



**PLAN .... Reduce your food expenses by planning before you shop.**

**SHOP .... Get tips to find nutritious items and save at the grocery store.**

**EAT .... Save time and money when eating out or at home.**

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## Manage Food Spending With Online Calculator

Yes, grocery prices have gone up. Do you wonder if you could eat nutritiously and spend less on food for your family?

If so, our [online calculator](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/page/what-you-should-spend) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/page/what-you-should-spend>) provides the weekly and monthly amount your family needs to spend for nutritious meals on USDA's Low-cost Plan. To use the calculator you will need the age, gender, and number of meals eaten away from home for each member of your household. You can also get information about the other three USDA food plans: Thrifty, Moderate-Cost, and Liberal.



How does this amount compare with what you spend? Sometimes it is hard to monitor how much you spend on food each month because we purchase food at numerous places and times throughout the month. Our page about [tracking your food expenses](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/page/what-you-spend-now) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/page/what-you-spend-now>) can help. This includes some helpful suggestions and questions to ask yourself about your spending habits.

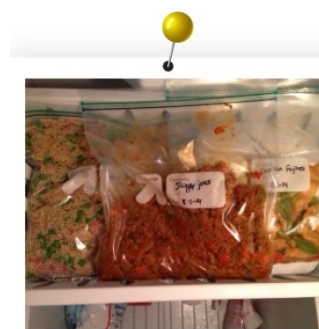
If you decide to you want to spend less on food our website [SpendSmart EatSmart](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/>) is devoted to eating nutritiously on a budget.

Peggy Martin—Registered Dietitian

## Save Time with Freezer Meals

Today my 4-year-old son started preschool. That means summer has officially ended. While I'm a bit sad that summer has ended, I'm looking forward to our schedule getting into a more regular routine. However, I also know life will continue to be busy with activities. Therefore, I spent some time in my kitchen a couple of weeks ago preparing some meals to freeze. I enjoy freezing meals ahead of time because:

- When I am busy I can have a meal on the table in just a few minutes.
- I am less likely to run to the drive thru or buy convenience food that isn't as healthy for my family.
- My husband (not a fan of cooking) can make dinner on his own because all he needs to do is reheat.



Freezing Leftovers

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**For more information on nutrition and health, contact Jill Weber, Human Sciences Specialist—Nutrition & Health at [jrweber@iastate.edu](mailto:jrweber@iastate.edu) or (319) 234-6811**

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When planning what dishes I would make, I browsed through the recipes on our Spend Smart Eat Smart (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/>) website. I wanted to be sure to select recipes that used a variety of protein sources and flavors. The recipes I decided to make were Chicken Fajitas (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/chicken-fajitas>), Ham and Brown Rice (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/ham-brown-rice>), Sloppy Joes (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/sloppy-joes>), and Mexican Chicken Soup (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/mexican-chicken-soup>). I also thought it would be nice to make a couple of recipes that would help us have a quick, healthy breakfast. For these dishes I chose Scrambled Egg Muffins (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/scrambled-egg-muffins>) and Crispy Granola. (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/crispy-granola>).



After I had the list of recipes I wanted to make, I looked through my cupboards, refrigerator, and freezer to see what ingredients I already had on hand. Some of the items I already had were chicken broth, eggs, onion, frozen peas, carrots, a couple of peppers, different spices, and hamburger. I then made a grocery list and bought the other ingredients that I needed the day before I planned to do my cooking.

I started the morning of my cooking day by chopping vegetables that I needed. Three of the recipes called for onions and peppers so I chopped those so they were ready for each of the recipes. I also chopped some broccoli for the Scrambled Egg Muffins. My family doesn't like cooked celery so I chopped carrots to use in the Sloppy Joes in place of celery.

I made the Scrambled Egg Muffins first so they could bake while I started on the other dishes. This recipe is easy to double so if you have a larger family or just want to freeze more muffins that can easily be done. The Ham and Brown Rice makes 9 cups so it could be split and frozen separately to get two meals if your family is smaller.

