



DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

August, 2004

Supermarket Savvy

Tricks to saving money at the grocery store include: buying in bulk the amounts you can use before it outdates, buying generic brands, looking for sales in flyers and newspapers, and using coupons only if they'll save you money. Stretch your food dollars even more with a grocery list. Learn what to put on your shopping list and what to avoid to save yourself a bundle.

It Pays to Bake At Home

Buying prepackaged baked goods or fresh bakery items is more costly than making them yourself. Flour, sugar, oats, bran, nuts and raisins can be purchased in bulk and used to make many kinds of baked goods. Scared to bake? Follow simple recipes to build your confidence. Read the instructions first, then gather and measure the ingredients. With muffins and quick breads, the rule is to mix dry and wet ingredients separately then combine them with very little stirring. Double recipes, prepare the item and freeze portions for later use.

Produce & Bread Possibilities

Take a second look at fruits and veggies that are fresh but past their prime. You could use them for baking or in soups or stews. Also consider day-old bread, which is often half price. Avoid any moldy items, because they are not safe to eat.

Buy In-Season

Choose in-season fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the year to add up savings. You can enjoy them off-season by buying frozen or canned. Or stock up on your favorites when they are in-season and freeze or can them yourself.

Make Homemade Salad Dressings

Homemade salad dressings can be very easy to prepare. All you need is oil, vinegar, herbs and spices. Dressings can also be used as marinades. Making these yourself can save you many dollars compared to buying prepared ones. A bonus benefit is that these homemade products contain no additives or preservatives. Check out page 3 for recipes!



School Lunch Refresher Course

School bells are beginning to ring across the county as students begin a new school year. Although hundreds of students buy lunch at school cafeterias, many choose to “brown bag” it. When packing school lunches, kids and parents alike should be aware of safe food handling rules. Read on to review these food safety lessons!

Keep Foods Clean

Keep everything clean when packing lunch. That not only goes for the food, but also food preparation surfaces, hands and utensils. Use hot, soapy water when cleaning. Keep family pets away from kitchen counters and tabletops.

Keep Cold Foods Cold

The best way to keep food cold is with an insulated lunch box. Include either freezer gel packs or cold food items such as frozen juice packs when packing it. Place perishable foods, like meat or cheese sandwiches, between cold items. Keep all lunch carriers out of direct sunlight and away from heat sources. Freezer gel packs will help keep food cold until lunch time, but usually will not work for all-day storage. Any perishable leftovers after lunch should be discarded and not brought home.

“If you use paper or plastic lunch bags, create layers by double bagging to help insulate the food,” advises Bessie Berry, manager of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's nationwide, toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline.

Keep Hot Foods Hot

Foods like soup, chili and stew need to stay hot. Fill an insulated bottle with boiling water, let it stand a few minutes, then empty. Fill the container with food that has been heated through. Close the lid and keep it closed until lunch to keep the food hot.



Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Agriculture. Food Safety and Inspection Service. 1997. [USDA Offers Advice for Packing Safe School Lunches](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/news/1997/school.htm) at www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/news/1997/school.htm

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Hoard a Dollar with Homemade Dressings

Salad dressings can be expensive to buy. They are cheaper to make and it is easy if you have the right ingredients on hand. Check out these simple make-it-yourself recipes. Experiment with different seasonings to add your own personal flair!

French Dressing

1/2 cup sugar or honey
1/2 cup ketchup
1/2 cup regular or apple cider vinegar
1/4 cup salad oil
1 whole finely minced garlic clove

1 Tablespoon provides 70 calories and 4 g fat.

Blue Cheese Dressing

1/3 cup fat-free mayonnaise
1/3 cup fat-free sour cream
1/3 cup buttermilk
1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 ounces Blue cheese
1 teaspoon garlic powder
Dash of vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

1 Tablespoon provides 40 calories and 2 g fat.

1000 Island Dressing

1 cup fat-free mayonnaise
1/2 cup ketchup
1/4 cup sweet relish
1 Tablespoon regular or apple cider vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

1 Tablespoon provides 25 calories and 0 g fat.



Directions:

For each recipe, put all ingredients into a pint jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake until thoroughly mixed. Refrigerate and shake well before each use.

Source: Adapted from O'Mara, P. [Peggy's Kitchen](http://www.mothering.com/recipes/salad-dressing.shtml), at www.mothering.com/recipes/salad-dressing.shtml

This material was funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program through a contract awarded by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS). The Food Stamp Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local SRS Service Center or call 1-800-221-5689.

Dining on a Dime Cook's Corner

Now that the kids are returning to school, wouldn't it be nice to have a quick and easy take-it-with-you breakfast or snack? Look no further! Try this recipe.

Oat Cereal Bars

Ingredients

- 6 Tablespoons margarine
- 3 cups miniature marshmallows
- 1/2 cup smooth or crunchy peanut butter
- 1/2 cup nonfat dry milk
- 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup raisins
- 4 cups ready-to-eat oat cereal circles

Directions

1. Spray a 9x9-inch microwave pan with cooking spray. Microwave margarine until melted.
2. Stir in marshmallows and peanut butter.
3. Microwave until marshmallows are melted.
4. Stir until mixture is smooth. Add remaining ingredients and stir until cereal is coated.
5. Spread mixture evenly across pan. Cool.
6. Cut into 16 squares. Each square provides 190 calories and 8 g fat.



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