



Savvy Supermarket Shopping

How to make big savings on food costs while eating well and supporting your health and dietary needs. With lots of tips and hacks for meal planning, grocery shopping, and smart food storage, to help you achieve best value for money.

Start with a plan

Here are some planning tips to help you reduce your bills at the supermarket, without resorting to reducing the amount of food you can afford to buy, and helping you afford more food if you are currently cutting back.

- **Make a shopping list** to avoid impulse buys and over-buying. Instead buy only what you need. Will help to keep you focused on priorities and supports healthy choices and dietary needs.
- **Plan meals** based around items already in the cupboards and freezer. Don't overlook forgotten tins and packets from the back of cupboards, or items from the bottom of the freezer. Check use by date, then see how much you can save from your supermarket spend as these items can contribute to your meal planning.
- **Plan how much food to purchase** by checking who will be eating and how much they can eat.
- **Make food at home** as it's much cheaper than buying ready meals or takeout. Home cooked

meals and easy-to make sauces, instead of buying ready-made, and make packed lunches. Plan ahead so you'll have the ingredients ready.

- **Set a budget** if you need to limit total spend. Make a priority list that works within your budget. This doesn't mean you can't include feel-good treats but include them on your list so they are budgeted for.
- **Health-check** your shopping list to see if you have included food for creating healthy balanced meals.
- **Small changes add up** when you purchase the same breakfast cereal and everyday teabags, but switch to cheaper brands and buy on discount. Check through your routine shopping list to see if there are any items you buy out of habit that you could save on. Try switching to a cheaper brand or buy economy sized boxes, and compare supermarket own label prices. Suggest starting with simple items such as teabags, to begin with, where there are lots of options and you won't need to additionally factor in dietary needs.

- **More shopping list tips:**

www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/writing-shopping-lists

Yellow sticker deals

All major supermarkets put yellow stickers on fresh foods that must be sold that day because it's reached the 'display by' date, and also store-cupboard items such as cereal packets with damaged packaging.

- **Time of day** when stickers are added varies. Usually added in last hour or two before closing time. Lidl and Asda add stickers in the morning as well. Worth getting to know the routine in your local supermarkets as stickers can appear during the day too.
- **Location in-store** varies, some stores have special yellow sticker shelves, others do not.
- **Discounts** between 30 and 70 percent, great way to get a half price meal. If these are foods that can be frozen, it's a great way of securing cheap ingredients and meals for the future.



Choosing supermarkets

Budget supermarkets Aldi and Lidl have increased prices of their own brand budget products until some are now more expensive than premium supermarkets such as M&S and Waitrose. Price gap is closing between rocketing budget product prices and premium ranges or brand labels, and between traditionally cheaper supermarkets and premium stores. Be prepared to shop around.

Price comparison

Shop around to see where you can get best deal and use different supermarkets for different products. Some supermarkets have budget ranges. You can price compare individual groceries using supermarket comparison website priceable.co.uk or trolley.co.uk which has phone app too.

Loyalty discounts and cashback

- **Signing up.** All well-known supermarkets except Aldi have a loyalty card, consider signing up for them all. Check out in-store leaflets or supermarket websites to sign up and find out details of their loyalty offers, as these differ from one supermarket brand to another. Remember to take loyalty cards with you, or use downloaded loyalty apps, to scan at checkout. For online grocery shopping, register card to automatically link. Some health food shops have cards, such as Holland & Barrett.
- **Benefits.** Savings on shopping include loyalty price-drop off certain products; money-off discount vouchers off total shopping; and cashback points which convert to money-off total shopping.
- **New customer discount.** Typically £30 off at checkout first time you shop online with a supermarket website or their app.

Eligibility discounts

- **NHS discounts.** Sign up for Blue Light Card for various discount offers from major supermarkets.
- **Seniors discounts.** Ten percent off at Iceland and Food Warehouse on Tuesdays, just sign up for their Bonus Card and take ID.

