

Healthy Eating on a Budget

The Three P's of Healthy Eating on a Budget

1. **PLAN:** Check your local grocery store flyers to see what is on sale this week. Then go through your fridge and pantry to see what you already have. Make a plan for meals and snacks to get you through the week, staying focused on what you already have and what is on sale at the grocery store. Good meal options that will stretch your budget include stir-frys, casseroles and stews. Then prepare your grocery list according to a pre-determined budget that is manageable for your household and fill in the gaps of missing ingredients for your weekly meal plan.
2. **PURCHASE:** Buy groceries after you've eaten and when you are not in a rush. Stick to the list and stay out of the aisles that don't contain items on your list. Buy store brands, if cheaper. Choose in-season fresh fruits and vegetables and only what you can consume before it spoils. Frozen and canned (low-sodium) vegetables are a good option as well. Avoid single serving items as the cost is usually higher than buying the item in bulk and portioning it out yourself.
3. **PREPARE:** Do most of your eating at home so that you know exactly how it was prepared, what was in it and to keep your food budget costs down. Double or triple up on recipes and freeze meal-sized portions (or individual sized portions) for later. Try a few meatless meals by substituting beans into the meal in place of meat or try a "no-cook" meal, like a salad. Incorporate leftovers into subsequent meals. Use the internet to your advantage, there are many great websites out there devoted to healthy eating on a budget, including great recipes.



Focus on Low Cost Proteins

Generally, the most expensive part of your grocery budget is on the portion spent on meat. Protein is an extremely important part of eating healthy but there are other great ways to get protein into your diet without blowing your budget on steak and salmon! Here are some great, cost-effective protein options:

- Eggs
- Low-Fat cottage cheese
- Beans & Lentils
- Nuts & Seeds
- Chicken pieces (thighs, legs) or whole chicken
- Plain frozen fish fillets (tilapia, haddock, sole)
- Canned fish (salmon, tuna, sardines)
- Stewing meat
- Outside, inside or eye of round steak

Lower priced meats can be less tender because they are lower in fat. Try these ways to make them more tender:

- Marinate meat overnight in the fridge
- Pound the meat with mallet before cooking
- Cook meat slowly (Crock-Pots are great!) for a few hours in water, broth or tomato juice

Source: www.choosemyplate.gov, www.eatrightontario.ca

Budget Friendly Recipe: Buffalo Chicken Thighs

This is a great recipe using budget-friendly, bone-in chicken thighs as the centerpiece. Get the great taste of buffalo wings at under 500 calories per serving and much lower in fat than the kind you get at your favourite take-out place. To round out the meal (and keep with the theme), serve cut up celery and carrots on the side with light ranch dressing!

Ingredients

6 tbsp all-purpose flour
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp garlic powder
¼ tsp ground red pepper
8 bone-in chicken thighs, skin removed
1 tbsp olive oil, divided
3 tbsp hot sauce
1 tbsp butter



Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Combine first 4 ingredients into a heavy-duty Ziploc bag & seal. Shake to blend. Add half of chicken to the bag; seal. Shake to coat. Remove chicken from bag, shaking to remove excess flour mixture. Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 ½ tbsp oil to the pan, swirl to coat. Add flour-coated chicken to pan, sauté 4 minutes on each side or until browned. Transfer browned chicken to a jelly-roll pan (or large cookie sheet lined with tinfoil). Repeat procedure with remaining chicken pieces. Discard remaining flour mixture. Bake chicken at 375°F for 8 minutes, or until done.
3. Combine hot sauce and butter in a microwave-safe dish; microwave at HIGH for 30 seconds or until butter melts, stirring to blend. Place chicken in a shallow dish; drizzle with butter sauce. Toss to coat. Serves 4 (2 thighs each).

Great Websites for Eating Healthy on a Budget!

www.poorgirleatswell.com

eatingrichly.com

www.eatingwell.com/healthy_cooking/budget_cooking

cheaphealthygood.blogspot.ca

www.hungryhealthyhappy.com

greenlitebites.com

Nutritional Info (per serving)

318 calories
17.8g fat
5.5g saturated fat
28.4g protein
9.2g carbohydrates
0.4g fibre
106mg cholesterol
2.1mg iron
474mg sodium
17mg calcium



Source: www.myrecipes.com