A Note from the Editor

Maybe it’s the haggler in me or that I’m a competitive New Yorker but I’m always hunting for a bargain. Don’t get me wrong, I don’t mind paying for quality and I’m not averse to the occasional splurge, but only if it makes sense. And these days, with high food prices, layoffs, and the sense that nothing is secure, I’m paying even more attention to how I’m spending my money.

And probably so are you. That’s why here at WeightWatchers.com the editors have spent the past year looking for ways that can help you put plates of cheap but extremely good food on your table. We’ve spent hours in our kitchens developing budget-friendly recipes. We’ve been testing new products and talking with farmers, chefs, nutritionists, and black-belt bargain shoppers for practical advice on how to balance your budget, time and health. This issue is the result of our intense desire to get you eating healthfully and affordably.

Most people think frugality is about deprivation, boring meals, and not eating the foods you enjoy. We say limiting our budget helps us think creatively and make the most of what we have. In Luxe for Less we feature ingredients that deliver a lot of bang for your buck, flavor-wise — salty pancetta, earthy mushrooms, fruity extra virgin olive oil.

Many of you also worry you’ll spend endless hours slaving in the kitchen now that you’re cooking at home more. We created Take Five with this in mind. It features recipes that are quick, use only five ingredients and don’t require a lot of high-level fiddling. The recipes in Family Table are equally simple to make and are the sort of meals that will please everyone, from the most finicky 6-year-old to the more refined palate.

Watching every single penny, in the end, is not such a bad thing. It’s made us reevaluate our lives and pay attention to what really matters — the pleasure and security of a home-cooked meal shared with family and friends. We also want less. We don’t give in to our indulgences so readily. It has made us a little stronger. And yes, wealthier.

Theresa DiMasi
VP/Editor in Chief

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TAKE FIVE
A pinch of this... a soupçon of that... Sometimes it’s the sheer number of ingredients, rather than the ingredients themselves, that can make for a costly recipe. We’ve created a bevy of recipes — delicious all year round — that use just five items beyond salt, pepper and cooking spray.

SPINACH-PARMESAN DIP
0 POINTS® VALUES | 8 SERVINGS
You have to love a zero POINTS value dip that not only livens up crudites but also doubles as a fabulous finishing sauce for grilled chicken or pasta.

♦ 1/2 pound spinach, cooked and drained
♦ 1 cup tomatoes, chopped
1 cup basil, fresh
1/2 tsp table salt
1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
5 tbsp grated Parmesan cheese

Combine all ingredients in a food processor or blender; process to desired consistency. Yields about 3 tablespoons per serving.

NOTES: We recommend a high quality cheese such as Parmigiano-Reggiano for the best flavor.

CLASSIC GUACAMOLE
2 POINTS® VALUES | 4 SERVINGS
Double or triple this favorite Mexican recipe for larger crowds. Serve it with baked chips or fresh vegetables. Or spoon some onto thick cucumber and carrot slices.

♦ 1 medium avocado, Hass variety
♦ 2 tbsp red onions, chopped
2 tbsp cilantro, fresh, chopped
1 tbsp fresh lime juice
1/4 tsp hot pepper sauce
1/4 tsp table salt, or more to taste

Put avocado in a medium bowl and mash with a fork until almost smooth. Add remaining ingredients and stir until combined. Cover surface with plastic wrap and refrigerate up to 1 day. Yields about 1/4 cup dip per serving.

NOTES: Some cooks believe that keeping an avocado pit in the guacamole will prevent it from turning brown. Give it a try but make sure to remove the pit before serving.
BAKED TILAPIA
3 POINTS® VALUES | 4 SERVINGS

Use this recipe with other types of fish such as halibut, flounder, sole and even shellfish. Lime juice instead of lemon juice is another good substitution.

1 spray cooking spray
♦️ 20 oz raw tilapia, four 5 oz fillets
1/2 tsp table salt
2 tsp garlic herb seasoning, salt-free
1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Preheat broiler. Coat a shallow roasting pan with cooking spray.
Season both sides of fish with salt and pepper.
Transfer fish to prepared pan and drizzle with lemon juice; sprinkle garlic herb seasoning over top.
Broil until fish is fork-tender, about 5 minutes. Yields 1 fillet per serving.

ROASTED SIRLOIN BEEF
6 POINTS® VALUES | 8 SERVINGS

Well-seasoned beef is as simple as adding garlic, rosemary and oregano. Serve with roasted potatoes and Brussels sprouts for a complete holiday meal.

1 spray cooking spray
♦️ 2 pounds lean sirloin beef
1 tsp table salt
1 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
4 medium garlic cloves, minced
2 tbsp rosemary, fresh, minced, or 2 tsp dried rosemary
♦️ 2 tsp dried oregano

Preheat oven to 400ºF. Coat a shallow roasting pan with cooking spray.
Season beef all over with salt and pepper; transfer to prepared pan.
Combine garlic, rosemary and oregano in a small bowl. Rub herb mixture all over top of beef; gently press herbs into beef with your hands so it sticks.
Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted in center of beef reads 160ºF, about 28 minutes (for medium meat; cook longer for well-done meat).
Let beef stand 15 minutes before slicing crosswise into thin (1/4-inch thick) slices.
Yields about 3 ounces per serving.

