

Cooking and Shopping tips for bachelors

Breakfast

Start by frying a couple of slices of bacon.

Leave bacon grease in pan and dice up a potato, onion, salt, pepper and whatever else you have laying around. Cover frying pan and cook on low heat. Stir occasionally.

When potatoes are almost done, break two eggs over the top of the potatoes. Cover and continue cooking.

When eggs are almost done spread a couple of pieces of cheese over the potatoes Cover and continue cooking.

When cheese melts, remove from stove.

NOTE: Best when eaten directly from the frying pan. Less dishes to wash too.

Hamburger stuff

Dig out a sauce pan and add two potatoes cut up in chunks covered with water and cook till tender. Drain water from potatoes when done.

Fry up a pound of hamburger and half an onion in the frying pan.

Dump hamburger into sauce pan with potatoes , two cans condensed cream of something or other soup and one can of water, salt pepper and some seasoning. Cook till sauce is hot.

Mans Meal

Brown a pound of hamburger with some onion and drain.

While the hamburger is cooking cook up some pasta. I use about 2 cups of macaroni.

Combine the two and add a can of MANWICH.

Continue cooking till the Manwich is hot.

Pork and Beans the way you really want them

Go to the grocery store and pick up a pound of bacon ends. That is the trimmings from when they cut up bacon. Its about a \$1.50 a pound. If you can't find them get a pound of bacon.

Dig out the crock pot and dump in a bag of pinto beans.

Cut up the bacon ends if there are any big pieces and dump them in.

Chop up about half or of an onion and dump that in along with some water. Beans take a lot of water so watch that they don't run out of water.

When the beans are starting to get close to being done, add a can of peeled tomatoes and two small or one large can of tomato paste and let it continue to cook.

If it is a little watery when it is about done, take the top off the crock pot for a while and it will thicken up. Add some brown sugar if you like it that way or some bar-b-q sauce if you like the bar-b-q flavor and continue cooking till it's done.

Chili

Same as above, but substitute hamburger for the bacon and leave out the brown sugar. Add some garlic and if you like it hot, some Jalapeo peppers and of course chili powder. If you like it “pray for ice cream” hot, add a couple of Habanero peppers. If you haven't eaten Habanero peppers before, just add one or two, they are small but mighty potent. **My friend Ernie likes it with about 8.**

NOTE: The longer you cook peppers, the hotter they get. Especially true with the Habaneros. **My friend Ernie likes me to put the Habaneros in first so they get nice and hot.**

When buying jalapeos, look for the ones that have what looks like little brown cracks in them, those are the hottest. As for the Habanero peppers, they are green first then turn orange. Get the ones that are just turning orange.

When you are cutting up the peppers wash your hands with soap and water afterwards, twice for Habaneros and don't touch your eyes. Habaneros can blind you.

Kitchen tips.

Tired of washing dishes? Just set them on the floor next to the dogs dish. Come back in a half hour and they somehow they come out spotless and sparkling Never could figure how that works. Works on pots and pans too, but the glasses never seem to get clean on the bottoms. you got to do that yourself.

Dishes piling up in the sink? No problem. just throw out all but one each of the knives, forks, spoons and plates. NOTE: For better tasting coffee and less dish washing, I hear it's best not to wash the coffee cups. When you end up getting only a half cup of coffee in the cup, just scrape out the excess.

SHOPPING TIPS

If you are a cheap old geezer like me, you're always looking for a chance to squeeze a nickel till it craps a dime. Just because I am a man and a bachelor, it doesn't mean I don't know my way around a grocery store. Besides having worked in one several times, I have learned a lot from being a cheapskate.

For you men out there, it is also a good place to meet women too.

How to buy ALL your groceries on sale ALL THE TIME.

Start out buying an extra 10, 20 or 30 dollars worth of items that are on sale each time you go the grocery store.

Box them up and stick them in a closet, under the bed or on top of your kids if they won't stay still.

Stock up your pantry too.

Now then, once you have a month (or 6 months) worth of extra groceries, each time you go to the grocery store, only buy stuff on sale. If it's not on sale, don't buy it. Restock your pantry from the stuff you have stashed away and add that

to the next shopping list. When it is on sale again, buy it at sale price and a little extra till you have a nice supply. From here on out, only buy stuff on sale and don't worry about food if you end up unemployed for a couple of weeks or months.

Remember to restock the pantry from what you have stored away. Like the stores, you want to keep your stock fresh and rotated. Some people even write the date it was bought on the container to help them keep track.

Expiration Dates

There are three types of expiration dates.

1- BEST IF EATEN BY. That means it should be eaten by the date on the can for maximum taste and freshness. What it doesn't mean is that it will instantly rot the next day. Canned stuff will usually keep for years although color or taste might be affected

2- SELL BY. That means the store has to sell it by that date. It is good for longer than that date. For canned goods, sometimes years.

