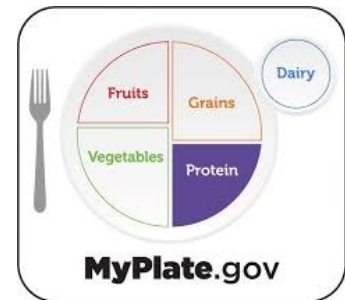


Budget Friendly Meals

With the upcoming holidays, increasing food costs, and money already tight, having some go-to meals that are easy to prepare and easy on the wallet are a necessity. It may be time to branch out and learn some new cooking techniques or incorporate some foods that may be less familiar but are nourishing and budget-friendly. Continue reading for tips and tricks to help stretch your food dollar while maintaining a balanced diet. Note: all prices have been taken from Price Chopper website and store brands have been used wherever possible.

Protein:

Traditional proteins like meat, poultry and seafood can be expensive. Trying out alternatives, such as beans, peas and lentils can be used in addition to or as a substitute for animal proteins, at a fraction of the cost. Or, buy canned versions (tuna, chicken, salmon) to add to soups, stews and casseroles.



- ⇒ Add 1 cup cooked lentils to meatloaf or meatball mixture.
- ⇒ Add 1 can drained, rinsed black or kidney beans to taco meat or burgers

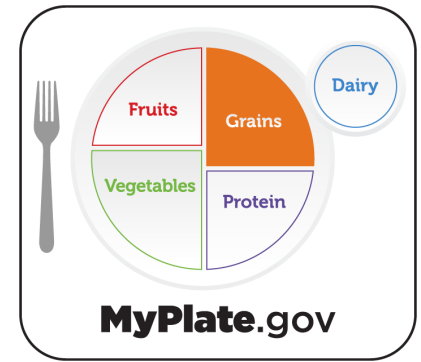
- ⇒ Use canned chicken to make quesadillas or a quick chicken salad
- ⇒ Canned salmon can be used to make salmon cakes or to top a salad
- ⇒ Embrace Depression-Era recipes, like chipped beef on toast
- ⇒ Remember that peanut and other nut butters are proteins, too!



Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Grains:

Carbs have gotten a bad rap over the last 20 years, but they are essential and provide the energy our bodies need to function. Many carbs are inexpensive and can help stretch your grocery budget.



Frozen waffles or pancakes are great to have on hand for an easy breakfast, dinner or snack. Pancake mix can be used to make biscuits, dumplings, cobblers and casseroles.

Oatmeal can be used for more than just breakfast: add 1/4 to 1/2 cup to 1 pound ground beef when making meatloaf or hamburgers.

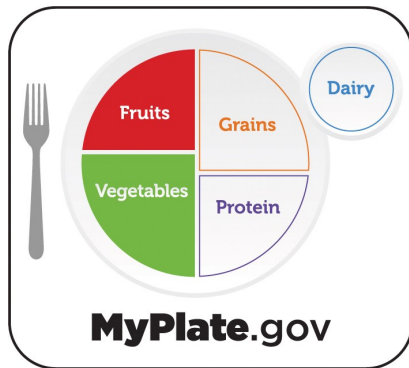


Rice and pasta are both great ways to add bulk to meals without breaking the bank. Use them in soups, casseroles and salads.



Look for complete frozen meals, like Birds Eye Voila! Brand, which contain veggies, grains and protein and are often quick, one-dish meals. You can increase the nutrition by adding extra fresh, frozen or canned veggies.

Fruits and Vegetables

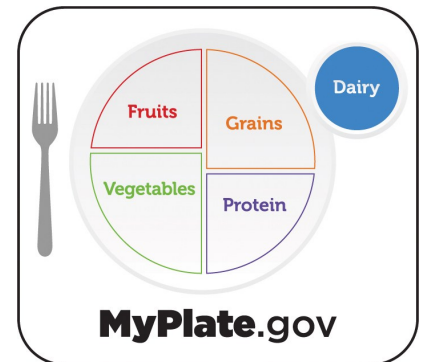


Fresh fruits and veggies are great, but not always accessible. Choosing frozen or canned options can be just as healthy as fresh, for a fraction of the price, and they last longer, too. When possible, look for canned veggies with no salt added and canned fruits packed in water or 100% juice. Rinse canned veggies thoroughly to remove excess sodium. Dried fruit is a great nutrient-dense option, meaning it packs a lot of calories into a small amount. Applesauce and canned pumpkin can be used in baking in place of eggs and oil/butter.



Dairy:

Dairy foods are great sources of protein, calcium and other nutrients. There are shelf-stable and non-dairy options that can be more affordable as well. Use dry milk in baking, or to add protein and calories to soups, sauces, gravies, and desserts.



Yogurt and cottage cheese are excellent protein sources, and snacks like cheese sticks or cheese & crackers can be inexpensive. Use plain yogurt (Greek or regular) in place of sour cream in baking.

Confetti Kielbasa Skillet

Recipe adapted from Taste of Home

Prep Time: 15 mins Cook Time: 15 mins

Servings: 4

Ingredients:

1 tbsp canola oil
7 ounces turkey kielbasa, cut into 1/4-inch slices
1 medium onion, halved and sliced
1/2 cup sliced baby portobello or white mushrooms
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 cup reduced-sodium chicken broth
3/4 tsp Mrs. Dash Garlic & Herb blend
1 15-oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 8.8-oz package ready-to-serve brown rice
1 cup frozen corn
1/2 cup chopped roasted sweet red peppers
4 tsp minced fresh cilantro

Directions:

1. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add kielbasa, onion, and mushrooms; cook and stir 4-6 minutes or until veggies are tender. Add garlic; cook 1 minute longer.
2. Add broth and seasoning blend, stirring to loosen browned bits from pan. Bring to a boil; cook 2-3 minutes or until liquid is almost evaporated. Stir in remaining ingredients and heat through. Serve.

Nutrition info (per serving): 400 calories, 21g protein, 56g carbohydrates, 8g fiber, 11g fat, 594mg sodium

Price per serving: \$3.10

Resources: <https://food.unl.edu/article/how-add-legumes-stretch-your-meals/>

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/confetti-kielbasa-skillet/>

Consumer-centered access for long-term care information, referrals and assessments.

For information, call 518-382-8481, #9, ext. 304



NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term Services and Supports

Do you have questions or concerns about what to eat?

If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County's Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible for a free consultation with Debbie Griswold, Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269 to contact or leave a message.

Check out our website for nutrition resources: <http://ccschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors>

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness In Nutrition (WIN).

OFA Nov 2025