

KIN's Tips & Tricks

Kids in Nutrition is here to teach you how to keep grocery shopping **HEALTHY, SIMPLE, ACCESSIBLE**, and most importantly, **AFFORDABLE!**

A guide to eating **HEALTHY** and **SUSTAINABLE** foods on a **BUDGET**.

Introduction

Eating healthy, nutritious foods doesn't have to break your bank. In fact, eating healthy, less processed foods can be cheaper if done correctly! If you follow KIN's list of tips and tricks, it can help you:

~Plan your meals~
~Make smart choices on your grocery runs~
~Cook at home~

Junk food can **DOUBLE** the expense of grocery shopping. In addition, poor health can come with medical costs, pricey prescription drugs, and missing work availability **AND** opportunities. Eating healthy doesn't have to be expensive. Even if it were, it would still be worth it for your future. You can't put a price on good health.

The following information is an interpretation of an article written by Adda Bjarnadottir, MS, LN, RDN, solely for educational purposes.

www.healthline.com/nutrition/19-ways-to-eat-healthy-on-a-budget. Accessed 12/14/2020.

Plan Your Meals

Takeaway: Plan your meals for the week and make a grocery list.

Plan your meals for the week and make a grocery list (or bi-weekly, or even monthly if you don't have easy or regular access to a grocery store). I know meal planning sounds tedious and like a massive chore, but trust me, it's easier than it seems **AND** you can reuse the same list once it's done. If you have a phone, it can be a good idea to write your list there. That way you have no excuse to forget your list at home!

Don't purchase things you already have enough of, so check what you have at home while you are writing your shopping list. Also, purchase what you know you will use; food waste is a big nono for the environment **AND** your wallet!

Stick to Your List

Takeaway: Stick to your list. Don't get tempted by junk food! Healthy food = perimeter. Junk Food = middle isles.

Once you've planned your meals and made your grocery list, stick to it. Don't get tempted by junk food! We all know that this is easier said than done. It's easy to get distracted, and adding junk food items can really add up and make your grocery bill much more than it needs to be.



Fun fact! Grocery stores are generally all designed the same way. These are some things to notice when shopping that will not only make it faster and easier to finish the task, but also less tempting to deviate from the list!

Shop the perimeter of the store first — this where the healthy whole foods are generally located. The middle of the store contains the processed and unhealthy foods. The most expensive items are usually placed at eye level, so if you do decide to enter the middle aisles of tempting doom, your wallet will appreciate looking at the top and bottom of the shelves.

Avoid Junk Food

Takeaway: By skipping the processed and unhealthy junk foods, you can spend more of your budget on higher quality, healthy foods. Junk foods not only provide little to no nutritional value, but they are actually overall more expensive than buying healthy foods.

Stop buying junk food! It is expensive and packed with unhealthy ingredients. It also offers little or no nutritional value. By skipping the processed and unhealthy foods, you can spend more of your budget on higher quality, healthy foods.

A good way to identify what counts as a junk food: (1) As previously mentioned, it is located in the center aisles of the grocery store; (2) it is packed in a box or a bag with a long list of ingredients you've probably never heard of. A general rule of thumb — the shorter the list of ingredients, the healthier it is (with exceptions, of course).

Allowing junk foods into your grocery cart can DOUBLE your shopping expenses. It may not seem like it, but junk foods are more expensive than healthy, whole foods. It is easy to be tricked by the vibrant colors, the packaging size, and the tastiness. But why spend a couple dollars on a bag of chips that harm your health when you can buy a whole bag of healthy brown rice that can last you an entire week for the same price?

Cook at Home

Takeaway: Cooking at home is MUCH cheaper than eating out! Yes, this includes fast food!

Cooking at home is MUCH cheaper than eating out! Yes, this includes fast food! The values below show just how much cheaper it is to cook up healthy foods at home (prices indicate serving an average family of 4):

\$27.89 — Average McDonald's meal

\$13.78 — Home-cooked chicken, potatoes, toast, and salad

\$9.26 — Home-cooked beans, rice, onions, bell peppers

You also don't have to cook 1 meal at a time! Meal prep can be as simple as cooking up a massive pot of brown rice for an entire week!



By cooking yourself, you also gain the benefit of knowing exactly what is in your food. Most restaurants and fast food places pack sodium, sugar, and unhealthy fats into their food. The ingredients they use are also low quality and lack proper amounts of fruits & veggies. Statistics also show that you are more likely to overeat when you are eating out.

Sources:

https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2011/09/24/opinion/sunday/20110925_BITTMAN_MARS_Hgph.html?ref=sunday. Accessed 12/14/2020.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5453830/>. Accessed 1/10/2021.

Freeze your Perishables

***Takeaway:** Frozen vegetables, fruits, and even meats are just as nutritious as their fresh counterparts. Freezing food also prevents your time-sensitive foods from rotting. No one likes to see their money go to waste!*

Freeze your veggies! This way you can buy a ton of food in one trip that can last for 2-4 weeks! Buying foods in bulk and freezing them can decrease the need to go to the grocery store often, especially if you don't have easy access to one. Prep the meals on your days off or in your free time; this takes max 1-2 hours and will save you from stressing for the rest of the week. Utilizing your freezer also prevents food waste and money lost!

