

How to Drastically Reduce Your Grocery Bill

1 Start Meal Planning

Planning a menu is the most efficient way to save money, prevent food waste, and actually know what you'll be eating and shopping for this week.

It doesn't have to be elaborate - just make a list of simple, quick meals that your household enjoys.

2 Shop your cupboards first

Before deciding what to eat and buy each week, look through your fridge, freezer, and pantry. Figure out some meals you can make out of the ingredients you already have.

3 Find the cheapest store in your area

Most communities have at least one grocery store that is less expensive than the others. Figure out what that store is for you, and adjust to doing most of your shopping there. Be sure to join your store's loyalty program for coupons and rewards!

4 Buy the store brand

The generic brand products are sold more cheaply because there is no expensive packaging or marketing budgets to account for. Try swapping out some brand-name products for the store brand. This alone can save 15-25%!

5 Use grocery apps

There are several grocery apps that will help you save money:

- The [Ibotta app](#) gives you cash back on many products (use code uwaf1c to get a \$10 welcome bonus).
- If you shop at Walmart, consider trying the Walmart Savings Catcher app. After you shop, submit your receipt through Walmart Pay. It looks for cheaper advertised prices in the area and refunds you the difference on an eGift Card.
- The Flipp app is the easiest way to compare prices in your area. You can look at all the sales flyers in one place. Plus you can search for a specific item (like 'chicken breasts') and it'll show you how much it's priced for at all the stores in your community.

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6 Compare prices while you shop

While shopping, compare the per unit prices. There's usually a sticker on the shelf that will give the price per ounce (\$_./oz.) Your best value is the lowest price per ounce or count. Sometimes it's the biggest container, but not necessarily.

7 Check out the clearance section

Most stores have a few 'clearance' areas, where they sell slightly dented products, or bread and produce that are approaching their expiration dates. You can save a lot by buying items with slight imperfections.

8 Base your menu on what's on sale

Since you've looked at the sales ads (or used the Flipp app) to see which store has the best price on your favorite meat and produce, create your meal plan based on those sale items. Mostly just buy what is on sale, and stock up on deeply discounted items when possible. The biggest savings will come from those weekly sale prices.

9 Buy produce in season

When produce is 'in season,' it is at the absolute cheapest price. It also tastes the best, and has the most nutrients. The front page of your sales flyer generally shows the discounted seasonal produce. Some produce (like berries) can be prepped and frozen when cheapest, so you never have to pay inflated, off-season prices.

10 Only shop once a week

Even when you go to the store with a nicely prepared list, it's so easy to make impulse purchases. The fewer trips you take to the store, the less money you'll spend.

Whenever possible, shop by yourself. When more people go to the store with you, it is more likely for unexpected items to end up in your cart.

Another option is to order your groceries online and pick them up at the store. You can see your total as you create your order, and aren't walking up and down aisles, throwing in extra stuff. Many stores offer the 'shop for you' service for \$5 or less.