Supermarket shelf hacks

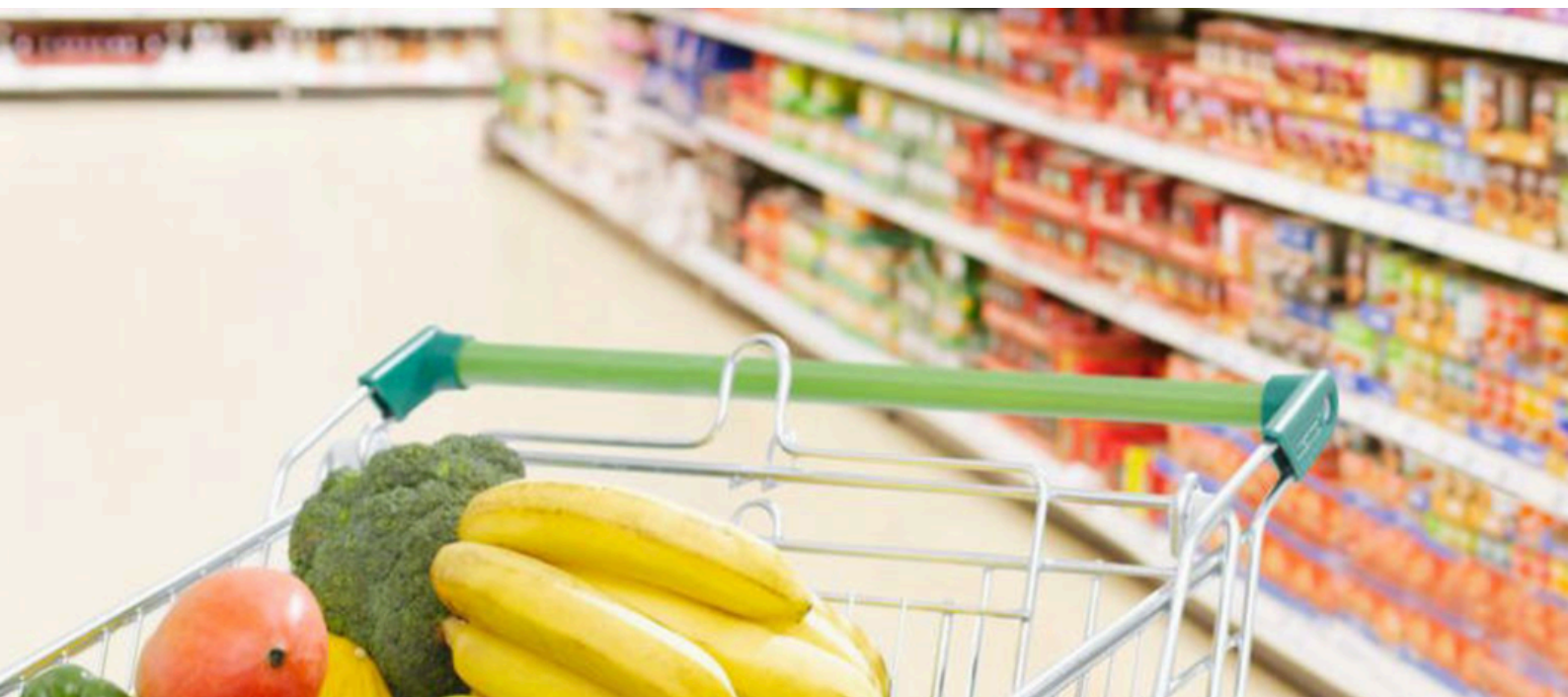
- **Frozen fruit and vegetables.** Frozen at peak freshness and keep in the freezer for a long time so you can use at convenience. Often cheaper than fresh. Good value considering you are paying by weight for trimmed edible parts and not the bits you would have thrown away. Cook vegetables straight from freezer, add frozen fruit to smoothies.
- **Loose fruit and vegetables** instead of pre-packaged if you only need a small amount.
- **Avoid supermarket salad bags** of torn leaves they are poor value for money they quickly wilt and go soggy, better to buy a whole lettuce instead.
- **Check drained weight** on food labels such as tinned fish, while comparing prices, to ensure value for money. Don't just look at the total contents weight on label as cheaper brands sometimes add more liquid to increase the contents weight, and you'll be pouring that liquid down the sink.
- **Compare price by weight or volume** using supermarket shelf labels which do the hard work for you displaying price calculation per 100g or 100ml so you can more easily compare value for money

Free food

- **Free food apps.** [Too Good Too Go](#) for surplus food from local shops and restaurants. [Olio](#) for spare food offered by individuals in local neighbourhoods.
- **Community cooking classes.** Free ingredients and lessons. Learn simple cooking skills to make home-made meals in future and save money. Sign up with [Bags of Taste](#) (Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Newham), or contact local charities for referral to other opportunities.

and cheapest prices per volume. This information available for online shopping too.

