Cut Food Costs by Reducing Food Waste

If you find yourself discarding food that is left over or of lower quality, you’re increasing your food bill. But by using these foods in creative ways, you can save money. Try these suggestions:

- Heels of bread — Dice with a knife or grind in a blender. Then sauté in margarine for a casserole topping.
- Soft apples — Make apple crisp, or dice and cook to make applesauce.
- Overripe bananas — Mash and freeze for future nut bread.
- Leftover plain yogurt or sour cream — Add to a sauce for a casserole or pasta dish.
- Sour milk — Use in pancakes, biscuits, or cooked pudding.
- Bits of cheese — Freeze for later use in macaroni and cheese.

Source: Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University; raabc@oregonstate.edu

The Oregon State University Extension Service “Oregon Family Nutrition Program” (OFNP) is looking for volunteers

- To assist Susie Johnson in the grade schools. The need is for 1 to 3 hours a month for four months in 1st grade classrooms and 1 to 6 hours a month for five months in 4th grade classrooms. Volunteers are needed in Nestucca Valley, Tillamook and Neah-Kah-Nie School Districts.
- To assist with serving nutritious, home prepared food samples in Food Pantries throughout the county. Volunteers are needed once a month for 2 hours in Beaver, Garibaldi, Wheeler and Tillamook!

If you are interested in volunteering or have any questions, please contact Susie Johnson at the OSU Extension Service in Tillamook, (503) 842-5708 ext. 215 or stop by at 2204 Fourth Street in Tillamook.
Get Ready To Garden for Good Health

Tough economic times have hit Oregon families hard, and many households are trimming spending. None of us can afford to sacrifice food quality to save money. Consider planting vegetables and/or fruit to help supplement your food supply. A small investment of your time and energy can stretch food dollars and help your family meet USDA Dietary Guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption. <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

Benefits of adequate fruit and vegetable consumption include reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes and a better chance of achieving a healthy weight (when combined with an active lifestyle and low-fat diet). Fruits and veggies are colorful, easy to prepare, and taste great, too.

Unfortunately, many Americans do not consume adequate quantities from these food groups. Those with lower incomes consume even fewer fruits and vegetables than those with higher incomes. Substituting low-cost, nutrient-poor foods is a common, but detrimental, strategy for households experiencing food insecurity.

You don’t need to have a large garden space or yard to reap the health and budget benefits of growing your own produce. Some vegetables and herbs may even be grown in containers. A number of resources are available through Oregon State University Extension Service that can help you plan, plant, harvest, and store home-grown edibles.

Growing your own food doesn’t require extensive start-up costs. If you receive benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps/Oregon Trail card), you can use them to purchase seeds and plants that produce food. Purchase second-hand shovels, rakes, and other gardening tools for a fraction of the cost of new tools. Composting <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/grow/grow/compost.html> your kitchen waste cuts down on your garbage bill and results in free fertilizer to enrich your garden soil. Invite your neighbors to pitch in and share the bounty.

Children will enjoy growing and harvesting fruits and vegetables as well. Planning a garden includes steps that kids will enjoy: choosing what to grow, identifying where the sunlight is best, measuring the space, digging, and watching plants grow. Planting food helps children discover and appreciate a personal connection to the environment and their own health. And what fun that first harvest can be! You can have fresh produce for pennies a serving, grown in your yard or in a container. Plant some now for good health!

References: OSU Extension’s publication “Growing Your Own” is a practical guide to gardening for first-time gardeners. It is available online <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/grow/grow/> Printed copies are available at the OSU Extension Service office.

The OSU Extension Service offers classes on a variety of gardening topics and Master Gardener volunteers who can answer gardening questions.

To learn more about USDA recommendations for fruit and vegetable intake, visit the USDA Food Guide Pyramid website <http://www.MyPyramid.gov/>.

Source: Anne Hoisington, Extension food and nutrition specialist and senior instructor; Anne.Hoisington@oregonstate.edu

Newsletter prepared by Nancy Kershaw, OSU Extension Agent
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Real Men Ate Their Veggies

When we think of “Real Men,” we often think of the caveman; you know, the big, burly, hairy, hunter type that carried a club and spent most of his time stalking the Wooly Mammoth to provide for his clan. Well our vision is a little off. The truth is the caveman was a small, muscular, salad-lover. Okay, he still hunted with a big stick, but the majority of his diet came from fruits, vegetables, nuts, lean meat and seafood.

Much attention and research has been given lately to the diets of our “hunter gatherer” ancestors. As much as 60 percent of their calories came from fruits and vegetables. Here is what we know: foraging was hard work, obesity didn’t exist, only two percent had cavities and they probably didn’t die of heart disease. On the flip side, the average life expectancy was only 25 years, but the 25-year-old caveman’s arteries were probably in better shape than the 25-year-old of today.

