

\$ Stretch Your Dollar \$

Stretch Your Food Dollar

1. Always have a plan:
 - a. Set a spending limit.
 - b. Plan menus and use them to make your grocery list.
 - c. Read sale advertisements and use them to plan your menus and grocery list.
 - d. Make a shopping list and stick to it. This helps prevent impulse buying.
2. Eat before shopping. If you're hungry while shopping, you might be tempted to buy things that aren't on your list.
3. Clip coupons for items you know you'll use.
4. Try store brands. Store brands usually cost less than name brands. Sometimes they are as good as or even better than the name brand item.
5. Compare stores. Some grocery stores may have lower prices than others. Day-old bread stores and dollar stores have lower prices on some items.
6. Take advantage of special discounts like senior discounts or double coupon days. Use the store discount card.
7. Choose your best day to shop. Some stores have sales on specific days. Stores may be less crowded and better stocked during a week day.

Food Dollar - Comparison Shop

Compare forms and buy the form that costs less for each serving.

Already cooked or cut up food usually costs more per serving. For example, a whole chicken will cost less than a chicken already cup up. Bulk ground beef costs less than ground beef patties. A whole cabbage costs less than a bag of slaw. Dry milk costs less than fresh milk (it can be used in cooking if you prefer to drink fresh milk or mix it $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ with fresh milk.)

Compare sizes and buy the size that costs less for each serving. For example, a gallon of milk costs less per serving than milk in quarts or half gallons. A large can of sliced peaches costs less than the same amount of peaches in smaller cans. Family-size packages of meat cost less per serving than smaller packages. Large packages of meat can be divided into freezer bags and stored for later use.

Compare packaging and buy the form that costs less for each serving. Foods in fancy packages, like pre-packaged snacks and lunches, usually cost more. Cheese in blocks costs less for a serving than wrapped single slices. Plain frozen vegetables cost less than frozen vegetables in sauce. Dry beans cost less per serving than canned beans. Plain rice costs less than seasoned rice mixes.

Look for bang for your buck from:

- Foods that have more nutrients per serving – spend your food budget on nutrient dense fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat protein and dairy products. Limit your purchase of less nutritious high-fat and high-sugar items.
- Foods that are lower cost sources of a nutrient – dry beans and peas, canned tuna in water, and peanut butter are all good sources of protein that cost less than meat.



References:

USDA's Nutrition Assistance Programs: Eat Right When Money's Tight. USDA. May 2008
Spending Smart on Food handout. University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service.

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