THE NEW BOSTON COOKING SCHOOL

Shop Smarter: The Home Cook's Guide

NOTES

Grocery shopping is easier when you follow these simple rules. As a result your cooking will be more affordable, healthier, and less wasteful.

Use a List
Lists help focus your shopping and keep you on budget. For efficiency, categorize your list into grocery departments so you won't need to visit each section more than once.

Buy in Bulk or by the Case
Bulk sections are great for saving money and trying new items because you can purchase as much or as little as you'd like of dried beans, grains, nuts, dried fruit, and, often, spices.

Also, most grocery stores offer a considerable discount when you buy an item by the case. Purchasing cases of pantry staples with long shelf lives, such as broth, canned beans, and canned tomatoes saves you money in the long run.

Compare Unit Prices
The best way to compare prices between products is to look at the unit price, which is the price per pound, gallon, or ounce—not the price per package. The unit price allows you to see the true price of the item.

Buy Seasonally and Locally
Local, in-season produce is often cheaper than out-of-season produce. When you shop at a farmers' market, ask for bulk discounts or buy lightly bruised—but still perfectly tasty—"seconds": reduced-price produce that's not as pretty as first-rate fruit and vegetables.

Consider Frozen Foods
Frozen vegetables, fruits, fish, and meat are convenient, nutritious, and economical. Plus, most of the items can stand a long time in the freezer without any depreciation in quality.

Shop the Periphery of the Supermarket
You'll find most of the ingredients on your list, including produce, dairy, and meat, in the outside aisles of the grocery store. The center of the store tends to have prepared and processed foods, but it also contains many pantry staples, such as beans, broth, canned tomatoes, and baking supplies.