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18 HEALTHY FOODS (UNDER A BUCK)

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FOOD PRICES ARE CLIMBING, AND SOME OF YOU MIGHT BE LOOKING TO FAST FOOD AND PACKAGED FOODS FOR THEIR CHEAP BITES. BUT LOW COST DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN LOW QUALITY. IN FACT, SOME OF THE MOST INEXPENSIVE THINGS YOU CAN BUY ARE THE BEST THINGS FOR YOU.

AT THE GROCERY STORE, GETTING THE MOST NUTRITION FOR THE LEAST AMOUNT OF MONEY MEANS HANGING OUT ON THE PERIPHERIES □ NEAR THE FRUITS AND VEGGIES, THE MEAT AND DAIRY AND THE BULK GRAINS □ WHILE AVOIDING THE EXPENSIVE PACKAGED INTERIOR. BY DOING SO, NOT ONLY WILL YOUR KITCHEN BE STOCKED WITH EXCELLENT FOODS, YOUR WALLET WON'T BE EMPTY.



OATS: \$1.39
SERVING SIZE: 1/2 CUP
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER: 13
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.11

High in fiber and complex carbohydrates, oats have also been shown to lower cholesterol. And they sure are cheap — \$1 will buy you more than a week's worth of hearty breakfasts.

Serving suggestions: Sprinkle with nuts and fruit in the morning or make oatmeal cookies for dessert.

EGGS (GRADE A) LARGE: \$1.79
SERVING SIZE: 2 EGGS
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER: 6
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.30

You can get about a half dozen eggs for \$1 making them one of the cheapest and most versatile sources of protein. They are also a good source of the antioxidant lutein, which may ward off age-related eye problems.

Serving suggestions: *Huevos rancheros* for breakfast, egg salad sandwiches for lunch and frittatas for dinner.

POTATOES: U.S. #1 RUSSET
\$4.99 (FIVE-POUND BAG)
SERVING SIZE: 1 POTATO
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER:
APPROX. 8
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.62

Because we often see potatoes at their unhealthiest — as fries or chips — we don't think of them as nutritious, but they definitely are. Eaten with the skin on, potatoes contain almost half a day's worth of vitamin C and are a good source of potassium. If you opt for sweet potatoes or yams, you'll also get a good wallop of beta carotene. Plus, they're dirt cheap and have almost endless culinary possibilities.

TIP: WHEN IT'S TIME TO CARVE YOUR PUMPKIN THIS OCTOBER, DON'T SHOVEL THOSE SEEDS INTO THE TRASH — THEY'RE A GOLDMINE OF MAGNESIUM, PROTEIN AND TRACE MINERALS. PLUS, THEY COME FREE WITH THE PURCHASE OF A PUMPKIN.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS: SALT, ROAST AND EAT PLAIN; TOSS IN SALADS.

Serving suggestions: There's nothing like breakfast potatoes with eggs for a hearty breakfast; for lunch, make potato salad; for dinner, have them with sour cream and chives.

GRANNY SMITH APPLES:
\$1.99 PER POUND
SERVING SIZE: 1 APPLE
PRICE PER SERVING: ABOUT \$1

I'm fond of apples because they're inexpensive, easy to find, come in portion-controlled packaging and taste good. They are a good source of pectin — a fiber that may help reduce cholesterol — and they have the antioxidant vitamin C, which keeps your blood vessels healthy.

Serving suggestions: Plain, as applesauce or in baked goods like pumpkin-apple breakfast bread.

BANANAS: \$.69 PER POUND
SERVING SIZE: 1 BANANA
PRICE PER SERVING: ABOUT \$.35

Recently, I found bananas for about 19 cents apiece; \$1 gets you a banana a day for the work week. High in potassium and fiber (nine grams for one), bananas are a no-brainer when it comes to eating your five-a-day quotient of fruits and veggies.

Serving suggestions: In smoothies, by themselves or in cereal and yogurt.

CANNED BLACK BEANS: \$.99 EACH
SERVING SIZE: 1/2 CUP
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER: ABOUT 4
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.25

With beans, you're getting your money's worth and then some. Not only are they a great source of protein and fiber, but black beans are also high in iron, folate and

manganese, and they may help reduce cholesterol levels. And if you don't like one type, try another — garbanzo, lima, lentils... the varieties are endless. Though they require soaking and cooking, the most inexpensive way to purchase these beans is in dried form; a precooked can will still only run you around a buck.

Serving suggestions: In salads, curries and hummus.

