

THE FRUGAL FAMILY'S

GUIDE TO SAVING BIG

ON GROCERIES WITH
SMART MEAL PLANNING
STRATEGIES!

THE DAILY CHANGE JAR . COM



How I feed a family of 7 on about \$25 a week!

I have no doubt you are saying to yourself, "yeah right!"
I swear I didn't write that just so you would click and download this guide!
(Well, maybe a little, but it's TRUE!)
Let me explain...

I am going to outline a few simple steps that you can easily follow.

1. Go to your fridge and write down everything that you need to use up, things that might go bad soon or that there is not much left.
2. Repeat step one with your freezer and your pantry. (I have included several kinds of inventory lists below to help with this). *Tip, if you have multiple freezers/fridges/pantries, make sure you write down which location they are in so you don't forget.
3. Put items together that can make a meal where you might only need a few more ingredients.
4. Make sure to plan meals where you can use leftovers for lunches, breakfasts, or other meals
5. Make you list of all of your other items that you need to complete your meals.
6. Go grocery shopping for the remainder of items that you need.
7. Revel in your meal planning success!

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Here is an example week...

Meals to make:

- Almost Homemade Hamburger Helper [From The Daily Change Jar \(that's me!\)](#)
- White Chicken Chili
- Lasagna
- Freezer Burritos
- Corn Casserole
- Tatter Tot Casserole
- 3-Cheese Chicken Alfredo Bake
- Chicken Cordon Blue Casserole

Ingredients Needed:

- Chicken broth \$1.22
 - Fresh cilantro \$0.78
 - Green chiles \$3.04
 - Pork sausage \$1.98
 - Cottage cheese \$2.36
 - Ricotta \$1.68
 - Grated parmesan \$3.97
 - Sour cream \$1.33
 - Jarred alfredo sauce (I actually crossed this off my list and decided to make my own as I was going to have extra parmesan cheese and I already had the other ingredients to make it)
 - Deli ham \$2.36
 - Swiss cheese \$1.84
 - Sliced provolone \$1.84
- Total price: \$22.40

A sneak peek...

Here is the method behind my madness...

I went to the fridge first (to be honest, there was hardly anything in there)

I had a lot of pasta, frozen chicken breasts, ground turkey, and LOTS of canned beans, tomatoes, and other canned items.

I then looked for recipes on my family favorites Pinterest board that had the bulk of the ingredients that I already had.

My two main go-to's for grocery shopping are Aldi and Wal-Mart, I have found that in this area they are the absolute cheapest. (unless I have coupons for other stores that makes things cheaper)

I always try and check the paper for coupons. I am by no means an extreme couponer, tried it and hated every minute of it. I don't have time to sit around all day to clip coupons, organize them into binder, and spend hours at the grocery store (with 5 kids I'm lucky to get there for 20 minutes without losing my \$H!t)

I then try and take a day and meal prep as much as possible. Freezer meals are the greatest thing ever considering my husband can't even saute an onion...(true story).

Whenever possible, I leave my husband and my kids at home. My kids are distracting when I am trying to price compare and my husband can't follow a grocery budget to save his life!

Realistically, the above meal plan might even last two weeks.

Meal Planning Tips and Tricks

- Try and make meals with similar ingredients.
- Use left overs to make a new recipe (EX: Taco Tuesday leftover taco meat into freezer burritos)
- Stock up on sale items that you normally use even if they are not in your current meal plan (\$4 off bacon, YES!)
- Display a calendar that your whole family can so they won't ask you five million times whats for dinner.
- Create a board on Pinterest to keep all of your family favorites that you have tried that you know everyone loves that you can easily reference.
- Instead of buying premade items (like the jarred alfredo sauce I mentioned above) make it from scratch if you already have the ingredients.
- Substitute dried herbs for fresh where you can, otherwise freeze fresh herbs in water or oil to use for later.
- Make sure to have EVERYTHING before you get started with meal prep (there is nothing worse than thinking you have something on hand when you actually don't...)
- Use meal planning apps to make your life easier! There are a ton out there, find one that works for your family.
- Batch cook whenever possible!
- Get the entire family involved in meal prep, everyone will appreciate it more, believe me!
- Don't forget to meal plan for snacks, breakfasts, and lunches too!
- Get your family's input on what they really like that you can make more of.
- Don't over-complicate things, keep it simple with meals that you know your family will always eat. You don't have to try and make a gourmet meal every night.

My Favorite Meal Planning Essentials!

I am a sucker for meal planning and prep goodies! Foil pans, calendars, reusable food labels! I like to think of it as a long term investment in my family's health and my sanity!

Below you will find some of my favorite meal prep and meal planning essentials.

I got a pressure cooker for Christmas last year and freaking LOVE it! I makes cooking things like shredded chicken breast to easy and quick!



★★★★★ [read customer reviews](#)

Freezer meals are the best! I love to be able to prep a bunch of meals ahead of time and just toss them in the oven when we get home. (So easy even my husband can do it!)



★★★★★ [read customer reviews](#)

I also like to have individual foil pans. That way I can make things that each individual person in the family likes without worrying about nobody wanting to eat leftovers.



