



Eat**Right** Ontario

Food Choices

When Money is Tight

PLACES TO GO WHEN YOU DO NOT HAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR FOOD

There may be times when you do not have enough money to buy food for you and your family.

Most communities have services to help people get food. Call 211, or go to www.211ontario.ca, to help find services in your area. Here is a list of programs that may be available in your community:

Food Banks and Food Cupboards

Food banks and food cupboards provide basic food items to help when you do not have enough money for food. They try to offer healthy foods, but the types and amounts of food you will get depends on what is available.

When you find a location, be sure to ask about the hours of operation and what information you should bring with you when you go.

Meal Programs

Sometimes you need a place to get a meal when money is tight. Nutritious meals that are free or at a very low cost may be available where you live. Ask about meal programs at local places of worship, community centres and other non-profit organizations in your community.

Student Nutrition Programs

Many schools offer breakfast, lunch and/or snack programs for their students. Ask the principal at your child's school if they offer a nutrition program.





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Community Kitchens

Community kitchens are small groups of people who prepare low-cost meals together to divide among their families. Ask your local community centre or public health department to connect you with a group.

Food Buying Clubs (e.g. The Good Food Box)

The Good Food Box is a non-profit food buying club that makes fresh vegetables and fruit available at an affordable price. Community organizations and volunteers help pack and distribute the boxes. Go to www.foodshare.net to find a Good Food Box program near you.

Community Gardens

Community gardens offer people the opportunity to grow their own vegetables and fruit. A group of people come together to grow food, maintain the garden and share the harvest. Ask your local community centre or public health department if there is a community garden that you could join.



Visit foodnetontario.ca for information about food programs in your community.

Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- Where can I find a food bank close to me?

To find answers to your healthy eating questions or get more **Food Choices When Money is Tight** factsheets speak to a Registered Dietitian at EatRight Ontario at **1-877-510-510-2** (in Ontario) or visit www.eatrightontario.ca/en/budget

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HEALTHY **FAMILY MEALS**

Making and eating family meals at home saves money.

Eating together also supports healthy eating habits for adults and children. But it can be hard to serve healthy meals at home that the whole family will enjoy. Try these tips to help family meals go well.

1. Eat together at home.

- **Plan regular meals at home as a family.**

Busy schedules can make this a challenge but do your best to have at least one meal together each day.

- **Eat at the table.**

Enjoy time together without TV, toys or other distractions.

2. Make one meal for everyone.

- **Offer everybody the same foods at mealtimes.**

Avoid making something special for 'picky' eaters.

Children will learn to like many different foods only if they are encouraged to try them. Making only one meal also saves money and prevents waste.

- **Set a good example** by choosing healthy foods and your kids will follow.





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3. Make healthy foods fun and interesting.

- Different shapes and colours make foods more appealing. Try dips, sauces and seasonings to add flavour and interest to foods.

4. Avoid power struggles over food.

- You decide what foods are served but let children decide what and how much to eat. If you respect children's appetites you will have fewer battles over food.

5. Get your children to help plan and prepare meals.

- Let children have a say in what is on the menu. If they want less healthy foods, talk about healthier options.
- Children are more likely to try new foods if they know more about them. Talk about how foods grow.



Here are a few family-friendly, lower-cost meal ideas to try:

- Tuna and vegetable wraps
- Macaroni and cheese with broccoli
- Chicken and vegetable kabobs with dip (plain yogurt mixed with fresh or dried herbs)
- Mini burgers with sweet potato fries

Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- What can I do to get my picky eater to eat healthy foods?
- What are some ways to get my children involved with cooking and meal preparation?

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HEALTHY FAMILY MEALS

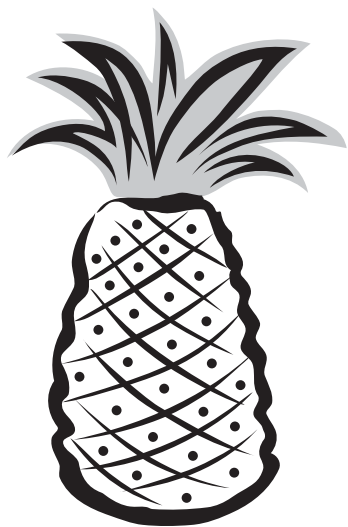
RECIPES

Hawaiian Chicken Serves 8

16	chicken pieces (drumsticks, thighs)	16
2 tbsp	butter or margarine	25 mL
1	19 oz (540 mL) can crushed pineapple, drained	1
3 tbsp	prepared mustard	45 mL
¼ cup	honey	60 mL
½ tsp	salt	2 mL
1	green pepper, sliced into rings	1
	paprika	

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Remove skin from chicken pieces. Arrange in a 9 x 13 inch baking pan.
3. In a saucepan, melt the butter or margarine over medium heat. Stir in the drained pineapple, mustard, honey and salt. Heat through.
4. Spoon the sauce evenly over the chicken pieces. Sprinkle with paprika. Garnish with green pepper rings.
5. Bake, uncovered, for 45 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink. If desired, broil for the last 5 minutes of cooking time to brown a little more.

