

Managing in the Current Economy: Tips for Maintaining Grocery Spend



Today, we face many financial challenges. While groceries are an essential expense, you can discover significant savings by adopting a few strategic shopping habits.

1. Create a Meal Plan and Stick to It

Build your shopping list entirely around a few meals and snacks. Plan recipes that share ingredients so you waste less and stretch your budget further.

2. Avoid Shopping on an Empty Stomach

Hunger clouds your judgment and often leads to costly impulse purchases. Grab a healthy snack before you head out to keep your focus strictly on your list.

3. Use Coupons Wisely

Only use rebate offers and coupons for items you would buy anyway. If you accidentally leave your coupons at home, ask the store clerk if they have an extra weekly flyer or coupon on hand.

4. Shop the Perimeter of the Store

The outside edges of the store hold fresh produce, dairy, and meats. Sticking to these areas naturally helps you avoid the heavily processed, higher-priced packaged foods in the center aisles.

5. Try Generic Store Brands

National brands pay a premium for eye-level shelf space. Store-brand alternatives on the top and bottom shelves offer similar quality and nutrition for a fraction of the cost.

6. Buy Frozen Produce When It's Out of Season

Fresh fruits and vegetables spoil quickly and can be expensive when out of season. Frozen and canned alternatives have a long shelf life, are highly cost-effective, and provide the exact same nutritional value.

7. Look Beyond the Retail Price

Use shelf labels to compare the price per ounce, pound, or serving to instantly find the best bargain. Also, be careful with items placed in large display bins—they are styled to look like a deal, but they aren't always on sale. Always check the price tags.

8. Use Your Freezer Wisely

Purchase staple foods or pre-made meals when they go on sale and freeze them. They will save the day when you forget to plan dinner or feel tempted to order expensive takeout.

9. Get Creative with What You Have

Before heading to the store, challenge yourself to turn random pantry items into a delicious meal. If you aren't sure how to combine what you have, try using a recipe-finder app or website.