★★★★★ [read customer reviews](#)

Meal Planning Essentials Cont..

I don't buy uncrustables, I make them myself with these fun uncrustable makers! I then find creative ways to use the leftover bread (french toast bake!) These are great for grabbing on the way out the door.



[▶ Check Price & Availability](#)

★★★★★ [read customer reviews](#)

Make sure everyone knows what is for dinner (without having to ask 100 times) with this dry-erase and magnetic meal planning calendar.

	breakfast	lunch	snack	dinner
9	omelette + salmon on toast	chicken breast with broccoli and rice	coconut yoghurt and mixed nuts	pork chops with steamed spinach
8	porridge with blueberries and honey	pre workout: steak + sweet potato	post workout: protein shake + banana	chicken salad
7	muesli with celery + apple juice	tuna sweetcorn sandwich	peanut butter on crackers	salmon salad with cucumber
6	avocado on toast with fried eggs	jacket potato with ham + cheese	fruit salad bowl: kiwi, grapes, apple	date night: stir fry beef and noodles
5	boiled eggs and toast	chilli con carne	carrot sticks + hummus	cod with steamed carrots + beans
4	pre workout: porridge and banana	post workout: chicken and quinoa	fruit & oat bar with milk	steak, mushrooms and pasta
3	eggs, bacon, sausages and tomatoes	lentil + pea soup	almonds and dates	dinner at moms: lasagna

[▶ Check Price & Availability](#)

★★★★★ [read customer reviews](#)

Meal prep containers are also great to have on hand. I can make a dinner or lunch and pack them up for the week and pop them in the fridge (or freezer) for quick and easy meals.



[▶ Check Price & Availability](#)

★★★★★ [read customer reviews](#)

If you do a lot of snack bags and freezer meal bags these baggie holders are great, especially if you are normally in the kitchen by yourself. They are even adjustable for different size baggies.



[▶ Check Price & Availability](#)

★★★★★ [read customer reviews](#)

Reusable meal prep labels are GREAT! It doesn't matter if you think you will remember what is in the freezer bag or container, you won't! So do yourself a favor and label it!



[▶ Check Price & Availability](#)

★★★★★ [read customer reviews](#)

An example of what a sample week looks like:

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Frugal Pantry Staples

There are some frugal pantry staples that you should always have on hand. Learning how to build a frugal pantry is easy and can save you both time and money.

Having a **stocked frugal pantry** will take the stress out of cooking and provide a base for easy recipes to have on hand for dinners or freezer meals.

I can't tell you how many times the kids have looked in the cupboards and said there was nothing to eat.

What they don't realize is the magic of putting together a few ingredients and making a full meal!

Below is a list of frugal pantry staples that will help lower your grocery budget and ensure that you have a stocked pantry full of food to make everything from freezer meals to gluten-free recipes.

- Broths (chicken, beef, vegetable)
- Beans, legumes, grains, oats
- Sugars and flours
- Ground meat
- Baking soda and baking powder
- Yeast
- Lemon juice or lemons
- Eggs and butter
- Potatoes, onions, carrots, garlic
- Peanut butter and nut butters
- Cheeses and sour cream
- Creamed soups
- Rice and pasta
- Chicken breasts
- Frozen veggies
- Oils and vinegar
- Dried milk
- Tortillas

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with Smart Meal Planning Strategies!

Meal List

MEAL	INGREDIENTS NEEDED	LEFT OVERS	DAY
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Grocery shopping list

PRODUCE

GRAINS & BAKING

PROTEIN & MEATS

DRY & CANNED GOODS

SNACKS

DAIRY & COLD ITEMS

Grocery shopping list

FROZEN ITEMS

HOUSEHOLD & CLEANING

BEVERAGES

PERSONAL CARE & KIDS

PETS

OTHER

Pantry Inventory

Keep this sheet updated so you don't need to inventory every time you meal plan.

QTY	ITEM	USE BY	NEED MORE
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Fridge Inventory

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QTY	ITEM	USE BY	NEED MORE
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<i>Fri</i>					
<i>Thur</i>					
<i>Wed</i>					
<i>Tues</i>					
<i>Mon</i>					
	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Snacks</i>	<i>Dessert</i>

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<i>Sun</i>					
<i>Sat</i>					
<i>Fri</i>					
<i>Thur</i>					
<i>Wed</i>					
<i>Tues</i>					
<i>Mon</i>					
	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	<i>Dinner</i>	<i>Snacks</i>	<i>Dessert</i>



If you fail to plan,
you plan to fail.

-Benjamin Franklin

Additional Resources

Need some extra reading material for how to get started with meal planning and stocking your pantry with super frugal items?

Check out the resources below!

- [The 6 Most Effective Ways to Meal Plan](#)
- [10 Frugal Meals for When You're Broke!](#)
- [30 Easy Instant Pot Recipes for Beginners](#)
- [25 Cheap and Easy Recipes Using Canned Tuna](#)
- [Ibotta](#)-Get cash back rewards when grocery shopping!
- [MyFreezEasy](#)-Get personalized meal plans on the go!

Have more questions? Don't be afraid to reach out to me at keegan@thedailychangejar.com