SHOPPING SAVVY

You can make the Spinach-Parmesan Dip with fresh or frozen spinach, whichever is cheaper. Keep an eye out for store specials — you can often get frozen veggies for $1 a pack.

Good Parmesan can be expensive per pound, but the tiny amount that it takes to provide the 5 tablespoons in this recipe adds up to very little money for a whole lot of flavor.

Sometimes stores charge a premium for ripe, ready-to-eat avocados. You can speed up the ripening process of a regular avocado by putting it in a brown paper bag.

The simplicity of the tilapia recipe makes it wonderfully versatile — use any white-fleshed fish that’s on sale.

Beef sirloin is a great, versatile mid-priced cut. Watch out for store promotions — it’s a cut that frequently goes on sale, especially in larger quantities. Freeze what you don’t need for another time.

Consider planting a little windowsill pot of mint — it grows like crazy and you’ll always have some on hand rather than spending money each time on a bigger bunch than you need.

While our broccoli recipe calls for Japanese panko bread crumbs, you could make your own with whatever leftover bread you have. Just blitz stale slices in the food processor and toast in a low oven until golden.
BULGUR SALAD WITH FETA AND MINT
3 POINTS® VALUES | 6 SERVINGS
Bulgur — steamed, dried, crushed wheat kernels — is a snap to prepare and goes well with a variety of herbs. Try chives, cilantro or mint.

1/2 tsp table salt
1 1/2 cups uncooked bulgur
3 tbsp fresh lemon juice, or to taste
4 tsp olive oil
1/2 tsp black pepper
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
1/2 cup mint leaves, fresh, chopped

Combine 1 1/2 cups of cold water and salt in a small pot; bring to a boil and stir in bulgur. Cover pot, remove from heat and set aside until bulgur is tender and water is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Fluff bulgur with a fork; allow to cool.

Spoon bulgur into a salad bowl. Add lemon juice, oil and pepper; stir well. Add cheese and mint; stir gently, but well. Yields about 2/3 cup per serving.

NOTE: Toss in some roasted grape tomatoes for additional flavor and lots of color (could affect POINTS values).

BROCCOLI WITH LEMON-GARLIC CRUMBS
2 POINTS® VALUES | 4 SERVINGS
Steamed broccoli is okay. But broccoli tossed with buttery lemon-and-garlic bread crumbs is a definite home run.

1 pound broccoli, florets, fresh
1 tbsp unsalted butter
1 1/2 tsp minced garlic
1/2 cup dried bread crumbs, panko (Japanese bread crumbs)
1 tsp lemon zest
1/4 tsp table salt

Bring 1 inch of water to a boil in a large pot. Place broccoli in a steamer basket and set over water. Cover pot and steam until broccoli is crisp-tender, about 5 to 6 minutes; drain. Alternatively, you can cook broccoli in microwave.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a medium nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add bread crumbs, increase heat to medium and cook, stirring often, until lightly toasted, about 2 to 3 minutes.

Remove skillet from heat; stir in lemon zest and salt.

Spoon broccoli into a serving bowl and toss with crumbs. Yields about 1 cup of broccoli and 2 tablespoons of crumbs per serving.

NOTES: Look for panko in the ethnic aisle of your supermarket or in an Asian grocery store. Try the same recipe with spinach, kale or collard greens. Use the bread crumb mixture for oven-frying chicken and fish, too.
While we’re keeping a close eye on our grocery budget, there are a few items that are still worth a splurge — and are more economical than you might think. These culinary stars add bright, rich and complex flavors, and a little goes a long way.

**PARMIGIANO REGGIANO**

This is vastly different from powdery Parmesan in a can. Aged for at least 12 months, and with a grainy, crumbly texture, Parmigiano Reggiano costs around $15 a pound, but it’s worth every penny — the intense, nutty flavor means you’ll use less of it. Look for the words “Parmigiano Reggiano” on the rind, and always buy in chunks — pre-grated cheese loses its pungency quickly. Wrapped in parchment or wax paper, then plastic wrap, it will stay good in the fridge for about a year. If mold should grow, cut it off with about an inch of the surrounding cheese; the rest is still good.

**AGED BALSAMIC VINEGAR**

The dark, thin vinegar for under $10 a bottle isn’t the real thing. The good stuff, Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale — which will set you back $75 or more, so put it on your birthday list — is a highly concentrated syrup that resembles molasses. It’s aged for a minimum of 12 years and approved by master tasters in Italy. But oh, the flavor: sweet, sour, fruity, woody, and so intense that just a few drops are needed — and a bottle lasts indefinitely. Aged balsamic is not for salad dressing. Drizzle it over a prime cut of beef, tuna steak, or roasted chicken. Try some on sweet ripe strawberries, or over fresh ricotta.

