

EATING HEALTHY ON A BUDGET

Eating healthy doesn't have to mean spending more. While some nutritious food *can* be expensive, thoughtful planning and smart shopping can help you maintain a healthy diet without straining your wallet.

Here are some practical strategies for how to eat well without breaking the bank.

Plan Your Meals and Stick to a List

One of the most effective ways to control food costs and avoid impulse purchases is to plan meals ahead of time.¹ Start by assessing what you already have in your pantry, fridge, and freezer. Use those ingredients as a foundation and plan meals around them to minimize waste.

Once you've outlined your meals for the week, make a shopping list that includes only the items you need. When you're at the store, stick to the list as closely as possible. This helps you avoid the temptation of adding unnecessary extras that add to your total bill.^{1,2}

Planning also helps you avoid last-minute takeout or fast food, which—in addition to having low nutritional value—usually costs more per meal than home-cooked options.¹

Purchase Whole and Minimally Processed Foods

Whole foods tend to be cheaper per serving than processed or convenience foods. For example, buying a block of cheese and slicing it yourself is more affordable than purchasing pre-sliced packages.²

Buying food in its simplest form also reduces the amount of added sugar, sodium, and preservatives you consume. This means whole foods provide more nutrition and can be used in a wider variety of meals.²

Stick to the basics, and you'll find your food dollars stretch further while supporting a more nutritious diet.



Opt for Generic Store Brands

Store brands, also known as generic or private-label products, often offer the same quality as name brands at a lower price—especially when you consider these generic items must follow the same food safety standards as their brand-name counterparts.³

Compare Unit and Product Prices

Take time to compare unit prices (cost per ounce, pound, etc.) and prices for similar products at different stores, too.² You might be surprised at how much you can save by diversifying where you do your grocery shopping.

Use Leftovers Wisely

Cooking meals at home gives you complete control over ingredients and portion sizes. This means you can cook in larger batches to have leftovers for future meals, which saves both time and money.¹

And if you don't feel like having the same food several days in a row, that's okay too. Just store your leftovers properly and freeze extra portions to ensure you always have a healthy option on hand.²

¹"7 Tips to Eat Healthy on a Budget." *Hartford HealthCare St. Vincent's Medical Center*, 2025.

²Robinson, Lawrence; Smith, Melinda, M.A. "Eating Well on a Budget." *Help Guide*, 2024.

³Raye, Tracey. "Top Tips for Healthy Eating on a Budget." *BBC Good Food*, 2024.