



CREATE A GROCERY GAME PLAN

GROCERY LIST

FRUITS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

GRAINS (BREADS, PASTAS, RICE, CEREALS)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

DAIRY (MILK, YOGURT, CHEESE)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

VEGETABLES

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

PROTEIN FOODS (MEAT, SEAFOOD, BEANS & PEAS, NUTS, EGGS)

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

OTHER

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

NOTES:



Eating better on a budget

Get the most for your budget! There are many ways to save money on the foods that you eat. The three main steps are planning before you shop, purchasing the items at the best price, and preparing meals that stretch your food dollars.

1 Plan, plan, plan!

Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or soups, which “stretch” expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you need to buy.



2 Get the best price

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales and coupons. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop. Look for specials or sales on meat and seafood—often the most expensive items on your list.

3 Compare and contrast

Locate the “Unit Price” on the shelf directly below the product. Use it to compare different brands and different sizes of the same brand to determine which is the best buy.

4 Buy in bulk

It is almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk. Smart choices are large containers of low-fat yogurt and large bags of frozen vegetables. Before you shop, remember to check if you have enough freezer space.



5 Buy in season

Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add to the freshness! If you are not going to use them all right away, buy some that still need time to ripen.

6 Convenience costs... go back to the basics

Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut fruits and vegetables, and take-out meals can often cost more than if you were to make them at home. Take the time to prepare your own—and save!

7 Easy on your wallet

Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein food. For vegetables, buy cabbage, sweet potatoes, or low-sodium canned tomatoes. As for fruits, apples and bananas are good choices.



8 Cook once...eat all week!

Prepare a large batch of favorite recipes on your day off (double or triple the recipe). Freeze in individual containers. Use them throughout the week and you won't have to spend money on take-out meals.

9 Get creative with leftovers

Spice up your leftovers—use them in new ways. For example, try leftover chicken in a stir-fry, over a garden salad, or in chili. Remember, throwing away food is throwing away your money!

10 Eating out

Restaurants can be expensive. Save money by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for “2 for 1” deals. Ask for water instead of ordering other beverages, which add to the bill.

REFRIGERATOR & FREEZER STORAGE CHART

Since product dates aren't a guide for safe use of a product, consult this chart and follow these tips. These short but safe time limits will help keep refrigerated food 40° F (4° C) from spoiling or becoming dangerous.

- Purchase the product before "sell-by" or expiration dates.
- Follow handling recommendations on product.
- Keep meat and poultry in its package until just before using.
- If freezing meat and poultry in its original package longer than 2 months, overwrap these packages with airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, or freezer paper, or place the package inside a plastic bag.

Because freezing 0° F (-18° C) keeps food safe indefinitely, the following recommended storage times are for quality only.

Product	Refrigerator	Freezer
Eggs		
Fresh, in shell	4 to 5 weeks	Don't freeze
Raw yolks, whites	2 to 4 days	1 year
Hard cooked	1 week	Don't freeze well
Liquid pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes, opened	3 days	Don't freeze
unopened	10 days	1 year
Mayonnaise, commercial		
Refrigerate after opening	2 months	Don't freeze
TV Dinners, Frozen Casseroles		
Keep frozen until ready to heat		3 to 4 months
Deli & Vacuum-Packed Products		
Store-prepared (or homemade) egg, chicken, tuna, ham, macaroni salads	3 to 5 days	Don't freeze well
Pre-stuffed pork & lamb chops, chicken breasts stuffed w/dressing	1 day	Don't freeze well
Store-cooked convenience meals	3 to 4 days	Don't freeze well
Commercial brand vacuum-packed dinners with USDA seal, unopened	2 weeks	Don't freeze well
Raw Hamburger, Ground & Stew Meat		
Hamburger & stew meats	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Ham, Corned Beef		
Corned beef in pouch with pickling juices	5 to 7 days	Drained, 1 month
Ham, canned, labeled "Keep Refrigerated," unopened	6 to 9 months	Don't freeze
opened	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, half	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, slices	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
Hot Dogs & Lunch Meats (in freezer wrap)		
Hot dogs, opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Lunch meats, opened package	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months

