

Budget Eating Tips & Swaps

If you haven't check out our one week Budget Eating Meal plans yet, do that prior to trying these swaps. There is an omnivorous budget meal plan and vegetarian version- try whichever one aligns with your food preferences best. Once you've tried out the meal plan, look through these swap ideas and try out any that sound good to you. Some of these swaps may add additional costs, but will add more choices and variety.

Original Menu Item	Swap Suggestion(s)	Tips and More Information
White rice	Brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat pasta, other whole grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Browse the bulk bins for whole grains. ● Each type of whole grain has different types vitamins and minerals. Eating a variety will help you get in a wider range of micronutrients.
Pinto beans	Any other beans, such as black, kidney, pinto, garbanzo (aka chickpeas), or cannellini white beans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Each type of bean has a slightly different amount of protein and micronutrient profile. Check the nutrition labels to see how they compare.
Rolled oats	Steel cut oats or other whole grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Steel cut oats take longer to cook than rolled oats but may help contribute to an increased feeling of satiety. ● Steel cut oats can be soaked overnight to cut down on cook time or you can buy quick cooking steel cut oats
Low-fat milk	Milk alternatives or fat-free milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look for milk alternatives that are unsweetened and fortified with calcium. ● Some milk alternatives also naturally contain protein- these include soy milk, hemp milk, or pea milk. Plant based milks that are low in protein include almond, coconut, and rice milk. Look at the nutrition label to see how they compare. ● Fat-free cow's milk is also a heart healthy choice.
Peanut butter	Avocados, other nuts/seed butters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on fats from plant-based whole food sources such as nuts, seeds and avocados. These are filled with heart-healthy unsaturated fats.
Whole wheat tortillas	Corn tortillas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corn tortillas can be swapped for whole wheat tortillas.
Canola oil	Olive oil, other plant oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Choose plant oils that are liquid at room temperature. These are higher in unsaturated fats and are linked improved heart health.
Bananas, apples, and bag of mixed vegetables	Any other fruits or vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frozen fruits and veggies are healthy, cost effective options. ● Look for seasonal produce for better deals. Learn about which fruits and vegetables are in season in the Bay Area here at https://sfenvironment.org/vegetables-fruits-in-season-bay-area ● Look for the discounted produce bags at Berkeley Bowl. These bags are an excellent deal, but generally need to be used right away. ● Not sure what to do with leftover vegetables? Make a salad, slice up vegetables and serve with hummus, or make a stir-fry or a soup. Make a large pot for leftovers later in the week. ● Dress up your salad with homemade salad dressing, which can be more affordable than purchasing pre-made dressing. Here is a link with some salad dressing recipes: https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/now-saladdressings.pdf

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember to eat the rainbow: Choose fruit and vegetables from a variety of different colors.
Kashi GoLean cereal	Other whole grain cereal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look for cereal made with 100% whole grains, low in added sugar, and high in fiber. Like your cereal sweet? Choose cereals with less added sugar, then add sliced fresh fruit, dried fruit, or frozen berries. Adding fruits will add that sweetness while also boosting your nutrient and fiber intake.
Canned tuna	Other canned fish, such as canned salmon, anchovy, or sardines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish are excellent sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for heart health. You can swap canned tuna for other types of canned fish. Want to get in some extra calcium? Look for canned fish with bones.
Low-fat vanilla yogurt	Fat-free plain or vanilla or Greek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Want extra protein? Greek yogurt contains more protein than regular yogurt.
Chicken	Other lean proteins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When possible, choose lean proteins over red meats. Turkey, fish, tofu, beans, seitan or tempeh are a few other lean protein options.
Butter	Nut butters, avocado, olive oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can swap butter for other fats such as nut/seed butters, avocado, olive oil or other plant based oils.
Mayonnaise	Mashed avocado	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a mayo fan? Try mashed avocado.
Yogurt	Cottage Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cottage cheese is a higher in protein but lower in calcium and higher in sodium than yogurt.
Tofu	Tempeh, veggie burgers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tempeh is higher in protein than tofu. You can buy veggie burgers, or you can try making your own with beans or mushrooms as the base.
Eggs	Tofu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not a fan of eggs? Make egg-less scrambled 'eggs' by scrambling silken tofu. Add turmeric powder to get a vibrant yellow color. Check out the recipe here: https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/now-tofuscramble.pdf
Salt	Herbs, spices, citrus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add more flavor without adding extra sodium by using spices such as curry powder, chili powder, smoked paprika, black pepper, dried herbs, or a spritz of lemon or lime juice.

Other Budget Eating Tips

- Compare the unit price of different brands. This is useful when comparing packages of different sizes.
- Remember to bring your shopping list with you to the store and stick to it! Avoid shopping on an empty stomach to help you resist impulse purchases.
- Look for store brands, which can be cheaper than their name brand counterparts.
- Look for sales, BUT make sure to only buy items that you *actually* need.
- Use condiments like fresh or dried herbs, spices, soy sauce or hot sauce to add variety and give meals some kick! Bulk bins can have better deals on dried herbs and spices.
- Stop by the Farmer's Market just before they close- sometimes farmers will offer discounted prices on produce they haven't sold yet.

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