

Prepare Your Meals at Home and Save Money

Diabetes Counselling Online "Dine In For Diabetes" ® Fact Sheet 7

For many, takeaway meals are a fast and easy option to get a meal on the table with very minimal effort. But besides the harmful health effects, regular takeaway meal consumption can also put a big dent in your wallet. We compared some popular takeaway options to our healthier homemade versions to see how much money you can save by cooking at home.

Fish and chips: \$6.40 per serve
Takeaway version: \$10 per serve

Ham and ricotta pizza: \$2.77 per serve
Takeaway version: \$7 per serve (half a medium pizza)

Bean and chicken quesadillas: \$4.45 per serve
Takeaway version: \$10

Green curry: \$4 per serve
Takeaway version: \$9 per serve

Fried rice: \$3.95 per serve
Takeaway version: \$9 per serve

Tandoori chicken: \$4.50 per serve
Takeaway version: \$9.90 per serve

The first step is to make the switch from takeaway food to regular home-made meals. And to help you keep even more money in your wallet, here are our top 5 tips on how you can stretch your dollar further

Make extra portions

When cooking meals such as pasta sauce, meat patties or soup, make double or even quadruple the quantity you need. This way you won't be tempted to grab a takeaway meal after work because you have a ready-made meal at home, simply needing to be heated. Always cool leftover cooked food as quickly as possible and cover and store in fridge or freezer as needed. And remember don't throw out any leftovers. Smaller portions of leftovers can be kept in a sealed container in the fridge and reheated the next day for an easy lunch.

Buy in bulk

A great way to save money is by purchasing non-perishable items such as rice, pasta, grains, cereals and canned items in bulk. You can also save money on fresh produce by buying meat and poultry in bulk sizes and freezing them in individual portions to use as needed at a later date.

Buy fruits and vegetables in season

Fruits and vegetables that are not in season need to be shipped in from overseas. This means we need to pay extra to cover the cost of importing them. By purchasing fruits and vegetables which are in season, you not only keep the costs down but also ensure they are of the best quality and flavour!

Go vego!

Legumes, or pulses (including lentils, chickpeas and canned or dried beans) are all excellent forms of protein, significantly cheaper than meat and fish, and also taste great! To bring your shopping bill down try having a vegetarian meal once or twice a week. Options include tacos with Mexican beans, chickpea and vegetable curry, lentil bolognese or lasagna, red bean chilli, falafel wraps or lentil burgers.

Planning ahead

You could save money simply by planning your week's meals before you go shopping. An easy way is to make a shopping list and stick to it. Not only will it get you out of the supermarket faster but it will also prevent you from spending money on things you don't need.

So the next time you're thinking of getting takeaway why not try one of our recipes for an easy, healthy and budget friendly version of your favourite takeaway meal. A quick visit to the supermarket will save you more money than you think.