Product	Refrigerator	Freezer
Soups & Stews		
Vegetable or meat-added & mixtures of them	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Bacon & Sausage		
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Sausage, raw from pork, beef, chicken or turkey	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Smoked breakfast links, patties	7 days	1 to 2 months
Summer sausage labeled "Keep Refrigerated," unopened	3 months	1 to 2 months
opened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months
Fresh Meat (Beef, Veal, Lamb, & Pork)		
Steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months
Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
Variety meats (tongue, kidneys, liver, heart, chitterlings)	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Meat Leftovers		
Cooked meat & meat dishes	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Gravy & meat broth	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
Fresh Poultry		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Chicken or turkey, parts	1 to 2 days	9 months
Giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Cooked Poultry, Leftover		
Fried chicken	3 to 4 days	4 months
Cooked poultry dishes	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Pieces, plain	3 to 4 days	4 months
Pieces covered with broth, gravy	3 to 4 days	6 months
Chicken nuggets, patties	3 to 4 days	2 months
Fish & Shellfish		
Lean fish	1 to 2 days	6 months
Fatty fish	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
Cooked fish	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Smoked fish	14 days	2 months
Fresh shrimp, scallops, crawfish, squid	1 to 2 days	3 to 6 months
Canned seafood (Pantry, 5 years)	<i>after opening</i> 3 to 4 days	<i>out of can</i> 2 months



FOOD SAFETY TIPS

This holiday season and throughout the year, follow these 11 tips to reduce your risk of foodborne illness.



Suds up for 20 seconds.

Wash hands with soap under warm, running water before and after handling food to fight bacteria.



Start with a clean scene.

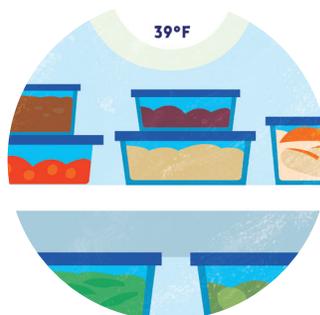
Wash cutting boards, dishes, countertops and utensils with hot water and soap.

Keep foods separate.
Separate raw meat, seafood and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags and in your refrigerator.



Don't rinse meat or poultry.

It is not a safety step and can spread germs around your kitchen.



Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or below.

Refrigerate leftovers in shallow containers within two hours.



Read and follow package cooking instructions.

The instructions may call for a conventional oven, convection oven, toaster oven or microwave, and it's important to use the proper appliance to ensure even cooking.



Rinse fresh fruits and veggies

under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.

Place meat and poultry in plastic bag provided at the meat counter,

and keep it in the plastic bag in your refrigerator at home.



Never defrost at room temperature.

Safely defrost food in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.



Use a food thermometer.

Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that causes illness.



Clean out your fridge.

No leftovers past 3-4 days.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



Leftover Makeovers and Refrigerator Reboots!

Alice Henneman, MS, RDN
Extension Educator

Got some leftovers languishing in your refrigerator? Or perhaps little bits of foods that are almost past prime time to eat. Read on if their next stop is likely to be the trash can.

Give new life to still edible foods with our gallery of delicious ideas. As a general rule, use leftovers within 3–4 days.

90 Billion Pounds of Wasted Food

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates about 90 billion pounds of edible food goes uneaten each year in homes and away-from-home eating places. This is equal to 123 times the weight of the Empire State Building and costs consumers about **\$370 per person** each year.

Here's the breakdown from USDA on how much food is wasted from each food grouping per person yearly:

- Grains: \$22
- Fruits: \$45
- Protein Foods (meat, poultry, fish, eggs and nuts): \$140
- Vegetables: \$66
- Dairy: \$60
- Added Fat & Sugar: \$37

Meat, Vegetables, Pasta



Search your fridge for foods that can be combined into a soup. Add extra cooked pasta or rice at the end, so it heats through but doesn't become mushy from overcooking. Keep some chicken stock or canned, diced tomatoes on-hand for a quick soup base.

Bread



Transform slightly dried-out bread into croutons: Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly brush top side of bread with olive oil. If desired, sprinkle with Italian seasoning. Cut into 1/2- to 3/4-inch cubes, leaving the crusts on. Spread in a single layer on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake on middle shelf of the oven for 5–10 minutes or until lightly browned and crisp. No need to turn croutons during baking.

Cheese



Use up those odds and ends of harder cheeses by shredding them with a grater or in a food processor. Check your refrigerator for other ingredients to include such as olives, pickles, pimientos, walnuts, red or green peppers, etc.; add low-fat mayonnaise to bind ingredients and use as a sandwich spread.

Fruit, Yogurt



Chop and combine those last pieces of fruit. Flavored or plain yogurt — perhaps sweetened with a little honey and a splash of vanilla — makes a tasty dressing. Other possible add-ins include the remainder of that package of nuts and those final bits of dried fruit.

continued on next page

Eggs



A general guideline is to use eggs within 3–5 weeks after purchasing them for best quality. Gain extra storage time

by boiling the eggs. Hard-cooked eggs, will keep in their shell for 7 days in a clean covered container in the fridge. They make a quick high quality protein source for a meal such as in main dish salads and sandwiches.

