



Kinship Link

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Pro Kinship for Kids

Inside this issue:

Cooking on a Budget 2 continued

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Cooking on a Budget

Did you know that we throw away 14% of the food bought in the United States? That adds up especially now as we start to try and pay off those Holiday bills we racked up buying gifts. It is about \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year for an average family of four! So let's look at how we can cook on a budget and save some money!

Planning to Save by Planning Menus

- Plan seven days of menus every week. Check your schedule, and write down what you plan to serve for each meal and snack. Plan to cook on the days when you'll have more time. Plan to pack "meals-to-go" or to serve quick meals at home, such as an item you can reheat from your stash in the freezer, or cold sandwiches, on busy days. Remember to plan to use left-overs, too.
- When you are preparing a main dish, it takes only a little more effort and time to make enough for several meals.

- You can either freeze all of the prepared food in meal size packages, or you can serve part of the food immediately and freeze the rest for later use.
- Focus on items you already have on hand, especially the perishable foods in your refrigerator. Then add meals that are based on specials, sales, and coupons in newspaper, radio and TV ads. Especially focus on the meat and produce sales as these can be your most costly food items for your meals.
- Buy enough of each sale item to prepare several meals. For example, if the grocery store is selling tuna at a lower-than-usual price, you might decide to serve tuna casserole and tuna salad sandwiches that week. Or, if ground hamburger is on sale, perhaps you could buy enough to make spaghetti with meat sauce, tacos, and a meatloaf.
- Plan to buy a little

less of refrigerated perishable foods. For example, buy the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables that you can eat within a day or two. Buy dried, canned, or frozen fruits and vegetables to use until you can shop again.

- Plan portion sizes based on nutrition guidelines, especially for the more expensive food items in your meals.
- Plan for "planned-overs". Make your meal do double duty. You will sometimes have more product than a recipe calls for. Have a plan for using these foods, such as the extra half can of some food. For instance, you could add them to a soup, or possibly freeze them for later use. Be creative in using leftovers.