*Reprinted with permission from **Colour It Up...Go for More Vegetables and Fruit** – a six week program that gives women the knowledge, skills and confidence to eat more vegetables and fruit. Materials used with permission from the Nutrition Resource Centre.*





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HEALTHY FAMILY MEALS

RECIPES

Mini Pizzas Serves 6

6	English muffins, cut in half	6
1 ½ cups	tomato sauce	375 mL
¼ cup	finely chopped green pepper	50 mL
¼ cup	sliced mushrooms	50 mL
1 cup	grated cheese	250 mL
	dried basil and oregano	

1. Turn oven to 350° F.
2. Place English muffin halves on a baking sheet.
3. Spread tomato sauce on each muffin half. Sprinkle with basil and oregano, to taste.
4. Put green pepper and mushrooms on top of each muffin half. Sprinkle with cheese.
5. Bake until hot and bubbly, about 20 to 25 minutes.

*Adapted from **The Basic Shelf Cookbook (1995)** with permission from the Canadian Public Health Association.*

Other pizza toppings to try:

- diced or sliced tomatoes
- asparagus
- leftover chicken
- ham
- pineapple
- olives



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FRUIT **BEST BUYS**

I know fruit is a healthy choice. How can I make sure I get plenty of fruit when money is tight?

Eating fruit has many benefits for your health.

Try these tips to help you eat more fruit and keep costs down:

- **Buy fresh fruit when it is in season.** Shop at farmers' markets, flea markets, or pick-your-own farms to save money on locally grown fruit. Go to www.foodland.gov.on.ca for a guide on when Ontario fruit is available.
- **Some fresh fruits are a good buy all year round.** For example, try: Apples, oranges and bananas.
- **Pre-cut fruit costs more.** Save money by preparing your own.
- **Save money by buying frozen, canned and dried fruits on sale.** "No Name" or store brands usually cost less. Buy larger cans or packages and repack into smaller containers for school lunches or for work.
- **Look for a vegetable and fruit food buying club in your area** (e.g. The Good Food Box).

Nutrition Tip:

Choose fruit more often than juice. Fruit is higher in fibre than juice.





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My kids like to drink fruit juice. What are the best buys?

- **Buy fruit juices rather than fruit drinks.** Fruit “beverages” and “punches” may cost less but they are high in sugar and have very little juice. Look for the words ‘100% juice’ on the label.
 - **Frozen concentrated juices are the best buy and store well.** Save money by buying juice on sale. “No Name” or store brands usually cost less.
 - **Juice boxes cost more per serving than juice bought in a larger container.** Fill a small thermos or bottle with juice for school lunches.
 - **When kids are thirsty, offer water** instead of juice or fruit drinks or try diluting juice with water.
- Blend bananas, frozen berries, peaches or mango with yogurt and juice to make a smoothie. Smoothies are a good way to use up fruit that is overripe.
 - Add frozen berries or dried fruit like raisins or apricots to cereal, yogurt, pancake or muffin batter.
 - Add fruit to salads. Top salad greens with canned mandarin oranges, sliced strawberries or grapes, raisins or chopped apples.
 - Try canned pineapple or frozen mango in a stir-fry.
 - Enjoy baked apples or fruit crisps for dessert.

To learn more, watch EatRight Ontario videos at <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/videolist>.

Questions to ask your community service agency OR contact EatRight Ontario

- What fruits are in season in the winter months?
- Fruits provide antioxidants. What do antioxidants do in the body?
- How many servings of Vegetables and Fruit does Canada’s Food Guide recommend? What is a serving?



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STORING **FRUIT**

How can I keep fruit fresh longer so I don't waste money?

Storing fresh fruit the right way will help it to stay fresh longer. It will also protect nutrients. Follow the storage tips below.

Store bananas at room temperature.

Tip:

When bananas turn brown, put them in the freezer to use later for fruit smoothies or baked goods.

Store these fruits in the refrigerator:

- Apples
- Berries
- Cherries
- Grapes
- Pineapple
- Rhubarb

Tip:

- Store fresh fruit unwashed. Wash them just before you eat them.
- Keep vegetables and fruit apart. Fruit produces gas that make vegetables spoil. If you have 2 drawers in your fridge, put vegetables in one and fruit in the other.

Ripen these fruits at room temperature, then store in the refrigerator:

- Avocados
- Grapefruit
- Kiwifruit
- Lemons and limes
- Mangoes
- Melons
- Peaches and nectarines
- Oranges and tangerines
- Pears
- Plantains
- Plums

Tip:

Buy these fruits at different stages of ripeness. Eat the ripe ones first and let the other ones ripen.





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When berries and peaches are in season I like to buy them by the basket. What is the best way to freeze fruit?

Try the tray freezing method to freeze fruit. This will help fruit keep its shape and keep it from clumping together. Fruits with high water content like melon do not freeze well.

How to freeze fruit using the tray freezing method:

- 1. Berries:** Wash berries in a bowl of cold water. Pick out the damaged berries. Drain for 15 minutes in a large colander.
Peaches or nectarines: Wash, pit and slice. Toss lightly in lemon juice to keep from browning.
Rhubarb: Wash, trim ends and slice.
- 2.** Spread the washed fruit in a single layer on a cookie sheet or tray.
- 3.** Put the tray in the freezer for 1 to 2 hours.
- 4.** When the fruit is frozen, store it in sealed bags or containers for up to one year. Label the bag with the name of the fruit and the date.

