

Chapter 3

Food Preparation and Purchasing



In this unit you will learn ways to reduce fat in food preparation, the use of herbs and spices and garnishes. The purchasing section explains comparison shopping, nutrition labels, and the accounting system for food and supplies.

Preparing meals requires careful planning if all dishes are to be served on time, at the correct temperature. The first step is to read through recipes that will be used to prepare dishes on the menu. Note the preparation time needed for each dish, and develop a schedule. An experienced cook may plan timing mentally, but a few quick notes can be a help. Assemble all ingredients and utensils needed before starting each dish. Efficient use of time requires overlapping as many preparation steps as possible.

Ways to Reduce Fat in Food Preparation

Look at the smallest section of the Food Guide Pyramid, the fats, oils and sweets. Notice that these ingredients should be used sparingly throughout the preparation of grains and breads, vegetables, meats, and dairy products. Here are some ways to use smaller amounts of fats and oils, replace saturated fat with more healthful oils, and reduce cholesterol:

In Breads

- ☐ Put oil in a spray bottle and spray a little on bread before toasting.
- ☐ Collect recipes that are low fat and include fruit for moistness and whole grains for nutrition.
- ☐ Replace shortening with vegetable oil and reduce

the amount used in recipes by one-fourth.

- ☐ Substitute two egg whites for one egg for half the eggs in recipe.
- ☐ Use non-sticking spray in baking pans; be stingy—one spurt is enough to prevent sticking.
- ☐ Serve cake with pudding or fruit topping instead of frosting.
- ☐ Use a light glaze instead of frosting on cinnamon rolls, cookies, and cakes.
- ☐ Offer lean ham on a bun instead of sausage and biscuit for breakfast.
- ☐ Substitute cinnamon toast for cheese toast.
- ☐ Shop for newer mixes and baked products that are low in fat.

- ❑ Brush breads with milk instead of butter before baking to improve browning.

In Vegetables

- ❖ Cut in half the amount of fat added to season cooked vegetables. (All fat used must be included in the nutrient analysis.)
- ❖ Thicken vegetable soups with mashed potato instead of cream sauce.
- ❖ Offer salsa with greens and salads and cut back on fat.
- ❖ Use lean ham instead of pork fat to season vegetables.
- ❖ Cook greens with ham stock instead of pork fat.
- ❖ Use half as much mayonnaise as previously, or use reduced-fat mayonnaise.
- ❖ Mix plain nonfat yogurt with mayonnaise for meat salads and potato salad.

- ❖ Use mustard and ketchup instead of mayonnaise as spreads for sandwiches.
- ❖ Try the newest versions of low-fat and fat-free salad dressings and mayonnaise.
- ❖ Make tartar sauce with a combination of yogurt and reduced-fat mayonnaise.
- ❖ Mix dry-base salad dressing with a combination of nonfat yogurt, reduced or fat-free mayonnaise, or non-fat sour cream. Good on baked potato as well as salad.

In Meats, Poultry & Fish

- Roast, broil, or grill tender meats, poultry and fish.
- Skin poultry before cooking.
- Trim all visible fat from meat before cooking.
- Substitute part ground turkey in ground beef recipes.

- Serve lean ham for breakfast instead of bacon or sausage.
- Pre-cook sausage and ground beef, and drain off all fat before using in any recipe.
- Use water-pack tuna instead of fish packed in oil.
- Serve only reduced-fat hot dogs and lunch meats.
- Make pizza with lean ham and part-skim mozzarella cheese.
- Make gravy with reduced stock, no added fat.
- Reduce ground beef in some recipes and add more beans. Substitute ground turkey.
- Oven-bake chicken with a crisp coating, in barbecue sauce, or with stuffing.
- Bake fish in crisp coating or low-fat sauces that are family-approved.
- Skip the heavy breading and batter

when food is fried. Coating soaks up more fat than the meat does.

and orange juice concentrate.

