SURVIVING TOUGH TIMES

HACE E-23-19

50 WAYS TO STRETCH YOUR FOOD DOLLAR

1. Select the right grocery store. Choose one that is close and convenient to home. Save gas money and time.

2. Know how much money you have to spend on food.

3. Use a pocket calculator in the store to stay within your budget.

4. Plan menus for at least 2 weeks to reduce trips to the store.

5. Make a grocery list and stick to it.

6. In planning meals, use store ads to take advantage of specials.

7. Plan meatless meals. Use meat substitutes like dried beans and peas, and eggs.

8. Check for items that are reduced for quick sale and substitute them on the menu.

9. Beware of buying clubs. They have membership fees.

10. Learn to be creative with leftovers.


12. Learn to cook from scratch.

13. Plant a small garden.


15. Don’t buy junk food.

16. Clip and use coupons for items that you usually purchase.


18. Don’t shop hungry. You will have the tendency to buy more.

19. Shop alone. Leave children with a friend or relative. They will encourage you to buy foods that are not on your shopping list.

20. Give up convenience foods. They cost more.

21. Compare prices. The large economy box may not be the best buy.

22. Read labels.
23. Watch for rebates or freebies.
24. Avoid trips to small convenience stores.
25. Buy non-food items, like tissue paper or shampoos at a discount store.
26. Check your pantry before shopping.
27. Freeze small amounts of leftover vegetables to put in soups.
28. Bake your own cookies.
29. Put frozen foods away immediately when arriving home.
30. Buy less expensive cuts of meat and cook with the moist heat cookery method.
31. Watch the cash register to avoid being over-charged. Check your receipt before leaving the store.
32. Stock up on “sale items” whenever possible.
33. Buy economy sizes and divide into smaller packs, if you have freezer or cupboard space.
34. Don’t waste food.
35. Eliminate alcoholic beverages and wines; they can be costly.
36. Buy bread at thrift shops and freeze.
37. Stash away food, such as rice, dry beans, non-fat milk, oatmeal, cornmeal, flour, and peanut butter. When money gets low, you can still prepare meals that are nutritious.
38. Select produce that is not too ripe or bruised. When fruits and vegetables are too mature, many times they spoil before we get to use them.
39. Recognize advertising gimmicks. A large display of canned goods may not necessarily be cheaper than those on the shelf.
40. Check expiration dates.
41. Buy enriched and whole wheat breads.
42. Portion control on the plate will not only save you money, but will also help with avoiding those extra calories.
43. Save the “pot likker” for use in soups and broth for seasonings.
44. Prepare your own sauce and broth for seasonings.
45. Know uses of different varieties of produce.
46. Buy canned goods rather than frozen. Compare the cost.
47. Consider preserving food. Decide based on availability of produce and equipment.
48. Puree your own baby food.
49. Breastfeed your infant.
50. If you eat out, do so at lunch. Usually, lunch rates are cheaper or may be on special.
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Surviving Tough Times is a 19-part series for individuals and families experiencing under-employment and unemployment. Originally developed by Linda Boelter, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Service.

Adapted for use in Georgia by:

• University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service South District Family and Consumer Sciences Agents: Judy Bland, Karen Brunegraff, Christa Campbell, Rhonda Coleman, Sylvia Davis, Ann Hudgins, Rebecca Moore, Debbie Purvis, Jennifer Robbins, Mandel Smith, Rachel West, and Martha Weston; and Sharon Gibson, Regional Educator, College of Family and Consumer Sciences.

• Michael Rupured, Consumer Economics Specialist, University of Georgia, College of Family and Consumer Sciences Extension.