Eat healthy without busting your budget

A little thought and planning can go a long way toward cutting your food budget. Below are some tips that may help:

1) Buy fresh produce in-season. Purchase from farmers' markets whenever possible, as the food is usually fresher and costs less.
2) Canned (in water or its own juice) and frozen produce is nutritious and will last longer, so that you don't waste money having to throw away spoiled food.
3) Buy milk (fat-free or low-fat) in large containers that generally cost less than milk in smaller-sized ones. Non-fat dry milk is the cheapest way to purchase milk.
4) Buy store brands. They are usually cheaper and just as good as many brand name products.
5) Look for "unit price" noted on display shelf, usually just below the product. This tells you the cost per ounce, pound, or pint, so you'll know which is the best buy.
6) Get protein from foods such as beans and peanut butter, which are much less expensive than meat.
7) Extend meat by putting it in casseroles and stews. These types of dishes (as well as other foods high in fiber and water, such as fruits and vegetables) can fill you up with nutritious food at little cost.
8) Buy non-perishable foods in bulk, and freeze unused portions for future meals.
9) The whole is the way to go! Buy a whole chicken, cut it up and freeze what you don't use for future meals. This is generally less expensive than buying pre-cut chicken parts.
10) Serve appropriate portions to avoid waste.
11) Promptly refrigerate leftovers and reuse within a few days.
12) Look for sales and clip coupons.
13) Plan ahead so that you buy only what you need for meals, to avoid waste and unnecessary purchases.
14) Don't go to the store hungry, as you'll tend to buy more food!
15) Buy at a supermarket, rather than a convenience store whenever possible to pay lower prices.
16) Spend smart – for the cost of bags of chips, boxes of cookies and candy you could buy lots of fruit and vegetables.