Grocery Shopping

Be prepared

❖ Plan ahead and always shop with a grocery list. Stick to your list, this will save you time and money and help you buy only for the foods you need (less impulse buys).
❖ Part of being prepared includes not shopping on an empty stomach. If you shop when you are hungry, you may buy foods you don’t need.

Explore grocery stores on island to see where the best place is to buy certain products

❖ Cronigs: specialty foods, wide variety of local produce, bulk isle, *offers a 20% islander discount- sign up for free w/ them!
❖ Stop & Shop: best price on fruits and organic vegetables, open late, *stop & shop card
❖ Vineyard Grocer: A little cheaper than Cronigs, avocados are often on sale, local produce available, *accepts The Island Card on Thursdays for 15% off
❖ Reliable Market: great price on store label spices
❖ Avoid grocery shopping at convenience stores, which are more expensive and have more unhealthy & processed foods.

Fill your cart with healthy choices

❖ Your cart should be colorful. As a helpful tip, make half of the items in your shopping cart vegetables and fruits. In-season vegetables and fruits are often: tastier, fresher, less expensive, and more nutrient dense
❖ Fill your cart or basket with:
  ● Mostly vegetables and fruits
  ● Whole grain, unprocessed foods (quinoa, rice, oats, whole grain or rice pastas that have 1 or two ingredients, etc.)
  ● Protein rich foods (choose protein foods that come from plants more often: canned/dried beans & legumes are usually cheaper than meat products)
  ● Healthy fats (nuts & seeds, avocados, coconut, nut & seed butters, olive oil)
  ● As little from a package as possible
  ● Use grocery shopping as a chance to find new healthy foods!

More tips

❖ ORGANIC: Follow the EWG’s list of clean 15 and dirty dozen when shopping for organic produce (list is attached)
❖ Stick to the outside perimeter of the store: this is where whole foods are stocked
❖ Frozen foods are a great option and can be cheaper when the fresh produce is out of season
❖ Take time to look at food labels. These help you to compare products and choose the healthier option. Focus on the ingredient list – minimal ingredients, whole foods, things you can pronounce and identify. Ex: peanut butter = peanuts
❖ Extend shelf life: freeze bread and fresh fruits & veggies, store nuts and seeds in fridge/freezer

Be aware of
❖ Certain aisles, freezers and the ready-to-eat food sections that are full of processed and prepared foods that have added sodium, sugars and processed oils.
❖ Limit the amount of highly processed foods in your basket. If you buy these foods and have them in your house, you are more likely to eat them.
❖ Notice if marketing is influencing your food choices while grocery shopping.
❖ Refrain from grabbing last-minute items from the checkout aisle. These tend to be expensive and are usually not healthy options.

Think of the environment while shopping
❖ Use reusable shopping bags and skip on the little plastic produce bags
❖ Choose products with less packaging (loose lettuce). A lot of food packages end up in the garbage. Buying food from the bulk section also helps reduce the amount of packaging used. And you can bring your own container!

Get involved in making your local grocery store a healthier food environment
❖ If you want a certain item and can’t find it, ask. Showing your interest can encourage the manager to stock other healthy items.
❖ Give your grocery store feedback. Let them know if you think they use too much packaging. Share ideas to replace checkout aisle snacks with healthy options.
Meal planning

Tip to not feel overwhelmed:

- Make shopping list & grocery shop on Saturday
- Cook on Sunday

Use these 4 steps to help you plan your meals!

1. Decide what to eat - write down your meal and snack ideas!
   - Get recipe ideas from:
     ● web sites (Pinterest, Instagram, google)
     ● cookbooks
     ● magazines
     ● friends and family
   - Check your fridge, freezer and cupboards for foods you have
   - Look to see what foods need to be used up before they go to waste (google ingredients you have with the word “recipe” at the end)
   - Focus on cooking items in bulk to use in different meals (grains, lentils, hummus)

2. Make your grocery list - write down the foods you need for your meal plan
   - Keep a grocery list handy and write down items as you run out of them
   - Organize your grocery list!
     ● by headings that match the sections of the store
   OR
     ● by dishes you plan to make and their ingredients

3. Go Shopping - Buy the foods on your grocery list
   - Use your list to navigate the aisles
   - Stick to your list to:
     ● reduce food waste
     ● save money and time
     ● cut down on impulse buys

4. Start Cooking!

What to cook?

Cook items in bulk for the week to use in different dishes like salads, sides and sautés

- Roast or steam vegetables
- Make a big batch of rice or quinoa - can use for breakfast too!
- Cook a batch of lentils for the week
- Overnight oats in single serving jars for breakfast
Make a couple dips/sauces/dressings for the week

- Hummus – snack and used in wraps or sandwiches
- Pesto – use over pasta, grains, veggies or on sandwiches
- Dressing – for salad & dinner bowls

Put together a few snack foods

- Fresh fruit on the counter
- Veggie sticks stored in a jar of water in the fridge
- Make a batch of energy balls and store in freezer
- Have a jar of homemade trail mix on your counter for a snack
- Freeze grapes for a healthy dessert sweet
- Boil local eggs to have on hand

Soup is always a great idea to use up left over produce!

*FREEZE for later is always an option too! – bread, produce or fruit that may be going bad soon, left over sauces, beans and soups, fresh meat & poultry