Somewhere in the course of the last 10,000 years we have forgotten the importance of fruits and vegetables in our diets. The average American consumes only two to three servings of fruit and vegetables per day. That number includes French fries. The caveman consumed closer to 10 to 20 servings. Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is linked with decreasing chronic disease, including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.

Ideally, we should be consuming some source of fruits or vegetables at each meal, or around 5 to 9 servings per day. Tips to increasing intake:

1. Keep bowls of cut-up fruit available in the refrigerator.
2. Keep veggie trays and low fat dip available in the fridge for quick snacks or to add to lunches.
3. Always serve a salad at dinner, along with other vegetable side dishes.
4. At dinner, make sure half of your plate is vegetables and the other half carbs and protein.
5. Make fruit desserts.
6. Add fruit to lunches.

Source: SeAnne Safaii-Fabiano, University of Idaho FCS Food and Nutrition professor

What Diet Is Most Effective for Weight Loss?

Researchers have found that the kind of diet that people follow—low carbohydrate, low fat, or high protein—doesn’t matter when trying to lose weight. What is important is making sure that people decrease their calorie intake and stick with it. Participants in a recent study were assigned one of four diets that varied in the percent of fat, protein and carbohydrates.

The calorie content of the four diets ranged from 1,200 to 2,400. Each subject’s diet was individualized and calculated to be 750 calories less per day than what he or she normally ingested. All four diets contained healthy fats, were high in whole grains, fruits and vegetables and were low in cholesterol and saturated fat.

Subjects were also asked to exercise 90 minutes a week, keep an online food diary and meet regularly with diet counselors for two years. After six months subjects lost an average of 13 pounds no matter what diet they followed. After two years they kept off an average of nine pounds, regardless of which diet they followed.

The conclusion of lead researcher Frank Hu at Harvard was “To lose weight, it comes down to how much you put in your mouth—it’s not a question of eating a particular type of diet.”

Mental Exhaustion Makes Workouts Harder

Researchers at Bangor University in Wales found that when people are mentally tired, they find it more difficult to exercise. The researchers found that being mentally exhausted caused subjects to stop exercising 15 percent earlier, on average, even though there was little difference in their cardio, respiratory, or muscle function.

Researchers speculated that mental fatigue might lower the brain's inhibition against quitting, or perhaps mental fatigue affects dopamine, a brain chemical known to play a role in motivation and effort. To get the most out of your workout, try and be mentally rested before you exercise.


Don’t Over-Reward Yourself for Being Physically Active

When adults are physically active, they are healthier and less likely to develop chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. The most recent Physical Activity Guidelines, released in November 2008, recommend that adults accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity (2 hours and 30 minutes) each week to receive the health benefits. For individuals trying to lose weight the physical activity recommendation increases to 300 minutes (5 hours) of moderate intensity aerobic physical activity weekly.

Does a higher level of physical activity result in increased eating in individuals trying to lose weight? Researchers at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center asked overweight and obese individuals not to change their eating habits but to increase their level of physical activity over a six month period.

At the end of the study they found that:

- That those who exercised approximately one hour a week lost 2-3 pounds, which was expected from the amount of exercise they were doing.
- Those who exercised approximately two hours a week lost slightly more than four pounds which was also expected from the amount of exercise they were doing.
- Those who exercised slightly more than two hours a week lost only 2-3 pounds, but they should have lost almost 6 pounds from the increase in physical activity.

People generally overestimate the calories they are burning with exercise and they may reward themselves by eating more. If a person runs for an hour then goes out to have a large high calorie coffee drink and a large muffin, she probably consumed more calories than she burned.”


May is Older Americans Month

This year's theme “Living Today for a Better Tomorrow” encourages focuses on prevention and healthy aging. 100,000 older adults will participate in activities at more than 1,000 locations throughout the country on May 27, 2009, as part of the 16th annual National Senior Health & Fitness Day. The common goal for this day is to help keep older Americans healthy and fit.
Proper Handling Ensures Leftover Food Will Be an Asset

Cut food waste by using leftovers. If you bake extra potatoes, add them to an egg frittata or make potato salad. Leftover vegetables can be added to a soup or an omelet. Add leftover meat or poultry to a casserole.

If you handle your leftovers safely, they’ll be safe to eat when you’re ready to use them. Be sure to refrigerate them right away. Don’t leave perishable foods at room temperature longer than 2 to 3 hours.

Store leftovers in see-through plastic containers or glass jars. Label with the contents and the date. If you won’t be ready to eat them for a day or two, freeze them to maintain the quality. Keep inventory sheets on the outside of your refrigerator and freezer so that you won’t forget about them.

When you’re ready to use leftovers, you’ll probably be reheating them. Be aware that reheating won’t make them safe to eat if they were mishandled earlier. One type of bacterium that causes 24-hour “flu” forms a toxin that isn’t easily destroyed by reheating.

