



# NUTRIeNT

February 2016



## BUYING SMART: make your food dollars go further

These days, if a trip to the grocery store causes you to cringe, you are likely not alone. Many of us are experiencing sticker shock after seeing costs of produce, meats and other grocery items. A rise in food prices, as with other goods, is an expected reality. The price surge in some food items, however, is surprising and putting added pressure on already tight household budgets.

A look at Consumer Price Index (CPI) reports from StatsCan shows year-end 2013 and 2014 saw dramatic increases in meat proteins; year-end 2014 and 2015 saw surges in produce costs.

### % Change from Previous Year

Item	Unit	Dec 2014	Dec 2015
Round steak	1 kg	24.1	3.1
Blade roast	1 kg	27.0	8.8
Stewing beef	1 kg	37.4	6.8
Ground beef, regular	1 kg	17.9	0.5
Apples	1 kg	-1.6	11.9
Grapefruit	1 kg	0.7	22.5
Celery	1 kg	7.5	46.3
Onions	1 kg	-8.9	16.6

## Recipe Corner:

### Corn Chowder Makes: 6 servings

#### Ingredients

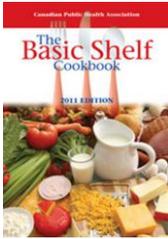
1 tbsp	vegetable oil	15 ml
¾ c	onion, chopped	175 ml
1 ½ c	potatoes, chopped	375 ml
1 c	water	250 ml
1 ½ c	2% milk	375 ml
1 tbsp	flour	15 ml
2 tsp	dried basil	10 ml
1	19 oz cream style corn	1
	Salt & pepper to taste	

#### Instructions

1. Heat oil in a heavy pot over medium heat. Add onions. Cook about 5 minutes.
2. Add potatoes and water. Bring to a boil.
3. Turn heat to low. Cover and simmer until potatoes are almost soft, about 15 minutes.
4. Mix together milk, flour and basil in a bowl. Add to potatoes.
5. Turn heat to medium-low. Cook until thick and smooth. Stir
6. Add corn and heat for 5 more minutes.
7. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Unfortunately, we can expect more of the same in 2016. A University of Guelph Food Institute report forecasts that food inflation rates will be two to four per cent in 2016. The average Canadian household can expect to add \$345 to its annual food budget.

So, what's making things so much more expensive? Sadly, we are all too aware of the plunging value of the loonie. But that's only part of the problem. Another reason is that Canada pays to bring in about 81% of its produce from other countries. Because of our cheaper currency, it costs more to import goods. This gets passed on to you and me. As for meats, another factor is low supply, high demand. Weather too plays a role.



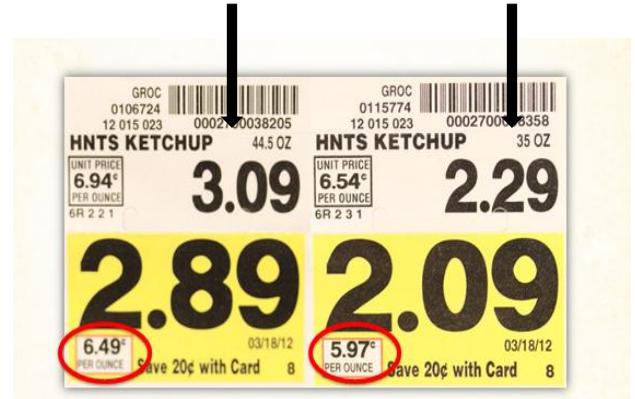
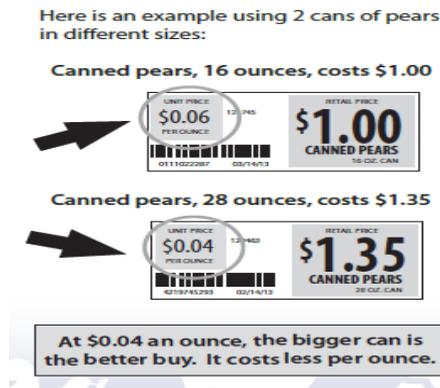
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## COST-CUTTING TIPS FOR THE BUDGET CONSCIOUS

1. **Buy frozen:** save money on fruits, vegetables and fish by buying frozen. Frozen is healthier than canned (except for canned tomatoes). Fruits and vegetables are “fresh frozen”, locking in most vitamins and minerals at their peak.
2. **Buy in bulk:** Buying in bulk is a great way to save money. Once at home, portion items into what you or your family normally consumes in a meal and freeze the rest to minimize waste. Usually larger package items can cost less than smaller ones, but do exercise common sense and make use of **Unit Pricing**.

### References

1. Food Price Report 2015, The Food Institute of the University of Guelph
2. Statistics Canada. *Food and Other Items, Average Retail Prices.*  
<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/econ155a-eng.htm>
3. Everybody's Food Budget Book, Durham Region Health Dept.
4. <http://www.davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/food-and-our-planet/help-end-food-waste/>
5. <http://www.seconddharvest.ca/hunger-facts>
6. Images downloaded from Google Images



3. **Unit Pricing:** is a helpful shopping tool that compares cost based on the same unit of measure. For the **canned pears**, the 28 oz can is cheaper (\$0.04/oz) than the 16 oz can (\$0.06/oz). For the **ketchup**, however, the 44.5 oz can is more expensive (\$0.0649/oz) compared to the 35 oz can (\$0.0597/oz).
4. **Comparison Shop:** go through your local weekly flyers for specials. If you have a smartphone, make use of technology. There are great apps to help search for deals efficiently. Check these out:
  - [Flipp](#) • [Checkout 51](#) • [PC Plus](#) • [Snap by Groupon](#)
5. **Look for Sales:** not all sales are advertised. Look for in-store specials. Also, consider generic brands versus name brands – they are often the same product with different packaging.
6. **Make a list:** try to plan the week's menu and write a list of ingredients you need. A little planning ahead can save money by searching sales, reducing waste and sticking to a budget.
7. **Watch the waste!** In Toronto, single-family households throw out about 275kg of waste each year. Canadians overall waste \$31 billion of food every year, 47% wasted in the home!

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### Basic Shelf Pantry

Menu planning is an important step in helping you stick to a budget. Aim at including at least One Food Guide Serving from three of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide.

#### Foods to Have at Home

All-purpose flour	Frozen beans, peas	Brown sugar	Soy sauce
Whole wheat flour	Canned corn	Soft margarine	Salt, pepper,
Natural bran	Canned tomatoes	Cooking oil	vinegar
Rice	Canned tuna	Baking powder	Bouillon cubes
Pasta	Canned salmon	Skim milk powder	Chili powder
Rolled oats	Canned fruit	Cornstarch	Garlic powder
Onions	Tomato paste	Worcestershire	Oregano
Potatoes	Raisins	sauce	Vanilla
Carrots	Tea	Mustard	Salad dressing
Dried peas, beans,	Coffee	Ketchup	Mayonnaise
lentils			