

# What's Good To Eat?!

San Francisco Free Clinic \* Nutrition Newsletter  
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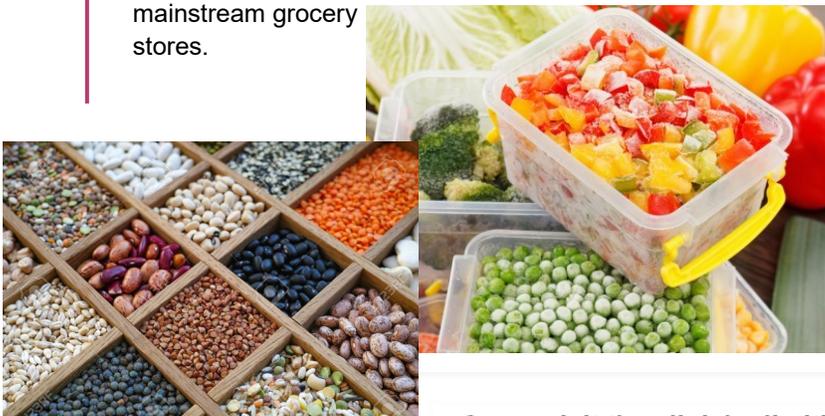
## Healthy Eating on a Budget

Eating healthy can give you more energy, improve your sleep and mood, and lower your chances of getting sick or developing diseases like diabetes and heart disease. With some planning, eating healthfully can **fit into a busy schedule and save you money**. To personalize your plan, make an appointment with the dietitian here at SFFC.

### COOKING TIPS

Here are some tips to make tasty and filling meals that won't break your budget.

- Use a cheap and nutrition-dense food as the base of your meal:
  - Lentils or dried beans
  - Grains (rice, quinoa, millet)
  - Seasonal or frozen vegetables. Buy pre-chopped to save time.
- Flavor your food. Things like lemon juice, vinegar and hot sauce can brighten up the flavors of your food. Look for fresh herbs on sale and throw them in by the handful!
- Try avoiding processed foods. These can include frozen meals and pre-prepared foods, which are more expensive than cooking yourself. However, frozen pre-cut vegetables are fine if you need to save some cooking time.
- Shop around! You might find that **produce markets** or **farmers' markets** have cheaper prices than mainstream grocery stores.



### MONEY-SAVING TIPS

#### Plan your meals and your shopping

- ◆ Schedule time in your calendar (15 minutes should be enough) every week to plan what you will eat. Use this plan when you grocery shop so you don't waste money on impulsive buys.
- ◆ Try using foods you already have in your cupboards, fridge, and freezer in your plan; you don't always need to buy new food for your recipes.
- ◆ Use cookbooks and online tools to find meals you will like that use inexpensive ingredients with simple recipes. (See [resources](#) on the next page!)

#### Stock your pantry

- ◆ Stock up on inexpensive (and nutrient dense!) beans and whole grains. Pastas can also be cheap, quick and easy to prepare.
- ◆ You may need to spend a little more money at first to stock up on a few spices/herbs. But keep it simple, find 3 or 4 flavorings you like to start.

#### Save time AND money

- ◆ Cook large batches of food that you can eat for several meals. Some call it "**meal-prepping**." Most foods will keep refrigerated for 3-4 days or frozen for a few months. Learn more about safe food storage here: <http://www.foodsafety.gov/>

#### Eat smaller portions

- ◆ If you eat out, you are likely being served more food than you really need for that meal. Try eating half your meal. The rest can be another meal ready to go!
- ◆ You can train your stomach and brain to be satisfied with smaller (and more appropriate) portions.

**Come visit the clinic's dietitian! Available to clinic patients on Tuesdays. Call 415-750-9894.**

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# Spicy, Crunchy, Creamy Polenta



## Ingredients

- 1/2 cup polenta or coarse ground cornmeal
- 2 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 4 cups fresh spinach roughly chopped (or 1 cup frozen)
- 3 cloves garlic finely chopped
- 2 eggs
- Grated cheese of your choice

## Optional toppings

- 1 anchovy finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp chili flakes

## Instructions

1. Bring the water and salt to a boil in a medium-sized pot, then turn the heat down to low and slowly pour in the polenta WHILE STIRRING quickly (this makes the polenta creamy and smooth). Once the polenta becomes smooth and thick, place a lid partially on the pot so that steam can escape.
2. Let the polenta cook while you prepare the rest of the meal, stirring the polenta occasionally. The total polenta cooking time should be about 25 to 30 minutes, but if you're in a rush, you can eat it after 15, it just won't be as delicious.
3. Meanwhile, chop the spinach, garlic, and anchovy if you're using it. Set them aside. Add a bit of olive oil or butter to a pan on medium heat. Add the garlic, anchovy, and chili flakes. Let them cook for 1 minute. Add the spinach and toss it around in the garlic mixture. Let everything cook for 3 to 5 minutes, until the spinach is wilted. Remove the pan from the heat and move its contents to a bowl to wait for the polenta and eggs.
4. When the polenta is about 2 minutes from done, start with the eggs. Wipe the pan quickly with a cloth, then put it back on medium heat. Splash a bit more olive oil in the pan and wait for it to get hot. Crack the two eggs into the pan and cover with a lid. This will steam them, making sunny-side-up eggs with fully cooked whites.
5. Scoop the polenta into a pair of bowls. Add some cheese and lots of pepper. Layer about half the spinach over the polenta.
6. Once the whites of the eggs are cooked, remove the eggs from the pan with a spatula and lay them over the polenta and spinach. Top with the rest of the vegetables and further sprinklings of cheese.



## Resources

- 1) <http://www.leannebrown.com/>
  - Free pdf of her recently published book: Good and Cheap: eat well on \$4 a day.
  - This is a cookbook for people on very tight budgets written by a home cook with a Masters in Food Studies from NYU.
  - <http://www.budgetbytes.com/> (also a cookbook)
  - Provides recipes with cost by item. Organized by type of food (meat, beans, pasta).
  - Tips and ideas about how to save money and eat well.
- 2) <http://food52.com/recipes>
  - Use the handy filter tool to build a meal around an ingredient you already have.
- 3) <http://www.ewg.org/goodfood/>
  - A complete guide to eating a whole foods diet on a budget
- 4) <http://www.cookinglight.com/>
  - Along with healthy recipes, this site is a good resource for learning to cook.
- 5) <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/budget>
  - Tips for grocery shopping and meal planning on a budget. Includes a two week eating plan with shopping lists and recipes for all meals.
- 6) <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/>
  - Shows how much it costs to eat healthfully for the week

Want to read more? Check out the clinic's website [sffc.org](http://sffc.org) and our nutrition blog [sffcdietitian.wordpress.com](http://sffcdietitian.wordpress.com)