



Denise Cousler, Sales Manager, My Organized Life™

I detest spending money on groceries! Years ago I was determined to start saving money so I attended a workshop about cutting your grocery bill. I learned a few good tips, but I have since created a system of my own that works even better. I've been using it for over ten years. People often ask me to teach them my system, so here it is.

Keep in mind that organizing your grocery shopping is a process that will not be conquered over night. But investing some time now will pay you back many times over. Here are the differences it has made in my life:

- I save money. My monthly grocery bill went from \$800 - \$1000 down to \$500 for a family of six.
- I save time. Before I used this system, I was running to the store constantly or hitting the fast food chains. (Spending, spending!) Now after using this system for years, I shop once a month except for fresh foods and perishables.
- My family eats healthier.
- I am less stressed at the end of the day. I already know what's for dinner, and I have all the ingredients to make it. No more frantically searching the pantry at 6:00 at night hoping for inspiration.

How to Organize your Grocery Shopping

STEP 1. Write a list of your family's favorite meals.

STEP 2. Write a master list of all the groceries you typically buy throughout the year. We have compiled a list for you to start from (shown below).

STEP 3. Make a monthly meal plan. The chart below demonstrates my monthly menu chart. Fill in the whole month with 30 menu ideas. Designate 5 "free" days a month, these are the days that everybody feeds for themselves and eats left-overs or freezer-based items. (Examples: Hot Pockets, T.V. dinners, finger food, or whatever is on sale for that week and/or items you have a coupon for.) Also designate "New Recipe Night" once a month. This is where the you cook something new, then the family votes to either add the meal to "favorites" or to "toss" the meal. TIP: I keep a file of menus to reflect back upon. Try not to repeat a meal more than 3 times in one month's time.

STEP 4. If you are shopping weekly, designate your 7 meal choices based on the weekly "sale" advertisements.

STEP 5. Next, compile a grocery list or circle/highlight the items you need on your Master Grocery List, plus any staples or "sale" items to be purchased. TIP: I have several copies of the Master Grocery List. I use one copy each time I go to the store and toss it when I am finished.

STEP 6: Go shopping. Remember to only buy what is on your list.

Tips for Organized Grocery Shopping

- Use coupons! Create a folder for them. I keep all grocery coupons, but I only cut them out if the item is on sale and on my grocery list.
- Save money on snacks. I only buy snack foods that are on sale and with coupons. I bought a trunk that I keep all the snacks under locked supervision. Each day my kids choose their afternoon snack before leaving for school. This is a great solution to make the snacks last longer.
- When items are on a "killer deal" sale, stock up for a rainy day. As you build a supply of the items you use most, you'll be able to "go shopping" in the basement, and rarely have to pay full price again! Buy only the kinds of food your family likes, and only what you'll use within the expiration date.
- Remember to send in any rebates. This is money saved!
- Save your grocery receipts for a year to calculate your true average monthly spending.
- When freezing items, use high-quality freezer wrap to keep foods fresh. Label them so you'll remember what you have.

Good luck and happy shopping!



MY GROCERY LIST

Sauces

- Condiments**
 Cheese/Bean Dips
 Cooking Wine
 Croutons
 Bbq Sauce
 Jelly/jams
 Vinegar
 Gravy
 Honey
 Horseradish
 Hot Sauce
 Ice Cream Topping
 Ketchup
 Lemon Juice
 Marinades
 Mayo
 Miracle Whip
 Mustard
 Non-Dairy Cream
 Olives
 Pasta Sauce
 Pickles
 Pizza Sauce
 Relish
 Salad Dressing
 Salsa
 Soy Sauce
 Spaghetti Sauce
 Steak Sauce
 Stir Fry Sauce
 Syrup
 Tomato Sauce
 Teriyaki Sauce
 Veggie Dip
 Worcestershire

Cleaning

- Air Freshener
 Ajax/Comet
 Ammonia
 Bleach
 Dish Soap
 Dishwasher Soap
 Fabric Softener
 Floor Cleaner
 Hand Soap
 Laundry Soap
 Lysol
 Mildew Remover
 Multi-Purpose
 Spray & Wash
 Starch
 Window Cleaner
 X-14

Misc.

- Briquettes
 Bug Spray
 Candy/Snacks
 Cat Food
 Cat Litter
 B-day Candles
 Batteries
 Dog Food
 Dog Biscuits
 Film
 Furnace Filter
 Gum
 Light Bulbs
 Matches
 Mosquito Repel.
 Toothpicks

Paper Products

- Coffee Filters
 Envelopes
 Foil
 Garbage Bags
 Kleenex
 Napkins
 Paper
 Paper Towels
 Plastic Wrap
 Sandwich Bags
 Storage Bags
 Sponges
 Stamps
 Toilet Paper
 Wax Paper

Baby Items

- Baby Food
 Baby Lotion
 Bath Supplies
 Bottle Supplies
 Cereal
 Cookies
 Diapers
 Dreft
 Formula
 Hair Products
 Juice
 Nursing Sup.
 Medicines
 Wipes
 Vitamins