3- UNDECIPHERABLE DATE CODES. Some date codes make no sense at all. As a stocker or store manager to explain them to you and how to read them. I will try to get some information on that and add it here.

OUT OF DATE MERCHANDISE

While you are shopping, keep a look out for out of dates, especially if the shelf is getting low. Sometimes stockers are lazy and don't rotate the stock as they should. Take the out of dates to the store manager and turn them over to him. He will be embarrassed about you finding out of dates on the shelf and will find the stocker that did it and make sure it doesn't happen again. If you are a regular customer and you play your cards right, you might even get a discount coupon on your next purchase. Don't yell and scream, just make it known you are disappointedly in the way the store is run to let that happen.

Here is a funny story about Out of dates, When I was working as a security guard at a grocery store a manager told me he used to go to a competitor's store on his day off. The store's policy was that if you found an out of date, you received half the price in cash. Being a grocery store manager, he was used to knowing where to look so he would usually find at least a half cart full of out of dates and sometimes a full cart. He would turn in the out of dates and go home without buying anything. Sometimes he made a couple hundred dollars. Eventually the store figured it out and stopped the policy.

Shelf Tags

Read the tag on the shelf. Most stores will have the price per ounce or price per each listed, See what that can or bottle actually costs. In the store I shop at I can save about 75 cents by buying two small jars of Mayonnaise rather than one large jar. I end up with the same amount and the jar is fresher because it hasn't been open as long. If that is the case opt out for the two smaller jars for freshness. Just remember, the larger container is not always cheaper.

Store Brands

Store brands are usually 30 to 50% cheaper than the well known brands. Even the cheap stuff. A lot of people won't buy store brands because they only like certain brands. Stores buy their store brands from well known companies. The little companies can't afford to produce the stuff at cut rate prices. If you compare labels and shapes of containers you will find they are similar to certain well known brands. Sometimes there is even the name of the company that made the product.

If you are fussy and can't determine the manufacturer, buy a can or a bottle and try it. You might be surprised to know it is as good or better than what you normally buy.

Coupons

Coupons are great **IF** it is something you normally buy. If not compare the price to what you normally buy, if it isn't cheaper don't buy it.

Keep track of the expiration dates of coupons and use them before they expire

Make sure that you have the entire coupon including the directions for the store. Most stores won't take them unless the entire coupon is presented.

Also compare the price with the coupon to the price of the sale price on the product. If the store sale price is cheaper, save the coupon for when the product is not on sale.

Other Stores

Occasionally make a trip to a competitor's grocery store, even if they are known for their high prices. You will often find that certain items are actually cheaper than your regular store and you might find that it is worth your time to buy certain items at the new store, especially since you are now stocking up ahead in quantity.

Bulk Stores

Some stores sell products by the case. Not everything is cheaper that way. Sometimes it is even more expensive that way. Bring your calculator.

Christmas Shopping

As you know, the best prices are the day after Christmas. This year when you go to return stuff, take a little extra money with you (as if you have it). Pick up a few things for next year and stick them away in the closet. Don't buy things like the latest tennis shoes and fad items, by next year it will be out of date. Get things like games, toys, wallets, handkerchiefs and nick-nacks. After a while you'll get the idea and the next year you won't have as much shopping to do and the prices will be last year's prices. You can avoid the Christmas rush and sit back and enjoy the Christmas season like you should. Each year stock up a little more until you don't do any Christmas shopping till the day after Christmas when things are on sale.

Shopping For Kids

Don't you just LOVE shopping for kids with the \$110 dollar tennis shoes and baggy pants. It has to be just the rite brand and model. How often have you shopped for your kid and left the store with a couple of hundred dollars worth of RECEIPTS and one bag and you still haven't gotten them the shirts socks and underwear they need. Aren't Ipods great. Don't you just love Christmas Shopping?

Ask most kids if they could only have one Christmas present, what would it be. invariably it will be MONEY.

First of all a couple pairs of underwear is not a Christmas present. Don't get any of that crap. Did you like getting underwear for Christmas? Well, don't do it to your kids. Just buy it and stick it in the dresser. Save the wrapping paper.

Go shop for what they want and figure the price but don't buy it. take that amount of \$20 bills and gift wrap that, They get what they really want and the fun of spending it on exactly what they want. Two presents that way.

If you are really cheap like me, Knock off 25% and give them that much. They will have just as much fun spending the money and they won't miss the couple of things they do want because they got most of what they wanted and the fun of spending all that money. If you shop the day after Christmas, they might even get everything they want and have some cash left over to squander on some useless junk, as if an Ipod is not useless.