

Healthy Living on a Budget

One of the biggest concerns people have when switching to a nutrient-dense diet is how much it will cost. However, it's a common misconception that a healthy diet is by default an expensive diet. Here are three tips to keep your grocery shopping within your means. For additional tips, [read this article](#).

Get Down to Basics

Shop for ingredients that are versatile and can be used for a wide variety of dishes. Instead of buying expensive spices that you might use once, get the basics, like all-season salt, fresh garlic, onion powder, Italian/Mexican/Indian (fill in the ethnic food of your choice!) seasoning, curry paste, and anything else that can be used for a multitude of dishes. Choose a couple of go-to fats like olive oil, coconut oil, and butter and use them for all your dishes.

Frozen vegetables are also a great choice, since they're just as nutritious as fresh, can be used in many different dishes, and have a much longer shelf life than fresh veggies. If you tolerate starches, white potatoes and sweet potatoes are cheap and filling and can be used at any meal.

As an added benefit, keeping your diet simple can also spontaneously reduce calorie intake, which will help if you're trying to lose weight!

Buy in Bulk

You can save a lot of money by buying your meat in bulk as a quarter, half, or whole animal directly from a rancher instead of buying individual cuts from the grocery store. You'll typically pay \$5 or so per pound, which includes cuts like filet mignon that sell for five times that at the store. You'll need a chest freezer to store the meat, but that expense is easily made back by the savings on meat throughout the year, not to mention that it's so much more convenient to have a freezer full of meat that you can just pull something out of than to have to shop for meat each week.

If buying a quarter, half, or whole animal is more than you can eat or afford, consider going in with other people. The more people involved, the lower the cost and the less need for extra freezer space!

You can also buy produce in bulk by talking to your local farmer and then splitting the produce with friends and family so you all get a discount and none of it goes to waste.

Choose Your Battles

Not everything you buy has to be organic, grass-fed, free-range, and local. There are many food items that are fine to buy from a conventional grocery store on a regular basis. While you always want to buy organic celery and strawberries, it might not be so important to look for organic onions or mangoes. Check out the **Environmental Working Group's Dirty Dozen Plus and Clean Fifteen** lists for what to focus on.

The same also goes for animal products. You may be fine purchasing non-grass-fed, non-organic lamb, eggs, and some cheeses. Fish like salmon, skipjack tuna, sardines, and herring are wonderfully nutrient-dense foods, and canned is a good (and less expensive) option. Of course, you should always get the highest-quality animal foods you can afford, but not everyone has access to ideal sources of meat.

Remember, it's better to eat non-organic eggs than organic cereal for breakfast, and it's better to have a dinner of conventionally raised beef and non-organic asparagus than a plate of organic pasta. Just do your best!