Assorted Produce

Toss assorted bits and pieces of produce lingering in the refrigerator and on your kitchen counter into a salad. Add the last of that bag of soon-to-be-limp lettuce; wedges cut from an almost overly ripe tomato and strips from that remaining half a pepper. Do



something “grate” and grate in some cabbage and carrots; while you’re at it, add some grated cheese. Mix in some leftover chicken chunks or add a can of tuna, and you’ll have a bountiful main dish salad!

CLEAN OUT THE FRIDGE AND CUPBOARDS CASSEROLE

(Makes 6 servings)

Make your own casserole from what’s on-hand using these basic ingredients. Select food(s) from each category or use your own favorites.

Starch — select ONE:

- 2 cups uncooked pasta (macaroni, penne, spiral, bow tie), **COOKED**
- 1 cup uncooked long-grain white or brown rice, **COOKED**
- 4 cups uncooked noodles, **COOKED**

Protein — select ONE:

- 2 cups cooked ground beef
- 2 cups cooked and diced chicken, turkey, ham, beef or pork
- 2 cups chopped hard-cooked egg
- 2 cans (6–8 ounce) fish or seafood, flaked
- 2 cups cooked or canned dry beans (kidney, etc.)

Vegetable — select ONE:

- 1 package (10 ounce) thawed and drained frozen spinach, broccoli, green beans, green peas
- 1 can (16 ounce) green beans, peas, carrots, corn, drained
- 2 cups sliced fresh zucchini

Sauce — select ONE:

- 2 cups white sauce or 1 can sauce-type soup (mushroom, celery, cheese, tomato, etc.) mixed with milk to make 2 cups
- 1 can (16 ounce) diced tomatoes with juice

Flavor — select ONE or MORE:

- 1/2 cup chopped celery, 1/4 cup chopped onion, 1/4 cup sliced black olives
- 1–2 teaspoons mixed dried leaf herbs (basil, thyme, marjoram, tarragon)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Topping — select ONE or MORE (if desired after heating, place on top):

- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup shredded Swiss, Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/4 cup buttered bread crumbs
- 1/4–1/2 cup canned fried onion rings

Combine in a buttered 2 to 2-1/2 quart casserole dish. Cover and bake at 350°F for about 50 minutes to 1 hour or microwave using 50% power for about 15–30 minutes, rotating or stirring as necessary. Heat until steaming hot (165°F) throughout. Return casserole with topping(s), uncovered, to oven for about 10 minutes or to microwave for about 2 minutes.

How to Make a Casserole from What's on Hand

Alice Henneman, MS, RD, UNL Lancaster County Extension Educator, ahenneman1@unl.edu

Create delicious casseroles from this basic recipe.

Make-Your-Own" Casserole (Makes 6 servings)

General Directions: Select food(s) from each category or use your own favorites. Combine in a buttered 2- to 2 1/2- quart casserole dish. Cover and bake at 350 F for about 50 minutes to 1 hour or microwave using 50% power for about 15 to 30 minutes, rotating or stirring as necessary. Heat until steaming hot (165 F) throughout.

Starch - select ONE:

- 2 cups uncooked pasta (macaroni, penne, spiral, bow tie), COOKED
- 1 cup uncooked long-grain white or brown rice, COOKED
- 4 cups uncooked noodles, COOKED

Protein - select ONE:

- 2 cups cooked ground beef
- 2 cups cooked and diced chicken, turkey, ham, beef, or pork
- 2 cups chopped hard-cooked egg
- 2 (6 to 8-oz.) cans fish or seafood, flaked
- 2 cups cooked or canned dry beans (kidney, etc.)

Vegetable - select ONE:

- 1 (10-oz.) pkg. thawed and drained frozen spinach, broccoli, green beans, green peas
- 1 (16-oz.) can green beans, peas, carrots, corn, drained
- 2 cups sliced fresh zucchini

Sauce - select ONE:

- 2 cups white sauce or 1 can sauce-type soup (mushroom, celery, cheese, tomato, etc.) mixed with milk to make 2 cups
- 1 (16-oz.) can diced tomatoes with juice

Flavor - select ONE or MORE:

- 1/2 cup chopped celery, 1/4 cup chopped onion, 1/4 cup sliced black olives
- 1 - 2 teaspoons mixed dried leaf herbs (basil, thyme, marjoram, tarragon)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Topping- select ONE or MORE: (If desired after heating, place on top)

- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup shredded Swiss, Cheddar, or Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/4 cup buttered bread crumbs
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup canned fried onion rings

Return casserole with topping(s), uncovered, to oven for about 10 minutes or to microwave for about 2 minutes.



Image courtesy of
National Cancer Institute

Know how. Know now.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.