

Supermarket Shopping Tips

Friendly to your waistline and wallet
(from the [Australian Healthy Shopping Guide 2009](#))

Healthy eating starts when you shop. This doesn't mean that you stroll around the supermarket helping yourself to the grapes, it means that this is where you make your key decisions. What you put in your trolley ends up in your house and eventually, your mouth.

Smart shopping actually starts before you leave the house. Try planning your meals for the week ahead or even the next few days, then make a list. Check your fridge and cupboards so you're not going to run out of anything. This avoids any extra trips to the corner store, where you may be tempted by little treats.

Avoid Distractions

When you get to the supermarket, only go down the aisles you need, and know which checkouts have magazines rather than chocolate to look at while you are waiting. Shop like a racehorse with blinkers on.

Food is packaged to look appealing on the shelves, and it's the processed foods, high in sugar and fat, that seem to shine the brightest. Not only do these tend to be more expensive, they are generally less healthy, so best kept to a minimum.

Save \$\$\$ - Consider generic (or homebrand) options

Brands including IGA, Black and Gold, You'll Love Coles, Woolworths and Foodland are the "home brands" in Australian supermarkets.

Usually you will save between 10-40% off usual brand-name prices of equivalent products!

The [Australian Healthy Shopping Guide 2009](#) lists nearly 300 generic (or homebrand) options that achieve the strict nutritional benchmarks of this guide. This is around 12% of all the products names in this book.

Make it easy on yourself

DON'T SHOP HUNGRY – It will be easier to resist the temptation of those less healthy and more expensive goodies.

GO IT ALONE – If you have kids, leave them at home occasionally. This gives you time to compare items, so you'll quickly know which to pick in the future.

MIND POWER, NOT WILLPOWER – Don't shop when you are tired or stressed, you're more likely to stock up on the comfort foods. If possible, reschedule.

LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE SHOPPING – If you struggle to resist temptation in the shop, order over the internet or phone.

Hunt down bargains

Often in supermarkets, more expensive items are at eye level, so check above and below for cheaper alternatives.

At the end of a day, many supermarkets mark down the price of perishables, and you can score bargains on things like bread or meat. If you don't need them immediately, freeze them. Soft or damaged fruit and vegetables are great for making stews, baked dishes or cakes.

Waste not, want not

Remember that the cheapest item may not always be the best value for money. Check the labels to compare the quantity and weight of products. Naturally, buying in bulk is often cheaper, but you may not need all of a packet for one meal. So cook up and freeze batches of soups, casseroles and curries. They're handy for when you can't be bothered to cook or have no fresh ingredients.

Make no excuses

"I must buy cake for the grandchildren/my mother-in-law/anybody else who drops in". Face it: these are often excuses for buying food that you want. If you must buy nibbles, do so just before your guests arrive, serve small portions and put away or freeze the rest. Ask yourself what would happen if you didn't buy treats? Will your friends stop coming over? Probably not. Will they still love you? Probably.

Buy 3 and get the 4th free! 250g for the price of 150g! And we're not talking apples. Many well-intentioned dieters convince themselves they are trying to save when they buy treats on special. But all those kilojoules still end up on your hips. Go for bargains only if they are healthy items you can store, such as canned tomatoes and beans. If the offer is for a bulk pack of fruit, split it with a friend.