



*the*  
**VEGAN RESET**

**WEEK TWO: PRACTICAL  
DAY NINE:  
PLANT-BASED ON A BUDGET**

# *plant-based on a budget*

There are many myths that surround the vegan lifestyle. One of them is that it's too expensive and that you have to be privileged to be able to afford living this way. This is because many people associate the term vegan or even plant-based with processed foods, meat and dairy alternatives, and the sometimes high cost of fruits and vegetables. In addition, animal products are highly subsidized therefore making them seem cheaper than they actually are. Whether you want to start eating only whole foods or you want to indulge in a little vegan cheese every now and then, there are plenty of ways to eat vegan on a budget.

In today's lesson you'll get tips on how to eat a healthy plant-based diet without having to ruin yourself financially.

Veganism may be expensive in some cases, especially if you buy pricey meat and dairy alternatives, but interestingly, the healthier options, legumes, grains and co, are often cheaper.

“National dietary guidelines advise consumers to cut meat and dairy consumption and increase their intake of fruit and vegetables. But more than 60 percent of agricultural subsidies have directly or indirectly supported meat and dairy production, while less than one percent benefit fruit and vegetable producers.”

– The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

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## 1. Choose pulses and grains over processed foods

Pulses are all the various beans, peas and lentils that are harvested dry and cooked as food. These are very high in fiber and protein, healthy and sustainable, and most importantly, much more affordable than meat.

## 2. Buy in bulk

Buying in bulk is one of the best things you can do to save money. Test it yourself, get some packaged food, look at the price per lb or kg and then compare it to the prices in the bulk section. You'll be surprised to see what a difference that can make! To make it extra eco friendly, you can bring your own reusable bags and containers and then store the bulk foods in glass containers at home. This goes for pulses/legumes, grains, dried fruit and many more items.

## 3. Compare prices

Many shops have different prices for the same items depending on region, brand, season etc. If there are certain foods you buy a lot (like hummus, chickpeas, tahini and granola), it's worth going to several different stores to see who offers the best deals. This might be a little inconvenient in the beginning, but you'll get the hang of it pretty quickly and it's worth it. I usually have about 2 to 3 stores I go to regularly and I know exactly where I can get which items cheaper.

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## 4. Shop at Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are a great place to shop in bulk and to negotiate prices. Often, vendors and farmers will give you a discount if you buy larger quantities or keep you in the loop when they have special deals, especially if you go to the same market regularly. Another trick is to go there right before they close, that's when they want to get rid of all the produce they have left over and you might be able to negotiate an even better deal.

## 5. Wholesale

Many of my friends who eat a lot of fruit (and by a lot, I mean A LOT), find wholesalers where they go about once a week to buy produce. Those aren't always close to where you live, but the deals are so good that it's usually worth the trip. They look like market halls and you can buy fruits and vegetables by the case.

## 6. Buy seasonal

When I lived in Brussels, an organic cucumber was 0.79 euros when in season and 2.49 euros when not in season. Kale was 1.49/kg in season and 3.49/kg towards the end of the season. Something as simple as knowing which fruits and vegetables are in season can save you loads of money! If you google the name of the place you live + seasonal produce calendar, you'll find plenty of resources.

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## 7. The Clean 15 and Dirty Dozen

As mentioned in yesterday's lesson, It's always preferable to buy organic produce, for health, environmental and other reasons, but sometimes that's just not possible if it's too expensive. The Clean 15 are fruits and vegetables that you can safely buy conventional and the Dirty Dozen are those you should rather buy organic (see Lesson 1 for the full lists).

## 8. Staple foods

I love fruit and eat quite a lot of it! But I eat more of certain fruits than I do of others, not necessarily because I like them that much more, but mostly because they're cheaper. So, while I may have plenty of bananas in a day, I rarely ever eat pounds of raspberries, I just couldn't afford that. I treat fruits like bananas, persimmons and watermelons (depending on the season) as my staple foods and raspberries, blueberries, cherries and mulberries as my "treats". Other staple foods can be legumes, potatoes and rice. They're basically the foods that you get most of your calories from while not paying that much for them.

## 9. Planning is key!

Fail to prepare - prepare to fail. If you know you're going to have a long day ahead of you, prepare by packing lots of snacks in the morning or the night before. That way you won't have to resort to expensive snacks somewhere else. This is especially important when traveling. Prices at airports, for instance, are ridiculously high!

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## 10. Anticipate and shop the smart way

Make a list of the items you'll need and stick with that list. It's very easy to get distracted (and tempted) when you're at the grocery store, so make sure you only buy what you really need. Another trick is to eat right before you go to the store. If you shop on an empty stomach, chances are you'll be even more tempted by things you don't really need.

## 11. Opt for generic brands

Most stores offer a variety of brands. Some of those (often the more popular ones) are more expensive than others. Before reaching for well known brands, look for cheaper alternatives.

## 12. Make more frequent trips to the supermarket

It's easy to overestimate the amount of food (especially fresh produce like leafy greens) we'll need and how long it'll last us. If you live near a supermarket or farmers market, try to stick with smaller quantities if you know you have a tendency to overbuy. In case that does happen, however, or you're not able to go more than once every week or every other week, you can always freeze food.

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## 13. Freeze food

As we saw in yesterday's lesson, freezing fresh produce is a great way to make sure you don't waste any food. I used to be afraid to buy too many bananas because they'd ripen quickly and I'd have to throw them away (that was before I had discovered banana ice cream and jumbo smoothies!). I had no idea that you could just freeze them! So now, I save even more money because I get discounts on larger quantities of bananas and then freeze them.

## 14. Opt for frozen food if there's a significant price difference

As you may have read in the shopping list notes, another way to save money is to buy frozen instead of fresh produce. Ideally, you'd be able to get all your produce fresh, but sometimes there is such a big price difference that opting for the frozen alternative is really worth it. This will also allow you to always have fruits and veggies at home without the fear of any of it going bad.

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## 15. Grow your own food (if you can)

The cheapest way to get food is to grow it yourself. That's obviously only an option for those with a garden or access to a garden, but if that's the case for you, why not look into ways of growing your own food? If you don't have a garden, foraging can be both fun and very rewarding, especially in warm places like Florida or California. I went foraging in Miami and Los Angeles a few years ago and got days' worth of fresh and ripe fruit. Before you go foraging, make sure you're in a safe area and research whether it's a good place to forage or not.

## 16. Shop online

Many online shops like Thrive Market or Lucky Vitamin offer discounts on you won't find in regular stores. I get most of my herbal tea and condiments like nutritional yeast and spices online because that allows me to save about 20-50% at times.