

## Quick and Easy Meals



With the hustle and bustle of everyday life, slaving over a hot stove is usually out of the question. Read on for some easy and healthy meal ideas that will fit your budget.

### Saving Money in Your Kitchen

Sometimes you can save time and money in the long run by investing a small amount of time and money now. Here are a few tips to consider:

- **Find recipes and learn new cooking skills.** Buy a used cookbook or borrow one from a friend or the library. Go to free Web sites to help build your quick and easy recipe collection.
- **Invest in a slow cooker.** You can throw your ingredients into it before you leave the house in the morning. The food cooks while you are away, saving you time at the end of the day.
- **Make double or triple batches of recipes** like soups, sauces, lasagna, chili, and meatballs. Freeze the batches to use later.
- **Buy a whole chicken** instead of chicken pieces or skinless chicken breasts. Cut the chicken apart and use the bones to make a chicken stock.
- **Have a plan for leftovers.** For example, you can bring them to work for lunch the next day.

### Saving Money While Shopping

Pick up these versatile and budget-friendly foods on your next shopping trip:

- **Eggs:** One egg costs about 11 cents, so eggs are a cheap option for a speedy meal. Also, they are loaded with protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, and the antioxidant lutein, which helps promote healthy skin and eyes. Try them in omelets, egg salad, and sandwiches.
- **Bananas:** One medium banana costs about 36 cents, has 109 calories, and provides vitamin B-6, fiber, potassium, and vitamin C. Bananas are a healthy topper for many breakfast dishes, like oatmeal, cold cereal, and pancakes. Before they brown, peel and store bananas in the freezer for a quick and delicious frozen treat, or try them in fruit salad or blended in a smoothie.



- **Beans:** Beans have fiber, iron, calcium, and zinc. A ¼-cup serving costs only about 13 cents. Dried beans are more budget friendly than canned. To prepare dried beans, soak and cook them before you eat them or add them to dishes like chili or beans and rice. On the other hand, canned beans are ready to eat and are often on sale. Rinse and drain canned beans to wash away some of the salt. Skip refried beans and beans with fat from pork or other meats.
- **Potatoes:** When you buy them in larger bags, potatoes cost about 40 cents each. This root vegetable contains vitamin C, vitamin B-6, potassium, fiber, and iron. Leave the skin on whenever possible to get more of these nutrients. Enjoy potatoes in chili or soup, or make baked, mashed, or scalloped potatoes.
- **Ground beef:** Lean meat can be costly, but you can make a thrifty meal if you stick to healthy portions. A 3-ounce portion of 93% lean ground beef costs about \$1. Stretch ground beef dishes like chili, sloppy joes, or meat sauce by adding seasonal vegetables and serving with potatoes, pasta, or rice.



### Healthy Recipe Finder

Here is a list of Web sites where you can find healthy recipes:

- **Cooking Light:** [www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com)
- **Eating Well:** [www.eatingwell.com](http://www.eatingwell.com)
- **Small Step:** [www.smallstep.gov/eb/recipes.html](http://www.smallstep.gov/eb/recipes.html)
- **Food and Health:** <http://foodandhealth.com/recipes.php>
- **Meals Matter:** [www.mealsmatter.org/about](http://www.mealsmatter.org/about)

