



Thrifty Ways To Go For 2&5[®]

Introduction

Eating your 2 serves of fruit and 5 serves of vegetables every day need not blow your budget! Smart shopping, preparation and storage is the key ...with benefits for the environment as well. Here are some tips for thrifty ways to Go for 2&5[®].

Smart shopping

- Smart shoppers plan their purchases before shopping. Consider the meals and snacks you would like to have through the week and write a shopping list.
- Let your shopping list be flexible enough to take advantage of in-store specials. For example, ingredients for a stir-fry or fruit salad can vary according to the best buys.
- Check your grocery shopping receipts to ensure you are spending a majority of your food budget on nutritious foods from the five groups in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*.
- Limit "extra" foods which are high in fat, sugar or salt such as cakes, biscuits, soft drinks, crisps, desserts, lollies and chocolates. In nutrition terms, these are poor value for money.
- Use seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables which are generally less expensive and of better quality.
- Check the price and quality of bulk buckets or bags of fruit and vegetables. Bulk produce can be a good buy, although it is usually ripe and ready for immediate use.
- Buy a whole box or bag of fruit and vegetables and split the cost between 2 or 3 households.
- If fresh fruit or vegetables are in limited supply, check the price of frozen or canned varieties. These may be a good substitute at a better price. Choose varieties with no added/reduced sugar, salt or fat where possible.

Did you know?

- Frozen and canned fruit and vegetables can be more nutritious than "fresh" fruit and vegetables that have been stored for too long.
- Most people find that if they eat more fruit and vegetables they eat fewer fatty or sugary "extra" foods. This approach partly offsets the cost of eating more fruit and vegetables, especially if you apply the smart shopping principles set out above. It can also help to maintain a healthy weight.

- Fruit and vegetables are generally less expensive per kilo than highly processed foods. Compare the price per kilo of the foods below. This shows that the Go for 2&5[®] message can be applied to most budgets.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BETTER VALUE FOR MONEY?

Less healthy Choice	\$/kg *	Healthier Choice	\$/kg *
Savoury biscuit shapes 200g	\$15.45	Watermelon	\$1.95
Crisps 50g	\$28.80	Pears	\$3.99
Puffed cereal bars 6X20g	\$39.80	Oranges	\$2.95
Muesli Bars 6X30g	\$23.25	Bananas	\$3.99
Cheese & biscuit snack 6X22g	\$31.00	Fruit tubs 4x120g	\$7.28
Chocolate Bars 12X22g	\$19.70	Large tin fruit	\$3.98
Rolled-up fruit bar 8X15.6g	\$40.00	Dried apricots 200g	\$10.30
Assorted cream biscuits 500g	\$12.58	Beans	\$3.99
Chocolate cream biscuits 200g	\$16.25	Carrots	\$1.29
		Frozen peas 500g	\$4.30
		Canned corn	\$4.52

* Estimates at March 2008.

Smart preparation

- Make the most of cheaper seasonal produce, or buying bulk fruit and vegetables, by freezing at home for future use. Consider:
 - Frozen oranges, mango, pineapple, grapes (popular frozen snacks for kids). Cherries, berries and melon also freeze well (see below).
 - Freeze ripe bananas for cooking. They look black on the outside but are fine for your next batch of muffins.
 - Stewed fruit for freezing.
 - Cook up left over vegetables with soup mix and freeze.
 - Cook portion and freeze vegetable-based sauces for pasta meals.
 - Roast excess carrot, zucchini, sweet potato, pumpkin, capsicum and onion to use as a delicious addition to pasta dishes, salads and sandwiches.
- When one fruit or vegetable is out of season (or too expensive), substitute another of similar nutritional value. For example, you could swap:
 - Cooked mushroom for eggplant.
 - Beans for snow peas.
 - Regular salad vegetables such as lettuce, tomato, cucumber with par cooked (so still crunchy) and chilled vegetables such as beans, cauliflower and broccoli.





- Extend meat dishes with inexpensive vegetables such as carrots, cabbage and pumpkin.
- Cooked red lentils or canned dried beans (no added salt) are also useful. Try lentils or red kidney beans with mince meat dishes and chick peas in chicken dishes.
- Plan some vegetarian dishes using vegetables with inexpensive ingredients like rice, pasta, different kinds of dried beans and lentils.

Example of a thrifty menu which provides at least 2 fruit and 5 veg.
This example shows that *Go for 2&5*® can be affordable.

MENU EXAMPLE	
Breakfast Cereal and low fat milk with 1 ½ tablespoons dried fruit or 1 cup stewed fruit	Serves of Fruit & veg 1 fruit
Snack 1 medium piece or 2 small pieces of fruit in season	1 fruit
Lunch ½ cup baked beans or creamed corn jaffle	1 veg
Snack Crispbreads with a medium sliced tomato	1 veg
Dinner* Stir fry of low-cost, seasonal vegies and meat or chicken. Allow at least 1½ cups cooked vegies per person	3 veg
Fruit (1 cup fresh or canned) crumble and low fat custard	1 fruit
Total	3 fruit and 5 veg
* see www.gofor2and5.com.au for recipe suggestions.	

Smart storage

Keep fruit and vegetables fresh by protecting them from heat and light on the way home and storing them correctly as soon as possible after purchasing.

- **Fruit** - Generally store at room temperature until ripe, then put in the fridge unwashed.
- **Citrus fruit, apples, pears** - Best stored unwashed in the fridge. If this is not possible then store in a cool and well-ventilated place.
- **Bananas** - Store at a moderate room temperature.
- **Green leafy and salad vegetables** - Store unwashed, in the crisper or in vented plastic bags in the fridge.

- **Mushrooms** - Best stored in paper bags in the fridge.
- **Root vegetables: carrots, turnips, beetroot, parsnips** - Store in plastic bags or the crisper of the fridge.
- **Onions, potatoes and garlic** - Store in a cool, dark, dry and well-ventilated place.
- **Frozen fruit and vegetables** - Store your frozen produce at -18° degrees celsius for no more than six months. Buy frozen food last.

You can freeze many types of fruit. For best results, cut larger fruit into smaller chunks and remove the skin. Place in a single layer on a cookie sheet and put in the freezer. Once frozen, put into freezer bags for long-term storage.

Environmental cost

Many shoppers are becoming concerned about the impact of food production on the environment. Food processing tends to lead to the production of higher carbon emissions, and hence a larger 'carbon footprint'. For example, the production of orange juice requires machinery-based processing and packaging that is not required for consumption of a juicy, fresh orange. Similarly, transport of food, especially by air and road, consumes fuel and energy and releases greenhouse gases.

Shoppers can make healthy fruit and vegetable choices which are more environmentally-friendly. To reduce the environmental cost of fruit and vegetables consumption consider:

- Buying fresh produce which is local and in season. The Sydney Markets website is helpful.
- Sourcing food locally e.g. at farmers markets and food co-operatives. Farmers markets are listed at farmersmarkets.org.au.
- Avoiding highly processed fruit and vegetables.
- Growing your own fruit and vegetables. Even if you don't have a big garden, try some pots plants such as cherry tomatoes, salad greens or strawberries.
- Minimising the number of plastic bags used when purchasing fruit and vegetables.

Further information

For more information on healthy eating and physical activity for you and your family, go to:
 • www.gofor2and5.com.au • www.livelifewell.nsw.gov.au • www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

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