

NUTRITION TO GO

Meal Planning 101

Why Meal Plan?

Planning meals ahead of time can help you save money and time at the grocery store, and makes it easier to eat healthy.



Before you shop:

1. Make note of what you already have in your freezer, cabinets and refrigerator.
2. Look at store flyers for coupons and to find out what is already on sale.
3. Stock up on kitchen staples like frozen vegetables, beans, canned tuna, brown rice and pasta.
4. Try to add new recipes into your meal planning! This will help you to eat a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, and keep cooking fun. Look at the SNAP-Ed website for low-cost healthy recipes. (web.uri.edu/snaped)
5. Write a grocery list before going shopping.

Canned and frozen vegetables often cost less and last longer than fresh!



When you shop:

- Stick to your shopping list so you only purchase what you need.
- Buy store brand items, as they cost less and are just as nutritious as the name brand products.
- Make sure you fill up on a healthy snack before shopping. People often buy more food at the market when they are hungry!
- Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables can cost less than fresh. Look for low-sodium or no salt added canned vegetables, and fruits canned in natural juice.



Buy produce seasonally to get good quality produce at a lower price!

After you shop:

- If you do not have time to cook every day, pick a few days a week to prepare meals. You can make extra portions to eat on the days you do not cook. This also makes the healthy choice of a home-cooked meal easier than going out to buy fast food.
- Find creative ways to use leftovers in other meals.
- Freeze meal leftovers to eat later.
- When stumped on what to prepare, focus on making half of your plate fruits and vegetables for a healthy meal!



UNIT PRICES COMPARISON

Grocery stores carry many brands of the same item, so it can be helpful to look at the **unit price** to help decide which is the better price.

Product	Unit Price	Total Price
Name Brand Cereal 16 oz.	\$0.19/oz.	\$3.04
Store Brand Cereal 24 oz	\$0.14/oz.	\$3.36

Even though the store brand cereal is more expensive, the unit price is less, making the store brand the better buy. Unit prices are a great way to make sure you are getting the best deal at the market.

Better buy!

PASTA WITH GREENS AND BEANS

Servings per recipe: 7
Serving size: 1 cup
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

2 cups uncooked whole wheat pasta
 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
 1 tablespoon minced garlic
 1 package frozen spinach
 OR 1 (14 oz) can
 1 (15 oz) can diced tomatoes with juice, no added salt
 1 (15 oz) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon pepper
 ½ cup grated parmesan cheese

Nutrition Facts

7 servings per container		
Serving size		1 cup
Amount per serving		
Calories		170
		% Daily Value*
Total Fat 6g		8%
Saturated Fat 2g		10%
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 10mg		3%
Sodium 350mg		15%
Total Carbohydrate 21g		8%
Dietary Fiber 5g		18%
Total Sugars 2g		
Includes 0g Added Sugars		0%
Protein 10g		
Vitamin D 0mcg		0%
Calcium 200mg		15%
Iron 2mg		10%
Potassium 394mg		8%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Directions:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions. Set aside.
2. Heat oil in a large pan. Add garlic and cook on low until soft.
3. Add spinach, tomatoes with juice, beans, salt and pepper. When the mixture bubbles, cook on low heat (uncovered) for 5 minutes.
4. Add pasta and parmesan to spinach mixture. Toss well and serve.

GROCERY LIST TIP

Try sorting your grocery list by MyPlate food groups (vegetables, fruit, protein, grain and dairy). This will help you get enough of all the different groups!

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND

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