

Best Buys: Meat and Alternatives

Healthy eating starts with shopping for a variety of healthy foods from the four food groups in **Canada's Food Guide**. Shopping is an important skill for everyone to learn. By planning ahead, you can save money and time, and get better food value for your dollar.

Meat and alternatives include meat, poultry, fish, seafood, eggs, legumes (peas, beans and lentils), tofu, soy-based imitation meats, nuts, nut butters and seeds. Meat and alternatives are important for keeping your body strong and healthy. They give the body protein, B vitamins (e.g., vitamin B12), iron and

zinc. Some meat alternatives, like legumes, nuts and seeds, also give the body folate and fibre.

Canada's Food Guide recommends:

- Eating meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.
- Eating at least two **Food Guide** Servings of fish per week. Choose fish such as herring, Atlantic mackerel, salmon, sardines, anchovies and rainbow trout.
- Choosing lean meat and alternatives made with little or no added fat or salt.

Meat and Alternatives:

Recommended number of *Food Guide* Servings per Day

Gender	Age	Recommended Number of <i>Food Guide</i> Servings per Day
Girls and Boys	2–8 years	1
Girls and Boys	9–13 years	1–2
Females	14+ years	2
Males	14+ years	3



One Food Guide Serving is:

Cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat	75 g (2½ oz)
Cooked legumes	175 mL (¾ cup)
Tofu	150 g (¾ cup)
Eggs	2 eggs
Peanut or nut butters	30 mL (2 tbsp)
Nuts and seeds (without the shell)	60 mL (¼ cup)

Shopping tips

Meat

- Buy less expensive cuts of meat such as:
 - ✓ Stewing meat
 - ✓ Outside, inside or eye of round
 - ✓ Pork shoulder
 - ✓ Ground meat
 - ✓ Brisket point
 - ✓ Cross rib
 - ✓ Flank steak
- Lower priced meats often contain less fat and are less tender. Bring out the meat's great flavours by tenderizing. To tenderize:
 - ✓ marinate the meat overnight in the refrigerator
 - ✓ pound the meat using a mallet before cooking
 - ✓ use slow cooking methods such as stewing, pot-roasting and braising in water or broth
- Compare the price per kilogram of meat, poultry and fish. Also compare how much meat you are getting and how much is fat and bones.
- Buy family-sized packs of poultry and meats. Separate and freeze in smaller portions.

Meat alternatives

- Eggs, tofu, peanut butter, peas, beans and lentils are lower in price than meat, poultry or fish.
- Dried peas, beans and lentils cost less than canned.

Chicken

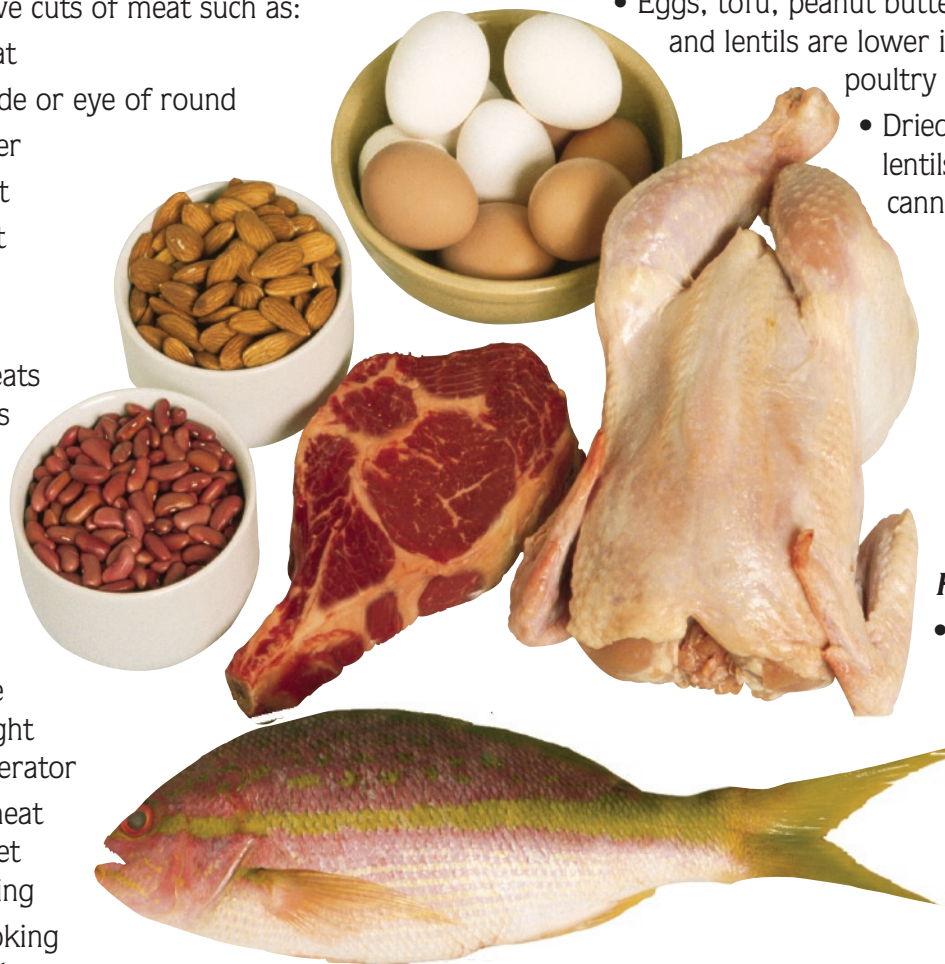
- Buy a whole chicken and cut it up yourself. Buying chicken in pieces or skinless and boneless costs more.

