

Instant Bargains: 600+ Ways to Shrink Your Grocery Bills and Eat Well for Less

Kimberly Danger

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According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the average American family of four spends an estimated \$700 per month on groceries. Many spenders are trying to wade through the recession by cutting back this amount, but they may wonder where to begin and how to maximize their efforts. With suggestions on organizing, differentiating the various types of stores, and cracking supermarkets' marketing schemes, Kimberly Danger's *Instant Bargains* eases readers into thriftiness with her conversational yet no-nonsense approach to saving.

The author of *1000 Best Baby Bargains*, Danger is also the founder of *Mommysavers.com*, an online community of mothers dedicated to living frugally. She includes many suggestions from the Web site in this valuable guide. One of the key time- and money-saving tools is the creation of a price book to comparison shop and "spot true bargains." If this task seems overwhelming at first, Danger recommends sharing the chore with other bargain-seeking shoppers.

The author also explains how numerous money-saving ideas begin at home. Portion control, for instance, can fatten the wallet but slim the waist. This can be made even easier by using vintage cookbooks, since even classic cookbooks, such as *The Joy of Cooking*, have increased their average calorie count per serving by sixty-three percent. Learning how long certain food items last (Crystallized honey has not gone bad. Simply heat it by soaking the container in a bowl of warm water.) and how to make use of "kitchen waste" (Add cheese rinds to simmering potatoes, pasta, beans, rice, or soup for a rich flavor.) are other simple, cost-cutting measures Danger recommends.

To make bargain shopping a family affair, she offers tips to engage children in the practice. Tech-savvy shoppers will enjoy such tips as menu-planning Web sites and text message coupons. And for families on the road, there are even suggestions for saving while on vacation. Other useful items include a menu planning worksheet, a sample shopping list, several quick recipes, an annotated list of food assistance programs and charities, ingredient substitutions, and measurement equivalency charts.

While recommending ways to skimp on grocery bills, Danger never asks readers to sacrifice quality or healthy choice in the process. She allows families to decide which methods fit their time and interests. Whether readers are new to bargain shopping, occasional coupon clippers, or serious buyers on a strict budget, *Instant Bargains* gives all levels of shoppers the inspiration and know-how to buy and live smarter. (January) Angela Leeper

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