**DRIED PORCINI MUSHROOMS**

$3.50 an ounce translates to $56 a pound — but a single ounce is enough to liven several batches of soup, stew, and risotto. When buying, examine the mushrooms carefully: stay away from crumbly batches, which are likely old and dull-tasting; pinholes are a sign of worms. Stored in the pantry, dried porcini should keep indefinitely. To reconstitute, soak in hot water for 20 minutes. Drain and chop — and strain and use the liquid to add even more deep, meaty flavor.
NUT AND OLIVE OILS
Depending on the nut, these oils can cost from $15-$30 per half-liter, but the subtle, delicate taste can transform a simple green salad into something spectacular. Nut oils turn rancid quickly, so buy in the smallest quantities you can, refrigerate and use within 2-3 months. Even better, split the purchase with a friend.

For salads and drizzling, premium extra virgin olive oil is another luxe item we wholeheartedly recommend. Keep two olive oils on hand: one that’s inexpensive, to use for cooking, and an extra virgin oil that’s more costly but full of flavors that appeal to you — the variety is practically infinite, so try to sample before you buy. Store olive oil in a cool, dark place (but not the fridge) and it should last about a year; light and heat will destroy it.

PINE NUTS
The edible seeds of pine trees, these tiny, cream-color morsels are a necessity in pesto; a sprinkling of toasted seeds livens up a salad or pasta dish immensely. At around $15 a pound they’re costly, but a batch of pesto only requires a few tablespoons. Pine nuts turn rancid quickly, so buy in small batches, from a supplier with high turnover, and store in an airtight container in the fridge for one month, or in the freezer for three months.

VANILLA
After saffron, vanilla is the second-most expensive spice available. Premium extracts are aged longer, have a higher alcohol content (to reap more vanilla essence), and no added sugar. Four ounces of premium vanilla extract starts at about $10, but the complex flavors and aromas in that one bottle will take dozens of baked goods to another level. Stored in a cool, dark place (again, not the fridge), vanilla extract keeps indefinitely.

ARTISINAL CHOCOLATE
We all know the power of chocolate. But why settle for mass-produced bars full of sugar and preservatives, when a single hand-made bonbon might inspire poetry? Chocolatiers all over the country are creating treats from the highest quality ingredients, with flavors that most of us would never even imagine. Sure, they’re pricey, but just one mouthful can change your whole day. Now that’s luxury.

PANCETTA
Don’t be alarmed by the appearance of the fat in pancetta, whether it’s the white spiral in the round cut, or as a layer on the little cubes if you buy it pre-diced. After you’ve heated it (always in small cubes or strips) in a pan, drain off the rendered fat and what remains will infuse whatever else you put in the pot (the makings of a pasta sauce, a cheap cut of meat braised low and slow for a stew, even humble chopped veggies) with an irresistible rich, salty, porky flavor. Explore varieties from different regions; many have their own spice blends that impart unique flavors. As you can buy it a couple of ounces at a time, you can afford to experiment.
ANGEL HAIR PASTA WITH EGGPLANT-TOMATO SAUCE
4 POINTS® VALUES | 6 SERVINGS

This homemade pasta sauce is so good that you’ll want to make extras. Freeze it in 1 cup servings for quick defrosting and easy portion control.

- 1 medium raw eggplant, baby-variety, sliced into 1/3- to 1/2-inch-thick rounds
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, cut into 8 strips
- 1 spray(s) olive oil cooking spray
- 3/4 tsp table salt, divided
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced
- 2 large tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp basil, fresh, minced
- 2 tbsp chives, fresh, minced
- 1/2 cup fat-free chicken broth
- 8 oz uncooked angel hair pasta, cooked according to package directions, drained
- 4 oz reduced-fat feta cheese, crumbled

Preheat grill to medium.*

Place eggplant slices and pepper strips in a grill basket (or place vegetables on a sheet of heavy duty aluminum foil with holes poked in it to allow smoke through). Off heat, coat vegetables with cooking spray; season with 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Place on grill and cook until lightly browned and tender, about 2 to 3 minutes per side. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature. Cut vegetables into bite-size pieces; set aside.

Coat a large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over low-medium heat. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add tomatoes and cook until slightly pulpy, about 1 minute more. Stir in vegetables, remaining 1/4 teaspoon of salt, red pepper flakes, black pepper, basil, chives and broth; increase heat to medium-high. Cook until broth is slightly reduced and mixture has a sauce consistency, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add pasta and toss to coat. Stir in cheese just before serving. Yields about 1 1/2 cups per serving.

NOTES: * You can roast the vegetables if you prefer. Preheat oven to 425°F. Coat a baking sheet with cooking spray. Place vegetables on prepared baking sheet and coat with cooking spray; season with 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Roast, until lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Remove from oven and cool to room temperature.

Let your garden dictate the vegetables for this recipe: sliced zucchini, yellow squash or red onion can be substituted for the eggplant.

