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Well-balanced bites on a budget

Eating healthy does not have to be expensive. With a little planning and smart shopping, it is possible to create balanced, nutritious meals while staying within your budget. With thoughtful planning and smart food choices, it is possible to prepare nutritious and satisfying meals without overspending. Small changes in shopping, cooking, and meal preparation can make a big difference in both your health and your budget.

Tips in mind when eating well on a budget:

- **Plan ahead** by making a grocery list and sticking to it
- **Avoid shopping while hungry** to prevent impulse purchases
- **Use digital coupons** and choose store or private label brands
- **Compare prices per unit** and check lower shelves for better deals
- **Explore local and international markets** for affordable options
- **Prepare meals and ingredients ahead of time** to save money and reduce waste
- **Cook staple foods in batches** and mix and match meals throughout the week
- **Keep your pantry stocked** with basic ingredients for easy meal preparation
- **Try a flexitarian approach** by focusing on plant-based foods and eating meat occasionally
- **Include more** vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, and seeds
- **Use plant-based proteins** such as eggs, yogurt, tofu, and beans
- **Make meat a smaller part of the meal** instead of the main focus
- **Try strategies** like Meatless Monday or blending plant foods with meat
- **Use the “blending” method** by replacing part of the meat with plant-based ingredients
- **Add vegetables** like mushrooms, spinach, or peppers to dishes
- **Incorporate grain** such as brown rice, oats, or quinoa
- **Use legumes** like beans, chickpeas, or lentils to stretch meals
- **Use leftovers creatively** by making frittatas, soups, stir-fries, power bowls, or salads
- **Save money on fruits and vegetables:**
 - Buy produce that is in season
 - Choose frozen or canned options when needed
 - Buy whole produce instead of pre-cut
 - Select canned fruit in juice and watch the sodium in canned vegetables
 - Use the entire fruit or vegetable to reduce waste
- **Choose budget-friendly staples:**
 - Whole grains like oats, brown rice, and whole wheat products
 - Affordable proteins like eggs, beans, peanut butter, yogurt, canned seafood, and chicken thighs



Eating well on a budget is possible by planning ahead, choosing affordable, nutrient-dense foods, and using simple strategies to reduce waste and maximize your meals.



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To view the recording of this session, visit the EatWell Bites webpage:

<https://workwell.usc.edu/events/eatwell-bites/>


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