

Shopping on a Budget



Know the amount of money you have to spend on food and follow a budget before you go to the grocery store. These tips will help!

1. Plan your meals and shopping ahead of time. Make a list and stick to it. Make good use of your WIC benefits and use your SNAP benefits for foods WIC does not cover.
2. Visit the local food pantry for foods such as canned fruits, vegetables and boxes of pasta.
3. Healthy foods can be affordable! Vegetables and fruits usually cost less when they are in season, and try frozen versions—they can be just as healthy as fresh. Also try dried beans/peas and whole grains, like brown rice.
4. When possible, buy large quantities of a food item and portion it out in smaller amounts to freeze and cook at a later time.
5. Check for coupons and sales in the local grocery store fliers or online, searching by brand name of your favorite food items.
6. Compare the prices of different brands of the same product. Even if you are using a coupon for a name brand item, you can often buy the store brand for less.
7. Remember that convenience items are more expensive. Pre-seasoned and pre-cut foods are more expensive because the more work that is done, the more it will cost you.
8. Focus on the outside aisles. Those items (produce, meat and dairy) tend to be less expensive and healthier than the convenience items that are in the center aisles.
9. Look for specials on discounted items, like end cuts of meat and day-old bread and produce that still taste great and can be used in many recipes.
10. Never go to the grocery store hungry—you may be tempted to buy more than you need!

A HEALTHY BUDGET

For every \$25 dollars of your food budget, experts suggest you spend it in the following way:

- \$6 for vegetables
- \$5 for fruits
- \$4 for grains
- \$4-5 for proteins
- \$4 for dairy
- \$1-2 for oils and other foods

(Adapted from the Environmental Working Group)

Here are some recipes that use WIC foods.

Morning Rice

2 servings

Ingredients

- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- ½ cup low-fat milk
- 1 apple, peeled, cored, and finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

Preparation

1. Mix all ingredients in a microwave-safe bowl. Add more milk for a creamier texture.
2. Microwave on high heat for 1-2 minutes or until heated through.



Pasta & Bean Soup

6 servings

Ingredients

- 1½ tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 (28-oz) can crushed tomatoes
- 2 (14½-oz) cans low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup cooked whole wheat pasta
- 1 (16-oz) can white kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- Pepper to taste
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- ¼ cup grated cheese

Preparation

1. Sauté the onion and garlic in olive oil for a few minutes over medium heat.
2. Add the tomatoes, chicken broth and pepper.
3. Cook on low for 20 minutes.
4. Add the cooked pasta and beans.
5. Heat through.
6. Sprinkle with cilantro and grated cheese and serve hot.



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Recipes adapted with permission from the California WIC Program



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