



Homeowner's HOPE Hotline Guide to Saving Money

Preserve Your Stake in Home Ownership With 25 Cost-Saving Grocery Tips

Did you know that meat is one of the most expensive items on your grocery list?

When you're trying to juggle a mortgage, it can be hard to figure out where to cut costs for your household. Some purchases are necessary and others are not. For example, food is a necessity—but there are many ways to save money at the grocery store to stay within your budget. Following simple tips will help you manage your finances and cut costs without feeling overwhelmed.

The **Homeownership Preservation Foundation**, known for the **Homeowner's HOPE™ Hotline** (1-888-995-HOPE), has prepared *Homeowner's HOPE Hotline Guide to Saving Money*, a series of tips to help lower your monthly bills to help stay current with your mortgage. For more information about how to preserve your stake in homeownership, please visit the Homeownership Preservation Foundation at: www.995hope.org

Grocery Shopping on a Budget

1. The Golden Rule: Never shop for food when you are hungry. You'll end up spending money that could be going towards full meals on snacks that you're craving in the meantime.
2. Plan your grocery trip by making a list. Keeping a notepad on or near your refrigerator is the easiest and fastest way to remember what you're running out of. Having a list will also help you avoid last-minute impulse buys that waste money.
3. Another note on impulse purchases: Avoid buying anything stocked at the checkout counter. If it wasn't on your list, you don't need it.
4. Use the unit pricing provided next to the price of the product to compare rates and brands.
5. Opt for store brand items instead of name brand. Often they're of the same quality, just with different packaging.
6. Look for sale items on the tops or bottoms of shelves. The most expensive products are usually stocked at eye-level.



7. Buy the Sunday paper and use it to clip coupons. This is one of the easiest ways to save on a variety of grocery items every week. However, you won't be saving any money if you use coupons for things you don't normally buy.
8. When selecting fruits and vegetables, the cheapest ones will usually be what are in season. If you're looking for something that's not in season, check the frozen or canned food sections. Fresh fruits and vegetables that are not in season are always more expensive than the ones that are.
9. Make your own window cleaner using water, ammonia and alcohol.
10. Only grocery shop once a week. Going throughout the week on small trips means that you're spending more money on gas and probably buying things that you don't need.
11. If you do find yourself in need of something last minute, don't go to a convenience store or gas station to buy it. Items are usually more expensive at these kinds of stores and rarely go on sale.
12. Plan your grocery trips and use coupons. If you're having trouble remembering when coupons expire, try going towards the end of the month, which is when most coupons expire.
13. Scan your pantry and refrigerator right before you leave just to be sure you're not forgetting anything that will require an extra trip later.
14. Avoid non-grocery items, like shampoo, pet food and toilet paper, that you can find cheaper elsewhere, like a discount store.
15. Drink more water (and not bottled water!). Sodas, flavored teas and non-juice drinks are expensive.
16. Avoid junk food – it's expensive and not a necessity. Using your grocery budget to buy chips and cookies means you're taking money away from a family dinner.
17. Check store's websites for printable coupons or go to www.Couponmom.com for coupons that can be used nationwide.
18. When something you regularly use is on sale, don't be afraid to stock up! You don't need to stock pile, but buy enough to last until the next sale.
19. If an item is advertised at a lower price if you buy more than one (i.e. "\$2 off when you buy two boxes"), remember that you can still get the discount if you buy just one item. Buy the quantity that you need.



20. Give yourself time to find the savings. Don't rush so much that you can't stop to compare prices. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and night-times are generally the least busy versus Fridays, pay days, the day before a holiday and right after work, which are busiest.
21. If butter is on sale and you want to buy it in bulk, keep in mind that unsalted butter can be frozen for up to five months and salted butter can be frozen for up to nine months.
22. Have a grocery budget and stick to it by only taking cash with you to the store. If it helps, keep a running total of how much is in your cart while you're still roaming the aisles.
23. Get creative. When your fridge is stocked with things that are nearing their expiration date, try combining them to make a meal or interesting salad. By not wasting food, you're also cleaning out your refrigerator and ensuring that you only buy what you really need during your next grocery trip.
24. If a store is out of a sale item, ask the manager for a "rain check" to pick it up for the same price next time.
25. Use cloth grocery bags. Many stores (if they're not already) have started offering incentives, like five cents off for each bag, to customers who bring their own bags to the store.

This article is intended to provide general information and should not be considered tax or financial advice. It's always a good idea to consult a tax or financial advisor for specific information about your individual financial situation.

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