

Feeding Your Family Well Without Breaking the Bank

Despite what you may believe, eating well doesn't have to mean a huge grocery bill. Here are some tricks I've employed over the years that helped me save money while ensuring that my children grew into strong, healthy men.

- Cut out the non-essentials. Eliminate all junk foods, including organic cookies, juice, crackers, chips and cereals. Commit to never buying anything that's pre-prepared. If there are ingredients listed on the package, that means someone else is charging you for their pre-preparation. Costly and vacant.
- Make your own [bone stocks](#) by saving the bones from the dinner's roast. Use the stock as a soup base to cook your rice or anything that requires water. I serve soup almost nightly, especially in cooler months. Ask hunters to give you bones, hooves and even antlers to make your rich stock.
- Get into a routine of making [crackers](#), mayonnaise and salad dressing. The commercial versions of these are not only expensive but are also chemically-laden.
- Make your own [snacks](#) and [cookies](#). Popcorn is cheap and easy; cookies are fun to make, and the variations are infinite. Even gluten-free is easy.
- Brew your own beverages: [kombucha tea](#), kvass, beer, wine and herbal teas.
- Buy beans in bulk and make bean soup. Soaking the night before not only makes them more nutritious but renders them a fast food. Then, cook them up in bone stock.
- The cost of butter is high, so make your own cooking fats by skimming off the fat from your chicken soup (smaltz) and store it in the refrigerator to fry eggs or blend into biscuits, etc. Then, learn how to render

lard and tallow...easy, inexpensive and nutrient dense. Many farmers give fat away.

- Enjoy old-fashioned breakfasts: eggs and ham, oatmeal with butter and soufflés. Eliminate breakfast cereals; they're costly and nutritionally vacant. Start with protein and [fat-laden foods](#).
- Make your own [yogurt](#), sour cream and simple cheeses from raw milk.
- Use cast iron, ceramic coated or enamel cookware. Most humble enamelware can be found at rummage sales and hardware stores. Avoid aluminum and Teflon; they're unsafe.
- In spring, search around your lawn before the [dandelions](#) bud. Harvest the leaves for a tender spring salad or sauté in butter or lard and garlic to top a steak and cheese sandwich. The buds are also delicious when sautéed. The roots are prized as a tonic.
- Just after the lilacs bloom in spring, learn to recognize wild [burdock](#) (cardoons) and fry them up for a spring liver cleanse and a delightful meal.
- Learn to identify wild edibles in your area: lambsquarters, nettles, rosehips, wild strawberries, Queen Anne's lace and more.
- Include gelatin in meals often. It keeps bones and nails strong, joints supple and skin radiant. Drinking 1 teaspoon of gelatin in a glass of water daily is a good practice, too.
- Grow your own culinary and medicinal herbs: oregano, basil, calendula, oatstraw, etc.
- Eat organic free-range [eggs](#) often, in fact, daily. They're versatile and inexpensive. If you can trust your source, make a practice of using egg yolks in their raw form. They add richness of flavor and abundant nutrients.
- Employ slow-cooking methods that make a savory meal from a chunk of an inexpensive cut of meat and wild vegetables.

- Find wild berry patches and harvest enough to freeze or dehydrate for pies and blender drinks.
- Employ homeopathic [cell salts](#) instead of costly, synthetic vitamins. They're tried and true, and you needn't worry about additives and bifurcated nutrients. We carry a kit of cell salts in our office. [Contact us](#) if you're interested.
- Make your own herbal tinctures. They are a fraction of the cost found at the store and a good way to prevent or treat illness. Consider St. John's wort, comfrey, colt's foot and many more (How to make tinctures will be featured soon).
- Keep an organic vegetable garden. If that's not possible, join an organic subscription garden or buy organic vegetables from your local farmer.
- Forage and brew your own wild teas for their nutrients, medicinal qualities and flavors.
- Plan your meals in advance, the way our grandmothers did. It keeps waste to a minimum.
- Never throw out food scraps from your family's plates or roasting pan. Recycle them into a stock pot and make tomorrow's dinner with the stock.
- Stop feeding the cat. If you live in a safe, rural area with lots of critters running around, let her find her own raw meat by giving her leave at night to hunt mice.

I found that one of the best ways to raise a family is to teach the importance of knowing how to find and prepare quality meals. These are some of the routines and practices that have helped me to raise three healthy boys while leading a busy life as a homeopath, writer and educator.

What has helped you save money while nourishing your family?