

Smart Grocery Shopping

Supports: Building Block 4 — Labels, Health Claims & Grocery Shopping

Why It Matters

A little planning turns grocery shopping from a stressful scramble into a smooth, money-saving habit. When you walk in with a loose plan, stock a few versatile staples, and store food so it lasts, meals come together more easily all week and less food ends up in the trash. None of this has to be all-or-nothing. Start with what you like, buy what you will actually use, and let your kitchen slowly become a place that makes healthy eating the easy choice.

What to Know

Plan before you go

A few minutes of planning saves time, money, and stress. Jot down a rough idea of a few meals, check what you already have, and make a short list. Aim for a variety of food groups so your cart feels balanced, and remember there is no such thing as a perfect diet or a perfect food.

Shop the perimeter, stock the staples

The outer edges of most stores hold the fresh foods: produce, eggs, dairy, and lean proteins. Spend most of your time there, then dip into the aisles for versatile staples that stretch across many meals.

- Produce you enjoy, fresh or plain frozen, so nothing spoils before you use it.
- Pantry building blocks: whole grains like oats, brown rice, and quinoa, plus canned or dried beans and lentils.
- Simple flavor boosters: dried herbs and spices, olive oil, salsa, mustard, and sauces with ingredients you recognize.
- Proteins that fit your week, from eggs and yogurt to poultry, fish, tofu, or beans.

Store food so it lasts

Storing food well keeps it fresh longer and cuts down on waste. Keep milk and eggs near the back of the fridge where it is coldest, and place raw meat on the bottom shelf so juices cannot drip onto other foods. Let fruits like bananas, avocados, and pears ripen on the counter, then move them to the fridge. Store leftovers in clear or labeled containers, cook a little extra to reuse later, and freeze batches for busy nights.

Ease into it, together. You do not have to change everything at once; try swapping in half whole-grain or bean-based pasta, or a build-your-own bowl night, and go at your family's pace. Cooking one base everyone can customize keeps different tastes happy while you blend changes in gradually.

Try This

Before your next trip, spend five minutes sketching a plan. Think about a couple of meals, a few staples worth keeping on hand, and one storage tweak that would help your food last.

- ? What is one meal you could plan around before your next shopping trip?
- ? Which versatile staple would make weeknight cooking easier to have on hand?
- ? Where does food most often go to waste in your kitchen, and what small change could help?