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POSH NOSH

An easy, elegant and affordable menu

Who needs filet mignon? This Italian-themed menu uses cheaper ingredients like pasta, eggplant and beans, and punches up the flavor and glamour with smaller amounts of classier fare such as shrimp and sun-dried tomatoes. Tie it all together with a truly decadent chocolate dessert. Buon appetito.
WHITE BEAN AND SUN-DRYED TOMATO DIP
3 POINTS® VALUES | 8 SERVINGS
Whip out the food processor for this winner: a creamy, garlicky dip made with white beans and sun-dried tomatoes.

- 6 medium whole wheat tortillas, cut into 8 wedges each
- 3 sprays cooking spray
- 1/8 tsp table salt, or to taste
- 30 oz canned white beans, drained and rinsed
- 2/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes, without oil, or less to taste
- 1/4 cup fat-free sour cream
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- 1/8 tsp table salt, or to taste

Preheat oven to 400°F.
Arrange tortilla wedges on a large baking sheet; coat with cooking spray and then season with salt. Bake until golden brown and crisp, about 6 to 8 minutes.
Meanwhile, combine beans, tomatoes, sour cream, lemon juice, garlic powder, cumin and onion powder in a food processor (or blender); process until smooth and then season with salt. Serve dip with chips on the side. Yields 6 chips and about 1/4 cup of dip per serving.

GREEN BEANS WITH CARAMELIZED SHALLOTS AND GREMOLATA
1 POINTS® VALUES | 8 SERVINGS
We sauteed the green beans and shallots and then topped them with fresh parsley, lemon zest and minced garlic for a fabulous addition to your meal.

- 1 1/2 pounds green snap beans, fresh, trimmed
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 6 medium shallots, peeled and thinly sliced (about 1 cup)
- 2 tbsp parsley, fresh, chopped
- 2 1/2 tsp lemon zest
- 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 1 1/4 tsp table salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
- 1/8 tsp table salt, or to taste

Heat a large pot of water to a simmer. Place green beans in a steamer and steam over simmering water until tender, about 5 minutes. Run steamed green beans under cold running water for 30 seconds to stop cooking; set aside.
Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet. Add shallots and cook, stirring often (and adding a little water to prevent sticking if necessary), until golden and tender, about 5 minutes.
Meanwhile, to make gremolata, combine parsley, lemon zest and garlic in a small bowl.
Add green beans to skillet; toss over medium heat until heated through. Season with salt and pepper; toss to mix and coat. Place green beans in a serving bowl or platter and sprinkle with gremolata. Yields about 3/4 cup of green beans and 1 teaspoon of gremolata per serving.

NOTE: You can steam the green beans 1 day ahead and store them in a zip-top bag in the refrigerator.

A DINNER MAKEOVER
The right condiment can dress up even the most humdrum bulk-bought chicken breast or fish fillet. Made ahead of time — and even frozen in single-meal sizes — these delicious add-ons can turn a miserly midweek meal into a special occasion.

Curried Yogurt Sauce & Dip
Creamy, tangy and versatile; this Indian-inspired dip and sauce is a great partner for grilled chicken, fish, shellfish and pork. It’s also perfect with fresh vegetables.

Fresh Herb Sauce
When your garden’s in full bloom, this sauce is almost free! Great as a vegetable dip, sandwich spread or condiment for grilled meat, chicken or fish.

Hollandaise Sauce
A high-end restaurant standby; spoon this rich, creamy sauce over fish, poultry and meat, or vegetables such as broccoli, asparagus or cauliflower. (Shh — we won’t tell a soul if they’re frozen.)

Strawberry Rhubarb Sauce
No one will notice that your ice cream isn’t the premium variety with a ribbon of this sweet, tangy sauce running through it. Bonus: it’s great as a condiment for something savory like chicken, turkey or pork.

Go to WeightWatchers.com/sauces for recipes
**SHRIMP SCAMPI**

5 POINTS* VALUES | 4 SERVINGS

Make this classic Italian recipe at home for a fraction of the fat and calories. It's fantastic, especially when served with bread or pasta to soak up the garlic-butter sauce.

Warm a large skillet over a medium-low heat; add oil and heat until shimmering. Add garlic and cook, stirring constantly, about 1 minute. Add shallots and sauté for 5 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of wine and 1/2 tablespoon of lemon juice; stir, scraping bottom of pan with a wooden spoon. Cook, stirring occasionally, until shallots are translucent, about 5 more minutes; allow to cool.

In a small bowl, combine shallots, parsley, tarragon, thyme, salt and pepper with softened butter; refrigerate until butter hardens (can be made 1 day ahead).

Preheat oven to 475°F.

Using a medium-sized oven-proof casserole dish or skillet, arrange shrimp in a ring, tails up and touching one another for support; place bits of chilled herbed butter around shrimp. Pour remaining wine and lemon juice in bottom of dish. (Or cook in four individual oven-proof dishes as pictured above.)

Roast in oven until shrimp turns pink and butter starts to sizzle, about 4 to 5 minutes. Yields about 3 jumbo shrimp per serving.

