

# Nutrition Matters

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## Best buys - eat well for less

This fact sheet will give you tips and information on getting the best value for your money when buying foods from Canada's Food Guide's four food groups. The Food Guide is a tool that will help you eat healthy and get all the nutrients your body needs. Refer to the Food Guide for serving sizes and the number of Food Guide servings you and your family should be having.

### Tips for saving money on food

- Plan ahead – use the foods you have at home first.
- Check weekly store flyers for sales – most grocery stores will price match if you show them the cheaper price in the flyer. Check with your local store for their price match policy.
- If you have a smart phone or tablet, try out some of the price matching apps available.
- Create a shopping list – and stick to it.
- Compare price—Compare the price of name brand, no name, and store brand. The lower cost brands often taste the same as the more expensive brands.
- Compare the price of the products using the unit price (price/100 mL), usually seen on the store shelf sticker, to find the best price
- Avoid shopping on an empty stomach. Hungry shoppers buy more than they need.
- Items at eye level may be more expensive. Look at the upper and lower shelves for better deals.
- Avoid buying at corner stores. You may be paying extra for the convenience.
- When unpacking and using your groceries make sure the newer and more fresh groceries get placed behind older groceries so the older groceries get used up first.
- Family-size packages may be cheaper but check the price per kilogram. If buying in large packages, store or freeze unused portions into smaller portions right away. You are not saving money if you are throwing it out.
- Make a stir fry, a casserole dish or pot of soup – this is a great way to use up the foods you already have at home



## How to buy vegetables and fruit for less

Vegetables and fruit are great sources of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Choose dark green and orange vegetables every day; they have many important nutrients.

### Frozen and canned vegetables and fruits

- Canned and frozen foods have almost the same nutrients as fresh vegetable and fruit.
- Drain and rinse canned vegetables to help wash off some of the salt or choose packages that say no added salt.
- Look for canned fruit packed in its own juice.
- Avoid vegetables that have breaded coatings or sauces. These cost more and are higher in fat and salt.
- Canned or frozen products are often lower cost when fruits and vegetables are not in season, especially in the winter months.

### Buy when fresh produce is in season

Fresh produce costs less when it is in season.

Check [Foodland Ontario Availability Guide](http://ontario.ca/foodland/page/availability-guide) at [ontario.ca/foodland/page/availability-guide](http://ontario.ca/foodland/page/availability-guide) to see when local Ontario vegetables and fruit are in season.

Visit farms where you can pick-your-own or your local farmers' market to buy large quantities of produce; preserve some by freezing or canning to use when fresh is not in season.

Grow your own vegetables. You can get started with a small garden or window box and some seeds. Easy-to-grow vegetables include tomatoes, beans, lettuce and herbs.

The chart below shows the main harvest season for different vegetables and fruits in Ontario and when it is available locally.

Produce	Months it is in season
Asparagus	August to October
Apples	August to June
Beets	July to April
Blueberries	July to September
Broccoli	June to October
Brussels sprouts	September to November
Cauliflower	June to November
Corn	July to October
Leeks	August to February
Peas (green)	June to July
Peaches	July to September
Peppers	July to October
Raspberries	July to September
Spinach	May to October
Squash	August to March
Strawberries	June to July
Sweet potatoes	January to December
Zucchini	July to October

## How to buy grain products for less

- Grain Products are a great source of energy, vitamins, minerals and fibre. Eat a variety of grains such as whole grain breads, cereals, pastas and brown rice. Try couscous, brown rice, quinoa or barley for variety.



## Pasta, rice and noodles

- Buy pasta and rice when it's on sale or at a bulk food store.
- Minute or fast cooking rice costs more and does not save much time when cooking.
- To make sure they last longer store pasta and rice in a cool and dry place.

## Breakfast cereals

- Choose hot cereals such as oatmeal and flavour with fruit, cinnamon or nuts instead. Avoid instant hot-cereals they are more expensive and often have added sugar.
- Look for higher-fibre cereals. The label should say at least 6 grams of fibre per serving. To increase the fibre in your cereal mix high-fibre cereals such as bran buds with a lower-fibre cereal. This will give you better nutrition for your dollar.

## Breads

- Check out the sale shelf. To make the bread last longer, place half of the loaf in the freezer until you need it.
- 100% whole wheat provides the best nutritional value for your dollar.

## How to buy milk and alternatives for less

Milk and Alternatives provide us with energy, calcium and protein. Choose lower-fat milk products (skim, 1% milk fat, or 2% milk fat) more often in order to give your body the nutrients it needs, with less fat and fewer calories.

## Milk and cream

- Buy low-fat milk in 4 litre bags or jugs; it's cheaper than buying cardboard cartons.
- Freeze milk for up to six weeks if you can't use what you have bought before the expiry date. Thaw in the refrigerator and shake it well before you open it.
- Milk in Canada does not contain growth hormones. Organic milk, fine-filtered milk and milk with added fatty acids are not needed and cost more.
- Use evaporated 2% milk instead of cream in recipes.
- Buy skim milk powder – when water is added it is easy to use in baking, or when making a white sauce.

## Cheese

- Buy cheese in large blocks and slice or grate it yourself.
- Sliced cheese may be cheaper at the deli counter than in packages; compare the price per gram and buy only the amount you need.
- Processed cheeses are a good source of calcium but they cost more and are higher in salt.
- Grate and freeze cheese if you can't use it before the expiry date.

## Yogurt

- Larger containers are less expensive than single-serving size or child-sized containers.
- Substitute plain yogurt for sour cream for a lower cost and healthier option.



## How to buy meat and alternatives for less

Meat and Alternatives are rich in protein, B vitamins, iron, zinc and magnesium. Red meats are the best source of iron. Choose leaner meats and poultry; remove all visible fat before cooking. Fish contains a healthy type of fat, plan to eat fish at least twice a week.

### Less expensive types of meat, poultry and fish

- Lean ground beef is a healthier choice, if buying less expensive regular or medium ground beef, drain the cooked meat to get rid of some fat.
- Stewing meat
- Pork shoulder
- Blade or flank steak
- Outside or inside or eye of round
- Chicken legs, thighs and drumsticks are generally less expensive than chicken breasts
- Canned tuna, salmon and sardines
- Frozen fish fillets such as Alaskan Pollock, Boston blue fish, haddock or ocean perch are lower cost.
- Prepared battered fish fillets or fish sticks are more expensive and are higher in fat. For a healthier option, use bread crumbs to make your own coating.
- To help save money, try meat alternatives in your meals.

- Meat alternatives such as eggs, tofu, peanut butter, canned beans, peas and lentils are your best buys.

## Cooking ideas

Less tender cuts of meat may cost less. They can be prepared using the following methods:

- Use moist cooking methods such as stewing, pot-roasting or braising.
- Pound the meat using a mallet or tenderizer before cooking.
- Marinate the meat overnight in the refrigerator.

### Basic marinade for meat, fish, poultry or vegetables

¼ cup (60 mL)	sodium-reduced soy sauce
¼ cup (60 mL)	vegetable oil
2	garlic cloves, minced
¼ cup (60 mL)	lemon juice

1. In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, vegetable oil, garlic and lemon juice.
2. Combine meat or vegetables and marinade in a sealed container or plastic bag. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours (or overnight). For safety, throw away any leftover marinade that has touched raw meat, fish, or poultry.

For more information and additional nutrition resources, visit our website at:  
[www.york.ca/nutrition](http://www.york.ca/nutrition)

You can speak to a registered dietitian at no cost by calling EatRight Ontario at: 1-877-510-5102 or by visiting: [www.ontario.ca/eatright](http://www.ontario.ca/eatright)