

STRETCHING YOUR DOLLARS AT THE GROCERY STORE

Grocery shopping and meal planning is a universal stress. One of the stress factors associated with these activities relates to the growing expense that corresponds with our experiences at the grocery store. However, there are certainly some steps that can be taken to minimize this stress, deliver a more positive experience, and save us money.



Consider the Strategies Listed Below

Meal Planning

I'd say first on the list is learning to plan your meals. Planning is absolutely everything. If we don't plan to have the foods we need in our home, then we just wake up, stare into the fridge or cabinets and go for whatever is available. We are hungry, and we just want to be satisfied.

Purchase in Bulk

Planning also allows you to use the same item more than once during the week through purchasing in bulk. For instance, you may purchase a larger cabbage to roast in wedges or slices for a couple of meals, then use the rest to throw in a pot of vegetable soup another day. It can be helpful to purchase in bulk at wholesale clubs like Sam's Club, Costco or BJ's – depending on where you live.

Double the Recipe

Another thing you can do is make a dish with multiple servings or double your recipes and freeze portions for another day. This approach allows you to add variety by changing the vegetables. For instance, you can make Sloppy Joes or Pulled Barbecue Chicken Breasts (our recipes) in the crockpot and have enough for 3 meals.

Save time and money in the kitchen by putting a whole chicken, turkey breast or roast in a crockpot, add some liquid or a can of Italian diced tomatoes or seasonings, and walk away for 6-8 hours.

Choose Less Expensive Proteins

To make food purchasing even more cost effective, grab less expensive cuts of meat in bulk – things like round steak, beef stew meat, flat iron or hanger steak. These varieties of meat are usually more tough, but they fall apart after being in the crockpot or Instant Pot. A whole chicken or bone-in cuts are less expensive than boneless chicken breasts or thighs. The bones also lend a lot more flavor, and the broth they develop in the crock pot is amazingly good.

Stick to Your List

Making and sticking to a list can also prevent buying additional items you think you will use, but then end up not using, and therefore creating unnecessary waste. Perhaps you will want to consider utilizing grocery store Apps that allow you to purchase online and have them bring it to your car. This way you are not tempted to put things in your grocery cart that are not on your list.

Cook at Home

Cooking at home is a great way to eat healthy on a budget. We may not like to cook, but this can help us stay in control of what is in the food we eat. This can help us control weight loss. It can also be a big part of the reason why we find ourselves in the situation we are in to start with, if we have been eating out a lot. It's all about making up your mind and breaking old habits.

Select Frozen Vegetables and Fruits

Frozen vegetables and fruits are a good purchase option. They are also nutritious, available all year and can be sold in large bags, making them more cost effective. They can also be prepared very efficiently.

Get Creative

Another great way to save is to prepare your own vegetables. Spiralizing zucchini, for instance, takes 3 minutes, and you get a ton of it for a fraction of the cost of pre-spiralized zucchini. You can get good spiralizers for \$15-20 at most grocery stores.

Consider Purchasing Generic Brands

Generic brands are always less expensive than the name brands and are often the same quality.

Use Alternative Shopping Options

Lastly, you can go to websites like Thrive Market, or shop for deals on Amazon. Consider the use of a grocery store APP.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that eating healthy at a better price does take more planning. There's no way around that. You might even have to reorder your priorities regarding where you spend your money and your time so that you can make healthier eating choices, but it is worth it. It is okay to think outside the box a little.