**NOTES:** Perfect for company, this dish looks great and is easy to prepare—especially when assembled in 4 individual oven-proof dishes. Make the butter ahead of time and have your shrimp already cleaned and on ice. When company arrives, just assemble the ingredients in a baking dish (or dishes) and pop in the oven.

*You can leave the tails on if you prefer.

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**CHOCOLATE WALNUT CAKE**

4 POINTS* VALUES | 16 SERVINGS

This rich, flourless chocolate cake is perfect for a special occasion. Vary the flavor by using different nuts* or adding a little cinnamon.

Preheat oven to 350ºF.

In a medium bowl, with an electric mixer on high speed, beat egg yolks with 1/2 cup of sugar until they are light yellow and form ribbons or ripples. Reduce mixer speed to low and pour in warm (but not hot) chocolate and half of processed nuts; mix until incorporated and set aside.

In a large bowl, with an electric mixer on high speed, beat egg whites until soft peaks form. Reduce mixer speed to medium and incorporate remaining 1/2 cup of sugar. Increase mixer speed to high and beat until egg whites hold their shape but are not too stiff or dry.

Incorporate a heaping cup of egg whites into chocolate mixture with a spatula; then carefully fold chocolate mixture and remaining processed nuts into remaining egg whites.

Spoon batter into an ungreased two-piece 10-inch angel food cake pan with feet; carefully smooth top into an even layer. Bake until a toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out clean, about 75 minutes.

Remove cake from oven and turn pan upside-down on its feet to cool — the cake will not fall out (if you do not have a footed pan, simply invert the pan over the top of a wine bottle). When cake is completely cool to the touch, loosen edges with a sharp knife and remove cake from pan. Cut into 16 pieces and serve. Yields 1 piece per serving.

**NOTES:** *Could affect POINTS values.

**You can grate the nuts by hand. Or you can use a food processor or mini chopper, using short pulses. Do not allow the nuts to clump together and start to form “butter.” Keep them fluffy since they are used as “flour.”

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1 1/2 tsp olive oil
2 medium garlic cloves, minced
1 1/2 tbsp shallots, finely chopped
1/4 cup white wine, divided
1 tsp thyme, fresh, minced
1/4 tsp table salt
1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
2 tbsp unsalted butter, at room temperature
1 1/4 pounds shrimp, jumbo-size, shelled and deveined*

9 large egg(s), separated
1 cup(s) sugar, divided
5 oz bittersweet chocolate, melted
1 cup(s) walnut halves, processed to a powder (see note**)

Indicates a filling food
10 FROM 1: PASTA SAUCE

There are few easier and cheaper meal makers than that pantry staple, jarred pasta sauce. But why should spaghetti get all the fun? Here are 10 delicious ways to stretch your buy.

1. NO-FUSS CHICKEN CACCIATORE
   Coat a large, deep skillet with nonstick spray, then brown a cut-up, bone-in chicken over medium heat, turning occasionally. Add 2 cups jarred pasta sauce, cover and simmer until the chicken is tender, about 40 minutes.

2. INSTANT PIZZA
   Spread jarred pasta sauce on a prebaked whole-wheat pizza crust or some pita bread. Top with shredded fat-free cheese and some frozen mixed veggies. Bake on a cookie sheet in a preheated 400°F oven until hot and bubbly, about 12 minutes.

3. NO-FRY EGGPLANT PARMESAN
   Slice a large eggplant into 1/2-inch rings and place on a baking sheet that’s been coated with nonstick spray. Spray the slices with nonstick spray as well, and bake at 350°F for 20 minutes, turning once. Layer the cooked slices in a 9 x 13-inch baking dish with pasta sauce and shaved Parmesan. Bake in a 350°F oven until hot and bubbly, about 30 minutes.

4. VEGETABLES MARINARA
   Cut quick-cooking vegetables such as zucchini, summer squash, seeded bell peppers and/or eggplant into 1/4-inch slices. Place these in a large saucepan and add 1/2 cup jarred pasta sauce for every 2 cups of veggies. Bring to a simmer over medium heat, cover and cook until the veggies are tender, about 10 minutes.

5. MEAT LOAF
   Spread 1 cup pasta sauce over your favorite meat loaf before baking. The sauce will bake up into a rich, tasty glaze.

6. BAKED FISH FILLETS
   Halibut, snapper, trout and striped bass can be baked on a bed of pasta sauce. Put a layer of the sauce in a large baking dish and top with the fillets. Bake in a preheated 350°F oven until the fish is firm and flakes with a fork, about 20 minutes.

7. ITALIAN COUSCOUS
   Spice up some couscous with jarred sauce. For each cup of whole-wheat couscous, bring 3/4 cup water and 1/2 cup pasta sauce to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the couscous, cover and remove from heat. Let stand for 5 minutes, then fluff with a fork. If desired, add some peas or jarred marinated artichoke hearts with the couscous.

8. MUSSELS MARINARA
   Place 1 cup jarred pasta sauce in a large saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Add 2 pounds cleaned and debearded mussels; bring back to a simmer. Cover and cook until the mussels have opened, about 6 minutes.

