



Gluten-free diet on a budget

Following a gluten-free diet can bump up the cost of the average household shop with specialist gluten-free foods like bread being three to four times more costly than comparable gluten-containing products.

Eating a healthy, balanced diet doesn't need to be expensive. Shop bought, processed foods may save time but can make a huge dent in your wallet and may not always be the healthiest option.

Making some small changes to the foods you choose on your diet can make a big difference in looking after the pennies.

Getting your five a day

- Visit your local market. Fruit and vegetables are often reduced towards the end of the day so buy more than you need and freeze for later.
- Buy fruit and vegetables in season as they are generally cheaper and full of flavour.
- Use frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables in water, these can be cheaper and you can buy when they are on offer.

Make a list

- Planning is the key to eating healthily and cuts down on waste. Plan your week's meals in advance, make a list and only buy what you need.

Cheap meat

- Opt for cheaper cuts of meat, such as chicken thighs and drumsticks instead of chicken breasts and shoulder of lamb instead of leg. Turkey is usually cheaper than chicken and can be used in most recipes to replace chicken.
- Buy meat when there are special deals on and freeze for use at a later date.
- Add vegetables and pulses to bulk out meat based dishes. This will help the meat go further and will therefore save you money.

Stock up

- Stock up on tinned and dried pulses. Adding pulses (peas, beans and lentils) to casseroles, soups and salads is a great way to add bulk to your meals and they are a cheap alternative to meat.
- Take advantage of offers - stock up on foods which have a long shelf life when they are on special offer. Foods like tinned tuna, tomatoes, baked beans and soups are often included in supermarket deals.
- Stock up on tinned fish as it is cheap and easy to prepare. Oily fish such as sardines are a great source of omega-3 oils which are thought to help protect your heart.
- Choose own brand versions of common foods as they are often cheaper than branded products.



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Get cooking

- Choose naturally gluten-free foods. Potatoes and rice are good to include in the diet as they are healthy, low cost and will fill you up. Buying in bulk will make them cheaper still.
- Think local. Farm shops will often sell sacks of potatoes and trays of eggs for less than the supermarket and at the same time you are supporting local farmers.
- Cook in bulk. On a quiet day make a big batch of chilli, casserole or curry and freeze in portions so you always have a fast and healthy meal on hand for days when you are too busy to cook.
- Be organised at work. Buying gluten-free sandwiches or salads for work can be expensive when you add up the cost over the week. If you have access to a microwave, making soup one day and freezing in batches means you can have a quick and nutritious lunch.
- Make your own sauces. Instead of buying them, make your own using tinned tomatoes, roasted vegetables and herbs. You can freeze in portions so even if you are in a hurry you can always rustle up a bowl of gluten-free pasta and sauce.

- Use leftovers. Cook more than you need for dinner and eat for lunch the next day or freeze to use on another day. Leftovers can be used in a variety of dishes. Rustle up some ratatouille with leftover vegetables and tinned tomatoes, make some potato cakes with leftover mashed potato and some cheese and make a stew with leftover slices of meat.

If you enjoy eating out but are finding it expensive, try organising a dinner party instead. You can ask everyone to bring one dish with them to spread the expense.

Green fingers

- Grow your own fruit and vegetables. Those that can't be eaten fresh can be frozen and used at a later date.
- Grow your own herbs from seed in pots. These will add interest and flavour to your meals.

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