

American food: Still the best deal in the world

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Although food prices rose 4.8% last year, eating nutritiously is still well within reach of the American family, according to the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) statistics. Analysis done by USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) indicates that families could, in fact, spend even less on food than what they currently spend and eat a healthier more nutritious diet.

USDA's Low-Cost Food Plan shows what a family on a budget can spend on food and still achieve a nutritious diet that meets current Dietary Guidelines for Americans. For December 2007, USDA estimates the cost of the Low-Cost Food Plan for a family of four (a couple ages 20 to 50 with two children ages 6 to 8 and 9 to 11) to be \$167.70 per week. This compares to the \$189.00 per week that the average four person household spent on food last year.

Families could spend less and eat a healthier diet. This is supported by a comparison of the foods in the Low-Cost Food Plan to what people are actually eating. The Low-Cost Food Plan contains more fruits, vegetables, and milk products than people are currently eating and less sweets and sugars.

“Eating healthier does not have to cost more and can even cost some families less,” says CNPP Executive Director Dr. Brian Wansink. The United States continues to have the safest, most abundant, healthiest, and least expensive food in the world. As a percentage of household expenditures, Americans spend approximately 13 percent of their

disposable income on food which includes food consumed both in and outside the home.

Source: Cornell Food & Brand Lab

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