



Navigating the Grocery Store

Grocery shopping is an important component of healthy cooking and eating. Use the following tips to help you customize your grocery shopping in a way that works for you.

Plan Your Shopping Trip Ahead

- Plan your meals for the week and make a list of what you need. Sticking to a list will help you keep your budget in check and avoid impulse buys.
- Check out coupons and store flyers. Consider using the items that are on sale to plan your meals.
- Plan the day and time that you will shop. If you feel stressed in busy stores, aim for shopping on a weekday in the early or late morning since stores tend to be more quiet during those times.
- Have a meal or snack right before you go out to shop.

Tips for Safe and Efficient Grocery Shopping

- Keep foods safe by shopping for meat, dairy, and frozen items last.
- Wrap all fresh meat, poultry, and seafood in a separate bags before putting them in your cart.
- If you are shopping on a budget, try not to buy items that have been pre-washed, pre-chopped, or pre-portioned into individual servings. You will usually save money by doing this yourself.
- Buy items in bulk and portion them out yourself. For example, buy a family pack of chicken breasts and freeze them individually.
- If it fits with your meal plan, take advantage of cost savings from sales, coupons, and seasonal produce.
- Plan your meals around items that you have in your kitchen
- Bring your own bags to save waste. Some stores will even give you a small discount for bringing your own bags.
- Put foods away right when you get home.
- Consider prepping items (e.g. cut, portion, freeze, cook) the same day you buy them if this will help you use them throughout the week.
- Place new items behind older items that need to get used first, but keep them visible so they do not get lost.

Selecting Food Items at the Grocery Store

| Store Section | Purchasing Tips and Food Options to Consider | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Produce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill up in the produce section based on what you are planning to make that week. • Fill in your plan with vegetables and fruits to have as snacks • Choose a variety of different colored fruits and vegetables. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider trying a new item each week or month. • Choose some items to eat early in the week (e.g. berries, spinach) and some longer-lasting items to eat later (e.g. citrus, apples, carrots, cabbage). • Packaged stir-fry vegetables or broccoli slaw | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salad mix • Small bags or boxes of salad greens (5-10 ounces), are perfect for small households. • Consider buying some yellow bananas and some green so they are ready to eat at different times. |
| Dairy and Other Refrigerated Items | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonfat (skim) or lowfat (1%) milk • Unsweetened non-dairy milk alternatives (e.g. almond milk, soy milk) • Lowfat cottage cheese | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowfat (skim) or reduced-fat (2%, part skim) cheeses • Reduced fat cream cheese (Neufchatel) • Tofu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tempeh • Nonfat plain yogurt or Greek yogurt • Light sour cream • Whole large eggs in-shell |
| Oils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose cold-pressed or expeller-pressed when available. • Nonstick cooking spray | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oils from olive, avocado, canola, sesame, high-oleic sunflower, or high-oleic safflower | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half butter-half canola oil spread • Unsalted stick butter |
| Baking Items and Seasonings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular or white whole-wheat flour • Whole-wheat pastry (cake) flour | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative grain flours (e.g. buckwheat flour, almond meal or flour) • Dried herbs and spices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-salt-added seasoning blends and packets • Unseasoned panko breadcrumbs |
| Grain and Grain Products | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-wheat grain products (e.g. bagels, English muffins, bread, tortillas, pasta) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry whole grains (e.g. brown rice, barley, quinoa) • Steel-cut or old-fashioned (rolled) oats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxed cereals with more than 3 grams of fiber per serving and less than 10 grams of sugar per serving |
| Snack Foods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsalted nuts and seeds • Dried fruits (without added sugar if available) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bean- or corn-based chips • Whole-grain crackers • Dried seaweed crisps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bars made with whole food ingredients (e.g. nuts, seeds, fruits, whole grains) |

Selecting Food Items at the Grocery Store

| Store Section | Purchasing Tips and Food Options to Consider | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Condiments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check sodium content (aim for less than 140mg per serving) • Vinegar (any variety) • Mustard (any variety) • Olive oil or avocado oil mayonnaise | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural peanut butter or other nut and seed butters • All-fruit jelly, jam, and preserves • Olives • Capers • Roasted red peppers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honey (raw or locally-produced if available) • Pure maple syrup • Salad dressings with whole food ingredients (e.g. olive oil, vinegar, herbs, spices) |
| Fresh Meat and Poultry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose grass-fed or pasture-raised when possible. • Beef loin and round cuts • Pork loin and loin chops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean ground meat and poultry (90% lean or higher) • Skinless chicken and turkey pieces or whole birds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turkey bacon • Turkey or chicken sausage • Lamb, goat, or game meat (e.g. venison, bison) |
| Fresh and Frozen Seafood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose fresh or flash-frozen items • Select items without added seasoning or breading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oily (cold water) fish for higher omega-3 fatty acid content (e.g. salmon, trout, tuna, mackerel) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean fish (e.g. cod, pollock, flounder, tilapia) • Shellfish (e.g. crab, lobster, scallops, clams, shrimp) |
| Deli and Bakery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-sodium deli meats (ideally nitrate-free) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-wheat pizza dough • Whole-wheat pita bread | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotisserie chicken • Hummus |
| Canned Goods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No-salt-added and low-sodium canned beans and vegetables • Unsweetened apple sauce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit canned in juice or light syrup • Low-sodium and reduced-sodium soups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned meat, poultry, and seafood (e.g. tuna, salmon, anchovies, sardines) packed in water or olive oil |
| Frozen Foods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check sodium content. Look for less than 600 mg of sodium per serving in meals less than 300 mg per serving in sides. • Meals with a balance of lean protein, fiber-rich starch, and non-starchy vegetables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable, bean, and grain blends • Frozen veggies without sauce or seasoning • Frozen fruit without added sugar • Whole-wheat frozen pancakes or waffles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable- or bean-based burgers • Greek yogurt or all-fruit popsicles • Mini ice cream sandwiches • Italian ice |