

Food Costs

GOING
UP?

Shop for healthful groceries
even when your budget is tight.



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RISING FOOD PRICES IN HAWAI'I CAN BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME MORE CREATIVE AND ADVENTUROUS ABOUT THE WAYS WE SHOP AND EAT. THE CHALLENGE IS TO FIND NEW WAYS TO KEEP EXPENSES DOWN WHILE EATING HEALTHFULLY.

Here are some tips to help you balance healthful eating with budgeting.

Before you head to the store:

- See if there are leftovers or perishable foods in your fridge that might turn bad if not used.
- Check the grocery store's newspaper ad or coupon book for sales and deals.
- Make a list of what you need and stick to it. Don't shop when you're hungry, because it's easy to pick up a bag of high-priced, low-nutrient chips or cookies when your stomach is growling.

Smart choices:

- Choose nutrient-dense foods, which tend to be less expensive. There's nothing wrong with ice cream once in a while, but a more nutritious, cheaper alternative might be low-fat yogurt with a banana or apple.
- Replace your dinner's animal protein (beef, chicken, pork, or fish) with a vegetable protein source. Lentils, soy beans (edamame), tofu, and beans make for great vegetarian entrées and shave many dollars off a meal. Egg dishes are also great alternatives.
- Convenience costs: Prepared and packaged foods come in handy, but they are pricey as well. No time to cook? Canned and frozen ingredients like beans and vegetables offer a cost-conscious middle road.

Other tips:

- Buying nonperishable items in large quantity saves money as long as you use what you bought. Cooking a huge batch of spaghetti sauce or other versatile dish with bulk-bought ingredients and freezing small batches often makes sense.
- Buy produce in season and go to farmers markets. It's usually a better deal.
- Take a brown bag lunch to work. It will save you money and you control all the ingredients so it's healthy and nourishing. 