

Real Food on a Budget...from The Mayo Clinic Diet

If you think you can't afford healthy foods, think again.



Are you concerned with the cost of your new good-for-you food choices? Some healthy real foods — such as fresh produce and fish — can be expensive. But your overall grocery bill may actually be lower because you're eating less of other costly foods, namely all those pricey processed offerings: chips, cookies and ice cream. Plus, you may find that you're eating more meals at home and fewer in restaurants, which can also save money.

Here are some ideas for sticking to your grocery budget while eating healthy foods:

- Plan ahead. With smart planning, you can obtain your recommend daily servings of fruits and vegetables at a very limited price. Shop smart at your grocery store and watch for specials.
- Buy grains such as oatmeal and brown rice in bulk. Food co-ops are often good at offering foods in bulk.
- Visit farmers markets for summertime deals. You can usually pick up the freshest produce at the lowest prices.
- Consider growing some of your own produce. It's not as hard as you think. If you don't have room for a garden, you can grow items such as tomatoes and peppers in outdoor pots.
- Eat simple meals sometimes. A peanut-butter sandwich made with whole-wheat bread or a bowl of soup and a few pieces of fruit don't cost much.

And remember, your health is worth the investment. Making good choices now will make your life easier later — and it may just save you money down the road.