

Thirteen Ways to Eat Cheap and Healthy

By Debi Silber, MS, RD, WHC The Mojo Coach®

Is it possible to eat healthfully on a budget? Not only is it possible, but your wallet...and body will thank you for it. Here are a few tips:

1. Buy "family size" packages of chicken. It's inexpensive, healthy and a little bit goes a long way. At one time on a few baking trays, coat some with seasoning, others with BBQ sauce, some with dressing and some with spices. Once cooked use as needed in soups, salads, stir fries and sandwiches for a low fat, healthy option.

2. It's cheaper (but more tempting) to buy big bags of low fat pretzels, tortilla chips, and popcorn. Invest in a few boxes of snack size Baggies. When you're NOT hungry, portion out servings according to the package and then grab 1 baggie when you're ready to snack. You'll eat less and save more.

3. Eating breakfast at home is almost always less expensive and healthier than eating out. For example, at home you can scoop out a bagel and fill with low fat cheese, cottage cheese, peanut butter, cream cheese, etc. You're cutting calories by scooping and eating far less topping than when you're eating breakfast out. A portion size of cereal with low fat milk and fruit is also a healthy and inexpensive option. Breakfast at home can also be a great place to get in your "good carbs" such as high fiber breads, cereals, whole wheat waffles or pancakes as compared to a regular bagel or "mammoth-sized" muffin you may grab "on the go."

4. Try serving your meals on smaller sized plates. You'll eat much less and save money. Eating dinner out can be expensive and the portions can be enough for at least 2 meals.

5. When you cook, you control the amount of fat used in preparation. Substitute broth, water and seasoning instead of all of the oil and butter used when you order some of your favorite meals.

6. For dessert, a single serving fudge pop or icicle has far fewer calories and is much less expensive than going out for an ice cream cone. You can also have a single serving pudding or pudding pop for less than 100 calories and just a few cents.

7. You can try cooking with whole grain or enriched pasta. A box is inexpensive, much healthier than regular pasta and you'll eat much less than the portions served when out.

8. Bring a healthy snack to work. For just a little bit of money, what you bring (yogurt, fruit, string cheese, trail mix) will be healthier and less expensive than what you'd buy when out or from the vending machine at work.

9. Make flavored coffee at home. Think about how much you spend on that fancy coffee concoction each day. It can be hundreds of calories and the price adds up over the course of a week.

10. Share an entree or order an appetizer portion. You'll eat less and save money.

11. Preplan. Bring healthy snacks and water bottles from home if you know you'll be out for the day. What you'll bring is almost always healthier and less expensive than anything from outside.

12. Experiment with beans. Beans provide protein, fiber and other important nutrients. They can be used in a multitude of ways and they come in many varieties. A can or bag of beans is also much less expensive than a cut of meat.

13. Value and economy meals don't save any money if it causes you to overeat and gain weight. You'll need to buy larger clothes and have higher medical bills as a result of all that "value!"



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