To learn more, watch EatRight Ontario videos at <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/videolist>.

Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- What is the best way to wash fruit?
- Is organic fruit safer or healthier than other fruit?



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STORING FRUIT

RECIPES

Fruit Smoothies

Make your own smoothie recipe by blending any combination of frozen, fresh or canned fruit with yogurt. Add milk or juice to get the right consistency. Here are a few recipes to try.

Banana Berry Smoothie Serves 2

1	banana	1
1 cup	fresh or frozen berries (any combination)	250 mL
1 cup	milk	250 mL
¾ cup	plain or berry flavoured low-fat yogurt	175 mL

Blueberry Orange Smoothie Serves 2

1 cup	fresh or frozen blueberries	250 mL
1 cup	orange juice	250 mL
1 cup	vanilla low-fat yogurt	250 mL

Mango Peach Lassi Serves 2

½ cup	fresh, frozen or canned mango	125 mL
½ cup	fresh, frozen or canned peaches	125 mL
½ cup	milk or vanilla-flavoured soy beverage	125 mL
½ cup	vanilla low-fat yogurt	125 mL
½ cup	ice cubes	125 mL





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STORING FRUIT

RECIPES

Fruit Oatmeal Crisp Serves 6

3	apples, peeled, cored and sliced (or 4 cups of fresh, frozen or drained canned fruit)	1 L
½ cup	quick-cooking oats	125 mL
3 tbsp	flour	45 mL
1/3 cup	packed brown sugar	75 mL
½ tsp	ground cinnamon	2 mL
¼ cup	margarine, melted	50 mL

Recipe tip:

This dish can be cooked in a glass dish in the microwave for 12 minutes instead of baking in the oven.

1. Heat oven to 375° F.
2. In a small bowl, mix together oats, flour, brown sugar and cinnamon.
3. Add melted margarine and mix together.
4. Place sliced apples in a 6-cup (1.5 L) baking dish
5. Crumble oat mixture evenly over the apples.
6. Bake for about 30 - 40 minutes until fruit is soft.



*Adapted with permission from **You Can Cook**,
Nanaimo Community Kitchens Society
www.nanaimocommunitykitchens.org*

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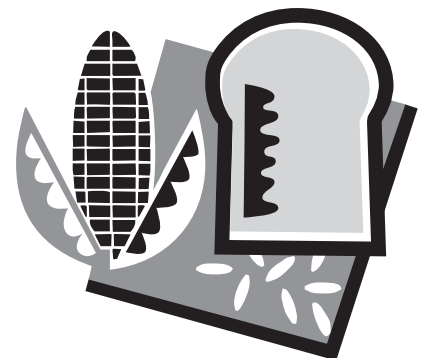
GRAIN PRODUCTS **BEST BUYS**

I know whole grain products are a healthy choice. How can I make sure I get plenty of whole grain products when money is tight?

- **Whole grain products are generally a good buy.** Choose whole grains instead of white or refined grains. Here are some examples:

Choose:	Instead of:
100% whole grain breads	White bread
Shredded wheat cereal	Rice crisps or corn flakes
Brown rice	White or instant rice
Multigrain hot cereal, cornmeal or large flake oats	Instant flavoured oatmeal
Quinoa, bulgur, barley, buckwheat	White rice or white pasta

- **Plan easy meals around whole grains.** Add meat, chicken or dried beans, peas or lentils and vegetables to brown rice, quinoa, bulgur or barley. Follow the directions on the package to help you cook whole grains.
- **Cook your own rice, pasta and other grain products.** Packaged rice and pasta mixes cost more. Packaged foods are often higher in fat and salt and lower in fibre.
- **Compare brands.** “No Name” or store brands may cost less. Buy whole grains and breads that are on sale.
- **Visit a bulk food store.** Save money by purchasing grain products such as brown rice, quinoa, bulgur, barley and cornmeal in the amounts that you need.
- **Compare nutrition labels** and choose higher fibre grain products when possible.





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My family likes breakfast cereals. What are the best buys?

- **Buy unsweetened whole grain cereals when you can.** Sweetened cereals are higher in sugar and are often lower in fibre.
- **Hot cereals like oatmeal and multigrain cereals are the best buys.** Instant flavoured hot cereals in single serving packages are easy, but they cost more and are higher in sugar and salt.
- **Add your own toppings to cereals.**
Try these ideas:
banana slices, berries, canned fruit, dried fruit (raisins, apricots, dates, dried cranberries), nuts, yogurt, applesauce, chopped apples or cinnamon

To learn more, watch EatRight Ontario videos at <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/videolist>.

Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- What is the best way to store whole grain foods?
- How do I read food labels to check for whole grains?
- How many servings of Grain Products does Canada's Food Guide recommend? What is a serving?

