

# Cooking on a Budget

## Summary

In a world of increasing debt, poverty and hunger, students need skills to provide for their own needs. One skill is the ability to create delicious and nutritious meals while on a budget.

## Main Core Tie

Life Management

[Strand 1 Standard 4](#)

## Additional Core Ties

FACS Exploration

[Strand 6 Standard 4](#)

## Time Frame

5 class periods of 45 minutes each

## Life Skills

Social & Civic Responsibility

## Materials

True stories about debt, poverty, and hunger; 3 products to taste-test (including 3 different brands of each), taste-test evaluation worksheet; supplies for lab(s); calculators; copies of \$1.50 recipes, ingredient price sheet or receipt; copies of fake money.

## Background for Teachers

People waste food everyday in the lunchroom, restaurants, and even at home. We take food for granted, that we will always have enough. The U.S. is 6% of the world's population, yet the U.S. consumes 40% of the world's resources. This is more than what we need. Yet there are those in this country who are poor, hungry, and on welfare.

Utah has the highest bankruptcy rate for people in their 20's. These people lack the skills to use their money wisely, and stay out of debt. These problems can be managed by learning to budget and manage money now.

When you graduate from high school, you won't have everything your parents have. Parents worked hard to get nice things, and you will too. You will have to pay for an apartment, car, insurance, schooling, food, and fun. All these cost money.

Money is a precious resource. Everyone would like to have more money. Learning to stretch your dollars will help you have more money in the long run.

The first step is self-discipline. Learning to say no to what you want is hard. Waiting to buy something is hard. But it will help you in the long run. How will you spend your money, so that you have some left? There are many ways to save money on food and cooking and still provide the nutrition your body needs. You have to choose what will work for you.

Tips for saving money:

Cook from scratch-- Individual ingredients cost less than pre-packaged foods.

Use staples as the basis of your diet. Staples include flour, sugar, oil, peanut butter, beans, tortillas, pasta, rice, and other plant/grains. They are less expensive than meat and poultry.

Extend meats with cheaper staples to help them go a long way.

Buy cheaper brands of the same product.

Use coupons-- Be aware of coupons for expensive items that may cost more than the cheaper brand.

Utah State University Extension provides an activity titled " [Eating well made Easy](#)" -- helping families eat better for less.

Most fast food costs around five dollars. This activity helps students see that they can eat better for only a \$1.50. It incorporates using no-name brands, sales, cooking from scratch, using the basics, and extending meat.

### Student Prior Knowledge

Basics in nutrition and meal planning.

### Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will identify cheaper brands of foods and describe whether they prefer expensive or cheaper brands and why. Students will calculate the cost per serving of different foods. Students will choose and eat a complete meal that costs less than \$1.50 and evaluate how well they ate nutritiously.

### Instructional Procedures

Notes/Lecture. Discuss the importance of saving money, and how it can be done.

Have students use grocery ads to find expensive and cheap versions of foods from the food guide pyramid. Students cut and paste the foods to see where they can save money.

Taste test-- Students try 3 products. Each product has 3 different brands. Students see which brand they like the most and the least. Reveal the real prices and brand names. Students evaluate and explain whether they liked the cheap or expensive version and why. Ideas of products include: soda, tortilla chips, cookies, pineapple, chocolate chips, etc.

\$1.50 lunch-- Each group makes a different product. For example, enchiladas, cornbread, green salad, fruit salad, brownies, beverage, etc. They calculate the total cost, and cost per serving. They create a label with their product name and cost per serving. On meal day, students choose their meal and eat it. Then they figure out how much their meal cost and pay with fake money. (Each student gets \$1.50 to spend.) They evaluate how well they ate nutritiously, and describe what they learned in a paragraph.

### Assessment Plan

Taste-test-- Read student's paragraphs and discuss with each student why they prefer expensive or cheap foods.

\$1.50 Lunch-- Read students paragraphs and discuss with each student what they would do to reduce costs when cooking.

### Bibliography

Utah State University Extension -- [Eating Well Made Easy](#) -- Helping families eat better for less.

### Authors

[Valerie Aubrey](#)