

At the store:

- Don't shop when you're hungry! Eat before you shop to avoid buying unwanted snacks.
- Grocers stock the most expensive items at eye level. Avoid falling for marketing ploys! Check out the surrounding shelves, where you'll find more affordable brands.
- Brand names can cost 35-45% more than store brands. Many store brands offer similar quality and, in some cases, are produced at the same facilities but packaged with a different label.
- When ordering groceries online, you tend to buy only what you need.
- Be careful with sales and discounts. You can go broke saving money!
- Avoid buying pre-cut and packaged foods. They often cost twice as much.
- Keep an eye on unit prices and compare foods to find the best deal.

**At the  
Checkout  
Line**

- Survey your cart. What can you leave behind?
- Mentally calculate how much your groceries will cost. Does the total meet your budget?
- Always bring an extra reusable shopping bag. It is likely that you will buy a little more than you planned, and you don't need to spend extra money on a bag when you are already well-stocked.

**Shopping  
for Deals**

- Take advantage of loyalty points programs.
- Look for in-store and online coupons. Visit the websites of the brands you purchase most often to download coupons.
- Find out when discounts on bakery products, meat and fish are applied at your grocery store.

Check out these resources for deals and coupons!

- On Instagram: [Living on a Loonie](#), Kat Cassidy
- On Instagram: [Coupon Cutie Canada](#), [www.couponcutie.ca](http://www.couponcutie.ca)
- [Checkout 51](#)

## Creating a Food Budget

Start by tracking your grocery-shopping habits:

1. Add up your receipts to determine how much you're spending on food per month and per week. *The monthly total is your starting point.*
2. Separate your spending by category (meat, produce, dairy, non-perishables, treats, etc.) to identify where money is being prioritized or wasted.
3. Determine how much money you can spend on food every week and month.

Repeat this process with restaurant receipts (including coffee, snacks, and alcohol).

## Create a Weekly Menu and Grocery List

- Take inventory of what you already have.
- Include at least 1 meatless meal each week.
- Choose 2-3 themes (Meatless Monday, Taco Tuesday, Slow Cooker Saturday, etc.).
- For ideas and inspiration, keep a running list of your favourite meals.
- Focus on dinners and make extra for the lunches.
- As you prepare your weekly menu, make your grocery list.
- Printable menu-planning templates can be found on [Pinterest](#) or try a meal planning app like [Mealime](#).

The average household wastes about 32% of the food it buys, costing approximately \$1,866 annually. The most wasted foods are fresh produce, dairy products, bread, and meat.

- Rotate the ingredients in your fridge and pantry. Move older items to the front.
- Use overripe vegetables to make stock or broth, pasta sauce, or pickled vegetables.
- Use leftover vegetables to make a breakfast omelette or stir-fry for dinner.
- Rinse berries with vinegar.

**Storing Produce  
to Prevent  
Spoilage**

- Separate fruits and vegetables in your refrigerator-crisper drawers:
- Place fruit that emit ethylene and rot in one crisper drawer: Apples, pears, strawberries, tomatoes, mangos, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, apricots, peaches, plums, and figs.
  - Place ethylene-sensitive produce in the other crisper drawer: Asparagus, cucumbers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, herbs, carrots, and leafy greens.
  - Store avocados, unripe bananas, peaches, pears, plums, tomatoes and nectarines in a bowl on your counter.
  - Store garlic, potatoes, winter squash and onions in a dark, dry cupboard.

Cutting back on expensive meat and dairy products will save you money. These foods are more economical sources of protein than meat.

	<b>Cost per Serving</b>	<b>Protein</b>
Whey Protein	\$0.40 per serving	25 g per 1 scoop
Sardines	\$2-3 per can	23 g per 1 can
Cottage Cheese	\$4-5 per container	23 g per 1 cup
Canned Tuna	\$2-4 per can	20 g per 3 oz (1/2 can)
Edamame	\$4-5.50	20 g per 1 cup
Lentils	\$3 per 900 g bag	18 g per 1 cup (cooked)
Greek Yogurt (plain)	\$5-8 per container	17 g per 8 oz
Black Beans	\$1-2 per can	15 g per 1 cup
Peanut Butter (natural)	\$4-5 per 454 g jar	8 g per 2 tbsp.
Eggs	\$4-6 per dozen	6 g per 1 egg
Sunflower Seeds	\$1-1.50 per 100 g	6 g per 1 oz

### Stretch Out Meat with Fillers:

- When a recipe calls for ground meat, reduce the amount (up to half) and swap in a similar amount of beans, lentils, mushrooms, quinoa, or vegetables. For every pound of raw meat, add one cup of cooked filler.

### Recipes to try:

- Tuna sandwich: canned tuna + chickpeas
- Burger: ground meat + black beans
- Meat sauce (for pasta): ground meat + lentils
- Meatloaf: ground meat + lentils
- Stuffed peppers: ground meat + rice or quinoa
- Chicken lettuce wraps: shredded or ground chicken + white beans and cauliflower or cabbage
- Lamb gyros: ground lamb + white beans

### Grow Your Own:

- Grow herbs, green onions, and microgreens in a sunny window, wall planter or vertical planter.
- Leafy greens, root and bulb vegetables can be grown from leftover scraps.

### Make Your Own Cheese:

- Making cheese is easier than you think! Check out 4 simple recipes [here](#).

**Batch Cooking**

Cooking in large batches saves money and time. Prepare large batches of these foods, containerize, and refrigerate or freeze until they're needed:

<b>Cook:</b>	<b>Use in:</b>
Bolognese or meat sauce (mixed with a filler, such as lentils)	Chili, spaghetti, pasta, chili dogs
Ground beef or turkey (mixed with a filler)	Tacos, pizza, casseroles
Dried beans	Refried beans, chili, tacos, soups, stews
Hard boiled eggs (boil an entire carton to eat throughout the week)	Breakfast, egg salad sandwiches, salads
Roasted vegetables (peppers, onions)	Salads, omelettes, sauces, stir-fries, pizza
Roasted tomatoes (drizzle tomatoes with a little olive oil and roast)	Pasta, sauces, omelettes, salads
Shredded chicken	Pasta, wraps, salads, nachos
Pork shoulder	Sandwiches, pasta, wraps, stir-fries



<b>Foods to Freeze</b>	<b>Freeze:</b>	<b>Use in/as:</b>
	Berries	Baked goods, smoothies, yogurt
	Meatballs	Spaghetti, sandwiches, pizzas
	Baked goods (muffins, cookies, breads)	Snacks, breakfasts, desserts
	Shredded cheese	Casseroles, quesadillas, nachos
	Nuts, Seeds	Baked goods, snacks
	Pasta sauce	Spaghetti, pizza, chili
	Pre-made burritos	Lunches and dinners
	Shrimp	Pasta, soups, stir-fries
	Chicken bones and vegetable scraps	Chicken broth, bone broth
	Vegetables	Stir-fries, soups, casseroles, roast

