

Shopping For Paleo On A Budget

Hello,

I'm so glad you made your way here!

If you're on a budget and wanting to eat paleo, I totally feel for you. It can feel wildly demotivating for you to hear all about the benefits of eating the paleo diet, get all excited, then realize that it costs \$18 for a bag of paleo-approved granola or something.

It can be *nuts*.

But the good news is, you can still eat paleo WITHOUT having to go into the poorhouse!! And actually - you can do it in a way that feels **AMAZING**. Seriously.

I'm going to let you in into all kinds of everyday tricks, like:

- How to get everyday food cheaper
- Meal preparation techniques that save money
- Inexpensive places you can buy food
- How to plan meals in advance (this saves so much cash!)
- ...and a bit more. So let's get going, because **my plan is to rock your world!**

Okay, so first up...

How to get things cheaper

There are all kinds of foods that are paleo friendly.

As you probably know, you can eat all kinds of meat (just avoid things that are super processed like some hot dogs), fresh veggies and fruit (go for seasonal whenever possible - it's cheaper and tastes better), healthy oils (coconut oil, ghee, olive oil), fermented foods, and all kinds of spices.

Depending on where you live, there might be some ingredients that are cheaper than others.

That being said, GENERALLY, the cheapest paleo foods are:

- Eggs. If your body can handle eggs, you have a great advantage. There are approximately 68 million ways to cook eggs, so there are all kinds of recipes you can benefit from, and a dozen eggs usually cost just a few dollars.
- Vegetables and fruit – These can be really cheap - especially seasonal items from the farmer's market. And a perk: green and root veggies are very, very filling!
- Lesser loved cuts of meat – Organ meats, meats close to expiration (they're still fine), etc.

Let's also go over how to get things cheaper:

How to get cheaper meat prices:

- Buy in bulk whenever possible.

- **Meat that's coming close to expiration date is usually heavily discounted.** Don't worry - you can freeze the meat and it's still good.
- **Go to farmer's markets wherever possible** - they offer cheaper meat.
- **Get cheaper versions of meat.** Instead of, say, steak, go for a hamburger patty. Instead of an entire chicken, you can get frozen thighs or breasts for much cheaper.
- **Check out your portion sizes** - you can often have 3/4 of what you're already eating without feeling like you're missing anything. That starts to add up!
- **Conventional meat can be OK** - If organic/grass-fed/pastured meat is too expensive, buy lean (without much fat) cuts of conventional meat instead. Most of the toxins in meat are stored in the fat. If you buy leaner cuts and trim off excess fat, you'll be taking care of a lot of the potential issues.
- **It's usually cheaper to NOT get pre-cut items like burger patties.** You can easily make the patties with your hands.
- **If you feel up for the challenge, you can work with a farm and buy half of a cow, bison, or lamb.** You can use all of the meat and save a ton of cash.
- **Make broth from your meat.** If you get some meat, stick them in a large pot of water with carrots, celery, or whatever else you enjoy in your broth and let it simmer overnight. This will give you an incredible base for all kinds of foods – soups, stews, chili, and so on.

How to get cheaper fruit and veggie prices:

- **Go to farmer's markets**
- **When food is out of season, look to the frozen kind.** For example, I get frozen berries when they're out of season. The frozen kind is cheaper, lasts longer, AND is picked at the height of freshness, so you're getting a higher quality fruit. Awesome!
- **Eat according to the seasons whenever possible** - Seasonal fruits and vegetables are usually cheaper than those that aren't.
- **Chop your own veggies and fruit.** It saves money and usually gives you a fresher product.
- **If there's a CSA (community supported agriculture) in your area, participate.** There are "farm shares" where local farms will sell you seasonal food for a discounted rate. To find out if there are CSA's in your area, just google "your town + CSA". If that doesn't work, try nearby towns or cities.
- **Consider starting your own garden.** I have a garden here in Las Vegas (raised bed for the win!) and it is ah-mazing. The food tastes so fresh, so delicious, and I always have a huge abundance of food that I can share with other people.
- **If buying all organic is tough financially, you don't HAVE to do it.** The places I'd go organic are with foods known as the "dirty dozen" - foods that have the most pesticides:

Dirty Dozen - the 12 most contaminated foods:

Peaches

Apples

Sweet Bell Peppers
Celery
Nectarines
Strawberries
Cherries
Pears
Grapes (Imported)
Spinach
Lettuce
Potatoes

The 12 LEAST contaminated foods are:

Onions
Avocado
Sweet Corn (Frozen)
Pineapples
Mango
Asparagus
Sweet Peas (Frozen)
Kiwi Fruit
Bananas
Cabbage
Broccoli
Papaya

This is an overview on how to get things cheaper. Let's also talk about how to plan your meals ahead of time so you know the types of things to buy and how to get them as inexpensively as possible.