If you reheat, use suitable cookware. Plastic containers are useful for storing leftovers but may not be designed for reheating them. High heat could release harmful chemicals. Transfer food to appropriate microwave or ovenproof containers before reheating.

Source: Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University; raabc@oregonstate.edu

Explore These TV Alternatives for Younger Children

Interaction, reading, and playing are always better than watching television. These activities are important for the healthy development of social, emotional, and intellectual skills. Here are some ideas, from the Parents as Teachers National Center, for activities to do with your child instead of watching TV.

Explore - Baby-proof an entire room and put an assortment of toys and safe household objects in the room to play with.

Watch - Hang a bird feeder outside a window where the child can see the birds and squirrels.

Listen - Play music at a moderate volume and encourage your child to sing and dance.

Touch - Toddlers like to dig, scoop, and mold, exercising their emerging fine-motor skills. Provide some play dough or a bowl half filled with beans, and cups for scooping.

Splash - Let your child play in the bathtub. However, never leave your child alone even for a minute when he is in the tub.

Look at books - Read a book or just look at the pictures with your child. Have some books that are unfamiliar to your child so they will hold her attention.

Help - Since toddlers like to be where the action is, let them play alongside while you work. Think creatively about how he can help you with a task.

Find a friend - Trade babysitting time with other parents of toddlers so your child can experience being with other children. This interaction will contribute to healthy development.

Source: Denise Rennekamp, Extension associate, Oregon State University; denise.rennekamp@oregonstate.edu

1. **If a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.** This saying is timeless. Unfortunately, the fine print often exposes such offers as a bad deal. Check all the terms before you purchase an item or sign a contract. If you still feel uneasy, check with your family and friends. Taking a little time to check out an offer can save you big headaches later.

2. **Use direct deposit for your Social Security payments.** Having your Social Security check electronically deposited guarantees that the bank receives your payment safely and securely. More than 90 percent of the problems with Social Security payments are associated with mail delivery. Electronic deposit also means you get your money immediately. Direct deposit is safer, faster and secure.

3. **At your death, your debts are your own.** When you die, your creditors cannot force your family to pay for your debts. The creditors you owe can take assets from what is left in your estate, but they cannot force family members to pay out of their own pockets unless they co-signed the debt.

4. **Update your will when your life changes — a birth, death, marriage, divorce or other life changing event.** Be sure to update your will when your family circumstances change so that someone is not inadvertently left out. Death may be uncertain, but you can be more certain about how life after your death will affect your family if you plan for it now.

5. **Don’t be a victim of identity theft.** Identity thieves may call you and pretend to be with a company you have a relationship with. If someone from a company you do business with calls you on the phone and asks for important personal information, do not provide it. Instead, call the company’s number in the phone book or on the statements they mail you and ask if someone called you. Chances are, it was a scam artist.

6. **If you get an unexpected check in the mail, read all the fine print before cashing it.** Some companies now send out checks with fine print attached. When the check is cashed, the person named on the check is enrolled in a service with a monthly charge. If you receive a check in the mail, make sure there is no fine print on the check or other materials mailed with the check that will cost you money.

7. **Check your credit report (free!).** Request your free credit report at least once a year to check for identity theft. Thieves sometimes open credit card accounts in seniors’ names, charge up large amounts and do not pay. This affects your credit report, which influences whether you can be employed, rent an apartment, buy insurance or get a loan. Check your credit report free by calling 1-877-322-8228 or go online to [http://www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). Don’t fall for free credit report services advertised on TV that actually enroll you in a monthly service before you can get your “free” report.

8. **Consider signing up for the do-not-call registry.** Registering your phone number with the do-not-call registry will reduce the number of unwanted calls you receive. To register your phone on the national registry, call 1-888-382-1222. You can still be called by charities, political parties, pollsters, and businesses with which you have a relationship, but telemarketing calls will stop.

9. **Read the fine print on gift cards.** Gift cards are not all the same. Some cards expire after a certain amount of time. Other gift cards charge fees for transactions or inactivity. If you are going to give someone a gift card, be sure that you understand the fees associated with the card.

*Source: Missouri Family Newsletter*
For Safe Home-Canned Foods, Choose the Right Processing

The food preservation season is approaching. Be prepared by gathering up-to-date instructions for home canning. Although other preservation methods such as drying and freezing may allow some room for creativity, canning must be done with precision.

Home-canned foods will be safe to eat if you follow research-based instructions exactly. It’s especially important to can low-acid foods (such as meat, fish, vegetables, and poultry) correctly to avoid botulism, a sometimes fatal foodborne illness. You must use a pressure canner.

