

## Top 10 Ways to Save on Groceries

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Have you ever read in a magazine "I save more than I spend at the grocery store" and thought, yeah, right? Well, I used to, but then I learned how to do it too!

It really isn't as hard as it sounds, believe it or not. Here are my secrets to saving money at the grocery store. This is what works for my family, it might vary for yours, but it should give you some ideas to start with!

**1) Never go hungry!** The best thing you can do is eat a snack before you shop! And, take a drink with you. Shopping hungry can quickly add onto the bill.

**2) Go alone if at all possible.** If you can't, plan on getting a doughnut or something for the kids to eat as you shop. Keep them in the cart if at all possible to keep them from grabbing things you don't need.

**3) Get to know the local grocery stores.** There is usually at least one that is almost always cheaper than the others. See if they will honor other stores' sales, and then bring the flyers with you. Most stores do this automatically, but if not, it can't hurt to ask. By doing this you get the best sale prices that you need, and you're shopping at the store with the lowest prices on the things not on sale.

**4) Clip coupons!** Buy that Sunday paper and clip clip clip! You will save more clipping coupons than you pay for the paper.

**5) Seek web coupons.** Join mailing lists online for your favorite products to get even more discounts and sometimes even samples. Also be sure to visit the following sites for printable coupons, discounts, and savings on future trips to the store.

[eCentives](#)  
[Cool Savings](#)  
[CouponSurfer.com](#)  
[ValuPage](#)

**6) When you see something on sale that you use a lot of, stock up!** Get familiar with a store, they usually have a cycle for their ads and store specials. My local store seems to be on a two month cycle for most things, so if I see something on sale we use a lot of, I make sure I buy enough to last us until I think it will be on sale again.

**7) Figure out what generic products are acceptable to your family.** There are some items where buying generic doesn't matter (for us things like pancake mix and dryer sheets), while there are others where you really have to get the real deal. (In our house, that would be ketchup. :-)) Ask friends and neighbors if they've tried the store brand; lots of times you can get a heads up from them!

**8) Make a list.** It sounds obvious, but so many of us don't do it! If you don't have a list and you forget something you need like bread, milk, or eggs, you will have to go back. And everytime you walk in the store you face temptation to spend more.

**9) Take a calculator.** The unit price is usually on the shelf, but if something is on sale it won't be accurate. Sometimes even when something is on sale it is still cheaper to buy another brand that isn't on sale. Or, it still might be cheaper to buy the smaller box.

**10) Invest in a warehouse club**, and when you do, make sure you shop around for that too. We have a Sam's Club and BJ's Warehouse. Each costs about the same to join (when they aren't running specials, that's something else to ask about) and they each have strong and weak points. For us, BJ's is cheaper with diapers and wipes, as well as has a larger variety. However, Sam's has cheaper phone cards. So, make sure before you join you have a good idea what you will be buying there and then make the choice. It might even benefit your family to join both... Just know you have options and what they are.

Try these strategies for a couple of months and you'll see the savings add up.

*Amy is the webmaster of [ColumbusMoms.com](http://ColumbusMoms.com) and money saving mama to Logan and Savannah. She also works for Moms Help Moms as the Community Programming Director. You can learn more about Moms Help Moms or find a local chapter at <http://www.momshelpmoms.org>.*

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**Chapter Four**   **Next article**