In Dairy and Egg Dishes

- Substitute two egg whites, which are fat- and cholesterol-free, for one whole egg.
- Use part-skim mozzarella, which has half the fat of cheddar cheese.
- Use sharp cheeses, which have more flavor, and reduce amount used in recipes.
- Boost cheese flavor with enhancers, such as dry mustard and lemon.
- Make pudding with skim milk and leave out the butter. Use inexpensive and shelf-stable dry skim milk for all cooking and baking.
- Use inexpensive and shelf-stable dry skim milk for all cooking and baking.
- For fruit dip and toppings, blend cottage cheese until smooth and mix with honey

Herbs and Spices

Fat gives food flavor. That is why people like fatty foods. When fat is reduced in food, the natural flavor of good food can be enhanced with inspired use of herbs and spices.

Children like foods that are seasoned in the traditions of their own ethnic heritage. Serve those seasonings on the side to groups of different heritage so all children can season food to their own tastes.

Truly creative cooks use herbs and spices to enhance their dishes and give every food a certain individual flair. Cooking with herbs and spices requires only a little experimentation.

Preparing a couple of basic blends is one way to get started. The first one is a dessert spice blend for sweets:

Sweet Spice Blend

½ cup ground cinnamon
¼ cup ground ginger
½ cup ground nutmeg
2 Tbsp ground allspice
2 Tbsp ground cardamom
1 Tbsp ground cloves

Mix ingredients together and store in tightly closed jar. Use in cakes, cookies, fruit breads, muffins, pancakes, fruit desserts, or sprinkle on toast.

The next one is an all-purpose herb seasoning for meat and vegetable dishes:

Herb Seasoning Blend

½ cup dry mustard
3 Tbsp onion powder
½ cup paprika
3 Tbsp garlic powder
3 Tbsp ground thyme
3 Tbsp white pepper
1 Tbsp dried, ground basil

Mix well and store in covered jar. Use to season soups and stews, mixed vegetables, ground beef dishes, chicken, pork, and fish.

Basic blends only provide a beginning. On the next two pages are two charts showing some of the many herbs and spices available, with suggestions for their use.

Herbs and Spices and Their Uses

| Herbs | Description | Uses |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Basil | Mild leaf, used fresh or dried | With tomato in meat and egg dishes, in salad, soup, pasta |
| Bay leaf | Pungent dried leaf of laurel tree | In soups, chowders, stew, fish, tomatoes, dry beans, meat |
| Caper | Pickled flower buds, strong | In fish sauces and salad dressing |
| Cayenne | Hot red pepper, dried and | In meats, stews, sauces, and salad dressing |
| Celery seed | Seed from parsley-family plant | Widely used in meats, stews, sauces and salad dressing |
| Chili powder | Ground pepper pods in blend | In chili con carne and Mexican dishes |
| Cilantro | Leaves of mild parsley-like | Widely used in meats, stews, and salad dressing |
| Coriander | Dried fruit of cilantro plant | In poultry and stuffing, with pork, in green salad |
| Cumin | Dried ground fruit, parsley- | Ingredient in curry and chili powders, in soups, cheese spread, |
| Curry | Mixture of herbs and spices | In stews, rice, salad dressing and dips, cheese sauce, fruit |
| Dill weed/seed | Leaf is mild, seed sharp | In pickles, sauces, salad, soup, stews, vegetables |
| Garlic | Pungent tuber | In red meats, salad dressing, spaghetti and lasagna, garlic butter |
| Jalapeno | Hot green peppers | In meats, vegetables, breads, cheese, dips and dressings |
| Lemon | Essence (rind) and juice | In fish, chicken, vegetables and salads |
| Mint | Mild leaf, used dried or fresh | In beverages, with lamb, in sauces |
| Mustard | Pungent, dried ground seeds | In meat, sauces, salad dressing |
| Oregano | Dried leaves of mint-family | In Italian cuisine, tomato sauces, pork and egg dishes |
| Paprika | Mild, sweet red pepper | Shellfish, salad dressing, potato dishes, canape spreads, as |
| Pepper, black | Dried, ground berry | In meats, fish, poultry, vegetables, salads |
| Pepper, white | Berry with outer coating | Same as black pepper, but milder in flavor |
| Saffron | Dried crocus-like flower | Used mainly for yellow color, very expensive |
| Sage | Pungent leaves of mint-like | In poultry stuffing and sausage |
| Savory | Fresh or dried, leaves and flower | In soups, stews, salads, sauces |
| Tarragon | Aromatic herb leaves | In vinegar and salads, fish sauces |
| Thyme | Dried or fresh leaves | Stew, salad dressing, cheese dishes, tuna, chicken, tomato, and |
| Tumeric | Slightly bitter, aromatic root | Used in curry powder, meat and egg dishes |
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Keep this page handy for reference and add ethnic herbs that are popular with your population.

