

In order to make your household budget dollars stretch, Nutrition Australia has plenty of great ideas on how to help keep down the cost of food. Planning ahead and shopping wisely will mean you eventually spend less and waste less.

Here are some tips on how to plan ahead and shop wisely for food:

1. Make a Shopping List

- Check the pantry, fridge and freezer**
 What foods do you already have that could be the start of another meal? Make a list of the main meals you want to cook for the next one to two weeks – what foods do you need? Should you stock up on any ‘Pantry Fridge and Freezer Basics’? (see the next page)
- Look for specials**
 Look through catalogues at home. Buy items in bulk if they are on sale and can be stored easily – but only if you are likely to use them before their use-by date
- Shop at different stores for different produce**
 Try a bulk supermarket for dry goods; a wholesale butcher for meat; and the local farmers market, fruit and vegetable shop or roadside stalls for fresh fruit and vegetables
- Shop in the suburbs**
 Prices are cheaper than in the city
- Stick to the basics**
 Limit convenience foods and meals bought out of home as these will often blow your food budget
 Spend as little as possible on the ‘Discretionary Food’ group and take-away foods (see www.eatforhealth.gov.au)

For more information:

- www.farmersmarkets.org.au
- www.foodcentsprogram.com.au

Check out our other factsheets:

- Tips for ‘cheap eats’
- What is a serve?

2. Pantry and Fridge Audit

This can help you save shopping dollars and waste less food if you regularly check what is in your pantry, fridge and freezer.

It helps to keep stock of some ‘Pantry, Fridge and Freezer Basics’ - food items that will allow you to make a quick, easy nutritious meals even if you haven’t had time to do your regular grocery shopping.

A pantry and fridge audit means checking regularly to see:

- If you need to replace or stock up on your ‘Pantry Fridge and Freezer Basics’?
- If any foods have almost reached or are already past their ‘use-by’ or ‘best before’ date?
- What foods you already have and what foods you need to buy when you are writing up your shopping list for your meal plan?



Pantry, Fridge and Freezer Basics

Look through the lists below and use the suggestions to make up your own list of preferred Pantry, Fridge and Freezer Basics. Always check there is stock of your 'Basics' before you do your regular food shopping.

Pantry Basics

- Wholegrain Bread:** sliced, bread rolls, flat bread
- Spreads:** peanut butter, honey, jam
- High fibre breakfast cereal or bulk bought muesli**
- Rolled oats**
- Dried pasta:** spaghetti and small pasta shapes
- Dried noodles**
- Rice:** brown, basmati, Doongara
- Wholegrain crackers**
- Bread crumbs**
- Tinned fish:** tuna, salmon, sardines (flavoured and plain)
- Stock cubes/liquid:** beef, chicken, vegetable
- Canned vegetables:** corn, beetroot, tomatoes
- Canned beans:** chickpeas, kidney beans, mixed beans, baked beans
- Dried lentils/split peas**
- Tomato paste**
- Tinned soup or soup mix**
- Flour:** plain, self-raising
- Sugar**
- Corn flour**
- Long life milk:** UHT, powdered, evaporated
- Dried fruit**
- Tinned fruit in natural juice:** apricots, peaches, apples, pears
- Seasoning:** salt, pepper, herbs, curry powder,
- Condiments:** soy sauce, tomato, sweet chilli, low fat mayonnaise, mustard
- Vegetable Oil:** e.g. olive, canola (try to buy in bulk as it can work out a lot cheaper)

Fridge Basics*

- Eggs**
 - Cheese:** reduced fat tasty
 - Milk:** reduced fat
 - Yoghurt:** reduced fat plain or fruit
 - Fish:** fresh
 - Chicken:** thighs, breast, drumsticks
 - Lamb:** diced, chops, roast
 - Beef:** mince, diced, roast, stir-fry
 - Pork:** chops, ham, bacon
- * Ensure use-by dates are strictly adhered to for refrigerated foods

Freezer Basics

- Wholegrain Bread:** rolls, pita pockets etc.- buy it on sale and store in the freezer
- Vegetables:** e.g. peas, corn, carrots, capsicum, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, beans
- Meat:** buying meat in bulk or family size packs is often cheaper than buying in smaller quantities
- Fish/Seafood**
- Frozen fruit** for smoothies and desserts

