



DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

August / September

Calculating the Cost of Convenience

Do you make your grocery store purchases based on taste, convenience, cost or nutrition? You probably consider all of these factors! This issue of *Dining on a Dime* compares the cost of some popular family foods. Prices of ready-made packaged products and their homemade counterparts are shown below. The column on the right shows how much you would save on four servings of the better buy. Read on — the results may surprise you!



Food Item	Cost for one packaged serving	Cost for one homemade serving	Which is the better buy?	How much would you save on 4 servings?
Beef Vegetable Stir Fry (3 servings)	\$1.87	\$0.97	Homemade	\$3.60
Cheese & Veggies Pizza (5 servings)	\$1.00	\$0.59	Homemade	\$1.64
Raw Vegetables Tray (5 servings)	\$1.12	\$0.57	Homemade	\$2.20
Muffins (4 servings)	\$0.97	\$0.20	Homemade	\$3.08
Lasagna (4 servings)	\$1.65	\$0.68	Homemade	\$3.88
Beef Chili (2 servings)	\$0.79	\$0.89	Canned	\$0.40
Chicken Enchilada (6 servings)	\$1.10	\$0.96	Homemade	\$0.56
Potato Salad (4 servings)	\$0.77	\$0.32	Homemade	\$1.80

Sources (Accessed 7/25/2014): Prices of packaged foods based on those at www.shop.safeway.com and prices of similar homemade recipes based on those at <http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov>

Don't Let the Good Go Bad



Nobody likes to find rotten fruits or vegetables in their refrigerator. Enjoy the tastes of the season by keeping your purchases fresh. Buy the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables that you and your family can eat within the storage limits shown in the table below. Fresh foods from a garden or farmers market generally will keep longer than items purchased at a grocery store. Read on for more tips to help you get the longest storage time for your fresh fruits and vegetables.

Avoid Excess Wetness and Keep Them Cool

- Do not store fruits or vegetables that show signs of spoilage.
- Wait to wash fruits and vegetables until just before using them.
- Refrigerate all cut or peeled fruits and vegetables immediately.
- Most refrigerated whole fruits and vegetables last longest when they're stored in plastic bags with six to eight small holes poked in each bag. The plastic holds in moisture and the holes let in some oxygen. Line the inside of the plastic bag with dry paper towels to keep excess moisture from spoiling the fresh produce.
- Store apricots, berries, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cherries, corn, grapes, green beans, leafy greens, herbs, mushrooms, radishes and summer squash in a crisper drawer, which is the coldest section of the refrigerator.
- Uncut apples, bananas, melons, nectarines, peaches, pears and tomatoes keep best if left to ripen on a counter before being refrigerated. Once ripe, eat them or store these foods in the refrigerator crisper drawer for optimal freshness.
- Store dry onions, garlic, oranges and other citrus fruits, and potatoes in mesh bags in a dry cool dark place, not in the refrigerator, for one to two weeks.



Fruit/ Vegetable	Refrigerated Storage Time	Fruit/ Vegetable	Refrigerated Storage Time	Fruit/ Vegetable	Refrigerated Storage Time
Apples.....	1 month	Fresh herbs	2-3 days	Nectarines.....	5 days
Beets.....	2 weeks	Grapes.....	3-5 days	Peaches.....	5 days
Berries.....	2-3 days	Green onions....	3-5 days	Pears.....	5 days
Broccoli.....	3-5 days	Head lettuce.....	5-7 days	Radishes.....	1-2 weeks
Carrots.....	2 weeks	Leafy greens.....	1-2 days	Tomatoes.....	2-3 days
Corn.....	1-2 days	Melons, cut.....	3-4 days	Turnips.....	1-2 weeks

Sources (Accessed 7/25/2014): Adapted from: 1. A Scott, Texas Cooperative Extension, [Safe Storage of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables](http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/87212/pdf_1902.pdf), http://repository.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/87212/pdf_1902.pdf and 2. L Nwadike, K-State Research and Extension, [Storing Fresh Produce](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/foodsafety/doc17168.ashx), www.ksre.ksu.edu/foodsafety/doc17168.ashx

You may view previous newsletters at www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=184 This issue is an updated revision of the "Dining on a Dime Aug 2006" newsletter. Contents of this publication may be reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Erin Henry and Mary Meck Higgins, "Dining on a Dime," August 2014.