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Try these tasty meal ideas:

- Make a stir fry and serve it over brown rice.
- Toss leftover pasta with diced canned tomatoes, canned or frozen vegetables and cooked meat. Put in a casserole dish and top with grated cheese. Heat in the oven or microwave.
- Add chopped vegetables and dried fruit to quinoa, bulgur or barley and toss with oil and vinegar salad dressing.
- Add cooked brown rice or barley to soups.
- Cheese and vegetable quesadillas on whole grain tortillas.



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GRAIN PRODUCTS
BEST BUYS

RECIPES



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Canada Web site at
[www.dietitians.ca/
Your-Health.aspx](http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health.aspx)

Vegetable Quinoa Salad Serves 10

1 cup	quinoa, well rinsed and drained	250 mL
2 cups	cold water	500 mL
2	tomatoes, chopped	2
2	large sprigs Italian (flat-leaf) parsley (leaves only), chopped	2
¼	English cucumber, chopped	¼
⅓ cup	chopped red, green, yellow or mixed bell peppers	75 mL

Vinaigrette

3 tbsp	vegetable oil	45 mL
2 tbsp	freshly squeezed lemon juice	25 mL
1 ½	hot pepper flakes (optional)	7 mL
½ tsp	salt	2 mL
½ tsp	freshly ground black pepper	2 mL
½ tsp	dried lavender flowers (optional)	

1. In a medium saucepan, over medium heat, bring quinoa and water to a boil. Reduce heat and boil gently for 10 to 15 minutes or until the white germ separates from the seed. Cover, remove from heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Remove lid, let cool and fluff with a fork.
2. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, combine tomatoes, parsley, cucumber and bell peppers. Stir in cooled quinoa.
3. Prepare the vinaigrette: In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, hot pepper flakes (if using), salt and pepper and lavender (if using).
4. Pour vinaigrette over salad and toss to coat.



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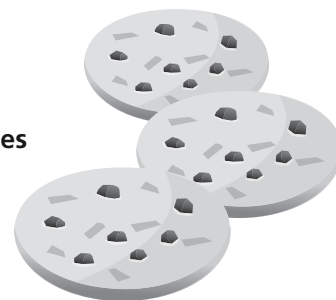
When Money is Tight

GRAIN PRODUCTS BEST BUYS

RECIPES

Apple and Toasted Oatmeal Cookies Makes 1 dozen cookies

1 ½ cups	toasted quick-cooking rolled oats	375 mL
½ cup	all-purpose flour	125 mL
½ tsp	ground cinnamon	2 mL
¼ tsp	ground nutmeg	1 mL
¼ tsp	baking soda	1 mL
¼ cup	lightly packed brown sugar	60 mL
¼ cup	non-hydrogenated margarine	60 mL
1	egg	1
¼ tsp	vanilla extract	1 mL
1	apple, peeled and finely chopped	1
¼ cup	semisweet chocolate chips	60 mL



Tip:

Use a wooden spoon if you do not have an electric mixer.

1. Preheat oven to 350° F (180° C). Spread oats on a baking sheet. Bake in preheated oven for 3 minutes, flip with a spatula and bake for 3 minutes. Watch to make sure they don't burn.
2. In a large bowl combine toasted oats, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg and baking soda.
3. In a medium bowl, using an electric mixer on high speed, cream brown sugar and margarine for 1 minute or until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla until blended. Stir in oat mixture, apple, and chocolate chips.
4. Drop by tablespoonfuls (15 mL) about 2 inches (5 cm) apart on a greased baking sheet. If desired, use a floured fork to flatten slightly. Bake in preheated oven for 12 to 15 minutes or until centre of cookies springs back when lightly pressed. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely.

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Visit the Dietitians of Canada Web site at www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health.aspx

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MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES

BEST BUYS

I spend a lot of my food budget on meat.
How can I save money on this food group?

**Buy less expensive types of meat, poultry
and fish such as:**

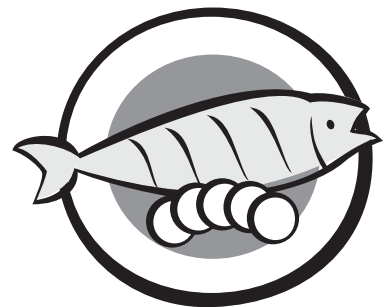
- stewing meat
- outside, inside or eye of round
- blade or flank steak
- regular or medium ground meat
- pork shoulder
- chicken pieces (legs, thighs) or whole chicken
- plain frozen fish fillets such as salmon, tilapia, sole, haddock and pollock
- canned fish like salmon, "light" tuna, sardines and herring

**Lower priced meats can be less tender because
they are lower in fat. Try these ways to make
meat more tender:**

- Marinate meat overnight in the refrigerator.
- Pound the meat using a mallet before cooking.
- Cook meat slowly for a few hours in a liquid such as water, broth or tomato juice.

Nutrition Tip:

Fish contains a healthy type of fat. Eat fish at least twice a week to get the health benefits.