Herbs and Spices and Their Uses

| Spices | Description | Uses |
|-------------|--|--|
| Allspice | Flavor like spice mix, small dried berry | In pickling, in cakes, cookies, pies |
| Anise | Licorice flavor, small dried fruit | In cakes, breads, cookies, candy |
| Caraway | Dried fruit of parsley-family plant | In breads (especially rye), rolls, cookies |
| Cardamom | Mild, dried fruit, whole or ground | In breads, cookies and cakes, preserves |
| Cinnamon | Inner bark from cinnamon tree | Whole sticks in fruit, ground in cakes, cookies, pies, pudding |
| Cloves | Aromatic dried flower buds | Whole in pickling, pork, ground in cookies, cakes, pudding |
| Ginger | Strong-flavored root from iris-like plant | Root in Oriental cuisine and fruit, ground in baked products |
| Mace | Outer coat of nutmeg kernel, mild flavor | Same as nutmeg, but more subtle |
| Nutmeg | Pit of nutmeg fruit, aromatic, slightly bitter | Whole or grated in doughnuts, eggnog, pudding, cakes |
| Poppy seed | Dry seeds of the poppy plant | Whole on rolls or filling for buns |
| Sesame seed | Small, flat, oily seeds | On rolls and breads, in cookies and salads |
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Keep this page handy for reference and add ethnic spices that are popular with your population.

Many herbs are common plants seen in gardens and fresh produce supermarkets. The illustrations that follow will help with identification:



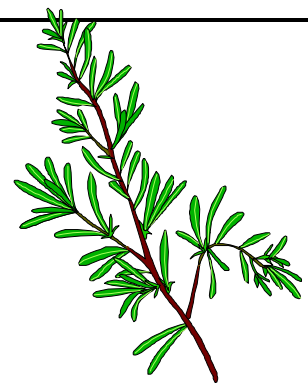
BAYLEAF

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ROSEMARY

growing in the section of the produce department. The illustrations will help with



Garnishes

Garnishes are the finishing touches to a meal. Garnishes to food what accessories are to an outfit. The garnish can be as simple as a dash of paprika on each serving of cauliflower or as elaborate as a tomato rose on a bed of endive on each plate.

A garnish should—

- ☞ complement the flavor of the food it decorates
- ☞ be simple and easy to prepare
- ☞ be edible

The garnish need not be something added. It can be the way the food is served. Piping mashed potatoes around beef tips will make both meat and mashed potatoes look more appetizing. The choices are limited only by imagination, so choose from whatever is at hand, based on time and budget. Following are some ideas:

- ☞ Carrot strips, curls, or pennies
- ☞ Celery curls or tops
- ☞ Sliced cucumber, peeled or unpeeled and scored with fork tines
- ☞ Lemon wedge or slices,

- fanned or twisted
- ☞ Orange wedge or slices
- ☞ Green or red pepper rings, strips, or chopped pieces
- ☞ Pineapple cubes, slices, or chunks
- ☞ Red cabbage shreds
- ☞ Beet slices
- ☞ Paprika
- ☞ Cinnamon sprinkles
- ☞ Parsley sprig or mint or lemon balm or any other herb
- ☞ Peach slice, chunk, or half
- ☞ Apple, with or without peel, slice, chunk, or ring
- ☞ Coconut and nuts, chopped or whole
- ☞ Bread crumbs, croutons
- ☞ Raisins, grapes
- ☞ Pickle strips, cubes, slices
- ☞ Cherry tomato, tomato wedges or slices
- ☞ Pimento
- ☞ Cherries or berries
- ☞ Whipped topping
- ☞ Hard-cooked egg, grated, sliced, or wedged

More Elaborate

The following garnishes take a little advance preparation but are well worth it:

Cucumber frog - Cut a two inch wedge out of one end of the cucumber. On top of the cucumber above the wedge scrape the green off in two circles to make the eyes. Submerge the frog in cut up fruit or vegetables.

