



**Welcome to the Workweek Lunch Guide To Saving Money On Groceries!** These tips come from personal experience and research I've done about how to cut down on grocery shopping costs. You can choose to use just one or all of these tips the next time you food shop. My personal goal with this guide is to help you save \$20 on your next grocery haul. Most of these tips should work no matter where you are in the world!

## Make A Plan So No Ingredient Goes Unused

I know it can be a tall order... but do you know what you have going on next week? Any catered lunches? Any social stuff after work? **You can save lots of money at the grocery store by planning around the events in your schedule where there's definitely food involved.**

For example, my boyfriend and I have a date night every Friday. We never miss it, so I know that meal is taken care of. **Without a plan, we end up either buying more than we need OR not enough.** Without a plan, you're GUESSING how much food you'll need for the week. That's bad news for your budget because you'll likely end up buying too much or too little.

[Here's the meal plan template I use to write out all of my meals for the week.](#)

Once you know how many meals you need for the week, you can accurately choose recipes or ingredients to fit that amount. In an ideal world, you'll end the week with a nearly empty fridge... because you actually ate all the food you bought! Wouldn't that be amazing?

If choosing recipes is overwhelming, consider joining the [WWL Meal Prep Program](#) which takes care of tips 1 and 3 for you!

**The bottom line:** When you waste food, you waste money. Having a plan (recipes, number of meals you need) helps you avoid wasting food, but you *HAVE to make the plan before you make your grocery list.*

## Shop Your Pantry And Freezer To Use Up What You Already Have

My favorite money saving hack: **use what you already have!** This helps you not buy extras of what you already have AND helps you build meals around what's already in your kitchen.

Take a peek in **your pantry, the back of your fridge** and deep inside **your freezer**, past all the ice cream. *You might find extra meals in there you can defrost* (one less thing to cook!), frozen chicken or an unopened bag of peas to use up (that's usually what I find).

Rice? Chicken? Peas? That's the foundation of a delicious stir fry right there.

**The bottom line:** By using what you already have in your kitchen, you can save A LOT of money at the grocery store. This is also another reason to keep your pantry and freezer stocked with staples!

## Write Your Grocery List (And Make It Digital!)

OK. You know how many meals you want to cook. You know **WHAT** those meals are. And you know what you already have to make them.



That leaves us with one thing left to do: write that grocery list!

Your list is your grocery store spirit guide, **guiding you AWAY from impulse buys** (which are bad news for your budget) and toward items you actually need.

**When you write your list, write it by category.** List produce first, then pantry items, dairy items, meat items, etc. This helps you easily navigate the store (and your list) so you don't have to run back and forth between the sections or lose precious time wandering down the aisles.

The most important thing though is to **make your list digital**. Email it to yourself, take a photo of it if you do it by hand, or keep it on a Google sheet like I do.

By the way, if you hate writing grocery lists or have trouble putting it together, the [WWL Program](#) can take care of that for you.

**The bottom line:** Making a grocery list is the best way to avoid impulse buys, which are the purchases that make grocery shopping so expensive. Put your list on your phone somehow so you can't forget it at home.

## Plug Your Grocery List Into Your Favorite Store's Website

Of all the tips I share in this guide... THIS one is the most effective to save money in the grocery store from my experience.

These days, almost every store has a website where you can select your location and build your grocery list online. This may be part of a delivery option, but here we're just using it to see the prices of what's on your grocery list (and find the sales!).

**After your list is written, go to your grocery store's site and plug the whole thing in.** Yes, it takes work and time... but it also saves you so much money.

Without leaving your house, you can get a really good sense of what your grocery list total will be AND you can **see what brands are on sale!**

The difference per product may only be fifty cents to a dollar which doesn't seem like much... but it's exciting when you save that much money on half of what's on your list! You'll potentially end up spending only \$30 on groceries for the week instead of \$60.

**This process helps you learn which products are way more expensive than you thought.** If you're especially budget-conscious, this process might help you avoid overspending in the store. When you do your research at home, you can still easily change your plan.

**The bottom line:** Plug your grocery list into your grocery store's website and you'll see roughly how much it will cost you and you'll see what's on sale and what isn't.



## Shop Produce In Season To Eat Fruits And Veggies On A Budget

Produce in season is usually what's abundant in the grocery store/easy to get, therefore it's on sale!

For example, in the winter blueberries can be \$7, but in the summer the price drops to \$3 here in North America. **The smart, cost-effective move in the grocery store is to focus on what's in season and build meals around that.**

You can easily find out what's in season by Googling it right now! Search "produce in season in [where you live + what season it is]" and I'm sure you'll find resources to help you navigate that.

People who don't know to shop in season are the ones that say healthy eating is expensive. But we know better! Getting fruits and vegetables on your plate doesn't have to break the bank.

**The bottom line:** Knowing what produce is in season makes you savvier, smarter shopper (and more creative cook).

## Don't Buy Organic If You're Trying To Save Money

Before you dump this guide in the garbage for telling you to not buy organic, hear me out.

My philosophy is that **it's better to eat a piece of fruit in general than NOT eat a piece of fruit just because it isn't organic.** Organic produce is expensive. It's one of those "nice to have" things, not a "need to have" if you're on a strict budget.

If you're someone that really values purchasing organic foods and can afford it without too much stress, then keep doing it.

And if you're trying to really cut grocery costs down now and choose to not buy organic, *that doesn't mean you can't start buying organic when it's more comfortable for you financially.*

**You're not unhealthy if you can't/don't want to buy organic.** Everyone has different priorities! It's okay if your priority is saving money.

