



Practice Smart, Savvy Grocery Shopping

Adapted from SuperMarketSavvy.com

Here are some simple tips to help you shop smart and eat healthy, while saving money.

Make a grocery list

The first step in making a grocery list is to look at your family's weekly schedule of activities. Plan meals ahead of time to avoid the last minute food run for takeout. Remember to check out your pantry, refrigerator and freezer before heading to the store to avoid buying any unnecessary extras. Look through the weekly food ads to see what items are on sale. Lastly, cut coupons only for the items you plan to buy. If you are short on time, check out the Internet for websites that give out master grocery lists. Or, consider creating your own grocery list on the computer. This way, you can just print off a copy each week and half your work is done!

Don't go to the store hungry

Like any situation where you're around food, you need a game plan before you head out. Go to the store after a meal or have a balanced snack before you leave. This way, you'll be less tempted to buy conveniently packaged, highly processed, unhealthy junk foods. Plus, you will have more energy and patience to get through those long checkout lines! When taking your kids with you, also remember to pack snacks for little ones. And, older toddlers and preschoolers love to help, so get them involved in the shopping. A grocery store is a great place to teach colors, shapes and numbers.



Read food labels

Grocery shopping can be daunting. But if you know what you are doing, you will be more effective with both your time and your money! Learn to read food labels. Buy products with the least amount of ingredients. Look for foods that have 100% whole grains. Avoid foods with trans fats, partially hydrogenated oils, and high fructose corn syrup. Limit your purchase of "diet" foods, as they tend to be expensive and high in sugar and salt. When purchasing fruits and vegetables, think frozen! In off seasons, they are the best "bang for your buck"!

Choose level of ripeness

If you are going to eat the produce today choose ripe. For tomorrow or the next day, look for produce that is not quite ripe. For the end of the week, choose produce that is still hard and/or green.





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Produce preparation

Ripening Produce

The best place is where the room temperature is warm and constant: for example, in a bowl or bag on top of your refrigerator. A loosely closed paper bag is preferred. Placing a banana in the bag will quicken the process because bananas give off a ripening gas.

Trim as Little as Possible

Most vitamins and minerals are found in the outer leaves, skin, and area just below the skin. If pesticides are a concern, discard or trim the outer leaves or skin.

Wash in Water

Wash and scrub all fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water. Avoid soaking because some vitamins dissolve in water.

Enjoy Raw

Some vitamins and fiber are destroyed by heat.

Cooking Vegetables

Cook until just tender crisp. Use as little water as needed—steam or microwave without water, if possible. Cover the pot while cooking so that steam does not escape and they cook faster. Save liquid from cooking produce and add to soups, stews, and sauces.