Organized Shopping Lists Save Time, Money

Are you looking for an easy way to save \$1,000 or more a year? Use an organized shopping list! Why? The average shopper spends 40 percent more on impulse purchases when shopping without a list. If you spend \$50 each week at the grocery store, there's a good chance that \$20 of those purchases are unplanned. That adds up! You're also likely to spend 50 cents more for every minute you are at the grocery store beyond the first 30 minutes. In this case, time is money! Save your time *and* your money by using an organized shopping list.



How Can You Get a “Master” Shopping List? It’s easy!

- The easiest way is to use the major food groups (vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy products and protein) and an “other foods” as the headings on your master shopping list.
- A better way is to go to your favorite grocery store with a blank piece of paper. Walk along all of the aisles and record general headings that describe your typical purchases, using the informational signs located in each aisle as a guideline. Some headings that you might include are: fresh fruits and vegetables, baking items, rice and pasta, canned and boxed foods, breakfast foods, beverages, household supplies, bakery products, refrigerated foods and frozen foods.
- Write any food items that you purchase every week (for example, bread and milk) under the proper heading on your master list. Photocopy the master list, or print it from a computer, for use as a weekly shopping list.
- Keep your weekly shopping list in a central location. Ask family members to add to it as needed, to avoid running out of items and return trips to the store.

Shopping List	
<u>Fresh fruits & vgs</u> apples bananas Watermelon cabbage onions	<u>Baking items</u> flour cinnamon nuts
<u>Rice & pasta</u> macaroni brown rice	<u>Canned / Boxed</u> tomato sauce peanut butter green beans
<u>Breakfast foods</u> oatmeal	<u>Beverages</u> tea
<u>Household supplies</u> bleach paper towels	<u>Bakery products</u> Bread tortillas
<u>Refrigerated foods</u> Milk chicken	<u>Frozen foods</u> Orange juice Corn Pizza

Plan on Sales

- Check out the weekly grocery ads to see what items are on sale, especially the meat and produce sales. Base your weekly menu around these special deals. For example, if the grocery store is selling tuna at a lower-than-usual price, you might decide to serve tuna casserole and tuna salad sandwiches that week.
- Check your kitchen to make sure you have the rest of the ingredients you need to complete the recipe, and add any necessary items to your list.

In & Out Quickly

- Plan to shop during the least busy times. Weekdays or early morning tend to be less crowded, which lets you get in and out of the store quickly.

Source (Accessed 7/25/2014): Adapted from: A Henneman, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension in Lancaster County, Use Grocery List to Save Time, Eat Healthier, <http://food.unl.edu/fnh/grocery-list>

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

Stuffed Zucchini (Makes 4 servings, 1/2 zucchini each)

Ingredients

2 fresh medium zucchini, halved lengthwise
2 teaspoons cooking oil
1/2 medium onion, chopped
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 cup chopped tomatoes, fresh OR canned without salt
3/4 cup cheese, shredded part-skim mozzarella OR feta

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 475 degrees F. **2.** Using a tablespoon, scoop out zucchini centers, forming "boats" with 1/4 inch borders. Coarsely chop the zucchini centers. Set aside.
3. Place boats on a baking sheet, cut sides down. Bake for 15 minutes. **4.** Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add onion and pepper. Cook for 5 minutes. Add chopped zucchini. Cook for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool for 5 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and cheese. **5.** Turn zucchini boats cut sides up. Fill with the mixture. Bake for 20 minutes. **6.** Serve hot. **7.** Cover and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours. **Nutrition Facts** per serving: 110 calories, 7g fat, 2.5g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 7g carbohydrates, 7g protein, 10mg cholesterol, 150mg sodium and 2g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 15% vitamin A, 40% vitamin C, 20% calcium, 4% iron.



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