



# BEST BUDGET TIPS

Learn how to work within your budget and save money when managing a restricted diet.

# Best Budget Tips When Managing Restricted Diets

Budget Friendly, Allergy Friendly Recipes on RAISE (clickable links)

## Shop The Perimeter

You may have heard this tip before, but it's SO true! The lowest prices of most grocery stores will be found in the perimeter. This is because the convenience items (AKA packaged goods) are usually in the center aisles. In addition to shopping the perimeter, shop your local farmer's market, and see if services such as Ugly Produce are in your area.



## Grocery Outlet (That's The Name of the Store)

This store is somewhat new to me, but AWESOME. I went after someone pushed me to go and saved more than TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS on allergy friendly products. Now, mind you, they were all convenience foods that we could have lived without. However, if you rely on these foods, a store like Grocery Outlet could be a huge help.



I spoke with someone at the store and they shared that the buyers purchase goods opportunistically. This means their inventory is NOT consistent and changes every 4 - 6 weeks. If you have the time to spare, it may be worth going every month or so to see what's new. Shopping seconds and on clearance can help too.

## Coupons & Deals: A Double Edged Sword

I use to think couponing was so cool until I tried to do it... It simply required too much of my time. I know what my time is worth (more on that later) and I couldn't spare it. Now, if you have a special coupon app or a "cash back" type of credit card, these may be great alternatives to clipping coupons.



The other downside: when you live with a restricted diet, you won't find all of your groceries at one store. This means the more coupons you have, chances are, the more stores you have to go to. Fuel and time add up fast. We'll talk more about those later too.

## Shopping In Bulk

I can honestly tell you that we could NOT survive financially without Costco. We are extra blessed because there are SIX in a 25 mile radius, meaning one of them should have what we need.



Our family has very unique needs and we're able to purchase so many great organic options at Costco. Additionally, Costco is wonderful about telling you the allergy status if you call with an item number. The downside: a lot of great items are made on shared equipment with allergens. Depending on your needs, Costco is hit and miss. Find a store like Costco in your area. The price of a membership usually isn't too bad when compared to the savings.

We have the business membership at Costco, and get 2% back on purchases. With the kickback, our membership is free each year. Every little bit counts! In addition to stores like Costco, purchase in bulk online (especially spices). We save hundreds yearly.

### Go Wholesale If You Can

This tip is not for the faint at heart. If you start a business that revolves around the ingredients you purchase, those ingredients become a tax writeoff. This could be a blog or food service company.

However, you have to be willing to put in the work. Many governments frown upon people who "play the game and never make a profit". Having a business (that's fully licensed) opens wholesale doors. The prices can be as low as 50% of retail (or better). Since we have the bakery, we are able to save considerably on dry goods, and a few other options.

Additionally, you can find medical-based writes offs for conditions such as Celiac Disease.

### Which Items Are Worth the Splurge?

I'm asked ALL the time which items are worth the money. In my humble opinion, only a handful. Look at it this way:

- Can I afford to give up the time to make the product?
- Are the raw materials significantly less expensive?
- Do I have access to the right tools to make this properly/delicious at home?

Here are some sample answers. Do I have the time to make crackers at home? Absolutely not. It takes hours to make a few servings of crackers. Are the raw materials for dairy free ice cream less expensive? Oh my goodness yes. There's a reason we have an ice cream machine with the compressor built in. Do I have the tools to make good

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pasta at home? No. The machinery they're using in a commercial setting is incredibly special. I may be able to pull off a decent fresh pasta, but store-bought free-from pasta is just plain easy.

A few items that I think are worth the splurge:

- Chocolate Chips
- Dairy Free Yogurt
- Dairy Free Butter
- Dairy Free Cheese
- Fermented Foods & Beverages
- Frozen Pizza Dough (way less work for me)
- Nut/Seed Butters
- Snack Chips (only the three brands we like)

Items that simply cost too much and I'd rather make at home

- Dried Fruit (we have a dehydrator)
- Cookies and Other Baked Goods
- Dry Ingredient Mixes (we store them in baggies)
- Frozen Waffles (or batters)
- Gluten Free/Allergy Friendly Bread
- Green Juice
- Ice Cream (for the most part)
- Salad
- Snack/Granola Bars
- Soda (we have a Soda Stream and I've made recipes for the kids to follow)

## Plant Based Money Saving

You may overlap with plant based for one reason or another. I personally feel meat substitutions can be skipped. The ingredients are usually questionable, the price is high, and you can make something pretty tasty at home.

Essentially, all novelty items should be put on the back burner. The only plant based items I refuse to make at home: dairy free cheese, dairy free butter, and dairy free yogurt. These are three items I'll simply pay for because my time is worth saving.

