



Create a Meal Plan WITH A BUDGET FOR ONE WEEK

EXPLORATORY QUESTION: How do you create a yummy meal plan with food you enjoy on a budget? What do food items cost? How can I make shopping organized and easier?

PROJECT GOAL: To develop a meal plan for breakfasts, lunches and dinners for one week on a hypothetical budget. Add in the Ranch Mac N Cheese for one of your lunches or dinners. Recipe research, planning ahead, understanding grocery costs, creating shopping lists, and figuring out quantities of ingredients are all valuable skills for the real world.

STEP 1 Come up with a hypothetical grocery budget for one week.

EXAMPLE: I want to spend no more than \$150 on groceries this week.

STEP 2 Make a list of meals you enjoy and research new recipes as well. Draw up a weekly meal plan for breakfasts, lunches and dinners. You can draw it out or do it on your computer, but you must map it out so you have a visual.

 **TIP:** Keep in mind you can use leftovers or meal prep food that can be used for multiple meals – for example the baked chicken you make the first night can be used in a sandwich the next day, and turned into a soup the following day. One container of oatmeal will get you through a lot of breakfasts – be sure to think of foods like this that can be used a couple of different ways.

STEP 3 Pull from all of your planned meals and recipes and come up with your master grocery shopping list. Maybe the store doesn't have everything you need. Plan to be flexible!

 **TIP:** Organize by type of food – dairy goods, meat, produce.

STEP 4 Research online and write out costs next to each food item. You can do this on your spreadsheet or just on paper if you'd rather. This doesn't have to be exact. Look at some of your parents receipts to get an idea and sit and chat with them, they can help you estimate. See if you're within your budget. If you're over budget when you go through your whole list, rework your meal plan. Again, think of how you can use items throughout the week for multiple meals and still be excited about the meals you have planned. You are on your own and can make whatever you want in this exercise!

STEP 5 Look at your spreadsheet for your daily meals and your grocery cost sheet and find what you're spending on average daily. You could even go a step further and figure out about how much you're averaging for breakfasts, lunches and dinners separately.

STEP 6 Share your meal plan and budget with your parents. Talk about things you're most excited to cook. Put your cooking skills to the test and make the Ranch Mac 'N Cheese recipe tonight for your whole family.



SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- ✓ Calculator
(This can be the one on your phone)
- ✓ Spreadsheet
(Excel, Pages, Google spreadsheet etc.)
- ✓ Pen and paper
- ✓ Computer to research grocery costs, meal planning ideas, recipes.
- ★ **Bonus! Use a favorite cookbook you already have**