

CUTTING FOOD COSTS

at the Grocery Store



If you're like the typical college student, food costs are an expensive part of your tight budget. With a little thought plus some shopping know-how, you can cut food costs. Here are some ways to save money at the grocery store.

Read cost/item labels on stores shelves.

Most grocery stores have a label on the shelf detailing the cost per ounce or per container. Use that information to compare different brands and sizes for the best buy.

Buy only the most necessary convenience foods.

Prepare as many foods from scratch as possible. Convenience foods are the most expensive part of your grocery bill.

Purchase larger quantities of food when cheaper and practical.

Ask roommates or friends to split the cost. But, always check the cost per unit to be sure the large quantity is a better buy.

Buy fresh fruits in season.

When fruits or vegetables are out of season, they cost much more. Tailor your purchases to seasonal produce. For example, buy peaches, strawberries, corn, tomatoes, and melons in the summer. Buy apples, pears and broccoli in the fall and winter. Buy frozen varieties when they are cheaper than fresh.

Choose store brands of foods, rather than national brands.

Store brands are usually significantly cheaper and most are just as tasty and similar in quality as the national brands.

Beware of coupons.

Coupons are usually for the more expensive national brands. Be sure to check the price of another brand of the same item. Many times it is still cheaper than if you used the coupon.

Buy large serving sizes rather than individually packaged servings, but only when convenient and practical.

For example, a 32 oz. container of vanilla yogurt is cheaper per ounce than the 6 oz. size. If you mainly eat yogurt at home, then the larger container is a better buy. If you tend to carry the yogurt onto campus, and you don't feel like putting it in single serving containers, then the smaller serving sizes are more practical for you.

**Don't shop when you are hungry.
Your grocery bill can go up by 17%!**

Use canned beans as a source of protein instead of chicken or other meats.

Beans are much cheaper than meat and packed with nutrition. Try a bean burrito lunch instead of the chicken version.

Make your own snacks.

Snack foods are one of the most expensive items on your shopping list. Try making your own, such as a healthy trail mix with cereal, pretzels, and raisins or another dried fruit.