

Paleo On A Budget

Trying to save some money *and* eat healthier? Not a problem! Here are some of our favorite strategies for keeping costs down while eating real food.

- **Buy conventional instead of organic (sometimes)**
 - Some foods are less problematic when purchased conventionally
 - Refer to EWG Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen to identify which produce items should be organic vs. conventional
- **Stick to lower cost proteins**
 - Lower quality cuts of meat will be cheaper than others (e.g. ground beef vs. filet mignon) but similar nutritional value
 - Different species of wild fish will be cheaper than others (e.g. wild sardines vs. wild grouper)
 - Even very high quality eggs tend to be less than \$8/pound
- **Buy in bulk**
 - Many membership stores like Costco and Sam's club have a good selection of organic produce, wild seafood, and grass-fed meats at a lower price
 - Many farmers sell "cow-shares" and other bulk meat purchasing options that significantly cut the cost per pound
- **Join a CSA**
 - Community Supported Agriculture supports local farms and often provides less expensive produce due to the pre-determined selection of items
- **Buy ugly produce**
 - Check out Imperfect Produce: <https://www.imperfectproduce.com/>
 - 1 in 5 fruits and veggies grown in the U.S. don't meet cosmetic standards – the crooked carrot, the curvy cucumber, the undersized apple – usually causing them to go to waste.

- Imperfect Produce sells fruits and veggies for 30-50% less than grocery stores, delivered to your door. (Includes organic options)
- **Join Thrive Market for wholesale membership prices**
 - [ThriveMarket.com](https://www.thrivemarket.com) offers a wide selection of healthy, paleo-friendly food options at wholesale prices after paying an annual membership fee
 - This membership especially saves money for people who need Paleo-friendly pantry staples, snacks, and packaged foods
 - The annual membership is \$59.95. If you don't save at least \$60, they'll give you the difference in credit at the end of the year after you renew.
- **Meal Plan**
 - Meal planning ensures healthy food availability, less emergency eating out, and less food waste, saving hundreds of dollars over the course of a year
 - Between 30 and 40 percent of the U.S.'s food supply winds up in the trash or a compost container
 - Meal planning ahead helps avoid waste - you'll be buying ingredients with a particular dish in mind and intent to use everything you buy
 - Batch cooking can keep costs down even further due to the use of bulk purchased meat and produce
- **Keep things simple**
 - No need to buy fancy "superfood" ingredients like acai berries and spirulina. Stick to simple basics like meat, veggies, starches, and fruits to keep costs low and avoid higher priced specialty items
 - Cooking from scratch with simple ingredients will keep per-meal costs much lower than using prepared foods
- **Skip packaged foods and snacks**
 - The Paleo food industry is exploding, and convenience foods can get pricey
 - Planning ahead with DIY snacks or sticking to simple snacks like fresh fruit and nuts is far more affordable than purchasing \$3-4 snack bars

- **Stock up on sale items**
 - Many grocery stores will have sales on good quality food items like grass-fed meats, wild fish, and produce
 - Look for items on sale and purchase larger quantities of sale items that can be frozen for later use
- **Use coupons**
 - Coupon cutting may sound a little silly, but even grocery stores like Whole Foods offers discounts on healthy products
- **Buy Online**
 - Online stores like Amazon and Vitacost offer discounts on healthy food items
 - Thrive Market is another popular online source for healthy foods on a budget
- **Grow your own produce**
 - Planting and tending a garden takes a little work, but is an incredibly low cost way to procure fresh organic produce
- **Buy produce in-season**
 - Out-of-season produce is typically shipped from other areas of the globe, increasing their costs
 - Sticking to in season produce - especially locally grown from farmer's markets - can keep food costs down
- **Use frozen foods when necessary**
 - Frozen produce and proteins are just as nutritious as fresh, and are frequently less expensive than fresh produce - especially produce that is out of season
 - You can also blanch and freeze your own in-season produce to use year round