

Healthy Eating on a Budget



Making healthy food choices for your family on a tight budget can seem impossible. Parents often feel guilty as there is media emphasis on buying foods that are fresh, organic, locally produced and/or “in season”.

With so much food snobbery people forget that good nutritious food does not need to be expensive.

The aim of this booklet is to help you make good food choices for your family without over stretching your budget.

Healthy Kitchen Basics



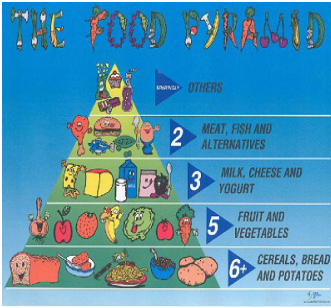
You can't always plan every meal and children love to snack. The problem is that they tend to snack on high fat and sugary convenience foods. Try to keep the below list in mind and stock up on these as they are cheap and quick and easy to prepare.

Nutritious Cupboard Basics

Canned salmon, tuna
Canned peas, beans, lentils
Canned fruit, dried fruit, raisins
Canned tomatoes
Pasta, rice
Skimmed milk powder
Bread, buns, bagels, pittas
Fruit
Onion and garlic

Nutritious Fridge and Freezer Basics

Frozen Fish
Frozen vegetable
Berries & rhubarb
Eggs
Milk
Cheese
Yoghurt



Milk Products

Choose no-name brand cheeses

Buy plain yoghurt and add your favourite fruit to flavour it



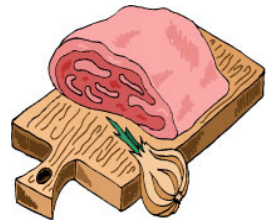
Use skim milk powder for cooking as it is easy to store and is a good source of calcium and protein. Use when making sauces, puddings, casseroles, soups, mashed potato & pasta dishes. Mix 75g milk powder with 250mls water to make it up.

Meat

Buy meat in bulk. Large packs of meat cost much less than smaller packs.

Meat that is pre-prepared (i.e. skinless chicken breasts) is more expensive than those that you will need to prepare yourself. If you have the time, buy the cheaper variety and prepare it yourself.

If you can't afford leaner cuts of meat and are worried about fat content you can reduce the fat after browning by drying the meat, rinsing under hot water & draining well



Fruit and Vegetables

Buy fresh berries in season and freeze to enjoy at a later date.

Frozen berries are cheaper than fresh berries, can be used when you want and are just as nutritious.

Frozen vegetable are cheaper than fresh vegetables and are often just as nutritious.



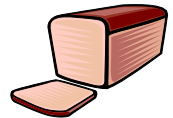
Buy only the amount of fresh vegetables you can use before they go stale. Remember – only bulk buy if you will eat it!

Buy plain, bagged frozen vegetable instead of vegetables that are boxed with added sauces. They are cheaper and usually lower in fat and salt.

Cereals Breads and Potatoes

Plain pasta shapes may be cheaper than fancy shapes. Dry pasta is just as nutritious as freshly made pasta and much cheaper.

Buy bread at the end of the day – you might get discounts!



Freeze sliced pan/pitta breads and use as needed instead of leaving bread sit out and go stale.

Buy whole grain cereals instead of sugary ones. They are more economical and nutritious.



Long grain rice is roughly half the price of minute rice and only takes 15 minutes extra to cook. Choose brown rice for an even higher nutrient content.

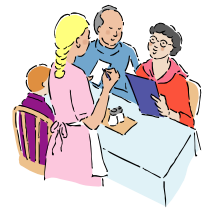
Eating Out

If you are hoping to cut back on your food bill, remember that cooking in your own home is almost always the cheaper option. When you go out for a meal, you are not just paying for the food. You are paying for employee salaries, rent for the restaurant premises etc.

Even if the restaurant meal is convenient and you have gotten an “Early Bird” or special offer you are still paying more than the equivalent meal in your own home.

The drive-thru/take-away is by no means a money saver. The average cost of a take-away for a family of four would be 50-60 euro. Cooking at home, you could prepare a gourmet meal for less, starters, steak dinner, dessert including soft drinks!

This is also a much healthier option than a hamburger and fries or a staunchy Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) loaded curry.



Shopping List ✓

Stretching your Euro: tips to cut food costs

Make a shopping list – this will avoid doubling up on unnecessary items.

Leave children at home to avoid pester power!

Avoid shopping on an empty stomach! Hungry shoppers buy more than they need.

Shop around the sides of the supermarket if in a hurry as this is where you find all the basics for a healthy diet.

Shop for loose vegetable and fruit. Often, the packaged/pre-washed variety are much more expensive. This way you can also choose exactly how much you want and need.

If you don't eat them - cut the stalks of broccoli prior to weighing. This will considerably reduce the cost and most supermarkets allow this

Remember – frozen veg and fruit is as nutritious as fresh and much cheaper!

Go to the Supermarket. Convenience stores charge you extra for convenience!

Store brands are often cheaper than brand name products while quality can be just as good.

Be wary of gimmicks and special offers. What is the point of buying a reduced item if you wouldn't have bought it in the first place?

Use coupons only for products that you purchase regularly – remember its not a good idea to buy something you didn't need in the first place!

Don't forget the bottom and top shelves. Higher priced items are often placed at eye level to sell.

Use local shops. Use your green grocer, market, fishmongers and butcher. It's cheaper because you're not paying for all the packaging that ends up in the bin. Also, once you build up a rapport with them they often throw in some fruit or vegetables as good will.

When you're cooking things like minced meat you can make the meat go further by adding beans and lentils which will add to the meaty taste, and also add nutrition.

Eat breakfast at home or bring food with you on the run. Bring your lunch with you!

Re-use water bottles daily instead of buying new ones each day.

Start a vegetable garden no matter how small, and involve the children. They will love to eat something they have helped grow. You can also grow herbs on the kitchen shelf.

Get a supermarket loyalty card for each shop you use.

Make use of leftovers. When you are making a recipe make it in large amounts and freeze in meal size portions so you can later microwave it or reheat it in the oven.

Don't be snobbish about discount supermarkets. Often, these brands are premium quality in their country of origin and much of the fresh produce has been sourced locally.

Meal Planner ✓

Feed the family on less than €15/day (Family of 4)

Breakfast

Scrambled egg on toast with tea and orange
8 slices shop own-brand fresh wholemeal bread
40g Spread, 6 eggs, 4 store own-brand teabags
40mls own-brand low fat milk
4 Oranges

Lunch

Baked potato with beans, apple and glass milk
4 baking potatoes with beans
2 x 420g tins value baked beans
800mls own-brand low fat milk, 4 green apples

Dinner

Spaghetti Bolognese
400g minced beef
400g tin own-brand chopped tomatoes
2 cloves garlic, 2 onions, 4 sticks celery
1 tablespoon of value dried mixed herbs
1 red pepper, 1 green pepper, 200g Spaghetti

**Please remember to wash your hands or use
hand gel when visiting the Hospital**

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