Onion fans - Use long green onions. Cut off root end. Remove most of green top. Make long slashes at both ends for a fringe effect. Put in ice water for about two hours to curl.

Radish accordions - Trim ends of long narrow radishes. Cut 8 or 10 narrow crosswise cuts 1/8" wide in each radish, cutting partly through the radish. Put in ice water for at least two hours so slices fan out.

Carrot curls and zigzags - Make thin, lengthwise slices with vegetable peeler. For curls roll up and secure with wooden toothpick. For zigzags, thread on toothpick accordion style. Crisp at least two hours in ice water.

Chocolate curls - Use a bar of sweet chocolate at room temperature. Shave into curls using a vegetable peeler.

Purchasing

Shopping for groceries is a task most homemakers relish. They enjoy the challenge of selecting the best quality foods at the best price with the highest nutritional value for meals.

RCCI personnel also keep records that show they selected the best foods at the best price and that they complied with federal procurement guidelines. These records are useful in more ways than documentation. Records show where to make adjustments if the food budget should be exceeded.

To develop the market order, the ingredients needed for the menus planned should be listed, using the production record. Then make an informal inventory to check the stock on hand. Then make a shopping list of additional foods that will be needed.

Probably the best way

to conform to the guideline that food items be bought at the "lowest possible cost" is to make a supermarket price comparison three or four times a year. The federal procurement guidelines (7 CFR 210.21) require that prices be compared in "an open and freely competitive market." Grocery advertisements are not necessarily a reliable indication because advertised leader items can be misleading. Those bargains do not reflect everyday prices, which make up the bulk of RCCI buying.

On the next page is a tool for comparison shopping with an example showing how to use the form. The example lists a sample market basket of common foods. Price comparisons from three different stores show overall pricing trends.

Make a copy of the blank form and list some of the standard items purchased every week. Then visit the stores and compare prices. Make a similar comparison three or four times

a year, and keep results on file to document implementation of the procurement guidelines.

Another guideline deals with conflicts of interest; for example, buying from the supermarket that a relative happens to manage. Any facility that gets taxpayer dollars is subject to the closest possible scrutiny, and it is best to avoid even the possible appearance of favoritism or conflict of interest.

Every RCCI participating in the National School Lunch/ Breakfast Program also must conduct a formal, annual inventory of purchased food and expendable supplies. The dollar value of the inventory is reported as an asset on your nonprofit institution's annual financial statement. When the first in/first out (FIFO) method is used, it is easy to check back to the last receipts for purchase prices.

After deciding which store to buy from, compare the price of the different brands and sizes of the product. Some supermarkets publish this information on the shelf tag, giving the “per unit” price. If that information is shown, it is possible to make comparisons.

Divide the price by the number of servings in the package shown on the Nutrition Facts Label. Except in the case of specials, the largest package usually has the lowest per serving cost. Store brands generally are less expensive than name brands but may be equal in quality. Generic items are the least expensive, though the quality may not be the same.

Food Pricing Comparison Form

| Food as Purchased | Purchase Unit | Supplier | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | Store A | Store B | Store C |
| Apples, Red Delicious | 3 lb. bag | \$2.99 | \$1.79 | \$3.29 |
| Broccoli, Fresh | Bunch | \$0.79 | \$1.29 | \$0.99 |
| Lettuce, Head | Head | \$0.79 | \$0.88 | \$0.99 |
| Bananas | 1 lb. | \$0.59 | \$0.59 | \$0.33 |
| | | | | |
| Green Beans, Delmonte | #2 ½ can | \$0.89 | \$0.79 | \$0.79 |
| Fruit Cocktail, Store Brand | #2 ½ can | \$0.89 | \$0.99 | \$0.89 |
| Tomato Paste | 6-oz can | \$0.39 | \$0.35 | \$0.33 |
| | | | | |
| Beef, Ground | 1 lb. | \$1.26 | \$1.29 | \$1.39 |
| Chicken Breasts | 3 lb. | \$0.99 | \$1.29 | \$1.33 |
| Wieners, Oscar Meyer, Beef Chicken or Trukey | 16-oz pkg | \$1.99 | \$2.09 | \$2.05 |
| Eggs | 1 dozen large | \$0.79 | \$0.99 | \$0.69 |
| Milk | 1 gallon | \$2.49 | \$2.39 | \$1.89 |
| | | | | |
| Bread, Colonial, Whole- | 18-oz loaf | \$1.79 | \$1.59 | \$1.79 |
| Cereal, Kellogg's, Cornflakes | 27-oz box | \$1.89 | \$2.39 | \$2.29 |
| Mayonnaise, Kraft, Low-fat | 1 quart | \$1.89 | \$1.79 | \$1.77 |
| | | | | |
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| TOTALS | | \$20.42 | \$20.50 | \$20.81 |