9. QUICK MINESTRONE
   Mix 2 cups pasta sauce with 2 cups canned chicken broth, one 15-ounce can of drained and rinsed kidney beans and 2 cups frozen chopped vegetables in a large saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cover and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes.

10. QUICK TACOS
    Brown 1 pound lean ground beef with 2 teaspoons ground cumin and 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro leaves in a sprayed, large skillet over medium heat. Stir in 1/2 cup pasta sauce and simmer for 2 minutes. Serve in soft whole-wheat tortillas with chopped tomatoes, lettuce, onions and pitted avocados.
THE FAMILY TABLE
You don’t need mac & cheese from a box or takeout to enjoy a cheap family meal. From classic meatloaf and a rich, meaty chili to delicate chicken and light and sweet caramel cookies, these easy and wallet-friendly recipes will please even the pickiest eaters.

HEARTY TURKEY CHILI
4 POINTS® VALUES | 6 SERVINGS
A bowl of hot chili is so satisfying on cold fall days. Ours boasts kidney beans, lean turkey and lots of vegetables, well-seasoned and sprinkled with scallions.

Coat a large pot with cooking spray; place over medium heat. Add oil and onion; sauté onion until soft, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add garlic and carrots; cook until garlic is softened, about 1 minute. Add turkey; brown meat, breaking it up with a wooden spoon as it cooks, about 5 minutes. Stir to break up lumps.

Add chili powder, paprika, red pepper flakes, cumin, tomatoes, tomato sauce, broth, vinegar, beans and green pepper; bring mixture to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer until meat and vegetables are tender, about 30 to 45 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper; garnish with scallions. Yields about 1 cup per serving.

Ingredients:
- 1 spray cooking spray
- 1 tsp canola oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 2 medium carrots, thinly sliced into rounds
- 1 pound lean ground turkey
- 2 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp paprika
- 1 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup canned tomato sauce
- 1 cup canned chicken broth
- 1 1/2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 1/2 cups cooked kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1/2 tsp table salt, or to taste
- 1/8 tsp black pepper, or to taste
- 1/4 cup scallions, chopped

Indicates a filling food
SAVORY BEEF BURGERS
5 POINTS® VALUES | 4 SERVINGS

The whole family will savor the flavor of these juicy burgers. Keep the calories down by using extra-lean meat and increasing flavor with lots of fat-free seasonings.

- 1 pound uncooked lean ground beef (with 7% fat)
- 2 tbsp onions, minced
- 3/4 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp table salt
- 8 pieces lettuce
- 1 medium tomato, cut into 8 slices
- 8 slices onion, red
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 4 reduced-caloric hamburger rolls

Heat grill or grill pan. Combine beef, onion, mustard, Italian seasoning, cumin, pepper and salt until thoroughly mixed. Divide beef mixture into 4 equal portions and form patties. Place patties onto grill or grill pan; cook for 8 to 10 minutes, until desired degree of doneness, turning once.

To assemble, place one patty on one half of each bun. Top each with 2 lettuce leaves, 2 tomato slices, 2 onion slices and other half of bun.

LEMON CHICKEN WITH BROCCOLI
3 POINTS® VALUES | 4 SERVINGS

An easy weeknight dinner. Great with a side of angel hair pasta, rice or couscous.

- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp table salt, divided
- 1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
- 1/2 cup uncooked boneless, skinless chicken breast, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth, divided
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 2 1/2 cups broccoli, small florets
- 2 tsp lemon zest, or more to taste
- 2 tbsp parsley, fresh, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

On a plate, combine 1 1/2 tablespoons of flour, 1/4 teaspoon of salt and pepper; add chicken and turn to coat. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook, turning as needed, until lightly browned and cooked through, about 5 minutes; remove to a plate.

Put 1 cup of broth and garlic in same skillet; bring to a boil over high heat, scrapping up browned bits from bottom of pan with a wooden spoon. Add broccoli; cover and cook 1 minute.

In a small cup, stir together remaining 1/2 cup of broth, 1/2 tablespoon of flour and 1/4 teaspoon of salt; add to skillet and bring to a simmer over low heat. Cover and cook until broccoli is crisp-tender and sauce is slightly thickened, about 1 1/2 minutes. Stir in chicken and lemon zest; heat through. Remove skillet from heat and stir in parsley and lemon juice; toss to coat. Yields about 1 cup per serving.

HAM AND CHEESE OMELET
4 POINTS® VALUES | 2 SERVINGS

Eggs aren’t just for breakfast. Combined with lean ham and a little highly flavored cheese, they make a hearty, delicious dinner.

- 2 large eggs
- 4 large egg whites
- 1/8 tsp hot pepper sauce, or to taste
- 1/4 tsp table salt
- 1/8 tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp scallions, minced
- 1 spray cooking spray
- 1/2 cup cooked lean ham, finely diced
- 1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese, Parmigiano-Reggiano suggested

In a large bowl, beat together eggs, egg whites, hot sauce, salt, pepper and scallions.

