

Asset HealthTalk

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

Four Tips for EATING WELL on \$4 a Day

Eating healthily and finding healthy alternatives are not luxuries saved for those who have extra cash to spend. Everyone can make subtle adjustments to everyday recipes to eat a little better today – without breaking the bank.

In fact, that's precisely Leanne Brown's mission. Ms. Brown is a food-studies scholar, and she wants to help everyone dine well on a conservative budget. To do this, she created a cookbook called *Good and Cheap* with recipes spanning every meal of the day – snacks included. Her artistry is simple, using ingredients commonly found in your pantry or local grocer; it is elegant enough to pique the interest of a new recipe (e.g., Spicy Panzanella); and it has a touch of home-cooked style (e.g., *My Dad's Baked Beans*) to warm your heart. Many of her recipes are entirely kid-friendly, too (e.g., *Peanut Butter and Jelly Granola Bars*; *Yogurt Smash*).

Here are four tips for making modest changes to your diet that Ms. Brown says you can do with a budget of \$4 a day.

Buy foods that can be used in multiple meals. Keep ingredients like flour, yogurt, garlic and lemons (or lemon juice) in stock to add flavor to a variety of meals.

Think seasonally. Seasonal fruits and vegetables are generally cheaper (and more full of flavor and nutrients) than out-of-season produce. Use wilted produce in sautéed and baked dishes or to make your own broth.

Don't buy drinks. Ms. Brown reminds us that we really just need water, or sometimes milk. Packaged drinks can be full of sugar and pricey.

Always buy eggs. Any time you're scrambling for an easy meal at the end of the day, eggs can be an inexpensive and nutritious solution.



October is Eat Together, Eat Better Month!

Visit nutrition.wsu.edu/ETEB/ to learn more about why eating together is so important for your health!

To learn more about her cookbook or the *Good and Cheap* project, visit leannebrown.com. A printable, condensed version of her cookbook is available to download for free.

"How to Eat Three Good Meals for Just \$4 a Day," Joanna Prisco, yahoo.com, Aug. 17, 2015.

"Cheap and Healthy Recipes," BBC Good Food, bbcgoodfood.com, accessed on Sept. 3, 2015.



A TREAT WITHOUT THE TRICKS: GLUTEN-FREE PIZZA CRUST

Try this scrumptious recipe for gluten-free pizza crust that uses spaghetti squash. This recipe keeps the toppings simple, but you can add any ingredient your heart desires— just make sure the toppings you choose don't contain too much moisture, or you might end up with a soggy crust!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 spaghetti squash (about 2 pounds)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 1/4 teaspoons kosher salt
- Cooking spray
- 1/2 cup shredded Parmesan
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup marinara sauce
- 4 ounces fresh mozzarella
- 3 to 5 fresh basil leaves

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Cut the squash in half lengthwise. Use a spoon to scoop out the seeds; discard them. Arrange the squash with the cut side up on a baking sheet. Drizzle olive oil evenly over each piece; sprinkle with 1 teaspoon salt. Bake the squash until the flesh is tender and can be easily separated with the tines of a fork, about 35 to 40 minutes. Remove the squash from the oven; let it cool; and turn the oven heat up to 450 F.
2. When the squash has cooled down, use a fork to gently separate the flesh into spaghetti-like strands. Transfer the separated squash to a kitchen towel or piece of cheesecloth; roll up cloth and twist and squeeze out as much liquid as possible. (Once you've done this, you should have about 2 cups of squash.)
3. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and lightly coat it with cooking spray. In a medium bowl, mix the squash, parmesan, garlic powder, red pepper flakes and 1/4 teaspoon salt together. Add the eggs; stir until the mixture is thoroughly combined. (Don't worry if the mixture seems too wet or loose.) Transfer the mixture to your prepared baking sheet and shape into a 9-inch round crust, about 1/2 inch thick.
4. Bake the crust until it is golden brown, about 15 minutes. Remove the crust from the oven and flip it. (You may need to use a plate for this.) Spread marinara sauce over the crust and top it with mozzarella. Return the pizza to the oven to bake until the cheese is melted, slightly brown; about 10 minutes more. Garnish your pizza with basil!

MINIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERRUPTION.

If you get distracted by chatty co-workers, wear soundproof headphones. Better yet, listen to motivating music when you do. Many online music sites have playlists dedicated to music that will help you stay focused. Constantly checking Facebook? Install a plugin on your computer or remove the app from your phone to block access.



REDUCE INTERNAL DISTRACTIONS.

Don't think about the birthday card you need to send when you're finishing a big report. Save those thoughts for a time when you can address them. If you have trouble doing this, incorporate meditation into your lifestyle. Research shows that people who meditate are more effective at blocking mental distractions.



STOP MULTITASKING.

Your brain adapts to constantly switching from one thing to the next, making it harder to focus on a single activity over time. It takes an average of 25 minutes to return to a task after a distraction. At work, designate specific times to complete tasks and other times to answer emails. Just like your body, you can train your mind. Consider this mental endurance training.



HOW TO TRAIN YOUR BRAIN TO HUNKER DOWN

Having trouble focusing? Modern culture inundates us with alerts and information that continually divert our attention. We're wired for instant gratification, and our electronics and social media provide just that. If we're dreading a project and don't know where to begin, it's a lot more fun to watch entertaining YouTube clips. That is, until our procrastination gets the best of us by keeping us from getting stuff done.

Here are some tips for harnessing your attention.



CREATE A TO-DON'T LIST.

Determine your distractions and put 'em on the list. Hooked on Pinterest? Add it. Vow that you'll refrain until important tasks are complete then use it as a reward for your hard work.



ALLOT LESS TIME FOR TASKS.

If something typically takes you an hour to complete, give it 40 minutes, and commit to finishing it in that time. Deadlines can prompt a sense of urgency. If this isn't enough motivation, enlist someone to hold you accountable for sticking with it.

Commit to your goal of increased concentration. Take time at the end of the day to review how productive you were and note areas for improvement. It's also a good idea to identify what time of day you're the most energized and productive to learn when it's best for you to tackle projects that require mental stamina.

"Ditch the Red Bull! 12 DIY Brain Hacks to Keep You Focused All Day Long," Joe McGauley, yahoo.com, June 15, 2015.

"Brain Scans Show How Meditation Improves Mental Focus," Joshua Gowin Ph.D, psychologytoday.com, April 20, 2012.