

PRESS RELEASE

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Spend Less on Food

Feeling the sting of the suffering economy? Spending too much money can cause stress within a family. Many people are cutting back, trying to save money however they can. One way families can cut spending is by making smart food shopping choices.

You can begin by finding recipes that respect your food budget. Many websites offer tasty recipes that do not cost a lot of money. The United States Department of Agriculture's recipe finder website offers ways to make everything from appetizers to desserts. The recipes come with nutrition information, and most cost less than \$1 per serving.

Go to USDA's recipe finder site (<http://recipefinder.nal.usda.gov/>), and search for recipes by ingredients, cost, name, nutrition information and many other categories. You can also rate recipes on the site, or add your own if you know of a dish that is missing.

Making smart choices at the supermarket can also help families save substantial amounts of money every year.

Dr. Cindy Fitch, Director of Families and Health Unit at West Virginia University Extension Service, advises people that they can save a great deal of money by carefully choosing which fruits and vegetables they purchase.

"It can be easy to save money if you buy fresh foods in season, and do more cooking from scratch," she said. "It's important to get fruits and vegetables, and sometimes the canned or frozen kind can be less expensive."

Flipping through the newspaper can also help you save a few bucks. Many stores advertise sales or include coupons in local newspapers. Your taking advantage of these deals can add up to big savings over time.

Many people spend too much money at the supermarket simply because they do not know what they need. By checking your recipes and keeping a list of items you need, you can stop yourself from making unnecessary purchases.

Another way to save money is by keeping food safe, which prevents illness and eliminates waste. By storing ripe fruit and fresh cut vegetables in the refrigerator, using leftovers within three days and using older cans of food first, you can prevent food from being wasted.

Using leftover foods in different soups or casseroles and freezing leftovers for later use are ways to keep food safe and save money. Finch recommends cooking in large quantities to help save on food later. "If you can, cook a little extra food," she said. "That way, you can freeze some of it and use it for lunches later on."

For more tips on how to keep food safe, check the national eXtension Web site (www.extension.org/pages/Stretch_Your_Food_Dollar:_Keep_Food_Safe).

To read or download free publications on keeping food safe and on planning and preparing nutritious meals, go to the WVU Extension Service's homepage and select the food and health section (www.ext.wvu.edu).

Spending less on food can be made easier with a little effort. Planning menus, keeping grocery lists, shopping for deals and sharing healthy meals are great ways for families to work together to lessen the impact of the current economy.

To learn about the WVU Extension Service and sponsored programs, contact Janice Heavner at the Pendleton County Office of the WVU Extension Service at 304-358-2286, jeheavner@mail.wvu.edu or <http://pendleton.ext.wvu.edu>.