

# Top 10 // The Truth About Vegetables



*These 10 tips will help you ditch the idea that healthy foods are too expensive!*

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## The Whole Truth

Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet because they provide essential vitamins and minerals. They are also high in fiber and water while low in calories, so they can help us feel full longer on fewer calories.

The USDA MyPlate Guidelines tells us to make  $\frac{1}{2}$  of our plate fruit and vegetables, but many people find it difficult to put this into practice. The three main reasons people give for not eating more fruits and vegetables are cost, time and taste.

This week we'll talk about how to eat fruits and vegetables on a budget, and we will cover how to make fruits and vegetables more convenient and tastier in following weeks.

**Many people think that fruits and vegetables are too expensive.** But the truth is, vegetables and healthy foods are more affordable for what you get out of them. Fruits and vegetables do tend to be more expensive per calorie, but less expensive than less healthy foods per gram or per portion eaten. This is because fruits and vegetables are higher in fiber, water and vitamins and minerals, while being lower in calories.

If you think about all of the nutritional benefits you get from fruits and vegetables, **it is hard not to see them as a deal!** Here are 10 great tips to include fruits and vegetables in your diet at a lower cost:

**1. Shop in season!** Fruits and vegetables are often on sale when they are in season, and usually taste better then too. You can look up what vegetables are in season here: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/what-fruits-and-vegetables-are-in-season>

**2. Some vegetables are low cost year round,** including potatoes, carrots, onions and cabbage. Look for recipes online to find new ways to use these staples: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/main-recipes>

**3. Stock up on frozen fruits and vegetables** when they are on sale. Frozen is just as nutritious as fresh, and they can keep 8-10 months in the freezer. Choose those without added sauces, fats or sugar.

**4. Plan your meals ahead of time** so fresh fruits and vegetables get used before they go bad. You can learn more about meal planning here: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-on-budget.html>

**5. To reduce waste, you can freeze leftover vegetables** to add to casseroles or soups later, and overripe fruit is great in smoothies or baking.

**6. Canned vegetables are a great option**, and are much more affordable than fresh or frozen. Choose fruit canned in 100 percent juice and vegetables that are low in sodium or have no sodium added. Stock up when they are on sale!

**7. When buying canned or frozen vegetables, try the store brand.** The store brand is the same or a similar product at a much lower price.

**8. Check out your local farmer's market.** You can often find great deals on seasonal produce.

**9. If you find a great deal on fresh produce, try freezing or canning** it for later use. You can learn how from USU Extension:

<https://extension.usu.edu/boxelder/files/uploads/fn168.pdf>

[https://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN\\_215.pdf](https://extension.usu.edu/files/publications/publication/FN_215.pdf)

<https://extension.usu.edu/canning/>

**10. Another way to reduce cost might be to grow your own.** A backyard garden or patio planter can provide super-fresh produce all summer long. USU Extension has a lot of great resources to learn how if you are a beginner:  
<https://extension.usu.edu/yardandgarden/>

Come back next week for more tricks and tips to make fruits and vegetables more convenient and tasty.

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This article was written by Carrie Durward, Extension Nutrition Specialist