

DOING MORE WITH LESS

Affordable and Healthy Eating for Your Family



Staying within a limited budget when planning healthy family meals can be a challenge! Read on for ideas on how to eat well even if you don't have a lot of money to spend on food.

Vegetables and Fruit



- Vegetables and fruit are essential for good health and provide important nutrients. Dark green and orange varieties have greater nutritional value so include these often in your meals.

Saving Tips

Frozen or canned vegetables and fruit can be as nutritious as fresh. They are an economical option year round, especially when fresh is not available.

Milk and Alternatives



- Milk products are important for growing children as they provide bone building nutrients. Good choices include fluid or powdered milk, fortified soy beverages, yogurt and cheese.

Saving Tips

Skim milk powder is less expensive and just as nutritious as fluid milk. Use skim milk powder with water in place of regular milk in recipes. Buy large size containers of yogurt instead of individual packs. Shred cheese yourself to save money.

Follow these tips based on Canada's Food Guide* to get the most value from your dollar when shopping for and cooking family meals.

Grain Products



- Oatmeal, brown rice and whole grain breads and cereals give you more nutrients for your food dollar and are a sure way to add fibre to your meals.

Saving Tips

Consider buying day old bread to make toast. Buy oatmeal and rice in large bags and avoid instant products which cost more.

Meats and Alternatives



- There are many ways to get protein in your meals without meat. Beans, lentils and tofu are inexpensive options. Canned fish, eggs and peanut butter are also good alternatives to meat.

Saving Tips

Buy dried beans, peas or lentils in bags and prepare them yourself rather than buying canned. Go for less expensive cuts of meats such as stewing beef, flank steak, ground beef, whole chicken, thighs and legs.

* Learn more about Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Simple tips to stretch your dollar

- Make a shopping list based on your meal plan to make sure you buy only what you need.
- Check newspapers and flyers for items on sale and stock up.
- Use coupons to save money on items you usually buy. Find coupons online, in newspapers, in magazines and at your local grocery store.
- Look for store brand products as they tend to cost less.
- If you are able, buy larger size packages if you can use the food before the "best before" date.
- Freeze extra food items or leftovers to seal in freshness and maintain nutritional value for a later date.
- Shop at grocery stores or farmer's markets instead of convenience stores which tend to have higher prices for grocery staples.
- Frozen foods can offer meal time flexibility; use what you need and return the rest to the freezer.



Family Meals Made Easy

It's amazing the options you have to make wholesome family meals using a few basic ingredients. With some creativity you can enjoy variety while sticking to a tight budget. These family-friendly recipes can be made by children ages 12 years and up. Enjoy!

Tuna (or Salmon) Casserole

Serves 4–6

- 2 cups (500 mL) dry pasta shells or macaroni
- 2 cans (170 g) tuna or salmon
- 1 can (10 oz/284 mL) condensed cream soup such as broccoli, mushroom or chicken
- 1–2 cups (250–500 mL) frozen green peas or other favourite vegetable
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk made from skim milk powder
- 1 cup (250 mL) shredded cheese
- pepper

1. Cook pasta in boiling water for 7–10 minutes or until tender. Drain.
2. Combine tuna, soup, frozen green peas, and milk. Mix with pasta in casserole dish. Sprinkle with cheese.
3. Bake uncovered in oven for 30 minutes at 350 °F (180 °C).

Use the recipe above without the pasta to make the following recipes:

Baked Tuna Enchiladas—Divide tuna mixture among 10 small (34 g) whole wheat flour tortillas + top with 1 cup (250 mL) salsa + shredded cheese. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 °F (180 °C).

Creamed Tuna on Toast—Heat tuna mixture + serve on whole wheat toast + top with shredded cheese, if desired.

Stretching Your Meals

Tomato Lentil Soup

Serves 4–6

- 1 vegetable or chicken bouillon cube or 1 can (10 oz/284 mL) chicken broth
- 1 cup (250 mL) water
- 1 cup (250 mL) carrots (2 to 3), chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 can (28 oz/796 mL) tomatoes, whole or diced
- 1 can (19 oz/540 mL) lentils
- 1 tsp (5 mL) dried basil
- ½ tsp (2 mL) spice of your choice (curry, cumin, chili powder)
- pepper to taste

1. In large saucepan add bouillon cube or broth, water and carrots. Cover and cook on medium heat for 10 minutes.
2. Stir in garlic, tomatoes, lentils, basil, cumin and pepper.
3. Bring to a boil then turn down to simmer, covered, for about 10 minutes until carrots are softened. Stir occasionally.

Chili Con Carne—Omit bouillon cube and water. Substitute 1 can (19 oz/540 mL) kidney beans for the can of lentils. Add ¾ pound (375 g) cooked ground beef + 1 tbsp (15 mL) chili powder. Cook on low uncovered for an additional 30 minutes.

Minestrone Soup—Substitute 1 can (19 oz/540 mL) red or white kidney beans for the can of lentils. Add ½ cup (125 mL) small pasta to the last 10 minutes of cooking time.

Stretching Your Meals