

Eating on a budget

Small changes in your shopping habits can mean saving money at the grocery store.



Before you go to the store

- Make a shopping list.
- Organize the list to match the layout of the store.
- Use coupons only for items you would normally buy.

Eating at home

- Keep portion sizes small and don't overload plates with too much food.
- Eat slowly — have a family dinner and take time to enjoy each other
- Repackage large containers of food into small bags and containers.
- Keep healthy foods in sight.
 - Put fruit in a bowl for everyone to grab for a snack.
 - Cut up vegetables and fruits for easy access.
- Involve children in meal planning and preparation.



At home

- Plan meals in advance to take advantage of advertised specials.
- Update your grocery list throughout the week to avoid forgetting items when you're at the store.
- Store foods properly — food that gets thrown out is money lost.



At the store

- Shop alone and on a full stomach.
- Stick to your shopping list to cut down on impulse buying and extra trips to the store.
- Shop the outer aisles.
 - Outer aisles have fruits, vegetables, dairy and meat.
 - Inside aisles have high-priced processed foods.
- Bigger is not always better — don't assume the biggest size is the best value.
- Use unit pricing to compare costs.
 - Tells you the cost of one unit, like an ounce.
 - Find unit price labels on the shelf edge right under the package.



Preparing foods at home

- What you don't use, you lose.
 - Use all the edible parts of broccoli, including stalks and florets.
- Use leftover vegetables in omelets, salads, pizza or soups.
- Leave out meat and have a vegetarian meal.
- Use vegetables and whole-grain pasta to stretch meals and add nutrition.
- Cook once and eat twice by freezing some for quick meals at a later time.



Look for the bargains

- Buy seasonal foods that cost less.
- Buy store or generic brands instead of name-brand items.
- Stock up on low-cost, frequently used items.
- Look high and low.
 - Bargains are usually on the top or bottom shelves.
- Check for bargain bins or featured items.
- Stock up on nonperishable foods when on sale.



Eating out

- Eat out less often to save money and gas.
- Share an entrée with a friend when eating out.



Other money-saving tips

- Grow your own food.
- Shop at the local farmers market.
- Beware of convenience stores and vending machines — you pay extra for convenience.
- Buy nonfood items — like dish soap and toiletries — at discount stores.



Funded in part by USDA SNAP.
For more information, call MU Extension's Show Me Nutrition line at 1-888-515-0016.
Running out of money for food?
Contact your local food stamp office or go online to dss.mo.gov/fsd/fstamp.
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI
Extension
an equal opportunity/ADA institution