



6 Strategies to Save Money on Groceries (+ How to Find \$2,275 In Your Garbage!)

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If you had to take a guess, what would you say is your biggest monthly expense? After rent or paying a mortgage, many of my clients are surprised to find out that it's groceries. That's right, you eat a huge chunk of your income every month.

"But Belinda, I have to eat," you may be saying. I can't argue with you on that one!

MONEY TIP:

The best way to save money on your food is to become aware of how much you buy that you don't really need.

According to a recent study*, American families throw out approximately 25% of the food and beverage they buy. (That's like throwing out two slices out of every pizza. Or 3 eggs out of every dozen!) One statistic I read quoted up to 40% even!

The cost estimate for food thrown out for the average family of four is \$1,365 to \$2,275 annually. (I don't know about you, but I can sure think of some better ways to spend that ~\$2,000.) So, whatever you spend on groceries every month, there's a good chance you are throwing a chunk of that money in the trash.

ACTION STEPS:

Here are 6 strategies to help you tame your grocery bill:

1. Shop in your own cabinets before you shop at the store

On average, most people have 3 boxes of pasta and 3 jars of spaghetti sauce on hand, in case of...a pasta craving? Before you go to the store, check your stash and cross the items off your list. Eat what you have already purchased. That's just as good as cash hiding in your pantry. (You'll save money on groceries right away with this step. Keep going until you can see the bottom and the back of the cabinets!)

2. Beware of buying bulk during a sale

You don't have to buy a year's worth of cereal when it goes on sale. It'll go on sale again in about three months. Plus, store promotions often cause shoppers to buy food outside their typical meal planning, which – you guessed it – ends up in the trash later.

3. Consider skipping the brand name items

Is a brand name product really better than store and generic brands? Do a taste test with your family. You may be surprised how little of a difference there really is on most items.

4. Buy less and plan your meals weekly

Most of the money wasted is from expired items or leftovers literally thrown in the trash. Save yourself time and money with just a few minutes of planning your food needs for the week. You'll likely be amazed at how much you'll immediately save when you buy fewer basic ingredients each week.

5. Don't take your children with you (And if you don't have children, don't take anyone else's kids with you either!)

They will often want additional items not on your list and items you don't really need. They can also keep you there longer, which inherently inspires you to buy more items than intended. If you absolutely need to bring them, then give them a job to keep them occupied -- like holding certain items for you, crossing items off the list, or keeping track of how many aisles you've been down.

6. And of course, do not go to the store hungry

You've likely heard this one before, but it needs repeating. If you do happen to be hungry, get yourself a quick granola bar or snack, or your entire purchase could end up being 10-20% higher than usual.

If you often find that the "mental math" of how much you think you should have in your bank account at the end of the month is \$200- \$400+ different, how much you spend on groceries is likely the culprit.

(Ready to get all of your "unconscious spending" in check? Try this free money-making tracking template at: www.OwnYourMoney.com/track.)

Why? Because most people vastly underestimate in their heads just how much groceries cost for you (and your family). Just think though – for every \$100 you save each month on groceries, that's \$1,200 per year you keep in your account!

* [National Resources Defense Council](#)