

# 20 Ways to Save at the Grocery Store

Stephanie K. Swinerton, R.D. FNP Graduate Assistant, Virginia Tech

Learn how to save money. If you shop smart, you can live on a tight budget and still have a healthy diet. Get the most out of your food dollar by adopting the following practices.

1. Don't shop when you are hungry! You are likely to buy more food when you are hungry. Instead, have a small snack before you go grocery shopping.
2. Make a grocery list before you go the store. Buy only what is on the grocery list.
3. Choose the grocery store that will give you the most for your money. You usually have to pay higher prices in convenience stores. Supermarkets will nearly always have lower prices than small stores, because they can buy their stock in larger quantities.
4. Compare prices by using cost per unit of various foods. The "Unit Price" is usually listed on the grocery shelf. The unit price is the cost of the item per ounce, quart, gallon, pound, or any other unit of measure.
5. Buy store brands instead of highly advertised brands to save money. Store brands are often just as good quality as the name brands.
6. Instant nonfat dry milk usually costs less per serving than fresh milk and can save you a great deal of money if you use it for cooking or drinking. Mix it half and half with fresh milk for drinking and get the flavor of fresh milk.
7. Buy milk in gallon or half-gallon containers because they are usually less expensive per cup than quarts or pints. Get the largest size you can use in four to five days.
8. Buy bulk or store-brand cheese instead of the pre-sliced, individually wrapped cheese. Individually wrapped cheese slices are more expensive than cutting your own slices. Often the bulk cheese is better for you because it has more calcium in it than the pre-sliced, individually wrapped cheese.

**Example:**

KRO FAM SZ CRM OF MSHRM  
69453331 10 12 16 OZ 047889

UNIT PRICE <b>9.0¢</b> PER OUNCE	<b>\$1.39</b>
--	---------------

KRO FAM SZ CRM OF MSHRM  
69453331 10 12 19 OZ 047889

UNIT PRICE <b>9.0¢</b> PER OUNCE	<b>\$1.69</b>
--	---------------

Notice that the unit price for both cans of soup is the same; therefore, the shopper is not saving by buying the larger size. Comparing the unit price of similar products will ensure that you get the best deal available without having to do the math.

- 9.** Compare the cost per serving and NOT cost per pound when you are comparing the cost of meat. Sometimes a piece of boneless, lean meat may be a better buy than a cut of meat with a lot of fat and bone that is a lower price per pound.

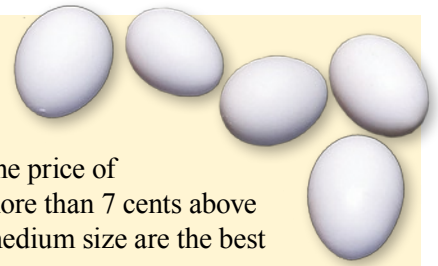


- 10.** Buy chicken and turkey instead of red meat because it is usually less expensive. Chicken and turkey can be a better buy because they contain more protein and less fat than many other meats. Be sure to look at the number of portions when checking the price per pound.
- 11.** Save money by purchasing a whole chicken and cutting it into parts yourself.
- 12.** The less tender cuts of beef such as round, chuck, and shoulder are less expensive, but are as nutritious as the more tender cuts. Cook them right – braise or stew – and they are just as delicious.
- 13.** Ground beef (hamburger) is usually a good buy, if it is fairly lean. Extra-lean ground beef will yield more meat when cooked. It is also lower in calories, saturated fat, and cholesterol than regular ground beef.



- 14.** Buy a pork loin roast and cut it into pork chops. It is often cheaper to buy a large cut of meat and divide it into several meals or servings than to buy the component cuts separately.

- 15.** Compare the cost of medium and large eggs. If the price of large eggs is more than 7 cents above the medium, medium size are the best buy.



- 16.** Fresh fruits and vegetables are low-priced when they are in season, but buy only what you can use before they spoil. If not in season, canned and frozen vegetables and fruits may be cheaper than fresh ones. Plus, recent studies show they are very good sources of vitamins and minerals.



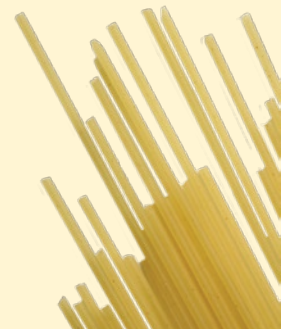
- 17.** Make your own cakes, pies, cookies, muffins, etc. from scratch at home. Mixes and convenience products usually cost more. Ask an Extension agent or program assistant to give you recipes for making your own mixes.

- 18.** Eat hot cereals instead of ready-to-eat cereals. Hot cereals cost less per serving than ready-to-eat cold cereals. Also, buy your cereal in a large container or box to save money instead of buying individual-serving-size boxes of cereal.



- 19.** Buy regular enriched rice and other cereals instead of the instant or precooked form.

- 20.** Pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, noodles) is a good buy for price and good nutrition. Plain shapes of pasta are usually less expensive than fancy shapes. Whole grain is higher in fiber than white, although it may cost more.



This publication was partially funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low incomes. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local county or city Department of Social Services (phone listed under city/county government). For help finding a local number, call toll-free: 1-800-552-3431 (M-F 8:15-5:00, except holidays). By calling your local DSS office, you can get other useful information about services.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, age, disability, or political beliefs.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call, toll free, (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

This publication was partially funded by the Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program, USDA, CSREES.