

## Healthy and Cheap Food Choices

It is common knowledge that college students like to eat, and they like to eat a lot. But everyone also knows our food choices aren't always the most nutritional or cost effective. So for those of you out there that have not just a wallet to watch, but a waistline, I have compiled a list of price pleasant foods that are also good for you. I purchase all of these foods and have kept my monthly food budget under \$100 (compare that to my previous spending habit of \$300+/month). If you think you can stick to a budget and be happy without eating out or eating junk all the time, then go through the following list and start making some good decisions.

- Eggs. Almost nationwide you can get a dozen for under \$2.00 or \$3.00. They are a great source of protein and antioxidants. You can make your traditional breakfast eggs or get fancy and make a sandwich out of them!
- Potatoes. Potatoes are loaded with good stuff (keep the skins on!). Your basic potato contains lots of potassium and vitamin C. There is also an endless list of things you can do with potatoes that make them very versatile...as well as very inexpensive.
- Apples. Apples are inexpensive, always in season, and come in plenty of varieties. They contain pectin (fiber that reduces cholesterol) and vitamin C. You might also purchase applesauce, but read the food label.
- Melons. While whole melons might cost a few bucks, you probably aren't going to eat it all at once. So you can eat your cut melons over the period of a few days and really get your money's worth.
- Clementine. Clementines are those tiny little oranges that you often see in the little rectangular boxes. They are easy to peel—can be done with fingers in under a minute—and are sweet, delicious, and good for you. I usually have one as part of my breakfast each morning.
- Nuts. Nuts sometimes get a bad rap for having a high fat content. However, it is a good fat: unsaturated & monounsaturated. They are also a quality source of Vitamin E and protein.
- Bananas. Bananas are very inexpensive and you can often purchase a week's worth for under \$2.00. They are high in fiber and potassium, not to mention an easy way to get your daily recommended servings.
- Beans. Beans are, as everyone knows, the magical fruit and they make you.... Even so, you definitely get your bang for your buck. They are packed full of iron, folate, fiber, and manganese. There is a multitude of beans to choose from as well, so feel free to explore.
- Brown Rice. Brown rice is just a smidgen more than white rice, but it is a lot better for you. It has low fat content and is high in protein and fiber...great source of whole grains as well! You can mix it with a meat or poultry item as well.
- Pasta & Sauce. Who doesn't like spaghetti or pasta with Alfredo sauce? All you need to do is grab any kind of pasta and your favorite sauce. This meal is loaded with carbohydrates and takes only minutes to prepare. One of my buddies makes pasta sandwiches—uses shell pasta, a marinara type sauce, and puts it in between buttered and seasoned toast.
- Spinach. Spinach can be shredded up and put on almost anything (like pasta!) as an added flavor. I personally like to throw spinach into a bowl and throw a little dressing on, then eat it like a salad. This is one of the best dark green and leafy plants under the sun.
- 100% Juice. True, the 100% juice is a little over the pricy end. However, you should realize that it will be drank one glass at a time over the period of a week. I have two glasses of cranberry or apple juice every day and it's a great way to start the mornings. Not only does it taste great, but you'll be getting tons of good, all natural ingredients.
- Yogurt Covered Raisins. I used to eat candy by the bucket load. Not only was it bad for my teeth, but it's just not good for you at all (use your sugars sparingly!). I switched to other items like this that are sweet but still good for you. These can be a little more pricy, but assuming you don't eat them all at once, they are a good deal.
- Cereal. I'm not talking about your favorite kids sugar cereal. There are "grown-up" cereals that taste great and are a very great way to start off the day or eat as another meal. I personally love Total, and they have many delicious kinds that provide me with the essentials.
- Chicken, Beef, & Pork. Before you go shopping, think of some meat dishes you can easily make and eat as leftovers. Personally, I buy a pound of two of ground beef every shopping trip and make sloppy joes, taco meat, etc. Always be thinking about what you can spread out over a few days and still be satisfied with.

- Frozen Pizza. I know what you're thinking...Pizza? Well, truth is, you can get entire frozen pizzas for under \$2.00 and they might not be the healthiest thing on the menu, but it's still something you can quickly cook for lunch and easily split with someone else.