Eating Well, Saving More

We all want to eat well, but healthy eating on a budget can be challenging. A healthful diet includes a wide variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy, meat and seafood, pulses, nuts, seeds and plant-based oils. Here are seven simple tips for enjoying a wide variety of delicious, healthful foods while saving money.

Go Plant-Forward With Your Protein

Eating pulses is not only good for your health, it's good for your wealth. A half-cup serving of pinto bean or lentils costs fifteen times less than a 3-ounce serving of ground beef. When you're at the grocery store, stock up on pulses in both dry and canned form. Both forms are shelf-stable ingredients that can last for months if stored in your pantry or kitchen cabinet.

Comparing the Cost of Proteins

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	COST PER SERVING
Pinto Beans (cooked from dry form)	½ cup	$0.07
Lentils (cooked from dry form)	½ cup	$0.08
Red Kidney Beans (cooked from dry form)	½ cup	$0.10
Eggs, grade A, large	1 large	$0.18
Pinto Beans (canned, drained)	½ cup	$0.19
Red Kidney Beans (canned, drained)	½ cup	$0.19
Chicken breast, boneless, skinless	3 ounces	$0.65
Pork chop (boneless)	3 ounces	$0.85
Beef (round roast, USDA choice, boneless)	3 ounces	$1.06
Ground beef, 90% lean	3 ounces	$1.14

Build Healthful Meals With Pulses + Grains

Pulses and whole grains are both plant-based sources of protein and key components of a healthy diet. Proteins are created from twenty different amino acid building blocks; nine of which cannot be produced by the body and are called "essential." Most plant-based proteins lack one or more of the essential amino acids, but when two or more plant-based sources of protein are combined, each food can provide the essential amino acid(s) that the complementary food(s) is missing. Grains and pulses are complementary proteins. Therefore when you eat the two together, you get a complete protein or all nine essential amino acids. Beans and rice, anyone?

Build Your Pantry

While some staple pantry items like olive oil, vinegars and spices may be expensive, they last a long time and using just a little bit makes a recipe go a long way! Also having a full stock of cooking and baking essentials, as well as dried pastas, grains and pulses, provides countless opportunities to make homemade, healthful, cost-saving meals every day of the week.

Buy in Bulk, When You Can

Buying ingredients in large quantities usually brings the cost per serving down. Buying healthful, shelf-stable ingredients in bulk is a great way to save money, but make sure you're choosing ingredients that are versatile. Pulses are an incredibly versatile superfood, plus they're awesomely affordable. You can boost nutrition and cut cost by replacing half your meat in tacos, casseroles, meatloaf or meatballs with pulses. Add pulses to dips or smoothies, or bake brownies or breads with pulse flours. The "*pulsabilities*" are endless.

Shop Seasonally

An aromatic, juicy peach. Sweet, tender corn on the cob. The flavors of seasonal fruits and vegetables are a joy to savor. Eating foods in the season that they are harvested not only provides exceptional flavor, it also makes incredible flavors more affordable. Pulses are always affordable and always in season. Why? Because they are allowed to dry in the pod before being harvested, they can be stored safely for years. Pulses can enhance the flavor and nutrition of your favorite seasonal foods all year long!

Savor the Flavor and Savings of Frozen and Canned

We often hear that fresh is best, but that simply isn't true. There are many fruits and vegetables that can be just as healthy and often more flavorful in their frozen or canned form. Frozen and canned foods last a lot longer than fresh and are less likely to spoil.

Also, saving time can sometimes be just as valuable as saving money. A chicken breast takes 15 minutes to cook. How long does it take to open a can of chickpeas? Less than 15 seconds!

Honor the Harvest

Throwing away food is just like throwing away money. Before you grocery shop, make sure you have a plan. Inventory what you already have (especially in the refrigerator), plan your meals for the week, and make a list of what you need to buy. Remember, farmers work hard to grow food for us. Honor the harvest by working to reduce food waste.

PULSES

To find more pulse inspiration + recipes, visit **www.pulses.org/NAP**