

HO 8.1 Compiling Your Grocery List

Taking a little time to plan ahead is guaranteed to save you significant amounts of time and money. But, unless it's a simple task, it can be hard to keep up with, so we've created a simple six-step strategy for compiling the list. Give it a try!

Step 1: Map your meals.

Start by mapping your meals for the week. Use a calendar or just list the days in a notebook or your smart phone. Think about when you'll have time to cook from scratch and when you'll need to use convenience-food products. Think about balance, variety, and the HEED plate. Are you including foods from all groups?

Step 2: Take inventory of your freezer, refrigerator, and pantry or cabinets.

Look to see what foods and spices you have already. Also, look to see what foods might expire soon so that you can plan to use these foods up. Record what you find and make any changes to your meal plans.

Step 3: Make a master list.

Use your menu planner and inventory records to create a list of foods and ingredients that you'll need for the week's meals. This would also be a good time to look at the weekly ads from your grocery store and the coupons that you have.

Step 4: Create categories.

Create categories of foods based on the HEED plate and put them in the order that you'll find them as you walk through the store. This will help ensure that your meals include a mix of healthy foods. You can print out blank copies of this category list so that you'll have a clean one each week.

Sample Categories:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Bread
- Cereal
- Rice and pasta
- Staples, condiments, and miscellaneous foods (spices, baking powder, cooking spray)
- Beverages
- Meat, poultry, fish
- Dry beans, nuts
- Eggs
- Milk, yogurt, cheese
- Fats, oils, sweets
- Convenience foods
- Health and beauty products (if you buy these at the supermarket)
- Household items (if you buy these at the supermarket)

HO 8.1 Compiling Your Grocery List

Step 5: Arrange your foods into categories.

Put the foods from your master list into the categories that you created. If you want to wait until you're at the supermarket before deciding what specific foods to buy within a category, write how many items you need from that group (such as lean meat for 5 meals or whole-grain, high-fiber cereal). Keep this list in a place where your family can see it so they can add to it, too.

Step 6: Set aside a day and time for your weekly trip to the supermarket.

Try to establish a particular day and time that you can do your weekly shopping. This will ensure that you allow yourself the time needed to do focused shopping.