Coat a large nonstick skillet with cooking spray; heat over medium heat. Pour in egg mixture and tilt skillet pan so bottom is completely covered with egg. Cook omelet until eggs are almost set, occasionally lifting egg in skillet to let uncooked egg move to edges of skillet, about 3 to 5 minutes.

Sprinkle ham and cheese over eggs. Using a spatula, ease up edges of omelet and gently fold in half; cook until heating through, about 1 minute. Yields 1/2 of omelet per serving.

NOTE: Scramble the eggs for an even faster entrée.

Indicates a filling food
MEATLOAF WITH BARLEY
5 POINTS® VALUES | 6 SERVINGS

Nutty-tasting, high-fiber barley substitutes for breadcrumbs in this super-healthy meatloaf. Use spicy ketchup for more intense flavor.

2 tsp canola oil
♦ 1 medium green pepper, diced
♦ 1 small onion, diced
♦ 1 large egg, beaten
♦ 1 cup cooked barley, quick-cooking suggested
2/3 cup ketchup, divided*
2/3 cup ketchup, divided*

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Heat oil in large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add green pepper and onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until pepper is tender, about 7 minutes. Spoon vegetables into a large bowl; add egg, barley, 1/4 cup of ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, salt, pepper and oregano and mix well. Crumble turkey into vegetable mixture; gently mix to combine (do not knead or meatloaf will be tough).

Coat a 9- X 5-inch loaf pan with cooking spray. Spoon turkey mixture into prepared pan in an even layer. Spread remaining ketchup over meatloaf. Bake until center of meatloaf is thoroughly cooked, about 50 to 60 minutes.

Remove meatloaf from oven and let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes to absorb juices in pan. Slice into six pieces and serve. Yields 1 piece per serving.

NOTE: *Turn up the heat with spicy ketchup.

SLOW COOKER CHICKEN BURRITOS
3 POINTS® VALUES | 12 SERVINGS

Mexican food is always a favorite. Just stir the ingredients for these burritos into your slow cooker and let everyone assemble their own.

1 medium garlic clove, minced
♦ 1 small red onion, chopped
♦ 14 1/2 oz canned diced tomatoes, with chiles
♦ 15 oz canned kidney beans, drained and rinsed
1/2 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp table salt
1/4 tsp dried oregano, crushed
1/4 tsp black pepper
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thigh(s), cut into bite-size pieces
3/4 cup canned chicken broth
12 medium whole wheat tortillas, about 7-inches in diameter each
3/4 cup shredded reduced-fat Mexican-style cheese

Place garlic, onion, tomatoes, beans, chili powder, salt, oregano and pepper in a 3-quart slow cooker; stir well. Add chicken and broth. Cover and cook on low setting for 5 hours; drain off liquid (there should be about 6 cups of burrito mixture).

To serve, spoon about 1/2 cup of burrito mixture down center of each tortilla; top with 1 tablespoon of cheese. Fold bottom 1/3 of tortilla to center. Fold left side to center; fold right side to center, covering filling. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Yields 1 burrito per serving.

NOTES: You can microwave the burritos, seam-side down, for 30 seconds, if desired. Serve with salsa and reduced-fat or fat-free sour cream (could affect POINTS values).

Caramel Cookies
1 POINTS® VALUES | 60 SERVINGS

Delicious and so easy to bake in small batches. Just keep the dough in the fridge or freezer and slice off and make as many cookies as you want at a time.

1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup packed brown sugar, dark
♦ 1 large egg
1 tsp vanilla extract
3/4 cup whole wheat flour
1/4 tsp table salt
1/2 tsp baking soda

Preheat oven to 400°F.

In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, cream butter, sugar, egg and vanilla extract. Add remaining ingredients and beat thoroughly.

Scrape dough out of bowl and onto a large piece of plastic wrap. Roll dough into a log, about 2 1/2-inches wide; completely wrap dough in plastic and refrigerate until firm, at least 20 minutes or up to overnight.

Cut dough into 1/8-inch-thick slices and arrange on several large ungreased cookies sheets about 1- to 1 1/2-inches apart. Bake until lightly browned around edges, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Allow cookies to cool on cookie sheet for about 1 minute and then remove to a wire rack to cool completely. Yields 1 cookie per serving.

NOTES: Add some spice to these cookies by sprinkling a pinch of cinnamon and nutmeg into the batter.
That old mantra, “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail” holds special significance for the weekly grocery shop. In these tight economic times, stores and manufacturers are trying harder than ever to persuade you to part with your hard-earned cash. The good news is that by planning ahead, not only will you be able to keep food costs down; you’ll also find your kitchen is full of friendly foods that will help you reach your weight-loss goals.

Use our 15 simple tricks to keep your bills down. Your wallet and your waistline will thank you.

