



STUDENT ADVOCATES FOR FINANCIAL EDUCATION

FOOD SHOPPING SAVINGS

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Are store brand items as good as name brand items?

Store brand items are often of equal quality and can save up to 40% on one's annual food budget.

2. Is 'Organic' the same as 'Natural'?

No. Organic is defined by the ways it can not be produced, rather than how it may be produced. (i.e. No synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, or biotechnology.) There is no legal definition of a 'natural' food, however, food producers define 'natural' as food that has minimal processing and no preservatives.

3. Should I watch the scanner and check my receipts?

Yes. Scanners may ring up an incorrect price or ring up items multiple times. It is also easier for you and the cashier to correct these errors on the spot.

4. What is the best way to comparison shop?

Compare prices at different stores, but also read the unit price so you get the best value for your dollar. Divide the price by the number of units to determine the price per unit.

Beware of store marketing. Middle shelves, end caps, checkouts, and store entrances are places where higher priced items are often located.



TIPS FOR A MONEY SAVING GROCERY TRIP

Americans today spend upwards of 13% of their total income on food. So how can consumers get the most for their time and money when it comes to grocery shopping?

- **Plan ahead, and make a list:** impulse-buying is a shopper's enemy, so having a list helps one to avoid picking up unnecessary items.
- **Eat before you shop:** hungry shoppers are more likely to overspend.
- **Use sales fliers and coupons:** use coupons only for items you normally buy. One can save an average of 10% per trip with careful shopping.
- **Buy in bulk:** bulk shopping for non-perishable goods is often much cheaper than buying items individually.
- **Choose the right store:** if price is your primary concern, use a warehouse for bulk purchases, a grocery store for basic needs, or a superstore for groceries and non-food items.
- **Buy the right food:** according to the Economic Research Service at the USDA, among the many varieties of fruits and vegetables, consumers can meet their recommended daily allowance for 64 cents a day.

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SHOPPING FOR NUTRITION

Check Labels

Labels provided on food items contain a lot of valuable information. Analyze products by comparing labels to ensure the food purchased meets good nutritional needs. The following tips help consumers know what to look for as they compare items at the store.

- Check the number of servings. Many products look like they are a single serving when in fact they are 2 or more. Eating excess servings will quickly extra calories and can translate to weight gain.
- Next compare the number of calories in a serving versus the number of calories from fat in a serving. Products with less calories from fats can be a healthier choice, but watch calories from sugar too.
- Limit your consumption of fat, cholesterol, and sodium, but remember that all healthy diets include some fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Learn what is best for you.
- Make sure to get the right balance of necessary vitamins and minerals.
- Know that your calorie allowance is determined according to your body type and activity level.

FOOD GUIDE PYRAMID

The Food Guide Pyramid is a good example of what an individual should be eating, per food group, everyday. Go to <http://mypyramid.gov/mypyramid/index.aspx> and get a personalized plan based on one's activity levels, age, gender, height and weight.



- ♦ **Grains**—Eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain bread, cereal, crackers, rice, or pasta every day. Look for 'whole grain' on the label.
- ♦ **Vegetables**—Eat a variety of dark green, and orange vegetables. Add dried peas and beans to your vegetable diet.
- ♦ **Fruits**—Choose from a wide selection of fresh, canned, dried, and frozen fruits. Go easy on fruit juices.
- ♦ **Oils**—Choose fats wisely from fish, nuts and vegetable oils. Reduce saturated fat intake such as butter, shortening, margarine, and lard.
- ♦ **Milk products**—Consume low or no fat milk products for adequate calcium and other nutrient intake. Lactose intolerant consumers may choose hard cheeses and yogurt, or calcium fortified food and drink, however these substitutes may not have the other nutrients found in milk products.
- ♦ **Meat and Beans**—Choose lean proteins. Low fat meat or poultry can be broiled, grilled, or baked to enhance nutrition. Supplement with nuts, peas, beans, and fish for a well rounded diet.