



Saving Food Dollars and Finding the Best Buys

Need help saving money on food? Planning can make a difference. Here is how you can save money on food.

Find out how much you are now spending on food:

- Save all of your family food receipts for one month:
 - Grocery Store
 - Convenience Store
 - Fast Food
 - Restaurant
 - Vending Machine (make your own receipt)
- At the end of the month, add up all of the receipts.
- How much money did you spend on food for your family? \$ _____

Make a plan before shopping:

- Read ads and flyers to find out what is on sale.
- Make a menu for the week:
 - Keep in mind what is on sale that week.
 - Plan for both meals and snacks—crunchy veggies and fruits are great snack foods.
 - Plan for leftovers.
 - Pack your own lunch and eat out less often.
- Make a shopping list based on the menu.

Follow your plan while shopping:

- Buy only the items listed on the shopping list:
 - Stay away from displays at the end of aisles.
 - Avoid wandering the store.
 - Use in-store specials if the item is on your list.
- Compare prices. Often store brands are cheaper.
- Use coupons only if using it gives the best price.
- Buying a large bag or box of snack foods and bagging it your self can save money.

I will try to:

- Make a shopping list, listing items from the same area of the store together.
- Know the regular prices of items I usually buy.
- Only use coupons for products my family will use.
- Take advantage of sales.
- Shop when I am not hungry.
- Get to know my grocery store layout for fast shopping.
- Buy only what is on my list in the amount I need and can store easily.
- Compare the prices:
 - of foods in different forms – fresh, frozen and canned.
 - of national and store brands.
- Use unit pricing when I can.
- Switch to a similar food if it costs less. For example, buy green beans instead of corn to use in a casserole if green beans cost less.
- Make sure that the cashier rings in the correct price at the checkout.
- Read over the sales receipt to make sure it is correct. Were you accidentally charge for two packages of spinach when you only purchased one?
- Call The University of Maine Cooperative Extension for free help with planning & shopping.

Cumberland County	1-800-287-1471
Hancock County	1-800-287-1479
Waldo County	1-800-287-1426
Washington County	1-800-287-1542

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