BROCCOLI: \$2.49 EACH
(APPROX. TWO HEADS)
SERVING SIZE: 1/2 CUP
SERVINGS PER BUNCH: APPROX. 8
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.32

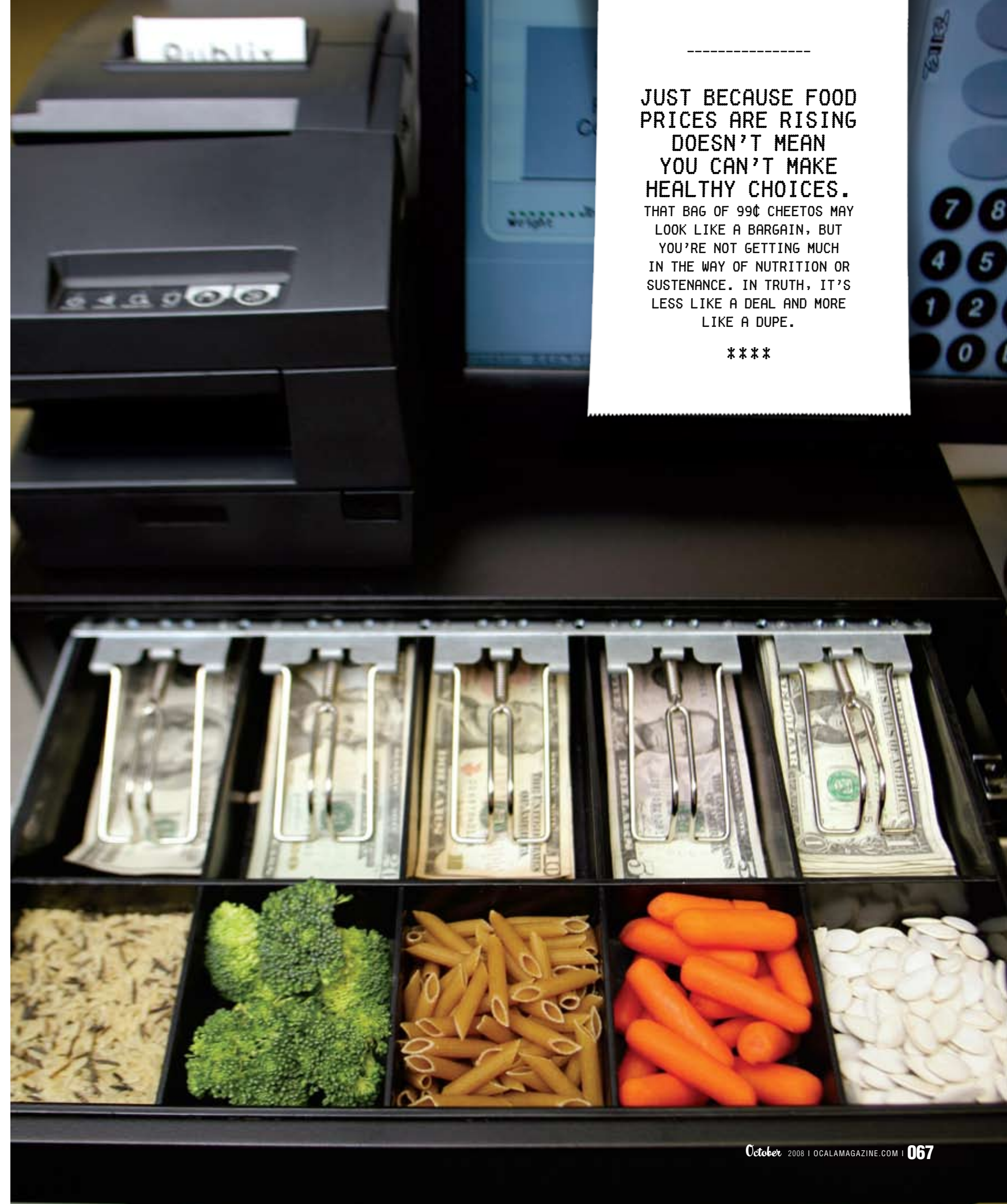
Broccoli contains tons of nice nutrients — calcium, vitamins A and C, potassium, folate and fiber. As if that isn't enough, broccoli is also packed with phytonutrients, compounds that may help prevent heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers. Plus, it's low in calories and cost.

Serving suggestions: Steamed with fresh parmesan, chopped into salads or pureed into broccoli soup.

WILD RICE BLEND: \$7.39
SERVING SIZE: 1/4 CUP
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER:
APPROX. 32
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.23

It may seem like a lot to spend when that two-pound bag of white rice is still under \$3, but wild rice blends are much better for you. Low in fat and high in protein and fiber, this rice is a great source of complex carbohydrates. It packs a powerful potassium punch and is loaded with B vitamins. Plus, it has a nutty, robust flavor.

Serving suggestions: Great as a side dish; mix with nuts and veggies for a cold rice salad.



**JUST BECAUSE FOOD
PRICES ARE RISING
DOESN'T MEAN
YOU CAN'T MAKE
HEALTHY CHOICES.**

THAT BAG OF 99¢ CHEETOS MAY
LOOK LIKE A BARGAIN, BUT
YOU'RE NOT GETTING MUCH
IN THE WAY OF NUTRITION OR
SUSTENANCE. IN TRUTH, IT'S
LESS LIKE A DEAL AND MORE
LIKE A DUPE.