The Sloppy Joes and Chicken Enchiladas were easy to make. I just cooked the meat and vegetables for each recipe to freeze. When we are ready to eat them, all I have to do is warm them up and have the other ingredients ready to go to assemble the sandwiches or fajitas.

The Mexican Chicken Soup and Granola simmered and baked while I made the other recipes. It only took me about 3 hours to make all of the dishes and get them packaged to freeze and I have 5 meals ready to go in my freezer (Yes, my children were out of the house. Otherwise it would have taken me double the time to get this done) I froze the egg muffins individually until firm so they wouldn't freeze together, then I put them in a plastic bag in the freezer. The other dishes, I let cool for about 20 minutes at room temperature before putting in plastic bags, labeling, and putting in the freezer.

For best quality when freezing food, use containers that seal well and keep air out. If using plastic freezer bags, be sure to press out the air before sealing. Air is what causes freezer burn. Check out our 'How to Freeze Leftovers' ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRBFNmO41\\_M&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRBFNmO41_M&feature=youtu.be)) video for more information on freezing food. For best quality, use frozen food within 3-4 months.

I'm looking forward to the nights this fall when I can come home from work and will just have to heat up one of the meals for supper!

Jody Gatewood—Registered Dietitian & Assistant State Nutrition Program Specialist

# Crisp Fruit Salad

This recipe is so easy it is almost embarrassing, but it tastes so good we had to include it. The dressing is what makes this a hit. Adding just a little mayonnaise to the yogurt really ups the flavor. The lemon juice prevents the apples and pears from turning dark.

Like most of our recipes you can vary this one to suit your family. Some ideas include:

- Use dried cranberries or cherries instead of raisins
- Add 1/2 cup celery, chopped (about 1 stalk).
- Add 1/4 cup walnuts or almonds, chopped.
- For a main dish salad, add chicken chunks, canned tuna, or salmon.
- Try with lemon, plain, or plain Greek yogurt



**Serving Size:** 3/4 cup    **Serves:** 6 (makes about 4 1/2 cups)    **Cost Per Serving:** \$.64

## Ingredients:

- 1 red apple
- 1 pear
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 cup seedless grapes, halved
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1 container (6 ounces) low fat, sugar free vanilla yogurt
- 2 tablespoons low fat mayonnaise-type salad dressing

## Instructions:

1. Wash fruit under cool running water.
2. Chop apple and pear (leave skin on). Add to large serving bowl and toss with lemon juice.
3. Add grapes and raisins to bowl.
4. Combine yogurt and salad dressing in a small bowl and spread over fruit.
5. Stir to combine. Refrigerate. Best eaten the day it is prepared.

Peggy Martin—Registered Dietitian

# Back to School and Time to Refocus!

The lazy days of summer are officially over and for many families hectic schedules have begun. Here are my top 5 tips for busy families!

1. **Breakfast:** Make sure your child starts each morning with a nutritious breakfast, whether it is at home, at school, or even on the way to school! Make sure fruit is a part of the breakfast so your child is on the right track in getting their fruits and veggies in for the day. Children who eat breakfast have fewer tummy aches during school, so they are better able to concentrate and focus in the classroom.

Breakfast Ideas: <http://www.eatright.org/kids/article.aspx?id=6442462528&term=breakfast>

Spend Smart. Eat Smart. Oatmeal Pancakes: (they can be made in advanced and kept in the freezer and reheated, just like the ones in the freezer section):

## Oatmeal Pancakes

**Serves:** 6

## Ingredients

- Pancake mix (that requires only the addition of water)
- Oatmeal
- Water
- Fruit (optional)
- Non-stick cooking spray
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Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/2 cup	
Servings Per Container 6	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 220	Calories from Fat 70
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>12%</b>
Saturated Fat 1.5g	<b>8%</b>
Trans Fat 1.5g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 75mg	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 36g	<b>12%</b>
Dietary Fiber 3g	<b>12%</b>
Sugars 25g	
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vitamin A 8%	• Vitamin C 6%
Calcium 2%	• Iron 4%



## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 (4 inch pancakes)

(75g)

