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Cheap Food for Dudes

Lucas Laursen

Life without a meal plan can cost a dude a lot of money. Last-minute pizza runs, ordering in from the greasy Chinese place, and 4am Denny's visits all add up. This starving writer has a couple of budget food tips for you to chew on. You might not want to let your bros catch you reading some gourmet recipe book, but take heed of these pointers and you'll be laughing when you've got more beer money at the end of the week.



Fill your belly at home:

If you take a few minutes to throw a frozen pizza in a microwave or boil up some pasta on the stove, you won't be quite as hungry when you hit the sports bar at night. Maybe instead of ordering the two-pound deluxe burger, you'll just have some wings with that first drink and have a few extra bucks at the end of the night.

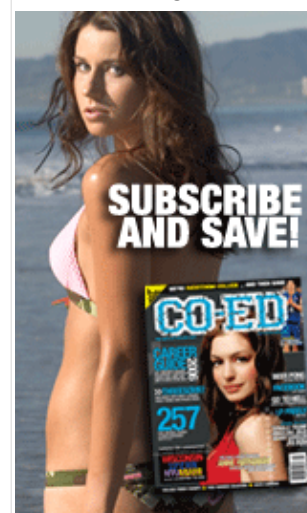
Leave a little room in that micro-fridge:

Buying in bulk at grocery stores or a big-box store like Wal-Mart is cheaper in the long run. Yeah, you'll have to leave a rack of beers out of the fridge to make room for the eggs and milk, but you can always use an ice chest when it comes time to party (also known as "sunset").

Save your brand loyalty for condoms:

Buying name-brand cereal, pasta sauce, or even toothpaste just means you're paying for a national distributor's expensive advertising campaigns. Instead, consider trying out the generic pasta sauce, or the "Loops of Fruit" cereal in a bag. Many grocery stores offer comparable but less expensive products right next to

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the name-brands on the shelves. [Warning: when it comes to the “Family Planning” aisle, stick to the top shelf. You don’t want “slightly imperfect” latex being the only wall between you and parenthood.]

Get Your Recommended Nutrients:

Admit it; you’re responsible for most of Japan’s annual instant noodle production. It may be filling, but you know it isn’t healthy on its own. What’s in those “instant flavor paks” anyway? Consider frying some fresh vegetables (you know, in the produce department) and dicing them into the noodles. Still cheap, much tastier and far more filling.

Go Local:

If you’re lucky enough to live in a town like Davis, California, with its weekly Farmer’s Market (<http://www.davisfarmersmarket.org/>), stop by to get fruits and veggies instead of buying one-way airfare for Chilean apples. You might just save enough for your own trip, instead.

Work the sales:

When you see basics on sale, stuff you know you’ll have to get down the road like pasta or beer, go ahead and get extra. Careful, though. Eight gallons of milk probably won’t fit in your fridge—though it might be a good excuse for getting your buddies to try the gallon challenge!

Speaking of shopping, if you’re hungry, don’t do it. Eat something first. Seriously. A kid in a candy store has nothing on a starving, credit card wielding student in a grocery store.

Now that you’re inspired, here are a few uncreatively named sites to get you started: <http://cookcheap.com/> <http://cheapcooking.com/>
<http://cheapfoodie.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.betterbudgeting.com/frugalrecipelist.htm>

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