



Can you afford to eat healthy?

WHAT'S TRENDING | Paula Hendricks

Spring is here and the fresh produce is looking delicious. But buying organic foods, fresh produce and shopping at high-end grocery stores can be quite expensive and cost-prohibitive. As a result, more and more people are heading to the big box warehouse chains like Costco looking to save.

The downside to big box shopping can be the super-sized portions you have to buy, which can lead you to eating larger portions or letting food go to waste. This can be an expensive burden on both your wallet and waist. You also don't want to spend your whole paycheck at Whole Foods, but you do want to budget for high quality fish, meats and cheeses.

Contrary to popular belief, you can grocery shop for healthy foods, buy organic and save money at the same time. With just a bit of planning, you can be on your way to becoming a savvy shopper. I know. Planning, prepping and cooking isn't always fun — but it is necessary. Once you have your master plan, shopping will be that much easier. Below are some suggestions.

- Create a template on your computer for your local supermarket items, Whole Foods, warehouse shopping, Costco, farmer's market, Target, etc. This way you can print it out each week. Also include a 7-day meal plan template including breakfast, lunch and eating out. Think sending your teens to do the shopping with an organized list.
- Take a monthly inventory of the basics. Think seasonings, almond flour, olive oil, and non-food items, such as snack bags, paper towels, dish soap.
- Prepare a shopping list for both the discount warehouse store and your local market based on your 7-day meal plan. Think fish at Whole Foods and organic ground beef at Costco.
- Buy fresh meats and produce that you will eat in the next three to four days. Plans can change. Don't overbuy and let food go to waste.
- Don't forget about lunch. Get enough food for dinner meals that can be prepared for lunch the next day. This will save you big bucks. Think Taco Tuesday, Bolognese sauce, Burger Night.
- Buy staple foods for the freezer. Think quick meals from frozen shrimp, ground meat, chicken breasts.
- Buy for breakfast. This is typically a meal that is skipped because of a lack of planning. I'm not talking about processed cereal or sugary muffins. Think grab n' go hard-boiled eggs, protein smoothies, cheese sticks.
- Snack time. Think almonds, pumpkin seeds, wasabi seaweed chips, raspberries, individually-sized Greek yogurts, protein bars, peanut butter, ham/cheese rollups.



- Choose wisely when buying organic produce. If you don't eat the skin, it doesn't need to be organic. Think avocados, bananas, winter squash, garlic. Do buy organic broccoli, strawberries, tomatoes, spinach — they taste better.
- Don't shop when hungry. Think "overspend."
- Buy foods on sale but only if you'll eat them. Think about getting tricked by the "Buy 10 for \$10." You get the same deal when you buy just five.
- Shop for foods when they are in season for better flavor and lower cost. Think artichokes in the spring, tomatoes in the summer, apples in the fall.
- Read nutritional labels. Organic doesn't always equal healthy. Organic cereals. Organic cookies. Organic chips. Think, "really?"
- Don't want to create your own grocery list? Go to grocerylists.org and use their editable template to personalize to your liking.

Think happy shopping and healthy eating.

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