



NORTH DAKOTA

FNP News

Family Nutrition Program

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Food Dollars and Sen\$e



We're tempted by many things in grocery stores. Who can resist the delicious aroma of baking bread or colorful displays filled with ready-to-eat deli foods?

On our way around the store, free samples of food might coax us to add items to our grocery carts. In fact, about three out of four people who sample food in grocery stores actually buy the food.

We may be tempted by food displays at the end of the aisles, too. These often are name-brand foods, which aren't always the wise buy. Name-brand items are often placed at eye level on grocery shelves, too — so you see them first.

When we finally roll our carts to the checkout stand, we may be enticed by candy, gum and lots of nonfood items like magazines.

Are You S-t-r-e-t-c-h-i-n-g Your Food Dollar?

Our food dollars can be stretched with some planning, but first we need to know how much we're spending on food. Save your grocery receipts and answer these questions:

- How much money did you spend at grocery stores last month? \$ _____
- How much of the money was spent on food? \$ _____
- How much did you spend on food away from home last month? \$ _____

Tried and True Shopping Tips

If you'd like to trim your food budget, here's some good news. By following these tips, you just might reduce your grocery shopping bill by 15 percent or more.

Check (✓) the ones you already use — and the ones you will try in the next month:

- Don't shop when you're hungry.
- If possible, shop alone.
- Plan weekly menus using sale items featured in store ads.
- Always use a list — and stick to it!
- Be familiar with the store layout to save time. Go down the aisles that include items on your list.
- For quick trips, shop the perimeter of the store where staples like milk, fresh produce and bread are located.
- Clip coupons only for the things you need. If the coupon is for an item you would generally use, look for stores that double coupons.
- Compare prices. "Unit pricing" (cost per ounce) is used in many stores. It will quickly let you know whether the regular-priced, super-size package is a better deal than the sale-priced, regular-size package. Unit pricing is usually listed on the shelf edge in front of the food.



For more information about food budgeting, contact your local county office of the NDSU Extension Service.

Question:

We recently received an assortment of spices for a gift. Could you provide some tips on using and storing them?

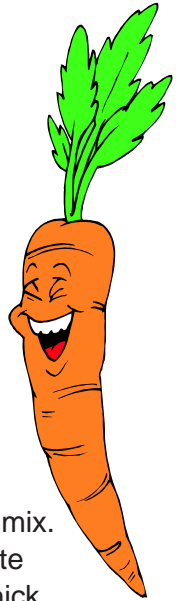
Spices are a good way to add flavor to foods while cutting back on fat, sugar and salt. It's best to start with tested recipes from cookbooks when using spices. If you double a recipe, don't double the spices! For a doubled recipe, start with 1.5 times the recipe amount. For example, use 1½ teaspoon of spice instead of 1 teaspoon of spice in a doubled recipe. You can always add more to taste.

Label your spice containers with the date of purchase. Store them in a dark, dry place away from humid, warm areas like sinks, stoves and dishwashers. Getting spices damp will cause them to lose their flavor, so avoid adding spices directly from the container into a steaming pot of food. Ground spices usually are of best quality if used within a year, while whole spices (like whole cloves or cinnamon sticks) retain their freshness about two years. To check if a spice is still flavorful, try putting a small amount in your hand and smelling it. If a spice smells strong and flavorful, it probably will provide flavor in your recipe.



Raisin Carrot Salad

- 1½ c. shredded carrots
- ¾ c. chopped apples (about 1 apple)
- ⅓ c. raisins
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- ⅓ c. reduced fat mayonnaise or salad dressing
- Low-fat milk (optional)
- Toasted slivered almonds (optional)
- Cinnamon (optional)



In a mixing bowl, combine carrots, apples and raisins. Sprinkle with lemon juice and mix. Add mayonnaise and stir gently. Refrigerate at least 2 hours. If mixture becomes too thick, add a small amount of milk to thin. Sprinkle with toasted almonds and a little cinnamon if desired.

Makes 6 servings.

Each serving contains 113 calories, 3.6 g fat, 21 g carbohydrate and 2 g fiber.