Date 5/25/97 Shopper Signature _____

Food Pricing Comparison Form

| Food as Purchased | Purchase Unit | Supplier | | |
|-------------------|---------------|----------|--|--|
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| TOTALS | | | | |

Date _____ Shopper Signature _____

Nutrition Labels

The best buy depends not only on price but also on the nutrition content of foods. A nutrition label, reproduced on the next page, must be on all processed foods. The Nutrition Facts Label shows amounts of nutrients that are in that particular food and provides other information that is significant.

The nutrient content given is per serving. Serving sizes are the amounts most people eat, and the serving size is standardized for all foods of the same type. This makes it easy to compare nutritional qualities among foods of the same type.

The Daily Values on the label are based on an intake of 2000 calories per day. Small children will eat less than the serving size shown and fewer than 2000 calories, while teenage boys will eat more. However, the real purpose of the Nutrition Facts Label is so that foods can be compared and each food

examined for the qualities that matter to the health of children—fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, sugar and fiber. The calorie values are helpful when selecting low-fat and low-calorie items for children who want to control weight.

Nutrition labels are not required on fresh produce, though some stores do post Nutrition Facts at the counters where these fresh foods are sold. Fresh vegetables and fruits are natural—not processed, and are loaded with vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They contain little or no fat and salt. Fruit has a little natural sugar.

Cured and processed meat must have a nutrition label, but fresh meats do not. Some stores do label their fresh packaged meat, and some post helpful Nutrition Facts near the meat counter. Meats are excellent sources of protein, minerals, and some vitamins, but fat content varies widely. The best

policy when buying fresh meat is to select those kinds and cuts that are lean.

When looking for whole grain products, the product name may be misleading. Breads and crackers can be made primarily with refined flour and yet have “wheat,” “whole-grain,” or “fiber” in the name. By looking at the ingredient list, you can tell what the main (first) ingredient is--and often it will show enriched wheat flour--that is the refined type. Instead, use the ingredient list and look for products that list whole wheat flour as the first ingredient.

Also just because foods have the word “fruit” or “meat” or “cheese” or “vegetable” in the name does not make it so. Fruit candy, meat pies, and vegetable casseroles often contain only tiny amounts of the ingredient in their name. It pays to read the list of ingredients and pay attention to the order in which they are listed.

Nutrition Label

Nutrition labels provide up-to-date, easy to use nutrition information and are designed to help plan a healthy diet that meets the Dietary Guidelines.

Consistent serving sizes, in both household and metric measures, replace those that used to be set by manufacturers.

Nutrients required on nutrition panel are those most important to the health of today's consumers, most of whom need to worry about getting too much of certain items (fat, for example), rather than too few vitamins or minerals, as in the past.

| Nutrition Facts | |
|---|----------------------|
| Serving Size ½ cup (114 g) | |
| Servings Per Container 4 | |
| Amount Per Serving | |
| Calories 90 | Calories from Fat 30 |
| % Daily Value* | |
| Total Fat 3g | 5% |
| Saturated Fat 0g | 0% |
| Cholesterol 0mg | 0% |
| Sodium 300mg | 13% |
| Total Carbohydrate 13g | 4% |
| Dietary Fiber 3g | 12% |
| Sugars 3g | |
| Protein 3g | |
| Vitamin A 80% | Vitamin C 60% |
| Calcium 4% | Iron 4% |
| * % Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs: | |
| Calories | 2,000 2,500 |

Calories from fat are now shown on the label to help consumers meet Dietary Guidelines that recommend people get no more than 30 percent of their total calories from fat.

% Daily Values show how a food fits into the overall daily diet.

Some Daily Values are maximums, as with fat (65 grams or less); others are minimums, as with carbohydrate (300 grams or more). The Daily Values for a 2,000 and 2,500 calorie diet must be listed on the label of larger packages. Individuals should adjust the values to fit their own calorie intake.