1 CHECK OUT THE STORE’S WEEKLY FLYER BEFORE YOU GO
Most stores drop their circulars at your door once a week. If yours doesn’t, just go online and sign up for the weekly email. Learn the normal price for the things you buy the most — chicken breast, pasta, etc. — so you can spot the great deals. Supermarkets put them on the front of the flier knowing it draws people into the store, though be warned that not everything billed as a “special offer” will actually represent a cost savings. Know your prices!

2 SIGN UP FOR YOUR STORE’S LOYALTY PROGRAM
Even if you go to three different stores, sign up for each one. You’ll often get unadvertised specials, and the more information the stores have about you the more targeted your offers are.

3 USE COUPONS
Go to manufacturers’ Web sites, check the newspaper and the flyers that come with it, sign up for emails from brands you enjoy. Check the expiration date; if it’s a long time in the future, hold onto it until your store has its own promotion on the item. Sometimes items such as oatmeal and yogurt end up almost free!

4 PLAN AHEAD, AND MAKE A LIST
Take five minutes to plan menus for the upcoming week. Create seven lunch and dinner menus. It’s a big effort upfront, but soon you’ll be an expert and you’ll be able to recycle whole days at a time. Making a list — and sticking to it! — limits impulse purchases.

5 GO ONCE A WEEK
Warns Stephanie Nelson, the “Coupon Mom” and budget expert, “If you take your kids midweek to pick up a loaf of bread, good luck on coming out with just a loaf of bread! If I spend an hour doing the list — meal planning, shopping list, organizing coupons — I still think I spend less time on shopping as I’m not making frequent trips.” If you need to make a produce pit-stop midweek, go alone or, better yet, look for cheaper place such as roadside stands, farmer’s markets or your local ethnic markets.

6 BUY IN SEASON
Blueberries are a cheap treat come summer but practically an investment once it’s fall. Buy frozen, or buy something else. Consider growing some of your own produce as well.

7 EAT BEFORE YOU GO
Sucked in by that bakery aroma every time you enter the store? Arm yourself with a hearty snack before you go, and chew minty gum while walking the aisles. You’ll save money — and POINTS values.

8 BUY IN BULK
When you see special offers, buy in bulk and freeze what you can’t use straight away. Ground beef can become chili, burritos, pasta sauce… And having quick-cooking staples on hand like rice, pasta and grains means you’ll be less tempted by takeout on busy nights.
**BUY GENERIC**
Follow this rule except when you know from experience that a certain brand is of higher quality. As Nelson says, “I get a lot of store brands — they’re always on the bottom shelf — such as graham crackers. Do you really need the world’s best graham cracker?”

**READ THE SMALL PRINT**
When you see deals like 10 for $10, unless the store says you must buy 10, you don’t have to. And be aware of unit pricing. Don’t assume the big package is cheaper or better value.

**THINK WHOLE FOODS**
The more processed foods you buy, the higher the price. Even a banana in pricey New York City only costs a quarter whereas a small candy bar costs at least 75 cents. Nelson says, “I skip a lot of the coupons for fattening snack foods. It’s the absolute dollar I’m spending: I would rather buy six bananas for a dollar, than a box of granola bars on sale.”

**DO IT FROM SCRATCH**
You pay more for convenience. So grate your own cheese, peel and cut your own carrots and shred your own lettuce. Buy pudding in powdered form and mix it with low-fat milk. You might also consider making your own dips (sour cream and powdered soup mix), potato “chips” (slice potatoes, coat with cooking spray, sprinkle with salt and bake) and popsicles (freeze orange juice in small paper cups).

**SHIFT THOSE PROPORTIONS**
Use pricey meats as an accent; not the main event. For instance, skip the pork chops and cook up a pork stir-fry. Or nix the meat altogether and fill up on delicious, filling and versatile beans.

**SHOP AT WHOLESALE FOOD STORES**
Some examples include Costco, Sam’s Club, BJ’s and more. Make sure you know prices, though, to guarantee a savings. Go with a friend to split supersize packs of fresh items like eggs, dairy and meat products.

**SUPERMARKET PSYCHOLOGY**
Supermarkets have been employing marketing experts and psychologists to design their stores for many years, with the simple goal to persuade you to buy lots of goodies. Nothing is left to chance: From the aisles that are wide enough to allow you to pass other people, but narrow enough to have products within arm’s reach at all times, to the music specially written to entice you to buy, a supermarket is a place where a consumer and his money are meant to part company.

*Watch out for the following tricks*
- An in-store bakery: The smell of freshly baked bread is designed to make us hungry and get us spending.
- Hidden staples: Milk and bread are set far apart from the entrance and each other, to encourage consumers to walk through all parts of the store.
- The “end cap” trick: Special displays at the end of the aisles, known as end-caps, are laden with offers; shoppers notice them more than regular displays.
- Eye-level goodies: More expensive items with higher profit margins are placed at eye level, while the shop’s basics range will be on the floor — companies actually pay more to have their products at eye level, as shoppers are considered “lazy” and will see them first.
- Remember that a supermarket is a bit like a machine; its mission is to get you to spend, so to counter this, you need to keep your wits about you.