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Try these tips to help you keep costs down:

- **Boxed, seasoned and prepared meats, poultry and fish cost more.** Save money by preparing your own. Use leftover meat for sandwiches instead of buying deli meat.
- **Buy larger amounts of meat, poultry or fish when it is on special** and if you have space in your freezer. Package it into smaller portions and freeze it.
- **Keep portions small.** A serving of meat, poultry or fish is just 75 grams (2.5 oz) or about the size of a deck of cards. Have 2 to 3 servings per day. Enjoy meals that use small amounts of meat and lots of vegetables, pasta or rice. Try stir-fries, casseroles, curries and pasta dishes.

To learn more, watch EatRight Ontario videos at <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/videolist>.

Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- How do I prepare dried beans, peas and lentils?
- What are some family-friendly recipes that use less meat?
- How many servings of Meat and Alternatives does Canada's Food Guide recommend? What is a serving?

Enjoy these healthy and tasty meatless meal ideas.



Explore meat alternatives like eggs, dried beans, peas and

lentils, soy products and nuts and seeds. Try eating a few meatless meals each week:

- curried chickpeas and rice
- vegetable cheese omelette
- vegetarian bean chili
- lentil casserole or soup
- tofu stir-fry
- egg salad sandwich
- hummus and vegetable pita



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MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES
BEST BUYS

RECIPES

Baked Breaded Fish Fillets Serves 4

½ cup	bread crumbs	125 mL
½ tsp	oregano or Italian seasoning	2 mL
¼ tsp	black pepper	1 mL
2 tbsp	vegetable oil	30 mL
¾ lbs	white fish fillets, such as tilapia, sole, haddock or pollock	375 g

1. Preheat oven to 375° F. Lightly oil a baking sheet.
2. In a bowl, combine bread crumbs, oregano (or Italian seasoning) and pepper.
3. Brush both sides of each fish fillet with oil, then coat in bread crumb mixture.
4. Bake for 10 minutes, then turn fillets over and continue to bake for 5 to 10 minutes, or until the fish flakes with a fork.





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MEAT AND ALTERNATIVES BEST BUYS

RECIPES

Basic Marinade for Meat, Fish and Poultry

Makes 3/4 cup

¼ cup	soy sauce	60 mL
¼ cup	vegetable oil	60 mL
½ tsp	garlic powder (or 2 garlic cloves, minced)	2 mL
¼ cup	lemon juice or orange juice	60 mL

1. In a small bowl, whisk together soy sauce, vegetable oil, garlic cloves and juice.
2. Combine meat and marinade in a sealed container or plastic bag. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours (or overnight). For safety, any leftover marinade that has touched raw meat, fish, or poultry must be thrown away.



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MILK AND ALTERNATIVES

BEST BUYS

My family enjoys milk products and yogurt. Are there any ways to save money?

- **Choose low fat milk** (skim, 1% M.F., or 2% M.F.). It is the healthiest choice for adults and children over two years old.
- **Buy milk in 4 L bags or jugs instead of cartons.** Milk can be frozen for up to three months. Thaw bags of milk in your refrigerator and shake it before you open it.
- **Skim milk powder costs less than milk and is just as nutritious.** Once skim milk powder has been mixed with water, try mixing it with an equal amount of milk from the bag or carton for a creamier taste. You can also use it for cooking or baking.
- **Buy yogurt in a larger container** instead of single serve portions.
- **There is no need to spend extra money on ultra filtered milk.** It is no more nutritious than regular milk. The slightly longer shelf life is not important for most people.

Nutrition Tip:

If you prefer not to drink milk, try fortified soy beverages as an alternative.





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Many of the meals I make use cheese.
What are the best buys?

- **Buy cheese in blocks when it is on sale** and slice or grate it yourself.
- **Freeze grated or block cheese to help make it last longer.** It will crumble when you thaw it, but it will be just as nutritious.
- **Skim milk and low fat cheeses (less than 20% M.F.) are healthier choices but often cost more.** Use a smaller amount of regular cheese in your recipes to save money and reduce fat.
- **Low fat cottage cheese can be a good substitute** for regular cheese in some recipes
- **Compare brands and the price of cheese per kilogram.** "No Name" or deli-packaged cheese often cost less.



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<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/videolist>.

Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- How much calcium and vitamin D do I need?
- How many servings of Milk and Alternatives does Canada's Food Guide recommend? What is a serving?



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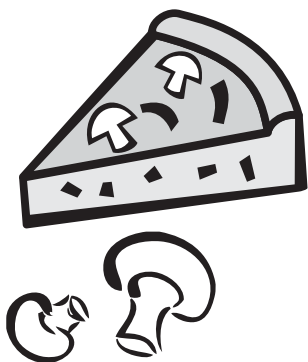
Food Choices

When Money is Tight

MILK AND ALTERNATIVES
BEST BUYS

RECIPES

**You can also
add leftover
cooked meat
such as
diced ham or
or chicken or
ground beef.**



Crustless Vegetable Cheese Quiche Serves 4

1 tsp	vegetable oil	5 mL
½	small onion, chopped	½
½ cup	sliced mushrooms (or canned)	125 mL
½ cup	chopped red or green pepper	125 mL
1 cup	grated Cheddar cheese	250 mL
4	eggs	4
1 cup	milk or (or make from skim milk powder)	250 mL
3 tbsp	butter or margarine, melted	45 mL
1/3 cup	all-purpose flour	75 mL
½ tsp	garlic powder	2 mL
½ tsp	dried parsley	2 mL
	salt and pepper to taste	

1. Put oil in large frying pan and set at medium heat. Add onion, mushrooms, and peppers. Cook and stir until vegetables are soft, about 5 minutes.
2. Spread vegetable mixture in a greased 8 x 8 x 2-inch (2 L) baking pan. Sprinkle cheese over top.
3. Combine eggs, milk melted butter or margarine, flour, garlic powder, parsley, and salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Beat with a whisk or fork until smooth. Pour mixture over cheese.
4. Bake, uncovered, in a 350° F oven for 40-45 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.



