

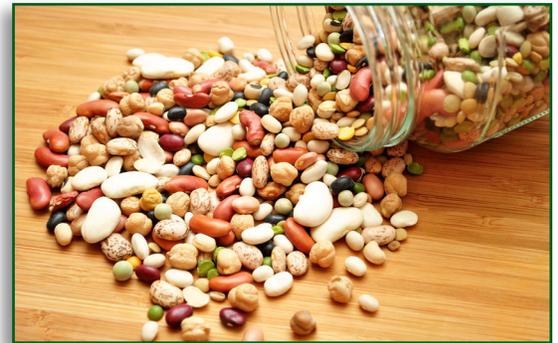


Food and Nutrition Myths: Eating Healthy Foods is Expensive

Forget anything you might have heard about healthy eating being too expensive! Center meals on vegetables, legumes, and whole grains to make delicious, healthy, and affordable meals for yourself and your family. Here are some tips to inspire your own meal prep without breaking the bank:

LOVE LEGUMES

Legumes, including beans, peas, and lentils, offer nutrient-dense flavor and are great for every diet whether you're an omnivore or a vegetarian. Canned beans are an affordable (and convenient) option at around \$0.80-\$1.50 per can. Dried beans are even more of a bargain. A single one-pound bag costs \$1.50 or less and is the equivalent of three cans of cooked beans, making dried beans the most economical choice. Where else can you get 10 servings of flavorful protein for a dollar and a half?



PICK PASTA

Pasta is one of the most delicious, convenient, and widely available healthy foods. It satisfies children and adults alike, can be served hot or cold, comes in a myriad of shapes and sizes, and serves as a fantastic "plate partner" for other healthy foods. Depending on the type of pasta, it can cost as little as \$1.00-\$1.50 per pound. Look for whole-grain pastas for an even healthier choice. Although they sometimes cost a little more, they deliver a great deal more nutritional bang for your buck.

LET A LITTLE BIT GO A LONG WAY

Sometimes a recipe just cries out for a premium ingredient. Fortunately in many cases, a little bit of a flavorful ingredient can be stretched a long way. Just a couple of ounces of feta cheese or a sprinkling of real Parmigiano ("Parmesan") cheese adds an immense amount of flavor. Perk up any dish with just a few sun-dried tomatoes or slices of prosciutto. When possible, purchase just the amount you need for your recipe. Try purchasing by weight at the deli counter, antipasti bar, or salad bar. But if you must buy more than you need, store the remainder in the freezer or plan other meals using the same ingredient later in the week.

MAKE MEALS WITH FRESH, FROZEN AND CANNED FOODS

Eating healthy can come in all forms – fresh, frozen or canned. Frozen fruits and vegetables, flash frozen at the peak of their ripeness, can often contain more nutrients than fresh produce that's been on a truck or in the store for a few weeks. When you shop, buy fresh, frozen or canned according to price. Use fresh foods first and then build your meals around canned and frozen items to finish up the week. When buying frozen and canned be sure to look for brands that are low in sodium, low in fat, and with no added sugars.

Notice when your favorite ingredients go on sale. Read the circular from your grocery store and plan your meals around what is on sale this week. Many items can be purchased on sale and saved in the pantry or freezer until they are needed. Look for sales on fresh seafood and poultry, and freeze it until you need it. Remember to clearly label and date food when you put it in the freezer, use it within a few months, and thaw it in the refrigerator when you are ready to use it.

Not only are frozen and canned foods easy on the wallet, they can save time, too. They're always ready when you are (so you'll avoid that last-minute trip to the market), most are already prepped for use so you won't need to scrub, peel, chop or slice, and there's no waste – which in itself is a savings, too!