



Tips for Healthy and Budget-Friendly Meals and Snacks

Buy from discount racks. If your regular grocery store has discount produce or even packaged food, this is a great time to be impulsive! Bananas going brown? Great! Remove those peels and stick them in a bag in the freezer for smoothies. Same goes for a lot of food.

Reducing meat consumption. Meat is expensive, by replacing one or two meals a week with beans, legumes or plant-based alternatives, you can save your money for other things! You're also helping out the environment: swapping out two or three meat-based meals for vegetarian, can reduce your CO2 consumption by 20%!

Buy whole foods. By buying whole foods, rather than processed, you end up paying less because you are not paying for the processing or the packaging. Also, when you make foods from scratch, you have more control over what goes into your food (no preservatives) and which generally makes it healthier.

Buy in bulk if you can. Buying staples in bulk saves you money. If you use a lot of certain ingredients, it may be a good idea to purchase a larger quantity, which generally costs less per unit. As well, it saves you from always heading to the grocery store, where you undoubtedly pick up two or three other things as well.

Skip the take-out. Takeout comes at a premium, and generally isn't very healthy. Reserve takeout for special occasions, and save your hard-earned cash. If your favourite places have to-die-for dishes, plan a fun night with friends or family in trying to recreate them.

Prep some meals and snacks to avoid last-minute trips to the grocery store or restaurants. This could mean freezing some meals in advance, spending some time making muffins or chopping vegetables to dip in hummus as a healthy snack during the week. This will set you up to make healthy choices every day.

Learn empty the fridge recipes. These are non-recipes that bring out your creative side. They are for the night where you just don't want to go to the grocery store, because you have food already in the fridge with no real plan. Usually, they are medlies like **stir frys, soups, curries, pasta, or salads**. For stir fry, you can easily cook up some rice or noodles, fry up some vegetables and protein, and whip up a quick sauce with some combination of rice vinegar, soy sauce, peanut butter, ginger, lime, and whatever else. Same goes for the rest, this assuming that you're always stocked with a can of tomatoes and maybe some chickpeas. Let the creative juices flow!

Plan your meals using the flyers/sales. If you're planning the meals and snacks for the week, it can be great to pull out that junk mail and put it to use. Check out what the sales are, and that can inspire you for your meals, and sometimes change up the regular routine.

Building a healthy, budget meal

Building a healthy meal on a budget doesn't have to be hard, it just takes creativity and flexibility. It calls for reusing things in different ways, using your freezer and the depths of your pantry. Making sure it's healthy is another thing. It's about making certain changes in your diet to make sure there are adequate quantities of basic nutrition, like fibre, nutrients, protein, and carbohydrates. It is not about restriction, but balance. Instead of white rice, we can choose brown. Instead of fruit juices, we can have smoothies, where we still get the fibre from our fruit, all with its natural sweetness. Here you'll find a list of some healthy options or alternatives, and affordable vegetables to choose when you're in a pinch.

Healthy Starch (examples)	Healthy Proteins	Affordable Vegetables	Affordable Fruits	Healthy Snacks
Barley	Split Peas & Lentils	Squash (& Zucchini)	Bananas	Plain Yogurt & Fruit
Brown Rice	Kidney and Black beans	Carrots	Apples	Granola Bars (check labels for added sugars)
Oats	Tofu or Tempeh	Romaine Lettuce	Grapefruit	Chia Pudding
Whole grain breads, pitas, and tortillas	Lean meats (Skinless chicken breast, turkey, lean ground beef)	Spinach (Fresh and frozen)	Lemons & Limes	Rice Cakes
Potato and Sweet Potato	Fish (Char, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines, trout)	Kale	Dried fruit (raisins, prunes, bananas, apples)	Hummus & Veggies or Pita
Wheat Berries	Nuts & Seeds (Natural peanut butter, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, walnuts, etc)	Green Onions		Roasted Chickpeas
Quinoa	Eggs	Okra		Popcorn
Buckwheat	Greek or Icelandic (Skyr) Yogurt	Cucumber		Unsweetened Applesauce

A week of healthy and budget-friendly meals

This week is all vegetarian meals. Add or subtract meat and animal products depending on your preferences.

Meal and snack prepping on the weekend (or whenever you have a few hours) is a powerful tool for staying on top of your budget and having healthy snacks around. Choose things you won't mind eating leftovers of, that will keep well in the fridge for a few days, and ingredients that can overlap

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Oatmeal with fruit	Frittata with bread	Smoothie Pancakes	Frittata with bread	Oatmeal with fruit
Lunch	Broccoli soup with bread	Dragon Noodle Bowl	Broccoli soup with bread	Dragon Noodle Bowl	Leftover stuffed bell peppers and salad
Dinner	Stuffed sweet potatoes	Whole wheat pasta with marinara and roasted veggies	Stuffed bell peppers with mediterranean salad	Moroccan lentil and vegetable stew with grains	Pizza!
Snacks	Bran muffins , hummus and carrots	Fruit, Homemade Popcorn	Bran muffins, Fruit	Hummus and carrots, Popcorn	Leftover snacks, Chia pudding parfait