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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

MILK AND ALTERNATIVES BEST BUYS

RECIPES

Yogurt Breakfast Parfait

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	low-fat yogurt (plain, vanilla or fruit-flavoured)	175 mL
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	fruit (e.g. fresh or frozen berries, canned fruit, sliced bananas, apples or pears)	125 mL
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	high fibre cereal (e.g. bran flakes, all bran)	125 mL

1. Put yogurt in a bowl. Top with fruit and cereal.



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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

PLANNING **HEALTHY MEALS**

Planning meals for my family is hard when money is tight. How can I make it easier?

Planning your meals and snacks ahead of time is a good way to make sure you eat well and save money.



- **Start by planning your main meals for the week.** Choose some favourite meals.
- **Find new recipe ideas in cookbooks, magazines or on the web.** Go to the library or swap recipes with friends. Choose low cost recipes that use only a few ingredients and are easy to prepare.
- **Next, make a list** of breakfast and other meal and snack ideas.
- **Write your meal ideas on a calendar or on a chart.**
- **Make a shopping list** that includes the items you need for your meal ideas.

Try these tips to help stretch your food dollar when you plan your menu:

- Check food supplies in your fridge, freezer and cupboard to see what you can use in your menu.
- Check flyers for foods that are on sale. Plan meals around good buys.
- Plan meals that have less meat and more dried beans, peas, lentils, vegetables and grain products. For example try stir-fries, pastas, egg dishes, soups, casseroles and bean dishes.
- Cook your own meals at home when you can. Buy less prepared food.
- Make larger amounts of food and plan to use leftovers for lunches or suppers the next day. Add leftover vegetables, meats, fish, or poultry to salads, pastas, soups or spaghetti sauces.



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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

My family is busy. We spend a lot of money on restaurant meals and take out and prepared foods. What can we do to save money and time?

- **Prepare your meals at home more often.** Get the whole family involved in planning, shopping, preparing and clean up.
- **Bring lunches to work or school.** Pack lunches the night before.
- **Check to see if there is a nutrition program at your child's school.** These programs can help with breakfast, lunch or snacks.
- **Bring a thermos of coffee or tea from home** instead of going to coffee shops.
- **Pack healthy snacks when you go out.**
For example, try fruit, nuts, granola bars, homemade muffins, crackers and cheese.



Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- What are some ways to save money at the grocery store?
- What are some family-friendly, healthy and low-cost meal ideas?

Create your own menu plan on the EatRight Ontario web site at
<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/MenuPlanner>

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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

PLANNING HEALTHY MEALS

OUR MENU

Main Meal

Sunday

Homemade stew and whole grain rolls

Monday

Baked cabbage roll skillet supper*

Tuesday

Muffin tin meatloaf & vegetable
quinoa salad

Wednesday

Sweet chili tofu stir-fry and vermicelli*

Thursday

Leftover sweet chilli tofu stir-fry
and vermicelli*

Friday

Tandoori haddock with mixed frozen
vegetables and rice*

Saturday

Leftover tandoori haddock with mixed
frozen vegetables and rice

Other Meals and Snacks

Breakfasts

Fresh fruit & muffin

Scrambled egg & toast

Oatmeal with cinnamon & apple

Smoothie

Lunches

Leftover stew and whole grain rolls

Leftover cabbage rolls

Egg salad dip with pita and
raw vegetables

Snacks

Air-popped popcorn

Mixed dry whole grain cereal and banana

Carrot-apple salad

*Look for these recipes at <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/recipes>



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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

Write your meal and snack ideas on this chart.

PLANNING HEALTHY MEALS

OUR MENU

Our Main Meal

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Other Meals and Snacks

Breakfasts

Lunches

Snacks

To find answers to your healthy eating questions or get more **Food Choices When Money is Tight** factsheets speak to a Registered Dietitian at EatRight Ontario at **1-877-510-510-2** (in Ontario) or visit **www.eatrightontario.ca/en/budget**

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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

SAVE MONEY AT THE GROCERY STORE

I often spend more money than I plan to on groceries. How can I stay within my budget?

1. Buy only what you need.

- **Plan a menu first then make a shopping list.** This will help keep you from buying items that you don't need.
- **Keep a list in the kitchen** to write down items that you need to buy for your menu or to restock your pantry.
- **Pay with cash if you can.** Bring only the money you plan to spend.
- **Avoid shopping on an empty stomach.** You might buy foods you don't need if you are hungry.

2. Buy fewer convenience items.

- **It is best to shop at grocery stores.** Corner convenience stores are more expensive.
- **Buy fewer prepared foods.** These items cost more and are often higher in sugar, salt and fat.