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| Total Fat | Less than | 65g | 80g |
| Sat Fat | Less than | 20g | 25g |
| Cholesterol | Less than | 300mg | 300mg |
| Sodium | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Total Carbohydrate | | 300g | 375g |
| Fiber | | 25g | 30g |
| Calories per gram: | | | |
| Fat | 9 ❖ | Carbohydrate | 4 ❖ Protein 4 |

Grocery Receipts

An RCCI is a small business, and like any business, it must keep accounts. The accounting system needs an easy way to record grocery purchases and keep those grocery items separate from supplies, such as cleaning and paper products that also are bought in the supermarket.

Most supermarkets show every item on the cash register receipt. Separate the food items from non-food items. Ask the checkout clerk to scan all the food and subtotal those items, then scan all the supplies and figure the total, as shown.

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| THANKS FOR SHOPPING | |
| STORE X | |
| Store #0000 | |
| THU 10/12/9x | |
| RNC SPAG | .45 |
| WIENER | 1.69 |
| PORK LN CHOP | 4.01 |
| LETTUCE | .88 |
| BANANAS | |
| 1.6LB @ \$1.00/3LB | .53 |
| EGGPLT | |
| 1.11LB @ \$.99/LB | 1.10 |
| SUBTOTAL | \$8.66 |

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| BORATEM BLCH | 1.89 |
| BRAWNY TOWEL | .89 |
| SLSTAX | .69 |
| TOTAL | \$12.13 |

Occasionally the receipt does not show the necessary detail for every item purchased. Reduced-price meat is one example. Products from the in-store bakery or deli often appear

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| THANKS FOR SHOPPING | |
| STORE X | |
| Store #0000 | |
| THU 10/12/9x | |
| LETTUCE | .88 |
| BANANAS | |
| 1.6LB @ \$1.00/3LB | .53 |
| MEAT | 1.96 |
| DELI | 1.10 |
| BAKERY | 2.39 |

simply as “BREAD” or “DELI.” In such cases, attach the receipt to a piece of paper and add the detail: “reduced-price round steak,” “whole-grain bagels,” or “1 lb coleslaw,” as the case may be.

2 ½ lb. chicken legs
 1 lb. coleslaw
 2 loaves French bread

| |
|-----------------|
| MOM & POP'S |
| <u>10/16/97</u> |
| 2.99+ |
| 3.59+ |
| 1.89+ |
| 1.79+ |
| 0.53+ |
| 2.59+ |
| 2.79+ |
| 0.95+ |
| 0.69+ |
| 0.89= |
| 18.70 o |
| 1.12+ |
| 19.82* |

| Grocery/Supply Receipt List | | | |
|--|--------|---------------------|--------|
| Name of store <u>Mom and Pop's Country Shop</u> Check number <u>1431</u> | | | |
| Date of purchase <u>10/16/97</u> Amount <u>\$19.82</u> | | | |
| Checked by <u>Granny Memaw</u> | | Store stamp | |
| Grocery Items | Price | Supply Items | Price |
| <i>Chicken thighs</i> | \$2.99 | <i>Bleach</i> | \$0.95 |
| <i>Ground beef</i> | \$3.59 | <i>SOS pads</i> | \$0.69 |
| <i>Wieners</i> | \$1.89 | <i>Paper towels</i> | \$0.89 |
| <i>Bread</i> | \$1.79 | | |
| <i>Bananas</i> | \$0.53 | | |
| <i>Milk</i> | \$2.59 | | |
| <i>Bran flakes</i> | \$2.79 | | |
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| <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>\$ 16.17</i> | <i>Subtotal</i> | <i>\$2.53</i> |
| <i>Tax</i> | <i>\$ 0.97</i> | <i>Tax</i> | <i>\$0.15</i> |
| <i>Total</i> | <i>\$17.14</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>\$2.68</i> |

| Grocery Supply Receipt List | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| Name of Store _____ | | Check Number _____ | |
| Date of Purchase _____ | | Amount \$ _____ | |
| Checked by _____ | | Store Stamp _____ | |
| Grocery Items | Price | Supply Items | Price |
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| Tax | | Tax | |
| Total | | Total | |