The type of canner and length of time needed are influenced by several factors including the acidity of the food (or food mixture), the way it’s prepared, and the size of the jar. Jars of food must reach a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has long been the major source of research-based home-canning instructions. Recommendations are published in The Complete Guide to Home Canning available online from the National Center for Home Food Preservation at the University of Georgia: http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/ (click on “publications”).

The OSU Extension Service publishes the same recommendations in their publications on the OSU website http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog (click on “nutrition and foods”) for publications on canning tomatoes, seafood, and smoked seafood, as well as pickling vegetables. These and publications about canning vegetables, fruit, salsa, and meat and poultry also are available for purchase via the OSU website or at the OSU Extension Service county office. These are kept updated based on current research. You can also take classes through the OSU Extension Service to learn the most current recommendations.

Recent Ball and Kerr home-canning publications also are based on USDA recommendations. It’s very important to use up-to-date editions because home-canning recommendations have changed through the years. Use editions published after 1988, when many changes were made.

Don’t assume that all home-canning recommendations on the Internet are safe. Be especially cautious about personal websites, recipe sites, and cooking exchanges. Contact the OSU Extension Service before using them. They may not be based on research.

Source: Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University; raabc@oregonstate.edu

2009 Summer Canning Class Schedule

Have you thought about learning to can fruits, vegetables, jams, jellies or fish or game meat this summer? Are you an experienced canner who would like an update on the latest USDA recommendations? Then plan to attend one or more of the canning classes held at the OSU Extension Office in Tillamook. Each class will cost $7.50 (or $10 after the pre-registration deadline) for supplies. Participants will take home something they have canned. Pre-registration and pre-payment of class fees are required, classes with low enrollment on the Wednesday before the class is scheduled will be cancelled.

Saturday, June 20, 9 am-noon – Canning Fruits, Pie Fillings, Jams & Jellies (pre-register by June 17)
Saturday, July 11, 9 am-noon – Canning Pickles & Relishes (pre-register by July 8)
Saturday, August 22, 9 am-1:30 pm – Canning Fish, Meat and Vegetables (pre-register by August 19 - bring a lunch)
Saturday, September 12 – Canning Tomatoes and Salsa (pre-register by September 9)
Home Preserving Can Cut Food Expense—Or Maybe Not, If You Tally Everything

Some people are turning to gardening and home food preservation to cut their food bills. In some cases, preserving food at home may save money. In other cases it may not. Compare the cost of a food item preserved commercially with the cost of a similar item preserved at home. Include the cost of:

- Produce and added ingredients (such as sugar)
- Equipment and supplies
- Fuel consumption to preserve and store the food
- Your own time and energy

Freezing is a simple method of food preservation, but a freezer costs money to buy and operate. Consider maintenance and repair as well as electricity needed to reach and maintain zero degrees F. More energy is required if the freezer is upright or frost-free, if it’s in a warmer room, if the door is opened frequently, and if it isn’t full. Other freezing costs include packaging materials and added ingredients such as sugar and antidarkening agents.

To get the most value out of your home freezer, select one that fits your family needs, use it properly, freeze only those foods your family likes to eat, freeze in portions you will use without waste, and find economical sources of those foods.

Home canning is a more economical method of preserving food than freezing. In addition to the cost of produce, include the cost of:

- Pressure and/or boiling water canners (which can be used for a number of years)
- Jars and lids (lids are not reusable but undamaged jars are reusable)
- Other equipment such as jar lifters
- Water and fuel (electricity or gas) needed to can
- Added ingredients such as sugar, vinegar, and spices

Canning must be done correctly to ensure that food will be safe to eat. You must use a pressure canner to safely process low-acid foods (meats, fish, vegetables, and poultry). It is the most expensive piece of canning equipment needed. Gaskets, safety valves, and pressure gauge replacements will be needed periodically. A boiling water canner is needed to process high-acid foods such as fruits, tomatoes, pickles, and preserves. The energy cost to can food in either type of canner will vary with the length of processing time and the efficiency of the burner in maintaining the desired processing temperature.

Drying may be an economical method to preserve foods. However, drying is time-consuming, and the end result may be less desirable than foods preserved by canning or freezing. Costs include:

- An electric dehydrator and/or screens
- Energy to dry the food (which varies with the type of dehydrator and time needed to dry the food)
- Water and energy to rehydrate the foods to their original state

No matter what preservation method you use, you need to take your time and energy into account. Shelling peas and pitting cherries can be time consuming. Commercially preserved food may be appealing in contrast. For those who prefer home preserved food tailored to their own preferences, however, the cost may be price-less.

Source: Carolyn Raab, Extension food and nutrition specialist, Oregon State University; raabc@oregonstate.edu

For information about the free loan of home food preservation equipment such as boiling water canners, pressure canners and food dehydrators contact the OSU Extension Service in Tillamook (503) 842-3433.