

Ways to save at the grocery store

Use coupons wisely

Coupons really can save you money, if you know how to use them. Clip coupons only for the things you need or use often – not for unnecessary junk food.

Don't be fooled by deals like 2 for \$1

You don't have to buy two. If the ad says "Buy two for \$5" and you want only one, you can still get it for \$2.50. If the item doesn't automatically scan that way, point out the sale price to the cashier.

Beware of displays at the end of aisles

Grocery stores often feature sale items at the end of the aisles. But you won't always save money on these items. Look inside the aisle to see if there are better deals.

Stick to the edges of the store

The healthy, less processed foods are at the edges of the grocery store: dairy, fruits and vegetables, meats, etc. The stores are designed to make you walk past the high-priced, less healthy items on your way to the milk and bread.

Always check the unit price

Buying bulk isn't always cheaper. There are products which actually cost more per unit when packaged in bulk. Always check the unit price (per-unit, per-ounce or per-pound). If it's not cheaper to buy bulk, go with the smaller packaging.

Avoid lavish displays

Marketers know how to get you to spend money. For example, cheese is almost always less expensive in the deli than from the tantalizing display of hors d'oeuvres set in the middle of the aisle.

Search the upper/lower shelves

The eye-level products are often the most expensive. The best deals for you will probably be found on the highest/lowest shelves. Remember: if it's looking right at you, it's probably more expensive.

Do buy generic and frozen

Generic items almost always taste the same as brand names and you'll save in price. Frozen vegetables and fruit are as healthy as fresh and you don't have to worry about them spoiling.



Credit: adapted from content from University of Nebraska Student Money Management Center.

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Avoid convenience items

Convenient items such as pre-cut vegetables, packaged salads, and pre-made meals cost much more than the sum of their ingredients. Take the time to cut, cook, and do it yourself and you'll save.

Identify loss leaders

Loss leaders are products that stores sell at a loss to attract customers. For example, the store may advertise bananas or milk at a very inexpensive price, but while you are at the store to buy these items, they hope you will buy other things as well. If you're at the store to buy an advertised item, stop there. Don't buy other stuff you don't need.

Shop sale days

Some stores try to boost their mid-week sales on a Tuesday or Wednesday. See if your favourite grocery store offers mid-week deals and shop accordingly.

Avoid peak hours

The more time you spend at the store, the better the chance for unnecessary spending. Plan to shop mid-morning or late evening and you'll avoid crowds.

Holiday shopping

The pricing of perishables sometimes goes up when the holidays get closer. If you have a freezer, stock up before the holidays or when the items you need are on special.



NOTE: Sometimes the best bargain isn't the lowest price

There are times when you want to spend a little more on items that are important to you. For instance, a loaf of really good whole-grain bread that is tasty and nutritious. Saving is great, but your health is worth a little extra for the best quality, most nutritious product.

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