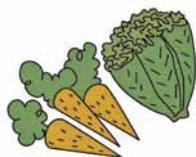


Savvy Shopping Guide

Now that you know how to minimize the time and energy spent grocery shopping, here are some tips to help you grab the best stuff from every aisle.



Produce

Veggies: In addition to buying items you need for your weekly menu, pick up a selection of brightly colored vegetables that can be tossed into a variety of different dishes, such as mixed salad greens, kale, red bell peppers, yellow summer squash, grape tomatoes, plus seasonal favorites. Round them out with basics like garlic, onions, celery and carrots.

Fruit: Grab any basics your household relies on (apples, oranges and bananas), plus seasonal fresh fruits (for late summer, think berries, peaches and plums) and anything that looks particularly delectable or affordable (like ripe avocados on sale for a song). Always keep a couple of lemons and limes on hand for perking up proteins, like bean dishes and fish.

Seafood Counter

Aim for one or two servings of fish each week. Whether you're buying fresh or frozen, wild Alaskan salmon and domestically raised tilapia are good bets for getting omega-3 fatty acids while minimizing contaminants. (For more on sustainable seafood choices, read "Good Fishing" in the June 2010 archives at experiencelifemag.com.)



Poultry and Meat Counter

When possible, buy organic, grass-fed meats to lessen exposure to antibiotics and hormones. If it's cold cuts you're considering, look for a natural brand made without nitrates and nitrites, or MSG. Consider some frozen options (like skinless chicken-breast tenderloins) that you can work into a variety of dishes, like stir-fries, salads, soups and pasta sauces.

Dairy Case

By choosing organic milk, yogurt and butter, you'll be limiting the amount of chemicals in your food. Don't assume fat-free products are better for you. (Read more on why in "Skimming the Truth," available in the September 2009 archives at experiencelifemag.com.) Be especially careful with fat-free butter and yogurt — two foods often infused with chemicals and artificial sweeteners to fill the gap. This is also the place to pick up a package or two of tofu, a protein-packed meat alternative.



Center Aisles

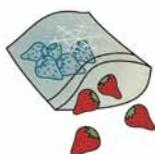
Jarred and bottled goods: Opt for olive, nut and grape-seed oils instead of vegetable oils, such as safflower, sunflower and corn oil. Olives, pickles, capers, mustards, salsas, chili sauces and vinegars (apple cider, balsamic and red-wine vinegar) boost flavor.

Canned goods: Canned beans, sardines, anchovies, tomatoes, beans and squash help you whip up quick protein-packed dinners.

Boxed and wrapped: Boxed, organic vegetable stock offers a shortcut for soups, casseroles and whole grains, like quinoa and couscous. Consider boxed almond, hemp or soymilk for the dairy-avoidant. Dried whole-grain pastas provide the base for an array of plant-based meals.

Bulk

It just makes more sense to buy some things in bulk, such as beans, nuts, dried fruit, brown rice, cornmeal, lentils and spices. Some stores offer bulk cooking oils, nut butters and sweeteners, such as honey or maple syrup.



Frozen Foods

Visit the frozen-food aisle last to minimize thawing. Stock up on frozen spinach, broccoli florets, cauliflower, edamame and squash that can be quickly sautéed and added to tomato sauce or stir-fries. Frozen fruits, especially berries, added to smoothies and pancakes or made into compote help keep antioxidants and phytonutrients in your diet all year-round.

Bakery

Look for baked goods with labels that list whole wheat or other grains, such as whole-grain rye, spelt, oats or millet, as the first ingredient. Whenever possible, choose organic grains and make sure the item is free of chemical preservatives, additives, hydrogenated oils and high-fructose corn syrup.

