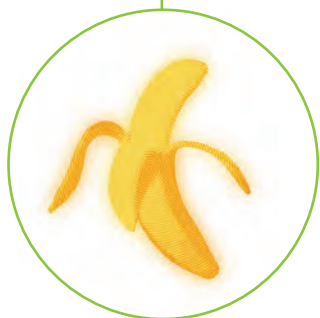
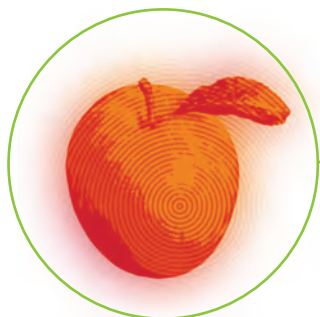


30 WAYS in 30 DAYS

to Stretch Your Fruit & Vegetable Budget



- 1** Calculate an appropriate Healthy Food Budget for your family, based on USDA's **Low-Cost Food Plan**. This easy-to-use calculator, offered by Iowa State University Extension, helps to create a budget for what is a reasonable amount to spend to feed your family healthy meals. (www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/fooddollar/).
- 2** Cook enough for several meals and freeze leftovers. Place enough food for 1-2 meals in each container.
- 3** Create a **meal plan** for the week that uses similar fruits and vegetables, prepared in different ways. Make the most out of the produce that you buy.
- 4** Buy fruits and vegetables in season at farmers' markets or at your local grocery store.
- 5** Grow your own vegetables. Invest a little in seeds, and get a lot of vegetables in return. Try indoor pots or greenhouse growing for the cooler months. Visit www.cdc.gov/Features/GrowingVegetables/ for more information.
- 6** Mix it yourself. 100% juice from frozen concentrate is often less expensive per serving than pre-bottled juice.
- 7** Minimize waste, by buying only the amounts your family will eat.
- 8** Learn basic food math. Taking the time to make a food budget before grocery trips can make food buying decisions easier. Simple food math can help you decide if the watermelon or the bunch of grapes is a better buy.
- 9** Enjoy the comforts of home more often. Eating at restaurants can increase the amount you spend on food. Include fruits and vegetables in quick, simple meals that you prepare at home. Visit http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/index.php?mode=pick_search&theme=2&cost_serving_num=&cost_recipe_num=&submit=Search for more information.
- 10** Be creative! To get the most out of your purchase, enjoy your fruits and vegetables in different ways. For example, you can use fruits for dessert. Try baking apples or poaching pears with some cinnamon. Visit <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnparecipe/RecipeSearch.aspx> and www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page_id=10 for more information.

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- 11** **Homemade soup** is a healthy and tasty way to use vegetables. Make a big batch and freeze leftovers in small lunch-size containers.
- 12** **Look for sales and deals** on fruits & vegetables at the grocery store or through coupons.
- 13** **Cut your fruits and vegetables at home.** Pre-cut produce can cost much more than whole fruits and vegetables.
- 14** **Don't shop hungry.** Eat a healthy snack, such as an apple, before going to the grocery store so that you stick to your budget and avoid spending money set aside for fruit and vegetables on less healthy temptations.
- 15** **Maximize your time and money.** Cut coupons for foods, such as fruits and vegetables, only on your grocery list.
- 16** **Canned fruits and vegetables** will last a long time and can be a healthy addition to a variety of meals. Choose canned vegetables that have no added salt and fruit that is canned in 100% fruit juice.
- 17** **Frozen fruit** and vegetables store well in the freezer until you're ready to add them to a meal.
- 18** **Pick your own at local farms.** Late summer and early fall is a great time to pick your own fruits and vegetables. This can be a fun and less expensive way to buy in bulk and freeze, can, or dry for later.
- 19** **Dried fruit** lasts for a long time, but can be expensive. Buy in bulk with friends and share the cost.
- 20** **Store-brands** can be a great budget choice for many forms of fruits and vegetables.
- 21** **WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) and Senior Farmers Market coupons** can be used by WIC participants and older adults to purchase locally-grown, delicious fruits and vegetables.
- 22** **When trying new fruits and vegetables, buy in small amounts.** Taste test before you change your grocery list.
- 23** **Keep it simple.** Buy dried beans, peas, and lentils in their raw or uncooked form instead of the processed and packaged versions which cost more.
- 24** **Avoid buying single servings.** Purchasing many small packages of produce is often more expensive than buying in larger amounts.
- 25** **Shop at discount grocery stores** for good deals on fruits and vegetables, especially canned items.
- 26** **Shop at large grocery stores** instead of small convenience stores when possible. There is more choice and the produce is often less expensive at larger stores.
- 27** **To make many fresh fruits and vegetables last longer,** store them in the refrigerator or freezer soon after getting home from your shopping trip. Many cookbooks offer specific freezing instructions.
- 28** **Clearly label your foods** in the freezer and refrigerator with the contents and date to stay within a safe time frame.
- 29** **Get creative with your leftover fruits and vegetables.** Make salsa from your tomatoes and smoothies from your fruits! Visit www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov to learn how.
- 30** **Buy frozen fruits and vegetables in large bags** to stretch your budget (e.g., green beans and blueberries). Avoid those with added sugar, salt, or sauce.

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