



NOURISH

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Make Healthful Choices While Stretching Your Food Dollar

Nearly every day, we hear about rising costs of groceries. Other issues in the supply chain have resulted in empty shelves. According to some reports, the costs of certain foods have increased anywhere from 2% to 18%. This can put a strain on budgets.

How many of these potentially cost-saving tips do you use?

- Check the weekly grocery store ads and plan menus around what's on sale.
- Make a grocery list to cut down on your trips to the store. That can save time and money, and help you avoid impulse buying. Remember to check what you already have at home.
- Limit your shopping to one or two stores. Driving to several stores for special deals can waste time and gas.
- Use coupons only to purchase foods you were planning to buy anyway.
- Compare store and national brands. Most store brands are similar in quality to name brands but cost less.
- Compare prices using "unit prices." The unit pricing on the front edge of the shelf shows you whether the regular-priced, super-sized package is a better deal than the sale-priced regular-sized package. Be sure to look up and down the grocery shelves. Sometimes the higher-priced items are at eye level.
- Aim for serving a variety of foods from all of the food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy and protein foods.
- Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season. If buying canned produce, choose fruits without added sugar or syrup and vegetables without added salt, butter or cream sauces.
- Turn leftovers into "planned-overs." For example, if you had whole roasted chicken last night, shred what's left, add mayonnaise and chopped celery and use it for sandwiches. Or use leftover spaghetti sauce to make lasagna or homemade pizza, or freeze it for a quick dinner later.
- Find a block of time when you can make a few recipes at once and then freeze them to use later.
- Create healthful snacks at home.
- Don't use a credit card to pay for groceries unless you plan to pay off your bill each month. Otherwise, you may be adding interest charges to the cost of the food.

Visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/food and check out the "Pinchin' Pennies in the Kitchen" and "Cooking 101" for many more tips and recipes.

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EXTENSION

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Question

I always have leftover bread, and it ends up getting moldy before I use it all. What tips do you have?

Some food companies are producing loaves of bread with fewer slices, so that is one option. Compare the price per ounce before you buy, though. If your bread becomes stale (but not moldy), toasting it can offset the texture changes. Here are several tips to use leftover bread.

- Freeze the bread. Label the package with the date you froze it. Usually, bread will remain at high quality for about three months in your freezer.
- Make croutons or bread crumbs. Simply cut the bread into cubes or tear into small pieces, and bake at 350 F until it is dry and brittle. To make crumbs, use a rolling pin to crush the bread to the desired size. You can add your favorite salt-free seasonings such as garlic powder. Use the bread crumbs to top various dishes such as macaroni and cheese, casseroles, fish or chicken. Croutons are a crunchy, flavorful addition to soups and salads.
- Use bread as a meat extender. Some recipes call for soft bread crumbs, and others call for toasted cubes. Add the bread crumbs to ground beef to make meat loaf or meatballs.
- Try making recipes with day-old bread. How about French toast, breakfast casserole, stuffing, grilled cheese sandwiches or other foods?



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How about breakfast for dinner? Personalize this recipe with the favorite ingredients of your family.



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As-You-Like-It Breakfast Casserole

8 eggs
2 cups grated cheddar cheese
2 cups milk
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
6 slices day-old bread, cut into cubes

Additions (choose two or three):

1 cup corn (cooked or frozen)
1/2 cup chopped broccoli
3/4 cup sliced mushrooms
1/4 cup sliced green onions, chopped peppers,
chopped onion, sliced olives
1 cup cubed ham

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Beat the eggs in a large bowl. Mix in the milk, cheese, salt and pepper. Add the bread and carefully stir until all pieces of bread are moistened (don't overmix). Add additions. Bake in casserole dish for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, until the top is browned and the center springs back when touched, with no liquid present. Let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

Makes 12 servings. When made with broccoli, mushrooms and onions, each serving has 180 calories, 10 grams (g) fat, 12 g protein, 10 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber and 270 milligrams sodium.

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