



## EATING ON A BUDGET

As a college student, there will be many opportunities to dine out and socialize with friends. Sometimes, it may seem more convenient to pick something up on-the-go, rather than making it yourself; however, these options might not be friendly to your budget or health.



### How To Eat Healthy on a Budget

#### Step 1: Come up with a plan

First, come up with a monthly budget for groceries, possibly between 10-15% of your monthly budget. You can then break that down per week. Second, come up with a meal plan and prioritize what items are most important to your weekly consumption. Lastly, evaluate what stores you will be shopping at for these items.

#### Step 2: Be smart about your shopping

Though it may seem obvious, buy the cheaper generic brands for items, such as soups, dips, baking supplies, jams, condiments, sauces, frozen and canned vegetables, nuts, cheese, milk and more. Then think whole foods. These are less processed foods sold in larger quantities that could offer more savings per serving. Try to buy fruits and vegetables that are in season, but if you are looking out of season, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables are cheaper and may last longer. Finally, have a variety of superfood staples on hand. Items such as canned beans, frozen vegetables, garlic and onions, eggs, sweet potatoes, whole grain pastas, and canned meats can be used to create a quick and healthy meal.

#### Step 3: Prepare these healthy meals

Your meals do not have to be complex. Stick to the basics and avoid purchasing items for a single recipe you know you won't reuse. Meat can be expensive, so substitute meat with other protein sources such as beans, veggies, or eggs. You can also opt for cheaper and tougher meat cuts and cook them longer, at a lower temperature in a slow cooker. Make your meals stretch further by adding nutritious staples such as rice, pasta or frozen vegetables to some of your favorite dishes. Remember, if you double your recipes, you can always freeze the other half and reheat it for a meal later on.

Information from [everydollar.com](http://everydollar.com).



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### Grocery Budgeting Tips

- Look for sale/mark down items and be willing to include these items in your meal plan.
- Don't overlook end-caps in grocery stores. Vendors and stores love these areas for sales and deals.
- Check the frozen section for deals (veggies, breaded chicken, etc.). Easy to portion and keep.
- Shop towards the beginning or end of the day to get clearance items.
- Look up and down in the aisle. Usually the most expensive things are at eye level.
- Typically a high protein breakfast keeps you feeling fuller throughout the morning (eggs, meat, peanut butter, etc.) This may reduce your lunchtime consumption.
- Cereal is pricey. Try bulk or generic cereals/grains (oatmeal/granola). Add fresh or dried fruit (raisins, etc.).
- Buy bulk chips, vegetables, etc. and pack them yourself with reusable plastic bags.
- Lunch on-the-go and no refrigeration? Fruit, protein bars, peanut/soy butter or spreads will work.
- Protein? Canned meats and fish are good sources of protein and do not need refrigeration if consumed immediately after opening. Rice and beans are another, cheaper alternative.
- Think two dinners and a lunch when deciding what to prepare– stretch your dollar and save time. Meals built around a slow cooker or larger cuts of meat (roast) and casseroles can easily be refrigerated, reheated, frozen or morphed into other menu ideas (tacos). Slow cookers are great for many reasons – especially saving time in the kitchen. With most slow cooker recipes, ingredients are prepped and thrown into the pot. That's it! Ready in 8 – 10 hours when you get home.

### HELPFUL RESOURCES

#### Recipes

BudgetBytes.com  
Crockpot-Cooking.com  
CookingLight.com  
AllRecipes.com  
Pinterest.com  
Buzzfeed.com

#### Coupons/Cashback

Coupons.com  
Flipp.com  
Checkout51.com  
Ibotta App  
Cent.ly  
Various grocery store apps

#### Restaurant Discounts

PocketPoints App  
Hooked App  
TasteBud App  
Groupon.com  
RetailMeNot.com  
Restaurant rewards programs