**The bottom line:** If you're prioritizing savings at the grocery store, don't buy organic.

## Weigh Your Produce At The Grocery Store

This is another reason why people think healthy eating is so expensive. Normally the price tag listed next to produce is not the actual price of one piece -- it's usually *per pound*.

For example, bell peppers are usually pretty pricey in the store I go to. They're usually around \$3.99/pound. But I normally only need one, and one doesn't weigh a pound! So I end up spending just under a dollar for one pepper. If I didn't know or didn't take the time read/understand that the price is per pound, I'd think most vegetables are expensive too!



So that's why it's important to weigh your produce. It can also work the other way. If something seems cheap -- like potatoes usually, and you grab a bunch of them, **weigh them out on a scale to see how many pounds you're actually buying (and how much it will cost).**

**The bottom line:** Weighing your produce in scales at the grocery store will give you a clear idea of how much it actually costs. It might be less than you think!

## Buy Frozen And Canned Produce To Keep Your Pantry Stocked

Do you need certain produce items that aren't in season? You might be in luck! **Canned and frozen versions of more expensive items like blueberries might be the way to go when the fresh versions are at their peak prices.** I can usually find a bag of frozen strawberries at a cheaper price than a box of them in the produce section.

There's nothing wrong with buying frozen or canned veggies/fruits! It's still better than not buying fruits and vegetables at all and it can save you money.

I always keep frozen mixed veggies in the freezer (a huge bag from Costco) to make easy pantry meals with. **In a pinch, having frozen veggies on hand could be the difference between buying a takeout meal or using what you already have in your freezer/fridge/pantry** (and not paying for another meal).

**The bottom line:** Frozen and canned produce helps keep your pantry stocked with healthy ingredients so you always have an option to cook instead of buying takeout.

## Buy Products From Generic Brands

Generic brands or "store brands" are private label brands that the grocery stores own. That's why stores like Trader Joe's are so cheap; they only sell products of their own private label. Some popular generic brands are Kirkland (Costco), 365 (Whole Foods), Simply Nature (Aldi) and Safeway Select.

Basically, if you see a name-brand item on the shelves next to a generic brand, they're probably VERY similar in terms of ingredients, but not in price. **The generic brand will always be cheaper.**

I stopped buying brand-name peanut butter, butter, quinoa and other products which saved me so much money at the grocery store.

**Other items to look for that are good to buy generic if you can find it:** frozen fruit/veggies, canned fruit/veggies, grains, saran wrap, aluminum foil, salt, sugar, flour and cleaning products.

## Occasionally Swap Out Meat For Plant-Based Protein

If you're a meat eater or have big meat eaters in the family, chances are your grocery bills are higher because of it. Even if you're buying it in bulk on sale and freezing it, it's still more expensive to eat meat. **I'm not saying you should stop eating meat altogether.** I eat meat too! But if saving money at the grocery store is important, it might be time to start branching out to cheaper sources of protein, like plant-based proteins.



**Plant-based proteins** are lentils, tofu, tempeh, seitan, chickpeas, legumes, quinoa, veggie burgers and veggie sausage.

There are other forms of plant-based protein, but these are the most common and they are pretty much always going to be cheaper than meat in North America.

**The bottom line:** I'm NOT saying become vegan tomorrow so you can save money. I'm just throwing the idea that incorporating plant-based meals into your weekly rotation is a good idea for grocery store savings.

## What do you think? Are you ready to start saving money on groceries?

Reach out to me at [taliala@workweeklunch.com](mailto:taliala@workweeklunch.com) to tell me how your next grocery shopping trip goes with these tips in mind. I can't wait to hear from you.

Oh wait, there's more:

## Bonus Ways To Spend Less On Groceries:

Just a few more tips and tricks to keep in mind!

- **Cooking dried legumes instead of buying canned.** [You can learn more about how to do that here.](#) Just note that the process takes a long time, which is why I pay extra for canned beans and chickpeas which come pre-cooked.
- **Avoid buying something impulsively JUST because it's on sale.** Something that you didn't plan to buy (even if it's on sale) still results in you spending more money than you planned to spend in the first place!
- **Bring your own reusable bags.** Some places charge extra for plastic or paper bags! Always keep a few in the car or in your office if you make random trips/often forget it at home.
- **Avoid buying pre-cut produce and prepared foods.** Those are always going to be more expensive!
- **When perusing the aisles of the grocery store, look at the products below or above you, not just the products at eye-level.** Products are strategically placed in the aisle and most people totally forget to look a few rows down or up for a lower priced version. That's where you can find good deals!
- **Avoid buying household items and toiletries at the grocery store.** Yes, it's convenient, but you'll usually find much better deals and a wider selection of these items at pharmacy stores like Walgreens, CVS, Rite Aid, Duane Reade etc.
- **Eat a meal or snack before you shop!** Going to the grocery store hungry is never fun and you're likely to throw unneeded items in your cart just because you've got food on the brain.
- **Make your own snacks and desserts.** This is where people end up spending extra, even when they cook most of their meals. There are so many snacks you can easily make at home like hummus, pita chips, kale chips, granola, energy bites, granola bars, chopped fruits and veggies, etc. Making homemade cookies, muffins and treats will always be healthier and cheaper too! Here's my free hummus recipe. [Here's my favorite chocolate chip cookie recipe.](#)
- **If you're really ambitious, make your own bread.** [Here's my favorite bread recipe!](#)

Don't forget, you can always sign up for the WWL Meal Prep Program where for \$7.99/month, I'll send you meal plans, recipes and pre-made grocery lists to make meal prep happen! The program easily pays for itself after the first few grocery trips and it's made to help you save money on food. [Check it out here.](#)