



## Secrets to Smarter Shopping

Has this ever happened to you? You're in the middle of prepping dinner and realize you're fresh out of an ingredient. Or, you return from the store and find you've forgotten to buy an item.

With a little pre-planning and a few of these “secrets” you'll be able to shop more quickly and efficiently, saving you both time and money—and you won't be caught empty-handed again!



### Pre-shopping Strategy

- **Avoid shopping when you're tired or hungry.** Shopping when you're tired or hungry can lead to spur of the moment purchases, which can be costly in terms of calories and your budget! Enjoy a light snack, such as a piece of fruit or a handful of nuts, or eat a meal before you shop.
- **Create a shopping list** of items you'll need for the week, as well as items that can be safely stored in your pantry or fridge for later use (these can be bought on sale when the opportunity arises).
- **Check out your store's website** before your trip and search for weekly specials or coupons for items that you use or need. (Alternatively, you can read the printed circular when you arrive at the store.) Avoid the temptation to buy something you don't need just because it's on sale—you'll more than likely not use it.



### Comparison Shop

- **Learn to read labels and ingredient lists**, and how unit pricing works. You'll be able to comparison shop and find the healthiest items for your budget. Having a calculator on hand can help you determine the best buy.
- **Look for store brands and compare** with their national brand alternative. You'll find in most cases store brands are less expensive but similar in nutrition value. You'll get better value while spending less. (A little secret: store brands are usually made by the same manufacturers as the well-known brands, but you're not paying for advertising and special packaging.)
- **Look up, look down**—most often, pricier brands are placed at eye level, with less expensive options above or below.



## Let The Buying Begin

- **Buy in-season fresh produce**, but only purchase what you think you'll use in 2 to 4 days.
- **Buy canned and frozen produce.** Eat your fresh produce first and then fill out your week's menu with canned and frozen items. Select low-sodium versions, without sauces or butter added.
- **Buy whole grains, coffee, nuts and seeds in the bulk aisle** whenever possible. You'll save money and have less packaging waste. If items are on sale, stock up and use them later in the month. For longer storage, place them in the refrigerator or freezer.
- **Pantry items**, such as canned tuna, canned tomatoes, low-sodium stocks, and frozen vegetables, **are ideal to stock up on when on sale, too.**
- **Buy frozen fish in place of fresh fish.** It's usually less expensive and more convenient—you won't worry about it spoiling in the fridge and it's always ready when you are.
- **Check the expiration or sell-by date on perishables** such as yogurt, milk, and cheese. Dates can vary widely on the same shelf, and by choosing the freshest packages—those with the farthest-off date—you can be sure they'll last until you have a chance to enjoy them.
- **Place frozen and refrigerated foods in your cart last** to discourage thawing. Be sure to store these foods immediately when you return home.