Frozen fruits, berries and vegetables are usually just as nutritious as their fresh counterparts. They are available all year round and are often sold in large, more cost-effective bags.

Organized Fridge/Freezer

***Takeaway:** By having a clean and organized refrigerator and freezer, you can prevent foods from rotting and you have more storage space. This means fewer trips to the grocery store!*

Keep your refrigerator clean and organized! This way, you know what you have and can avoid letting items rot in the back of the fridge. This is also important because more freezer and fridge space means more room to store your food and fewer grocery trips!

Use Leftovers

***Takeaway:** Leftovers can be used for future meals; there's no need to throw food away or let food go bad!*

Leftovers are a great way to prepare lunches. Leftovers can be used to make delicious stews, soups, stir-fries, salads, and burritos. These types of foods are especially great for those on a budget without sacrificing the quality or tastiness of your meals.

Remember: you can always freeze your leftovers to keep them fresh if you want to save them for another day. There is no good excuse to let foods go bad!

Buy Whole Foods



Takeaway: *Buying whole foods is both healthier and cheaper than purchasing their processed counterparts.*

Whole foods are generally less expensive than their processed counterparts. You can also buy them in larger quantities and save a significant amount of money in the long run.

For example, dry/uncooked beans are cheaper than buying beans by the can. Whole grains, like brown rice and oats, are also cheaper per serving (and not to mention healthier) than most processed cereals.

Eat Less Meat

Takeaway: *Replace expensive meat cuts with equally nutritious and protein-dense alternatives!*

Eating less meat can be a good way to save money. Try having one or two days per week where you make your meals using only non-meat protein sources, such as legumes, seeds, eggs, or canned fish. These are all very cheap, nutritious, and easy to prepare. Most of them also have a long shelf life and are less likely to spoil before you eat them.

In addition to reducing your grocery costs, eating less meat, and replacing it with more plant-based proteins is healthy and environmentally sustainable. Plant-based proteins are associated with numerous health benefits, including reduced risk of cardiovascular disease (heart disease). These proteins are also planet-friendly and have shown reduced greenhouse gas emissions when compared with animal protein manufacture.

Sources:

<https://ourworldindata.org/environmental-impacts-of-food#the-carbon-footprint-of-eu-diets-where-do-emissions-come-from>. Accessed 1/10/2021

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/substituting-healthy-plant-proteins-for-red-meat-lowers-risk-for-heart-disease/>. Accessed 1/10/2021

Seasonal Produce

Takeaway: *Produce that is in season is generally less expensive than out-of-season produce. It is also more environmentally sustainable.*

Local produce that is in season is generally cheaper than produce that is out of season. In-season produce is usually at its peak in both nutrients and flavor. Produce that is not in season has often been transported halfway around the world to get to your store, which is not good for either the environment or your budget. Also, buy produce by the bag if you can. It is generally cheaper than buying by the piece.

Don't be afraid to buy more fresh produce than you need for the week; your freezer is your safety net to avoid wasting food AND money. Frozen produce is an easy way to limit your grocery trips and a fast way to add high-quality nutrients to your meals.

Buy in Bulk



***Takeaway:** If you have the means to, buying in bulk can save you A LOT of money in the long-term.*

A general rule of thumb: buying foods in bulk can save you a lot of money. Grains, such as brown rice, millet, barley, and oats, are all available in bulk. They also stay good for a very long time if you store them in airtight containers. This is also true for great plant-protein sources such as beans, lentils, and nuts. These are all highly nutritious AND inexpensive staple foods that can be easily incorporated into healthy meals.

Purchasing healthy foods in bulk will not only make your wallet happy, but it can also encourage and help you consistently practice healthier eating.

Generic Brands

***Takeaway:** Generic brands are generally less expensive than and of similar quality to the national brands.*

Most stores offer generic brands for many products. These are usually the same quality as the more expensive nationally known brands (but double check by reading and comparing the list of ingredients).

Eat Before You Shop

***Takeaway:** Eating before you go to the grocery store can help curb the temptation of purchasing junk food.*

Avoid grocery shopping while you are hungry! Hunger can lead to cravings which leads to impulsive buying. If you're hungry, have a snack before you go shopping.

Sale & Coupons

***Takeaway:** Stock up on your healthy staple products when you see a coupon or they are on sale.*

If you have favorite products or staples that you use a lot, stock up on them when they're on sale. Double check that they won't expire in the meantime and don't get tempted by junk foods items that are on sale!

In addition, keep an eye out for useful coupons! Just make sure to avoid the ones that involve processed and unhealthy foods. There's no health benefit in spending your budget on foods that offer little to no nutritional value, so don't be tempted by the discount.

Stay Open-minded

***Takeaway:** Some healthy foods may look unfamiliar to you, but it is important to try new, healthy foods, especially when they are less expensive than your traditional go-tos.*



There are a lot of foods available that are both inexpensive and healthy. By making some adjustments and using ingredients that you may not be used to, you can prepare many delicious and inexpensive meals. Try increasing your use of eggs, beans, lentils, seeds, frozen fruits and vegetables, canned fish, and whole grains. These all taste great, are cheap (especially in bulk), and are very nutritious.

Healthy eating can be challenging and new at first, so it is important to stay open-minded about trying new foods you've never seen or heard of before.

