

# How to get the fruit and veggies you need without busting the budget

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(HealthDay)—Fresh foods can be expensive, especially if you're trying

to go organic. But if you want to eat healthier by skipping processed, packaged foods, it is possible to keep costs under control and still get in the daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service found that you can have your 2 cups of [fruit](#) and 2-1/2 cups of vegetables for between \$2.10 and \$2.60 a day. These tips can help you stay within that budget.

Fruits that are typically less expensive include watermelon, bananas, apples, oranges and grapes. Potatoes, onions, canned tomatoes and broccoli are among the cheapest vegetables.

Always plan meals around what's currently abundant so you're not paying extra for hard-to-get fruits and veggies. That means being more flexible with menus and recipes, and deciding on dinner after a trip to the store rather than before you go. Here's one step that can help you with advance planning: If the supermarkets you frequent have apps, download them and look at their weekly specials before you leave home.

While [farmers markets](#) and local seasonal choices yield the freshest produce and often the most affordable, you may not have this option year-round where you live. Prices can vary widely between produce that's been trucked in, and frozen and canned varieties. For instance, fresh carrots are often cheaper than canned or frozen, but canned corn can cost substantially less than fresh.

Food warehouse chains may offer better prices than traditional grocery stores on some items. Buying in bulk can save money, but only as long as you can use [food](#) before it spoils. That usually means buying just one week's worth at a time or freezing some portions for future use. Look for bulk items, like chicken parts, that have been divided into sealed sections within an oversized package, making it easier to freeze part of

the food. Other options are to make casseroles, soups and stews that you can freeze, a convenient way to get home-cooked meals during the busy work week.

**More information:** You can see the entire U.S. Department of Agriculture list of the [most and least expensive fruits and veggies](#) on its website.

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