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 use of your WIC and SNAP benefits.
2. Check for coupons and sales in the local grocery store fliers. Some websites that offer coupons are:

[www.coupons.com](http://www.coupons.com)

[www.coolsavings.com](http://www.coolsavings.com)

[www.smartsource.com](http://www.smartsource.com)

Also, visit the actual website of the specific items you use the most to look for coupons.

1. Visit the local food pantry for foods such as canned fruits, vegetables and boxes of pasta.
2. 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.
3. When possible, buy large quantities of a food item and portion it out in smaller amounts to freeze and cook at a later time.
4. Compare the prices of different brands of the same product. Many times, you can purchase the store brand for less.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Look for specials on discounted racks, like day-old bread, produce, and end cuts of meat that still taste great and can be used in many recipes.

1. 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 or soymilk

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:

1 ½ tablespoons olive oil

1 large onion, chopped

6 garlic cloves, chopped

1 (28-oz) can crushed tomatoes

2 (14 ½-oz) cans chicken broth

1 cup cooked whole wheat pasta

1 (16-oz) can white kidney beans, rinsed and drained

Salt and pepper to taste

Cilantro, chopped to taste

Cheese, grated to taste

Preparation:

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

**Baked Sweet Potato Fries** (2 servings)

2 small sweet potato, scrubbed and cut into 3-inch x 1-inch strips

1 Tablespoon canola oil

Salt, pepper, and paprika to taste

1. Preheat oven to 450
2. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray and set aside.
3. In a medium bowl, toss sweet potato strips with oil and seasonings.
4. Place strips on baking sheet and bake for 30 minutes, turning halfway through.

Serve with baked chicken and broccoli to make a meal.

*Recipes adapted with permission from the California WIC Program*