## Get The Right Tools For The Job

If you use a tiny food processor to make power balls each week and it takes an hour,

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you've wasted a lot of time. A large food processor can make 4 times the amount and you're done in 10 minutes. The right tools can save you time, which shouldn't be undervalued.

## Don't Waste Money (or Energy) on R & D

Find a recipe developer (or cookbook author) you trust and make what they share. They've done all the testing so you don't have to. That's one of the many perks of joining RAISE. There are 600+ recipes that are all allergy friendly. [The Advanced Recipe Search](#) can get you exactly what you need. Best part: new recipes are added each month.

## Meal Prep & Batch Cooking

When you plan your meals well, you can indeed save money. For example, select ingredients you can use several times in the week to prevent food waste. Making good use of your freezer to save produce before it goes bad is another easy way to save money.

My favorite way to save money: batch cooking. Instead of cooking one batch of chili, cook two or three. While it may not save money directly, it saves time and loads of energy later. Another important tool for me: efficient workflow. I get the shopping done on a particular day each week. I then prep produce for cooking the following day. It's slicing carrots, dicing onions, etc. What that means is each meal I make throughout the week takes MUCH LESS time. [Learn all about the Batch Cooking eCourse here.](#)

## Time & Fuel Are Worth Money Too

This is something so many people overlook. Let's look at life through a different lens for a moment.

- How much would it cost you to hire a personal driver for your kids?
- How much would it cost to hire a private shopper, or have Instacart deliver each week?
- How much would you spend on a personal chef to come to your home?
- How much is a tank of gas and how far did you drive for XYZ?

I think you can see where I'm going with this, and each job we do for ourselves, or as parents, is worth something. I think several years ago they valued a stay-at-home parent at well over \$500k per year with all the different tasks they do.

I said alllll of that to say this: your time is valuable! Determine how much money you're

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worth hourly (should be at least double minimum wage). Now, each time you do something, think about the cost. If you're worth \$100/hour, that "quick trip" to the store for one item was mighty expensive.

Knowing your number will help you determine which items are worth the splurge. I know this helps me greatly.

## Remember That Your Budget is Yours

With the same idea of keeping your eyes on your own plate, your budget is a private matter between you and your bank account. Never feel the need to compare with others or justify your purchases. You may reach a point where a second job (or something part time) needs to be considered. Or, you may opt to purchase a used car instead of new.

As you continue your journey, sacrifices will need to be made, but over time (especially if you're raising kids) it gets easier.

## How To Start Saving Money NOW

The first big step is to get critical with your receipts. If you notice you're spending too much on soda or ice cream, ask yourself if a Soda Stream or ice cream machine can save money. In our case, this was true. If you're eating out regularly, consider batch cooking a few dinners. This way, you can have "fast food" at home from your freezer when you can't (or don't want to) cook. Also, try Meat Free Monday... meat is pricey.

Meal plan, make a list, and stick to it. Resist the urge to purchase items "because you saw them" or because they looked new/interesting. Take a trip to the farmer's market this weekend and look at prices. Are they lower than the grocery store? Is it reasonable for you to start shopping at the market weekly? Don't forget to shop in season too.

One last note. It's going to take you time to get to a place where you're happy with how much you spend on food. Start with the receipt analysis, sticking to a meal plan, and giving yourself an "hourly wage". As you use these tools, you'll start to see where you can be more efficient and save time and money in the long run.

Need more tips, resources, or information? [RAISE has you covered](#). The platform is designed to save you time and money, and to help you thrive.

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# ABOUT THE ALLERGY CHEF

Kathlena, The Allergy Chef, has more than 200 food allergies and food intolerances. She can't drink most water, and also manages contact and airborne allergies. Her respirator isn't a fashion statement, though, she's been told she makes it look good. It's a lifesaving device that allows her to leave the home safely, and cook/bake some ingredients.

Several years ago, Kathlena was given 30 days to live because of her condition. After surviving, she knew that everything in her head had to go somewhere to help others. She launched a GF + Top 9 Free bakery that was the only in the state of California that could serve as many free-from people as possible (without shared equipment). She published 6 cookbooks, launched a membership site (RAISE) with more than 600 recipes and hundreds more resources. She held allergy seminars, created corn free courses, and did anything else in her power to help the free-from community thrive.



## MISSION

The Allergy Chef is on a mission to change the world, one bite at a time. She does this by:

- Making sure free-from kids and adults are empowered.
- Showing people how to make amazing free-from foods that "shouldn't" exist.
- Educating those without dietary restrictions and spreading awareness.
- Creating resources for the newly diagnosed to help the thrive.
- Partnering with brands and food companies to improve the quality of free-from foods.
- Contributing to publications to make sure people are aware of the free-from community.
- Constructing RAISE, a one-of-a-kind platform for those with restricted diets.