

FOOD FOR FITNESS AND FUN

March - 2009

We continue the focus on conserving our food dollar while striving for optimal health. Enjoy! Jan Temple

FOUR WAYS TO SAVE MONEY AND GAIN HEALTH

With the economy struggling, we all are looking for ways to save a few bucks. Since Americans spend a good share of their money on food, here are suggestions of what to put in your grocery cart to save money and stay healthy allowing you to tighten your budget and your belt.

1) **Go for the Grain** – By now, you’ve heard the benefits of eating more whole grains and, it turns out, they are pennies per serving. Buy oatmeal, brown rice, or popcorn in bulk or larger containers/bags. For your next batch of oatmeal, boil oats in low-fat milk for a creamier texture and top off with some sliced banana and walnut pieces.



- Oatmeal – 14 cents per serving versus individual instant packets 32 cents/serving
- Brown rice – 15 cents per serving
- Popcorn – 10 cents per serving

2) **Where Have You Bean?** One of the most inexpensive proteins around, beans are also high in fiber but low in fat. Canned beans are a terrific staple to have in your pantry and there are dozens to choose.



- Eggs and beans are the least expensive protein sources
- Cut a serving of meat in half and load up your plate with more veggies and rice, pasta, or potatoes
- Toss beans into salads and soups; mix into pasta; add to salsa or puree into dip.
- Canned beans – 12 cents per serving (dried beans are only 5 cents per serving)
- Rinse the sodium

3) **Your Friend, The Freezer** Most Americans need to triple their veggie intake. Freezing locks in vitamins and stops nutrient loss occurring over time in fresh produce AND you have less waste.

- Frozen broccoli – 37 cents per serving
- Frozen pineapple – 40 cents per serving

4) **Don’t Ditch the Dairy** – When food prices go up, we often look to the cost of milk. But even during a recession, a serving of milk is still one of the best nutrient bangs for your buck.

- Nutrient Rich Food – Penny for penny you still get a great bang for your health buck.
- Fat-free milk – 21 cents per serving
- Yogurt in big container – 1/2 cost per serving versus small containers
- Homemade smoothie (1 cup each - milk, yogurt, frozen fruit) - \$1.09/16 oz serving vs. To-Go Smoothie - \$3.39/16 oz. serving

The Bottom Line on Cheap Eats:

- Make a grocery list and stick to it; the fewer trips to the store you make means the fewer impulse purchases you will make – it is always better to plan a menu so you don’t buy stuff you don’t need.
- Consider bulk and store brands
- Use unit pricing to make best decisions
- Frozen and canned items are usually good values and they have a long shelf life

Source: Communicating Food for Health, February 2009

CUBAN BLACK BEAN SALAD – SERVES 6

Either serve this salad with grilled chicken or fish OR make it a wrap: Place one salad serving in a whole wheat tortilla; top with grilled chicken or fish. Add milk and fruit – it’s a meal!

2 cups cooked brown rice	1 teaspoon dried oregano
14 ounce can black beans, rinsed, drained	3 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 tomato, diced (or 1/2 cup canned diced tomato)	1 Tablespoon olive oil
1/2 cup diced red onion	Juice of one lime ~ 2 Tablespoons
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder	1 Tablespoon chopped cilantro (optional)
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin	6 cups romaine lettuce, shredded
Pinch chili powder	

Place everything but the lettuce in a medium mixing bowl. Mix well. This can be done ahead of time and kept covered in the refrigerator for one or two days. Serve the salad on top of the romaine lettuce.

Each 2-cup serving: 204 calories, 3.5 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 166 mg sodium, 0 mg cholesterol, 36 g carbohydrate, 8.5 g protein.



Cost per serving without chicken or fish – 60 cents.

Source: Communicating for Health, March 2008

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CABBAGES ARE KINGS!

Cabbage has sustained people throughout the winter months for generations. It is very inexpensive and in most places it is commonly thought of as a poor man's vegetable. But it's delicious when properly prepared, and when it comes to nutrition – cabbages are kings!