3. Look for best buys.

- **Check store flyers** and look online for coupons.
- **Look at the top and bottom of the shelf for lower cost foods.** Higher priced items are often placed at eye-level.
- **Buy store or "no name" brands.**
- **Check unit prices** to help you compare similar foods of different sizes. Most stores show the unit price on the shelf below the product.
- **Take a close look at the items at the end of aisle displays.** They may not always be a lower price.





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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

Is buying food in bulk a good way to save money?

Buying foods in larger amounts can sometimes save you money.

Keep these tips in mind before buying in bulk:

- Be sure you have enough extra money and storage space to buy in bulk.
- Not all bulk items are best buys. Check the unit price.
- Buy only foods that your family will use up before spoiling.
Dry goods like rice, pasta, couscous and frozen foods keep well.
- Buying in bulk can sometimes lead families to overeat.
Be careful with portions.
- When meat and poultry are on sale and you have freezer space,
buy enough to make large batch recipes. Freeze leftovers.

Try a virtual grocery tour by visiting Healthy Eating is in Store for You at <http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca/>.



Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- How do I read the nutrition information on food labels?
- What are some family-friendly healthy and low-cost meal ideas?

Create your own menu plan on the EatRight Ontario web site at
<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/MenuPlanner>

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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

VEGETABLE **BEST BUYS**

I know I should eat more vegetables. How can I do this when I don't have a lot of money to buy fresh vegetables?

Eating lots of vegetables has many health benefits. Try these tips to help you eat more vegetables and keep costs down:

- **Buy fresh vegetables when they are in season.** Shop at farmers' markets, flea markets, or pick-your-own farms to save money on locally grown vegetables.
- **Some fresh vegetables are a good buy all year round.** For example, potatoes, carrots, cabbage, onions and sweet potatoes.
- **Bags of vegetables** such as potatoes and onions are a better buy than single pieces.
- **Pre-washed, pre-cut and packaged vegetables and salads cost more.** Save money by preparing your own.
- **Look for a food buying club in your area** (e.g. The Good Food Box).
- **Try growing your own vegetables** in a small garden, window box, or container. Look for a Community Garden in your area where you can grow vegetables with other people.

Nutrition Tip:

Choose dark green and orange vegetables more often. They have many important nutrients.





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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

Frozen and canned vegetables cost less than fresh but are they as healthy?

- **Frozen vegetables can be just as nutritious as fresh.** Choose plain frozen vegetables without added seasonings and sauces. They cost less and have less salt, sugar and fat. Frozen vegetables keep well and are always ready to be added to other menu items.
- **Canned vegetables can also be a healthy choice.** Drain and rinse to help wash away some of the salt. Choose lower sodium (salt) brands when you can.
- **Save money by buying frozen and canned vegetables on sale.** "No Name" or store brands usually cost less.

To learn more, watch EatRight Ontario videos at <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/videolist>.

Questions to ask your community service agency OR contact EatRight Ontario

- How can I help my kids eat more vegetables?
- What are the health benefits of dark green and orange vegetables?
- How many servings of Vegetables and Fruit does Canada's Food Guide recommend? What is a serving?



Try these ideas to help you enjoy more vegetables:

- Add frozen or leftover vegetables to soups, chili, stews, curries or salads.
- Add a package of fresh or thawed frozen spinach in your favourite lasagna or pasta recipe.
- Add peas, broccoli or cauliflower to macaroni and cheese.
- Use frozen mixed vegetables to make a stir fry.
- Enjoy hearty vegetable soups as a main dish.

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VEGETABLE BEST BUYS

RECIPES

Oven-Baked Sweet Potato Fries with Curry Mayo Serves 8

Sweet Potato Fries

1 ½ lbs	sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½ - inch (1 cm) thick spears	750g
¼ cup	canola or olive oil	60 mL
1 tsp	ground cumin	5 mL
½ tsp	salt (optional)	2 mL

Curry Mayo

¼ cup	light mayonnaise	60mL
1 tsp	curry powder	5mL
1 tsp	liquid honey	5mL

Tip:

1 ½ lbs (750g)
is about 6 sweet
potatoes.



Fries:

1. Heat oven to 425° F (220° C).
2. In a large bowl, combine sweet potatoes, oil and cumin, tossing until fries are well coated.
3. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with foil. Bake for 15 minutes. Flip potatoes over and bake for 15 minutes until browned and tender.
4. Transfer potatoes to a plate lined with paper towels and sprinkle with salt (if using).

Mayo: Meanwhile, in a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, curry powder and honey. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Serve fries with curry mayo for dipping.

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VEGETABLE BEST BUYS

RECIPES

Roasted Vegetables Serves 4

4 cups	mixed vegetables (potatoes, carrots, onions, squash, turnip etc.)	1 L
2 tbsp	vegetable oil	30 mL
1 tsp	dried thyme, rosemary or basil	5 mL
2 tbsp	sugar or honey (optional)	30 mL
1 tsp	mustard or 1 tsp (5 mL) dried mustard	15 mL

1. Heat oven to 400° F.
2. Cut vegetables in one inch (2.5 cm) pieces. Place in lightly greased 9 x 13 inch (4 L) pan.
3. Mix together the rest of the ingredients and toss together with vegetables in the pan.
4. Bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour until vegetables are tender.
Stir once or twice.

