If you’ve been shocked by food prices this year, you aren’t alone. Try these tips for dealing with food price inflation. Not every idea will work for you, so pick the ones that best fit you and your lifestyle!

Start by making a list before grocery shopping. Stick to that list and avoid shopping on an empty stomach to prevent impulse purchases. When possible, also try to shop when you are well-rested because you will make better decisions. Consider eliminating high-cost “junk food” snacks and beverages that provide empty calories with little or no beneficial nutrients. Take advantage of coupons (but only on products you already use). Look up and down when selecting a product, since eye-level products can be more expensive. When purchasing produce, plan to purchase produce which is in season and less expensive.

If you are concerned about maintaining a nutrient-rich diet amid high food prices, consider choosing canned fruits and vegetables. According to the Academy of Nutrition and
Dietetics, these can be just as nutrition as fresh and frozen foods. There are some steps you can take to ensure you are choosing a nutritious option. Pick fruits canned in water or 100% fruit juice versus those packed in syrup. When it comes to canned vegetables, choose ones labeled “no salt added” or “low sodium.”

If you are eating out at a restaurant, rethink your drink and make the switch from soda to water. You can also investigate if local restaurants have specials like “kids eat free” nights. If you have leftovers, bring them home to eat for another meal. For food safety purposes, leftovers should be refrigerated or frozen within two hours of eating or preparation. Place the leftovers in a prominent spot in your refrigerator to remind yourself to consume them promptly.

Another important way to cut down on food costs is to reduce food waste and eat everything you buy. The average family of four loses $1,500 each year on wasted food. Some of the tips listed above will help you reduce food waste, including shopping from a list. Proper food storage is also key. Use thermometers in your refrigerator and freezer to ensure food is kept at a safe temperature (40°F or less for the refrigerator and 0°F or less for the freezer). Implement the “first in, first out” storage method to ensure the food you buy first is used first. For more food storage tips, check out the USDA FoodKeeper app at bit.ly/AppFoodKeeper.

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