



In times of rising inflation, one area where households feel the pinch is spending more on groceries. Try these tips to reduce your monthly grocery bill.

Make a list. Write out your shopping list before leaving the house to help avoid impulse buying of nonessential foods.

Look for sales and coupons. Check out the weekly grocery store circulars, which feature the latest discount prices and coupons. Plan your weekly meals around these deals.

Shop your pantry. Before heading to the store, take inventory of what you already have at home to avoid mistakenly buying multiples of the same item. You'll also reduce the chance of food going bad before you remember to use it.

Be picky with produce. In-season fresh fruits and vegetables cost less and taste better. If you are buying frozen fruits and vegetables, look for options that are lower in added sugar and salt.

Make protein substitutions. When prices for meat, poultry and fish surge, substitute cheaper protein sources such as beans, lentils, eggs or chickpeas.

Put it on ice. If you find a bargain, fill your freezer with it. Egg whites and most meats can stay preserved in your freezer for up to 12 months. If buying in bulk, divide the meat into smaller quantities before freezing.

Skip name brands. Store brands — also known as generic or private label brands — can be up to 15% cheaper than the national brands and are often produced by the same company.

Check Dates. To ensure freshness and long shelf life, look at expiration and sell-by dates. If you are eating the item right away, look for clearance stickers on soon-to-expire products.

Try damaged goods. Many big chain grocery stores keep a rack near the back of the store that displays discontinued or damaged items, which can be a source of big savings.

Don't shop when you're hungry. When you go to the grocery store on an empty stomach, you are more likely to buy less nutritious food and overspend on your grocery budget. Eating a small snack before you go shopping can curb your hunger.

Source: [Los Angeles Times - www.latimes.com](http://www.latimes.com) (Adapted)

March 2023

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