

Getting the most nutrition from your food dollar



Saving money is a great idea any time! Pay attention to your food shopping habits and try to get the most nutrition from your food dollar.

First, review [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#) to make sure you're choosing foods that fit your age, gender and activity level.

Next, review these tips to get the most nutrition from your food dollar within each food group:

Vegetables and Fruits:

- Frozen vegetables are picked at their peak of freshness and flash frozen, making them a nutritious and economical choice. Buy the larger bags which are often more economical. This way you can take out what you plan to use and return the rest to the freezer. Buy them without added sauces which can add to both calories and cost.
- Buy in-season local fruits and vegetables when prices are lower. Stay away from costly out-of-season produce that's flown from afar; you can probably find an alternative to eating fresh raspberries in January in Canada! Opt for less costly canned or frozen items. You can even learn to [freeze or home can](#) foods yourself for winter months.
- Root vegetables like potatoes, carrots, parsnips, turnips, sweet potatoes and onions are often great bargains; use them in soups and stews.

- 100% frozen juice concentrates are generally less expensive than boxed or chilled juices; fruit 'drinks' are less expensive, but they're also much less nutritious.
- Check the clearance area in the produce section for 'just passed peak' fresh fruits and vegetables. Items like bananas are ideal to use in muffins or quick breads.
- Dried fruits like raisins are ideal to use in muffins, loafs, salads and some stews; many other dried fruit like cranberries and blueberries can be quite expensive.
- Make use of leftover cooked vegetables by adding them to soups, stews or stir-fries.
- Buy fruit at different stages of ripeness, one that's ripe and ready to eat, another that's ready for tomorrow and one for a few days from now.

Grain Products:

- Day old whole grain bread, bagels, buns are perfect if you freeze them first and use later for toast, grilled or toasted sandwiches or bread crumbs.
- Check out the bulk food section of the store for grains like rice, oats, oatmeal, bulgur, barley, quinoa, kamut, cereals and other whole grains.

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Generally speaking, grains bought in bulk are much less expensive than those bought in packages.

- Enjoy some home-made muffins and loaves vs. store bought.

Milk and Alternatives:

- Add your own favorite fresh or frozen fruit to plain yogurt.
- Buy milk in plastic bags and use a plastic bag holder at home.
- Buy the largest size container that you can use before the expiry date of sour cream, cottage cheese or cream cheese.

Meat and Alternatives:

- Eggs are a terrific alternative to some costly meats; try an omelette for lunch or dinner or make egg salad for lunch. You can also add cold hard cooked eggs to a variety of salads or enjoy one as an afternoon snack.
- Bring on the beans! Try good old' fashioned canned beans on whole grain toast for a quick healthy dinner; add a tossed salad and a glass of milk to round out the meal. Dried beans bought in bulk are probably one of the most economical and healthy products you can buy. Learn how to rehydrate them for use in a variety of meals and snacks. (Lentils generally do not need to be rehydrated prior to use.) Or, buy canned black beans, chick peas, lentils or Romano beans and use them in soups, stews or salads. Rinsing the beans before use can remove up to half the sodium.

- Peanut butter is also a less costly meat alternative. Use it in sandwiches or for a snack atop whole grain crackers.
- Fatty meats that come with lots of bones like spare ribs and short ribs can be costly and high in fat. Opt for cuts like beef chuck or bottom roasts and braise them in a stew to produce a tender and tasty meal.
- Use water-packed canned tuna or salmon to make sandwiches, or use in casseroles and salads.
- Buying a whole chicken vs. chicken parts is generally less expensive; roast the entire bird and then use the leftovers for another meal.
- Tofu is another versatile and economical meat alternative. Use regular tofu in stir fries or casseroles or add it to salads.
- Choose Boston bluefish or Alaskan Pollack instead of cod or haddock
- Many people consume too much meat at one sitting. Review [Eating Well with Canada's Good Guide](#) to know what a serving of meat is. This can help make your meat purchase go further.

Paying attention to how you shop can help you get the biggest nutritional bang for your buck!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- You can get a copy of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide by calling 1-800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide
- [Simply Great Food](#) – 250 quick, easy and delicious recipes, Dietitians of Canada; Robert Rose, 2007
- To find out more about nutrition labelling in Canada, visit <http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca/>

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