- **Beware of multi-buys.** All those offers such as '3 for 2' are supermarket promotions designed to get you to spend more. It's a false saving on food and should be avoided unless you know you can make use of the extras without wastage, such as freezing or sharing your shopping with a friend or neighbour.
- **Spend less on household products** to free up more budget for groceries. Look out for refill pouches which are 50 percent cheaper than buying a new bottle. Multi-buys of your tried and tested products are good value if you are confident you'll use it up quickly.
- **Discount coupons and vouchers.** Use these only if it's something you need anyway.



Smart food storage

With prices of everyday food basics such as bread and cheese escalating, here are tips and tricks for keeping supermarket food fresh for longer.

Say cheese

- **Keep cheese at back of fridge**, along with other dairy, as it's coolest there. Don't store in the door.
- **Re-wrap** after opening supermarket packaging. Wrap in cling film, or a food paper such as baking, parchment, or waxed. Then place inside a plastic food bag loosely folded but not sealed so cheese can breathe which prevents mould.

Vegetables fresh for longer

Keep root vegetable such as carrots, swedes, parsnips and radishes double-wrapped in fridge.

- **Wrap in paper first**, either brown bag, kitchen paper, or newspaper, to absorb moisture and prevent rot as veggies sweat in the fridge. Prevents fridge gases from making root vegetables such as carrots from sprouting tops and getting old quickly.
- **Seal up in plastic bag** next, to stop veggies drying and shrivelling. Store in fridge crisp drawer.

Leafy greens fresh for longer

The trick to keeping salad leaves, lettuce, spring onions, celery, and leafy greens such as kale, spinach, rocket and parsley fresh for longer is to keep them hydrated. They can still drink water even though they are no longer growing in the ground. Here are tips for keeping them fresh in the fridge for longer. Ideally store in crisp drawer.

- **Keep leafy greens with stems fresh** by trimming off tips of stems from freshly purchased greens such as kale and parsley with kitchen scissors, then wrap soaking wet kitchen paper around the base of trimmed bundle. Then fasten up in a plastic bag and store in fridge, ideally in crisp drawer. Leaves will stay fresh for more than one week.
- **Revive wilting leafy greens with stems**, such as kale and parsley, by trimming ends of stems with scissors then stand in glass of water until they revive. Works for celery too.
- **Keep salad leaves and leafy greens fresh** by fastening up in a plastic bag. Can also wrap leafy bundle in wet kitchen paper before placing in bag.

Freezer fresh

- **Check freezing advice** at [Food Standards Agency](#) and full list of all food you can freeze and how to freeze it at [freezeit.co.uk](#). Read freezing instructions on pre-packaged food.
- **Wrap portions individually** before freezing so you can easily defrost meal portions. Get maximum value out of fish, meat, or chicken multipacks bought on discount. Reduce vegetable waste by freezing spare chopped veggies. Can cook from frozen.
- **Seal up** in freezer-friendly food wrapping or tupperware.
- **Label clearly** with food description, quantity, date frozen and date by which to defrost.
- **Check freezer contents** regularly.

- **Revive wilting salad and leafy greens** by soaking in big bowl of water chilled with ice cubes.

Use your loaf

Unless your household eats a lot of bread each day, freeze bread on day of purchase, leaving some out for a day or two. Can be stored for 1-6 months depending on type of bread. Defrost in kitchen, or toast slices from frozen. Once defrosted is just like fresh bread.

- **How to freeze.** Remove from supermarket packaging and re-wrap in cling film, airtight sealed plastic food bag, or tin foil. Can freeze any bread, including uncut loaf (advise cut in half), rolls, or slices. Make the most of yellow sticker bread and stock up the freezer. Label so you know when you froze it and when to use by.

TOP TIP: Wrap bread slices two at a time in cling film, then re-pack the loaf back into its original bread bag before freezing. Makes it easy to defrost just two slices at a time for a sandwich later in the day or pop the frozen slices under the grill to toast.

Useful links

[MoneySavingExpert: supermarket shopping tips](#)
www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

Article by Cost of Living, People Participation Team



Visit <https://www.elft.nhs.uk/service-users-and-carers/cost-living> for more tips and advice on how to save on your household bills.