*(Adapted with permission from **You Can Cook**,
Naniamo Community Kitchens Society.)*



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Food Choices

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STORING **VEGETABLES**

How can I keep vegetables fresh longer so I don't waste money?

Storing vegetables the right way will help them to keep their flavour and stay fresh longer. It will also protect nutrients. Here are some tips:

Store these vegetables at room temperature:

- Garlic
- Tomatoes



Tip:

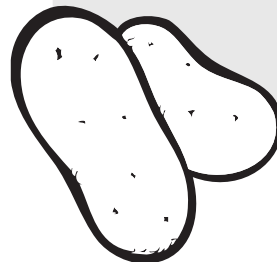
Ripen tomatoes at room temperature and then store them in the refrigerator. Use within 2 to 3 days. Buy ones at different stages of ripeness. Use the red ones first and let the green ones ripen.

Store these vegetables in a cool, dark, dry place:

- Onions
- Potatoes
- Pumpkin
- Sweet Potatoes
- Winter squash (e.g. acorn, butternut, spaghetti squash)

Tip:

Keep potatoes and sweet potatoes in a paper or plastic bag.





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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

Store these vegetables in the refrigerator (in plastic bags):

- Asparagus
- Bok choy
- Bitter melon
- Green and wax beans
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cucumbers
- Eggplant
- Greens (collard, chard, callaloo)
- Ginger root
- Fresh Herbs
- Leeks
- Lettuce
- Mushrooms (keep in a paper bag)
- Okra
- Parsnips
- Peas
- Peppers
- New potatoes
- Radishes
- Sprouts
- Turnip
- Zucchini

Tip:

- Store fresh vegetables unwashed. Wash them just before you eat them.
- Keep vegetables and fruit apart. Fruit produces gas that can make vegetables spoil. If you have 2 drawers in your fridge, put vegetables in one and fruit in the other.



I like to buy large amounts of fresh vegetables when they are on sale. Can I freeze vegetables?

Yes, if you have freezer space, this is a good way to store vegetables for longer. You can freeze many fresh vegetables if you blanch them first. Blanching means boiling vegetables for a short time then chilling them in ice water. This will help keep the texture, colour and flavour when you freeze vegetables.

For more information on buying, storing and preparing vegetables, go to www.foodland.gov.on.ca

Questions to ask your community service provider OR contact EatRight Ontario

- What is the best way to wash vegetables?
- What are the best ways to cook vegetables to keep the nutrients?

To learn more, watch EatRight Ontario videos at <http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/videolist>.

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MORE RECIPES

Nutrition Tip:

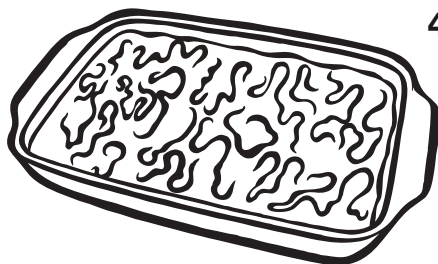
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL) of dried lentils makes 2 cups (500 mL) of cooked lentils.

Speedy Lentil and Bean Casserole Serves 6

1 tbsp	vegetable oil	15 mL
1	large onion, chopped	1
2	celery stalks, sliced	2
1	19 oz (540 mL) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed	1
2 cups	cooked lentils	500 mL
1	19 oz (540 mL) can stewed tomatoes, drained	1
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	thyme	2 mL
	pepper	
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	mozzarella cheese, shredded	375 mL

1. Preheat broiler.
2. In a saucepan, heat the vegetable oil over medium heat and cook the onion and celery until softened.
3. Add beans, lentils, tomatoes, thyme and pepper to taste. Bring mixture to a simmer; stirring often. Break up the tomatoes with the back of a spoon.
4. Put mixture in a casserole dish. Sprinkle the cheese over the top and put under the broiler until melted.

Adapted with permission, Community Food Advisory Program, Nutrition Resource Centre, Ontario Public Health Association.





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Food Choices

When Money is Tight

MORE RECIPES

Hearty Homemade Chili Serves 8

1 lb	ground beef	500 g
2	onions, chopped	2
1	green pepper, chopped	1
½ tsp	garlic powder	2 mL
1	28 oz (796 mL) can diced tomatoes	1
1	19 oz (540 mL) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed	1
1	19 oz (540 mL) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed	1
1	7 ½ oz (213 mL) can tomato sauce	1
1	7 ½ oz (213 mL) can mushrooms, drained	1
1 tbsp	chili powder	15 mL
1 tsp	cumin	5 mL

1. In a large saucepan, cook ground beef with onions, green pepper and garlic powder, about 5 minutes. Drain off fat.
2. Stir in tomatoes, kidney beans, chickpeas, tomato sauce, mushrooms, chili powder and cumin.
3. Bring to a boil, then cook on low heat, uncovered for about 20 minutes. Stir often.



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