Fish

- Canned fish costs less than fresh fish. Canned salmon, "light" tuna and sardines in water are good choices.
- Frozen fish fillets such as pollock, wild

salmon, tilapia or sole (dover or petrale) are good buys.

- Frozen battered fish fillets, fish sticks or battered fish sandwiches are more expensive and are higher in fat and salt. For a healthier, lower cost option use breadcrumbs to make your own coating and bake in the oven.





Processed meats

- Processed meats, such as hot dogs, may cost less but they often have less protein and iron and more fat, salt and calories than fresh meats.
- It is less expensive to buy cold cuts from the deli counter or a “no name” product.

Value for your food dollar

- Don't buy more than you need. A serving of cooked meat, poultry or fish is 75 grams (2.5 oz) or about the size of a deck of cards. For one serving, buy 120 grams (4 oz) of uncooked meat, poultry or fish.
- Toss leftovers into a salad, use in sandwiches or add to eggs, soups, stews, casseroles, pasta dishes, pizza or stir fries. Use leftover meat within two to three days.

in the kitchen



Herb Baked Chicken

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

1/3 cup	bread crumbs	75 mL
1/4 cup	parmesan cheese, grated (20% M.F. or less)	60 mL
1 tbsp	dried parsley	15 mL
1/4 tsp	black pepper	1 mL
4	chicken legs (with thigh), skin removed	4
1/2 cup	milk, water or juice	125 mL

Makes 4 servings



Nutrition Information

Per serving (1 chicken leg): 230 calories, 8 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 110 mg cholesterol, 300 mg sodium, 6 g carbohydrate, 1 g fibre, 1 g sugars, 30 g protein, 4% DV vitamin A, 0% DV vitamin C, 15% DV calcium, 10% DV iron.

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Mix bread crumbs, cheese, parsley and pepper in a medium bowl.
3. Dip chicken in milk, water or juice and then in bread crumb mixture. Be sure each piece of chicken is coated all over. Throw out remaining milk, water or juice.
4. Bake chicken in the oven on a greased baking sheet for 45 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.

in the kitchen



Meat Sauce with Zucchini

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

½ lb	lean ground beef	225 g
3 cups	zucchini, sliced	750 mL
1 can (19 oz)	diced tomatoes	1 can (540 mL)
1 tsp	dried oregano	5 mL

Makes 4 servings



Directions:

1. Cook ground beef in a large frying pan over medium heat until the beef has browned. Drain off the fat.
2. Add zucchini, tomatoes and oregano to the pan. Heat to boiling. Lower the heat, cover and simmer for 25 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season to taste.
3. Serve sauce over whole wheat pasta, couscous or brown rice.

Nutrition Information

Per serving (291 g): 190 calories, 9 g fat, 3.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 45 mg cholesterol, 115 mg sodium, 8 g carbohydrate, 2 g fibre, 5 g sugars, 19 g protein, 10% DV vitamin A, 60% DV vitamin C, 2% DV calcium, 15% DV iron.

Recipes Adapted from *The Basic Shelf Cookbook*, 1994