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Ladies, Have You Heard?



By Doris Thomas,
Extension Home Economist

Doris Thomas

**How To Cut Food Costs
If You Really Want To**
Consumers wanting to cut food costs need to realize they don't have to buy a product just because it is available. Food costs can be cut many different ways.

For example, carbonated beverages in throw-away bottles or cans are not an economy-minded value. In most cases, you can throw deposit bottles in the garbage and be money ahead compared to the cost of pop in one-way bottle. And since carbonated beverages lack nutrients except for calories, you could do without them and be money ahead.

Buying main dish mixes to which you add meat isn't economical either. Meat is the most expensive ingredient.

Mixes are convenient and in most cases, tasty. But, cost is several times that of the chief ingredient -- noodles, rice, macaroni or potatoes. You can't really save money when you pay 45 to 69 cents for seasonings, a sauce and 14 cents worth of macaroni or rice.

Another alternative is to buy a few basic spices for a couple of dollars and have spiced casseroles for a year or more. You can buy macaroni and other extenders for about 15 cents a pound. And money you save making it yourself will buy at least another half pound of hamburger.

Convenience foods are a boom to busy consumers and almost a necessity for employed homemakers. But many convenience foods are more costly than their homemade counterparts.

If you choose to buy them

continually, that's the choice you have in today's marketing system. But you must be willing to pay for the convenience of someone else doing the work for you. It's built-in maid service at relatively low cost.

Other alternatives for cutting food costs include buying foods in season, choosing weekly advertised specials and doing some preparation yourself.

Do some armchair shopping before going to the store. This is one of the best ways of cutting food costs. Read the ads, check weekly specials and then plan your meals around these foods.

From one weekly food ad you can usually plan main-dishes and go-togethers for eight to 10 days without repeating foods. And most advertised foods are lower cost than regular prices.

After you've planned, make a list. Then take the list with you when you go to the store. If you leave the list at home and rely on food shelves to remind you what to buy, you'll likely buy items you don't need and you'll probably forget things you really need.

Making impulse purchases you don't really need, such as high cost or out-of-season products or snack items, add little food value but lots to the cost of your shopping trip.

Forgetting to buy items you

really need means another trip to the store and another exposure to items you don't need or otherwise might not buy. Another way to cut costs is never to shop when you're hungry.

Decisions you make in food stores are your own -- whether you choose lower cost alternatives or the most expensive products. Today's markets and free enterprise systems make it available.

Laundry Sorting Tips

Is your laundry room a place for germs to congregate? Given half a chance, bacteria on your family's clothes will leave the dirty laundry and climb back onto your clean clothes.

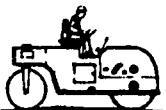
To cut down on bacteria in your clean laundry, sort dirty clothes and clean clothes at different times. Don't shake dirty clothes near clean laundry or near surfaces you'll later use for sorting laundry.

If possible, sort dirty clothes on a table or in one area. Sort and fold clean clothes on another surface in another area. If this isn't possible, cover the table or the work area with clean paper, plastic sheeting or any other clean cover before you work with clean clothes. Such precautions are even more important if you use public laundry facilities such as commercial laundromats or apartment laundry rooms.

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