

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

BACK TO BASICS

JULY 2016

PLANNING SHOPPING TRIPS

- Keep a pad and pencil handy for jotting down foods as they run low. Encourage all family members to add to the list.
- Don't shop with a hungry or tired child, or when you are hungry.

At the Store

- Stick to your shopping list; avoid impulse purchases. However, watch for "in store" specials that you know you can use.
- When buying a food for the first time, buy a small amount in case you don't like it.
- Use in-store flyers to find items on sale.
- Invest in staple foods like canned fruit, tuna, or sauces when they are on sale.
- Avoid buying pre-cut fresh foods; cut your own to save money.
- Use coupons only for foods you would normally buy and if a cheaper store brand is not available.
- Buy a larger package only if the unit price is cheaper (check shelf label) and if you will use it all before it goes bad.
- Buy store brands; they usually are similar to brand name products but cost less.

Other Tips for Saving Money

- Plan meals around items that are on sale, especially costly items like meat and fish.
 - Select canned and frozen foods when they are cheaper than fresh; avoid foods with added salt or sugars.
- Continued on page 2.



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Planning Shopping Trips **1**
- Shopping Trips-Continued **2**
- Searching for Hidden Water Leaks **3**
- The 40-Gallon Challenge **3**
- Applesauce Loaf Cake **4**

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JUST A HINT:

Use apple cider or apple juice instead of water for perfect pancakes. They turn out extra light with a wonderful apple flavor.

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PLANNING SHOPPING TRIPS – CONTINUED

Planning

- Inventory your perishable foods before making a shopping list.
- Have a cooler in your car for keeping perishables safe on the way home.
- Plan to shop when you can take food home immediately and store it safely.

In the Store

- Select perishable foods like dairy and meat last so they stay cold in your cart.
- Put raw meat in a plastic bag and keep it separate from other foods in the cart.
- Choose produce at its peak freshness.
- Check to be sure eggs are not cracked.
- Check 'use/by' dates to be sure you will use foods before they go bad.
- Do not buy dented cans or jars with bulging or cracked lids.

At Home

- Store ripe fruit and fresh cut produce in the refrigerator.
- Wash produce with running water just before using.
- Put newly purchased canned foods behind older ones in your cupboard; use older cans first and before 'use by' date.
- Refrigerate perishable leftovers within two hours and use them within three days.

Prevent Food Waste

- Cut down on the amount of food you throw away; freeze leftovers or use them in recipes like soups or casseroles. Instead of thinking "leftovers" - think "planned overs." Have a plan to use excess food from one meal, whether by using it within a few days or freezing it for the future.
- Take leftovers for lunch instead of eating out. Store proper to keep foods safe to eat.
- Before buying an unfamiliar food, be sure you know how to prepare it.
- Buy only the amount of food you can store and use before it spoils.

Plan Ahead

- Plan meals for a week using foods on hand and grocery store specials.
- Clip and use coupons if the coupons are for items you usually use and the cost with the coupon is lower than other brands for similar products.
- Cook large batches when possible; divide into portions and freeze.

General Money Saving Tips

- Cut down on expensive ready-to-eat salty and sweet snacks.
- Enjoy seasonal or dried fruit, vegetables (cut your own), whole grain crackers, or low-fat yogurt for nutritious snacks.
- Limit pre-made meals and fast foods.
- Buy a reusable water bottle and fill it with tap water. Refrigerate overnight and keep it with you during the day.
- Avoid excess soda, expensive energy drinks, and coffee shop drinks.



SEARCHING FOR HIDDEN WATER LEAKS



Searching for leaks and other hidden losses of water can be an adventure. Consider enlisting your kids to help and offering them a prize if they successfully identify a leak. To check for a water leak, turn off all water sources in and around your home. If the triangular dial remains stationary, there is no water flowing through the meter, hence no leaks. If it continues to move, you have a leak. To detect how much water is being lost, note the position of the sweep hand. Wait at least 15 minutes and check the position of the sweep hand again. This method only identifies leaks that are ongoing. Some installed devices such as pool pumps may leak only when they are running.

Fixing a leak is simple, inexpensive, and can save more than 500 gallons each month. Here are some useful tips:

- Listen for dripping faucets and toilets that intermittently refill themselves.
- Pools and spas may have leaks in their basins, piping, or pumps.
- Don't forget to check outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses. Check your sprinkler system valves. Investigate unexplained patches of damp earth.
- Check your evaporative cooler, if you have one, to ensure that the recirculation pump is working properly.
- Problems with the automatic recharge cycle of water softeners are common. A faulty timer or stuck solenoid may waste hundreds of gallons during the night.
- Catch a silent leak from your toilet tank into the bowl by putting a few drops of dark food coloring into the water tank. Wait 10 minutes. If the colored water seeps into the bowl, your toilet is leaking. Sometimes the float arm gets out of adjustment, allowing water to flow down the overflow tube. More commonly, the flapper valve needs to be replaced.

Investigate if you notice a "hot spot" underneath your floor—this could indicate a broken hot water pipe under the concrete slab.

Source: www.mesaaz.gov/conservation

THE 40 GALLON CHALLENGE

The *40 Gallon Challenge* is a call for residents and businesses to reduce our region's water use on average by 40 gallons per person, per day.

The challenge began in 2011 as a voluntary campaign to increase water conservation.

The *40 Gallon Challenge* encourages people to save a minimum of 40 gallons a day by adopting new water-saving techniques. The pledge card outlines water-saving practices and the daily water-savings to expect. You can use the pledge to review the water-saving practices that you or your family currently puts to use. By pledging *new* practices, you will see the total daily savings expected for your household.

For more Information about *40 Gallon Challenge* go to :

<http://www.40gallonchallenge.org>



Applesauce Loaf Cake

Makes: 16 servings

Total Cost: \$3.20

Serving Cost: \$0.20

Cinnamon, nutmeg, and toasted walnuts make this loaf cake taste as great as it smells.

Ingredients

1/2 cup walnuts (chopped)	2 cups flour (all purpose)
1 1/2 cups applesauce	2 teaspoons baking soda
1 egg	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon (ground)
1 cup sugar	1/2 teaspoon nutmeg (ground)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil	1 cup raisins
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	

Directions

1. Wash hands well with soap and warm water.
2. Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease 2 (8x4x2 inch) loaf pans.
3. Toast walnuts in an ungreased skillet pan. Stir while heating on medium-low heat for 5-7 minutes. They are done when they are brown and smell nutty. Set aside to cool.
4. Mix applesauce, egg, sugar, oil and vanilla in a large bowl.
5. Mix flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and nutmeg together in a smaller bowl.
6. Pour flour mixture into applesauce mixture.
7. Stir in raisins and cooled toasted nuts.
8. Pour half of the batter into each greased pan. Bake for 45-55 minutes.
9. Remove cakes from the oven. Cool for 10 minutes. Remove from pans to finish cooling. For best taste, let cakes cool a few hours before serving.



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LORRIE COOP CEA-FCS
JERRY COPLEN CEA-AG/NR
PO BOX 22 BENJAMIN, TX
79505
940-459-2651
knox@ag.tamu.edu