Servings Per Container 3

Amount Per Serving

**Calories** 140    Calories from Fat 20

% Daily Value\*

**Total Fat** 2g    **3%**

    Saturated Fat 0g    **0%**

    Trans Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 5mg    **2%**

**Sodium** 260mg    **11%**

**Total Carbohydrate** 25g    **8%**

    Dietary Fiber 2g    **8%**

    Sugars 1g

**Protein** 4g

Vitamin A 0%    • Vitamin C 0%

Calcium 6%    • Iron 8%

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**2. Lunch:** You have the power to inspire your child to build a healthy plate at school and at home. School lunch programs offer healthy, well-balanced meals. Review the school menu with your child and encourage them to try new foods and reinforce healthy eating by offering similar new foods at home. If your child brings a lunch from home, discuss with them what foods to include and focus on providing foods similar to a complete school meal (whole grains, protein, fruit, vegetable and low-fat or fat-free milk).

Tips to Build a Healthy Meal: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet7BuildAHealthyMeal.pdf>

**3. Snacks:** My 4 year old pretty much sums it up, “I don’t like food, I like snacks!” Processed snacks have consumed our children’s diets. When you think of snacks, think of them as mini-meals. Have fruits and vegetables, whole-grain crackers, low-fat cheese, small sandwiches, yogurt, and fat-free/low-fat milk ready for after school snacks. Make healthy snacks the easy choice!

It’s Not Just a Piece of Candy Blog: <http://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/2013/03/11/its-not-just-a-piece-of-candy/> MyPlate Tips for Parents: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet24MyPlateSnackTipsforParents.pdf>

**4. Family Meals:** Focus on each other at the table. Talk about fun and happy things at mealtime. Turn off electronics and try to make eating meals a stress-free time. We use ISU Extension and Outreach Conversations cards when we need to revive our family meal conversations. My daughters love them!

ISU Extension and Outreach Conversation Cards: <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Mealtime-Conversation-Cards>

**5. Physical Activity:** Make sure your child has plenty of opportunities to be active and that doesn’t mean they have to participate in organized sports. Make physical activity part of your family’s lifestyle, not something that you have to carve time out to complete. Walk the dog together as family. Involve the whole family in household chores, cleaning, vacuuming, and yard work. When it is time to celebrate as a family do something active as a reward, such as go to a park your family hasn’t been to before, go swimming, check out a new bike trail, or find a roller skating rink nearby (yes they still exist!).

MyPlate Be an Active Family Tips: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet29BeAnActiveFamily.pdf>

As a parent or caregiver, you are the most important influence on your child. You can do simple things that will help your children develop healthy habits for life. What is something new you want to try this week?

**Guest, Carrie**

## If You Don’t Eat Breakfast, Neither Will Your Children

There is research to back up the saying “breakfast is the most important meal of the day”. Breakfast contributes to higher achievement, lower rates of absence and tardiness, increased concentration, fewer calories, and better nutrition for youth and adults. We also know that children learn from watching parents. It stands to reason that if you do not model eating breakfast; your children will not get the benefits either.

Ideally, you want to make a balanced breakfast that consists of protein, fat and carbohydrates. If breakfast is rushed, eating something is still better than eating nothing.

**Simple breakfasts that can be prepared quickly and easily include:**

[Breakfast splits](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/breakfast-splits) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/breakfast-splits>)

[Peanut butter pita pockets](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/peanut-butter-pita-pockets) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/peanut-butter-pita-pockets>)

**Juice and cereal with milk**

- Toast with peanut butter and a piece of fruit
- [Yogurt parfaits](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/yogurt-parfaits) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/yogurt-parfaits>)
- [Breakfast burritos](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/breakfast-burritos) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/breakfast-burritos>)
- A hard-cooked egg and a bagel
- [Make your own instant oatmeal packets](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/oatmeal-packets) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/oatmeal-packets>)
- [Whole grain cereal treats](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/whole-grain-cereal-treats) (<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/recipes/whole-grain-cereal-treats>)

Leftovers can be breakfast too—pizza, soup, tortillas with melted cheese or chicken drumsticks can work in a pinch!

Peggy Martin—Registered Dietitian