Meats

- Bacon
 Chicken
 Chicken (boneless)
 Corn Dogs
 Fish
 Ham
 Hamburger
 Hot Dogs
 Lunchables
 Lunch Meat
 Pepperoni
 Pork Chops
 Ribs
 Roast
 Sausage
 Seafood
 Steak
 Stew Meat
 Turkey

Breads

- Bagels
 Biscuits
 Bread Sticks
 Hotdog Buns
 Hamburger Buns
 Croissants
 Donuts
 English Muffins
 French
 Hoagie
 Rolls
 Tortillas
 White
 Wheat

Other Foods

- Applesauce
 Cereal
 Cheetos
 Chips
 Cookies
 Crackers
 Hot Cereal
 Inst. Potatoes
 Inst. Breakfast
 Peanut Butter
 Popcorn
 Snacks
 Top Ramen
 Tortilla Chips

Fruits

- Apples
 Apricots
 Bananas
 Blackberries
 Blueberries
 Fruit Tray
 Grapefruit
 Grapes
 Kiwi
 Lemons
 Limes
 Mango
 Melons
 Oranges
 Papaya
 Peaches
 Pears
 Pineapple
 Plums
 Pomegranate
 Raspberries
 Rhubarb
 Strawberries
 Tangerines
 Tomatoes
 Watermelon

Beverages

- Coffee
 Herbal Teas
 Juice
 Milk
 Orange Juice
 Soft Drinks
 Sports Drinks
 Sunny D
 Tea
 Water
 Wine

Can Foods

- Soup
 Chili
 Fruit
 Meat
 Broth
 Tomatoes
 Tuna
 Vegetables

Vegetables

- Artichokes
 Asparagus
 Beans
 Beets
 Bokchoy
 Broccoli
 Brussel Sprouts
 Cabbage
 Carrots
 Cauliflower
 Celery
 Cole Slaw
 Collards
 Corn
 Cucumber
 Egg Plant
 Garlic
 Ginger Root
 Gr. Onions
 Gr. Pepper
 Kale
 Leeks
 Lettuce
 Mushrooms
 Onions
 Parsley
 Parsnips
 Pea Pods
 Peas
 Peppers
 Potatoes
 Radishes
 Salad Pkgs
 Shallots
 Spinach
 Sprouts
 Squash
 Turnips
 Watercress
 Zucchini
 Veggie Tray

Cheese

- American
 Cheddar
 Cottage Ch.
 Cr. Cheese
 Feta
 Goat
 Monterey Jack
 Mozzarella
 Parmesan
 Provolone
 String
 Swiss

Baking Seasonings

- Bacon Bits
 Baking Powder
 Baking Soda
 Bay Leaves
 Bisquick
 Bouillon Cubes
 Brown Sugar
 Cake Mixes
 Cinnamon
 Choc. Chips
 Cocoa
 Cooking Spray
 Cornstarch
 Flour
 Frosting
 Fruit Filling
 Garlic Powder
 Garlic Salt
 Italian Seas.
 Jello
 Nuts
 Onion Powder
 Paprika
 Parsley
 Pepper
 Powder Milk
 Powder Sugar
 Pudding
 Raisins
 Seas. Pkgs.
 Shortening
 Sugar
 Sugar Sub.
 Taco Seas.
 Thyme
 Veg. Oil
 Vanilla
 Yeast

Frozen

- Cool Whip
 French Fries
 Hash Browns
 Ice Cream
 Pancakes
 Fish/Seafood
 Chicken
 Pizza
 Snacks
 Pot Pies
 Poppicles
 Tatertots
 T.V. Dinners
 Vegetables
 Waffles

Health

- Alcohol
 Aspirin
 Band-aids
 Bath Soap
 Conditioner
 Cold Meds.
 Cotton Balls
 Cough Meds.
 Deodorant
 Eye Care
 Feminine Prod.
 First Aid Supplies
 Hair Products
 Hair Spray
 Lotion
 Makeup
 Pain Relievers
 Peroxide
 Q-tips
 Razors
 Shaving Lotion
 Stomach Remedies
 Shampoo
 Toothbrush
 Toothpaste
 Tylenol
 Vitamins

Dairy

- Butter
 Buttermilk
 Choc. Milk
 Chilled Dough
 Creamers
 Margarine
 Milk
 Sour Cream
 Whip Cream
 Yogurt

Pasta/Grains

- Beans
 Macaroni
 Fettucini
 Lasagna
 Mac. & Cheese
 Manicotti
 Pasta Dinners
 Rice
 Stuffing
 Taco Shells

MY MONTHLY MENU CHART



1. Make a list of your family's favorite meals.
2. Make a monthly meal plan.
 - Fill in the whole month with 30 menu ideas. Designate 5 "free" days a month, the days that everybody fends for themselves and eats leftovers or freezer-based items they can personally make. (Examples: Hot Pockets, T.V. dinners, finger food, or whatever is on sale for that week and/or items you have a coupon for.)
 - Designate "New Recipe Night" once a month. This is where the family cooks something new, then the family votes to add the meal to "favorites" or "toss".
3. Keep a file of menus to reflect back upon. Try not to repeat a meal more than 3 times in one month.
4. Each week, designate your 7 meal choices based on the weekly "sale" advertisements.
5. Next, compile your grocery list or circle/highlight the items you will need on your Master Grocery List, plus any staples or "sale" items to be purchased.