

Stretch Your Groceries

Tallahassee Democrat

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Saving money is on everyone's mind; so you never know when you might pick up a new tip. At Ft. Braden's Senior Days, a lady shared an idea she had used to make her fresh potatoes "stretch further." Her secret (until her son told on her) for great homemade mashed potatoes was to chop one potato finely and cook it in a pot with plenty of water. When the potato was done she added instant potatoes to the cooked potato and broth – *Wah-Lah*; homemade mashed potatoes complete with a few lumps. This may not be news to you, but this was the first time I had heard this money saving idea.

Recently I read a great publication, *Supermarket Savings, 16 Tips that Can Total Big Bucks* written by Alice Henneman, MS, RD, an Extension colleague at the University of Nebraska. It motivated me to make some changes in my food planning, shopping and preparation habits. The following are some of her ideas:

1. As boring as it seems – Keep a grocery list. Every article, publication or pronouncement regarding saving dollars encourages making a list. Grocery lists help us do several things – we are encouraged to buy only what we need according to a review of our fridge and pantry; we shy away from extras that look enticing and we avoid extra trips back to the store. As a result we save money on gas and impulse buys.
2. Carefully look in your garbage (or compost bin). We lose dollars every time we throw food away! If you see leftovers, **plan** to use them more quickly. If fresh produce is getting tossed, plan for more vegetable or fruit salads earlier in the week or if the items freeze well save them for later use in smoothies, breads or soups.
3. Try bringing your lunch at least one day a week to avoid eating out. Even a fast food meal costs several dollars plus the money you spend on gas. Don't forget that during the school year it's possible to save money on your children's meals by having them participate in the school breakfast and lunch programs.
4. Snacks, such as chips, cookies, cakes, candy, soda, etc., need to be enjoyed in moderate amounts. Very few of us can **afford** the fat, sugar, sodium or calories provided by these foods. So consider buying one less snack food a week. I checked and you can save \$3.79 a week and maybe some unwanted weight by buying one less bag of potato chips. Multiply \$3.79 by 52 weeks and save \$197.00 in just a year not to mention the potential 26 extra pounds!
5. We need to drink plenty of water to stay well hydrated, but tap water works just as well as bottled water and is a definite bargain. We may need to keep some bottled water around for certain situations, like hurricanes, but most of the time a clean reusable water bottle filled with tap water is the cheapest and most nutritious way to go (no fat, sugar, calories).

To check out the other money saving ideas see the full publication at:

<http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/supermarket-savings.pdf>

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