

How Organizing Can Help You Eat Well

By Sarah Welch and Alicia Rockmore



Summer's here! And while it's nice to have the kids at home, figuring out what to have in the kitchen to keep everyone happy and healthy can end up being a drain on both your energy and your wallet. Even if you pack lunches for them during the school year, the summer schedule, with its barbeques, picnics, and outdoor activities, brings with it more chances to spend more, eat worse, and go crazy in the process. Fear not, because with a little planning, and a few simple habits, you can make this summer the healthiest, most economical, and tastiest time of year.

Alicia on "A Week of Eating In"

"It's so easy to settle for eating out. You don't have to cook. It's fast. And, even better, there's no dishes to clean! But it's also expensive, and far less healthy. Try scheduling a whole week of meals at home, so when you do go out to eat, it becomes a special occasion. On Sunday, plan ahead for the week, setting easy-to-make meals and buying the groceries you'll need ahead of time. You'll be surprised how much money you'll save, plus you'll get to spend more time with your family."

Sarah on "Fresh and Frugal"

"Buying fresh, unprocessed food is not only better for your waist, it's better for your wallet as well. The best bet for getting the freshest food is to find a local farmer's market, where you can get in-season fruits and vegetables, as well as fresh meat and cheese. If you can't find one, head to your local grocery store and begin shopping the perimeter of the store. Fill your cart with fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats. Remember that the inner aisles are filled with processed foods, which tend to be more expensive as well."

Here are three ways to eat better, and save bigger all summer long.

1. Big dinners, Big leftovers

The recipe says, "Serves Eight" but there are only four of you. Instead of halving the recipe, go ahead and make the whole thing. Divide the rest into individual serving-size containers and put them in the fridge for lunch the next day. Why spend more money on lunches when you can have a meal already sitting in the fridge, ready to eat?

2. Everyone picks a meal

"Oh, no! Chicken and rice again!" We've all heard it, and back in the day, we said it as well. To avoid mealtime showdowns, get everyone together at the beginning of the week and let people choose a meal or two that they want for the upcoming week. That way, there's no surprises, and, when it comes to "their meal," the person in charge can help prepare the food. It's a great way to lighten your load, while keeping everyone content to be eating at home with the family.



3. Grocery lists

If you go to the grocery store and grab whatever you feel like, you'll find that you often choose foods that aren't the healthiest, and you may end up forgetting those foods that are needed to prepare your meals for the week. By preparing a list ahead of time, with the specific ingredients for every meal, as well as special requests from different family members, you can eliminate extra trips to the store, and avoid getting food you don't really need.

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We are the co-founders of Buttoned Up, inc., a company dedicated to helping stretched and stressed women get themselves organized (along with everybody else they're responsible for too!). We welcome your thoughts! Please send ideas and questions to us at: yourlife@getbuttonedup.com or visit us at www.getbuttonedup.com