopped
- 1 parsnip, peeled and chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- ¼ cup olive or canola oil
- 1 t. garlic powder
- ½ t. onion powder
- Black pepper to taste
- 3 T. parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Rinse and cut vegetables into chunks.

Place in a medium bowl and pour oil over top. Add seasonings and parmesan and mix well.

Spray a baking sheet with baking spray. Spread vegetables in an oven layer on baking sheet.

Bake for 45-50 minutes until tender.