Planning Your Meals

We all know what happens when you shop without a plan. (And it's even worse if you're shopping while hungry without a plan!)

You might grab random things that don't go together (*"what am I going to do with a tangerine and arugula?"*), which causes more stress, or you over-spend, or you don't have anything meal-worthy and then need to go back to the store all over again.

The good news is, if you do a little planning ahead of time, you can avoid all of that.

While most of us would love to make all kinds of different meals, the reality is, we usually eat the same kinds of things all the time. So what I recommend is knowing what your "staples" are (like chicken, salmon, etc), and plan around that. You might also plan around what the cheaper foods are, like looking for egg or chicken recipes.

In general, here's an easy-to-implement plan:

Step 1: Check out flyers for your favorite stores before you go shopping.

The items on sale are usually seasonal (yay for freshness!) and will save you money. Check out what's going on, then you can start to plan meals around what's available.

Step 2: Look for recipes (or work backwards from recipes you know about).

For example, if chicken and lemons are on sale, do a recipe search for “paleo lemon chicken”. Or, you can grab an [AMAZING paleo recipe book](#) and work backwards from the recipes to see what’s available.

Step 3: Create a week-long plan.

You can make it so, SO easy on yourself.

Just fill out something like this once a week:

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			
Sunday			

Easy-peasy.

As you’re making your plan, remember what your schedule will look like. If you’re going to be coming home tired during the workdays, plan for things that are easy to make. Be realistic.

Step 4: Create a grocery list.

Start writing down exactly what you’re going to need for the week - obviously not including things that you already have on hand.

That’s it! So simple. The beauty of planning in advance is that you won’t make any last minute decisions that aren’t so good for you.

You'll also spend less time in the grocery store and won't need to buy anything extra. You'll be completely set up.

Meal Preparation That Saves A Lot Of Money

When making your plan, there are ways you can cook which also save a boatload of cash.

You can:

- **Use your crockpot or slow cooker.** Whenever you make meals, cook double (or triple) what you'd eat yourself, then freeze the rest. It's always cheaper to double a meal than to get brand new ingredients for multiple meals. And as a bonus, it saves you from cooking later.
- **Make extras and freeze them.** Even if you're not using a crock pot, make extras of *anything* you're making and freeze them. One way I do this a lot is with root veggies in the winter. I'll roast a ton of sweet potatoes, then freeze the majority of them in small, portion-sized containers. When I'm ready, I put them on a stovetop oven and they're good to go.
- **Have a "cook double" friend.** If you have another friend who is eating paleo, both of you can cook double. Ideally you'll both have the same size household. This is a great way for both of you to get more variety and still get the cost benefit of buying items in bulk.
- **Reuse the same ingredients.** The same chicken and spinach can taste completely different with a few different spices, and they'll still be a lot cheaper when purchased in bulk.

Where You Can Buy Food For Less Money

There are all kinds of places you can buy food for less.

Here are some ideas. You can:

- **Go to your neighborhood Asian market (if there is one).** You can get some insane deals on food there. Some things to look out for: fresh produce, coconut milk (canned), sweet potato noodles, crazy-low seafood prices, coconuts, eggs, oils, and other meats.
- **Make sure to go to farmer's markets.** You'll get high quality produce and meat inexpensively.
- **Go to warehouse stores like Costco, BJ's, or Sam's.** Buying in bulk strikes again. ☺ These stores have all kinds of great paleo staples – meat (the quality varies by the store), Lara bars, sweet potato chips, nuts and seeds, organic produce, grass fed butter, sweeteners, tuna fish, eggs, salsa, jerky and spices.
- **Thrive Market.** This is an online store where you can buy healthy food. They have all kinds of great deals and give you 15% or 20% off your first order.
- **Local grocery stores.** All grocery stores, even Whole Foods, have weekly sales. Make sure you're checking out flyers.
- **Make sure you're following your local neighborhood's Whole Foods Twitter account.** I'm not talking about @WholeFoods, but your neighborhood one. Sometimes they offer flash sales with incredible deals. (And while you're on Twitter, feel free to add me, too!)

- **Go to Trader Joe's.** If there's a Trader Joe's nearby, definitely go there. They often offer amazing deals!
- **Check out Amazon's Subscribe & Save deals.** If there are foods you use on a monthly basis, see how much they cost on Amazon for the monthly subscription deals. You can get some great deals that way.

Do You Have Other Questions?

I really hope this helped you! If you have other questions, please let me know! You can email me at proudtobepaleo@gmail.com or reply to one of my posts on [Twitter.com/ProudToBePaleo](https://twitter.com/ProudToBePaleo). I'm considering this an ever-expanding resource and will be adding more and more to it over time. 😊

If you liked this post, make sure to also check out **The Worst Parts Of Paleo**. It goes over all the things people typically dislike about paleo, and how to overcome them. 😊

Thanks for reading!

Peace, love, and bacon,

Tara

