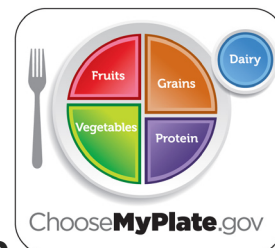


smart shopping for veggies and fruits



10 tips for affordable vegetables and fruits

It is possible to fit vegetables and fruits into any budget. Making nutritious choices does not have to hurt your wallet. Getting enough of these foods promotes health and can reduce your risk of certain diseases. There are many low-cost ways to meet your fruit and vegetable needs.

1 celebrate the season

Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor, and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer's market is a great source of seasonal produce.



2 why pay full price?

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales, coupons, and specials that will cut food costs. Often, you can get more for less by visiting larger grocery stores (discount grocers if available).

3 stick to your list

Plan out your meals ahead of time and make a grocery list. You will save money by buying only what you need. Don't shop when you're hungry. Shopping after eating will make it easier to pass on the tempting snack foods. You'll have more of your food budget for vegetables and fruits.

4 try canned or frozen

Compare the price and the number of servings from fresh, canned, and frozen forms of the same veggie or fruit. Canned and frozen items may be less expensive than fresh. For canned items, choose fruit canned in 100% fruit juice and vegetables with "low sodium" or "no salt added" on the label.



5 buy small amounts frequently

Some fresh vegetables and fruits don't last long. Buy small amounts more often to ensure you can eat the foods without throwing any away.

6 buy in bulk when items are on sale

For fresh vegetables or fruits you use often, a large size bag is the better buy. Canned or frozen fruits or vegetables can be bought in large quantities when they are on sale, since they last much longer.

7 store brands = savings

Opt for store brands when possible. You will get the same or similar product for a cheaper price. If your grocery store has a membership card, sign up for even more savings.



8 keep it simple

Buy vegetables and fruits in their simplest form. Pre-cut, pre-washed, ready-to-eat, and processed foods are convenient, but often cost much more than when purchased in their basic forms.

9 plant your own

Start a garden—in the yard or a pot on the deck—for fresh, inexpensive, flavorful additions to meals. Herbs, cucumbers, peppers, or tomatoes are good options for beginners. Browse through a local library or online for more information on starting a garden.



10 plan and cook smart

Prepare and freeze vegetable soups, stews, or other dishes in advance. This saves time and money. Add leftover vegetables to casseroles or blend them to make soup. Overripe fruit is great for smoothies or baking.



Very few Americans consume the amount of vegetables recommended as part of a healthful eating pattern. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that everyone increase vegetable and fruit intake. In addition, they recommend we eat a variety of vegetables, especially dark green and red and orange vegetables and beans and peas.

Vegetables and fruits

There are reasons we need to eat more vegetables and fruits. First, most vegetables and fruits are major contributors of a number of nutrients such as folate, magnesium, potassium, dietary fiber and vitamins A, C and K. Several of these are important for specific groups or needs (e.g., folic acid for women who are capable of becoming pregnant).

Second, consumption of vegetables and fruits is associated with reduced risk of many chronic diseases. Specifically, consuming at least 2½ cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit per day is

associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, including heart attack and stroke. Some vegetables and fruits may protect against certain types of cancer.

Third, most vegetables and fruits, when prepared without added fats or sugar, are relatively low in calories. Eating them instead of higher calorie foods can help adults and children achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

Children tend to consume more than half of their fruit intake as juice. Although 100 percent fruit juice can be part of a healthful diet, it lacks dietary fiber and can contribute extra calories when consumed in excess. The majority of the recommended fruit should come from whole fruits, including fresh, canned, frozen, and dried forms, rather than from juice. When juices are consumed, 100 percent juice should be encouraged. To limit intake of added sugar, fruit canned in 100 percent fruit juice is preferred over fruit canned in syrup.

Carrot Raisin Salad

Serving Size: 1/4 of recipe

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

4 medium peeled and grated carrots

1/4 cup raisins

2 teaspoons sugar

Juice of one lemon

Instructions:

1. In a medium bowl, thoroughly mix carrots, raisins, sugar and lemon juice.
2. Serve chilled.

Nutritional Analysis Per Serving: Total Calories: 63 kcal, Total Fat: 0 grams, Total Saturated Fat: 0 grams, Total Trans Fat: 0 grams, Total Polyunsaturated Fat: 0 grams, Total Carbohydrate: 16 grams, Total Protein: 1 gram, Percentage of Calories from Fat: 3, Total Cholesterol: 0 milligrams, Total Dietary Fiber: 2 grams, Sodium: 43 milligrams, Vitamin D: 0 percent, Vitamin C: 15 percent, Vitamin A: 204 percent, Folate: 3 percent, Calcium: 3 percent, Iron: 2 percent.

Source:

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These materials are partially funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact 1-888-LAHELPU or visit www.dss.state.la.us to download an application for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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