VARIETIES

Several types of cabbage may be available:

- **Green cabbage** – Pale green head of cabbage with a white center.
- **Red cabbage** – This looks like green cabbage, except for its vibrant color.
- **Savoy cabbage** – This variety sports crinkled leaves with a mild flavor.
- **Napa cabbage** – These mild-flavored cabbages are long, oval-shaped bunches of pale green leaves.

CHOOSING AND STORING

- Buy whole heads when possible because cabbage quickly loses its vitamin C when cut.
- Choose unblemished, compact heads that are heavy for their size, as this means they have not lost their moisture.
- Leafy cabbages, if fresh-looking and firm when purchased, will keep for four or five days.
- Head varieties of cabbage last at least a week in the refrigerator when wrapped in plastic.
- One pound of cabbage yields about 6 cups of shredded cabbage.

NUTRITION

One cup of chopped raw cabbage weighs in at a little more than 20 calories, but it supplies 2 grams of fiber and a third of the RDA for vitamin C. It also contains around 40 mg of calcium, 219 mg potassium and 10 percent RDA of folate. Cabbage is part of the brassica family of cruciferous vegetables which includes broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kohlrabi, collards, bok choy, and kale. These vegetables contain potent anticarcinogens, called indoles, and have been associated with a decreased risk for colon and stomach cancers. Red cabbage contains anthocyanins, powerful antioxidants that fight inflammation and protect blood vessels. Cabbage and other members of the cruciferous family should be on your dinner table often!



PREPARATION

To get the most nutrients from cabbage, eat it raw or quick-steamed (either in a microwave or steamer basket). Long cooking destroys the vitamin C. Some of the indoles are drained off with the water when cabbage is boiled. Quick cooking also helps to prevent the formation of a strong sulfur smell that develops when cabbage is overcooked. Cabbage can be shredded with a knife, grater or food processor – be sure to remove blemished leaves and the core.

TIPS FOR USING CABBAGE

- Cabbage is great in winter salads! Put together a coleslaw, or mix cabbage with other greens.
- Go for some crunch! Think of places you normally use lettuce – sandwiches, tacos, salads – and use shredded cabbage instead.
- Hallowed cabbages make festive serving bowls for dips and salads.
- Stir shredded cabbage into your favorite soups, stews, stir-fry dishes and casseroles.
- Have a sandwich with no bread! Pile your favorite fillings onto a lightly steamed cabbage leaf and roll up tightly. Savoy cabbage makes especially good wrappers.

TROPICAL CABBAGE SLAW – SERVES 10

Use this recipe as a guide, adjusting amounts to fit your household size. The important message: you may combine shredded cabbage with fruit and use yogurt for a dressing to make a quick, healthy salad! Note – traditional cabbage slaw has 150 to 250 calories per serving and no fruit!

4 cups shredded cabbage	1/4 cup sliced almonds (optional)
1 8-ounce can pineapple tidbits, drained	2 cups pineapple, lemon or Piná Colada flavored yogurt – low fat or fat free
1 11-ounce can mandarin oranges, drained	

Combine ingredients. Serve chilled.

Each 1/2-cup serving: 69 calories, 1.5 g fat, 0.1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 33.6 mg sodium, 12 mg cholesterol, 12.1 g carbohydrate, 1.5 g fiber, 3.0 g protein, 39% vitamin C; 9% calcium. **Cost: 33 cents per serving WITH nuts; 27 cents per serving WITHOUT nuts.**

SPEND SMART EAT SMART – For great ideas to save money on food while planning, shopping and preparing meals:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings>

Prepared by Jan Temple, CFCS, Nutrition Field Specialist, Iowa State University Extension, Housed in Johnson County

Ph. 319-337-2145; FAX 319-337-7864; Cell 319-330-6175; E-mail: mjtemple@iastate.edu;

Web Site: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/food>

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