



## The basics

- Plan all your meals for the entire week.
- Make a grocery list and stick to the list; resist impulse buys.
- Batch cook items such as beans, chicken, and rice and incorporate them into several different meals throughout the week.
- Cook on one night and eat for two nights.
- Purchase foods that are in season; these foods are usually cheaper, are at peak ripeness, and will add variety to your meals.

# Cooking on a budget

Planning is the key to cooking healthy, staying within your budget, and minimizing waste. Start with one week planning your menus, grocery list, and leftovers. Save your notes! In a short time, you'll have several weeks of plans all mapped out.

## Other tips

- **Don't go to the grocery store on an empty stomach.** You may be tempted to buy more than you intended.
- **Review grocery store specials in advance** and plan your meals around the specials that week.
- **Take advantage of digital coupons.**
- **Compare and contrast the "unit price"** on the shelf below the product. The larger package is not always the cheapest option.
- **Buy in bulk when shelf stable items are on sale.** If you live alone, find a family member or friend to split items with.
- **Limit going out to eat.** This includes fast food drive-throughs. One trip though the drive-through is usually an entire day's worth of calories.
- **Watch buying convenience foods.** Precut veggies and fruits, premade salads and sandwiches are convenient, but they cost significantly more per ounce. For example: a large apple at the store may cost \$1, but a bag of precut apples will cost \$3 for the same amount.
- **If your produce is getting overripe,** freeze for a later use. Frozen veggies work well in soups and casseroles and frozen fruit is a wonderful addition to pancakes and smoothies.
- **Purchase only what you need for the week.** Grocery stores are constantly moving items around to make them stand out and tempt you, such as drinks and candy bars near the checkout. These strategies help the grocery store sell more. Resist temptation and stick to your list!