BEETS: \$3.49 PER POUND
SERVING SIZE: 1 MEDIUM BEET
SERVINGS PER BUNCH: APPROX. 4
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.87

Beets are my kind of vegetable — their natural sugars make them sweet to the palate while their rich flavor and color make them nutritious for the body. They're powerhouses of folate, iron and antioxidants.

Serving suggestions: Shred into salads or slice with goat cheese. If you buy your beets with the greens on, you can braise them in olive oil like you would other greens.

BUTTERNUT SQUASH: \$1.69 PER LB
SERVING SIZE: 1/2 CUP, COOKED
SERVINGS PER SQUASH: APPROX. 2
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.84

This beautiful gourd swings both ways: sometimes savory, sometimes sweet. However you prepare the butternut, it will not only add color and texture, but also five grams of fiber per half cup and chunks and chunks of vitamin A and C. When in season, butternut squash and related gourds are usually less than \$1 a pound.

Serving suggestions: Pear (also a great buy at 50 cents each) and squash bruschetta is an unexpected delight, cook and dice into salads, or mash with butter and salt.

WHOLE GRAIN PASTA: \$2.19
SERVING SIZE: 2 OUNCES
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER: APPROX. 6
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.37

In the days of Atkins, pasta was wrongly convicted, for there is nothing harmful about a complex carbohydrate source that is high in protein and B vitamins (especially the new fortified versions). Plus, it's one of the cheapest staples you can buy.

Serving suggestions: Mix clams and white wine with linguine, top orzo with tomatoes and garlic, or eat cold farfalle salad on a picnic.

SPINACH: \$2.99 PER BAG
SERVING SIZE: 3 CUPS
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER: 4
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.75

Spinach is perhaps one of the best green leafies out there — it has lots of vitamin C, iron and trace minerals. Plus, you can usually find it year round for less than \$1.

Serving suggestions: Sautéed with eggs, as a salad or a spinach frittata.

LOW-FAT MILK: \$3.79 PER GALLON
SERVING SIZE: 1 CUP
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER: ABOUT 16
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.24

Yes, the price of a gallon of milk is rising, but per serving, it's still under \$1; single serving milk products, like yogurt, are usually less than \$1 too. Plus, you'll get a lot of benefit for a small investment. Milk is rich in protein, vitamins A and D, potassium and niacin, and is one of the easiest ways to get bone-strengthening calcium.

Serving suggestions: In smoothies, hot chocolate or coffee and milk products like low-fat cottage cheese and yogurt.

CANNED TOMATOES: \$1.25 PER ONE
28-OUNCE CAN
SERVING SIZE: 1/2 CUP
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER: ABOUT 7
PRICE PER SERVING: \$.18

Think fresh fruits and vegetables are always the most nutritious? Think again. Canned

tomatoes have more available lycopene — believed to be protective against heart disease and even cancer — than fresh. A simple can of diced tomatoes has two-to-three times as much as fresh, and tomato paste has more than six times the amount of lycopene than fresh.

Serving suggestions: Great for Italian and Mexican dishes, chili, stew and casseroles.

BABY CARROTS (IN BAGS): \$1.69
FOR A 32-OUNCE BAG
SERVING SIZE: 3 OUNCES
SERVINGS PER CONTAINER: ABOUT 10
PRICE PER SERVING: ABOUT \$.18

Easy to pack and perfect as crudités for that favorite dip, the crunchy texture and sweet taste of carrots are popular among both adults and children. Better yet, carrots are an excellent source of antioxidant compounds, and the richest vegetable source of the pro-vitamin A carotenes. Carrots' antioxidant compounds help protect against cardiovascular disease and cancer, and they also promote good vision, especially night vision.

Serving suggestions: Great for snacks, casseroles, stews, veggie platters and side dishes.

COFFEE
PRICE PER SERVING: LESS THAN \$.50

The old cup-o-joe has been thrown on the stands for many a corporeal crime — heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis — but exonerated on all counts. In fact, coffee, which is derived from a bean, contains beneficial antioxidants that protect against free radicals and may actually help thwart heart disease and cancer. While it's not going to fill you up like the other items on this list, it might make you a lot perkier. When made at home, coffee runs less than 50 cents a cup.

Serving suggestions: Just drink it. ☺

TIP: FROZEN VEGETABLES ARE USUALLY FRESHER AND CHEAPER THAN ANYTHING THAT CAN BE FOUND IN THE PRODUCE AND CANNED SECTIONS OF THE STORE. CRUISE DOWN THE FROZEN FOOD AISLES, AND YOU'LL FIND BIG BAGS OF VEGGIES AT BARGAIN PRICES — SOMETIMES AS LITTLE AS \$1 A BAG.