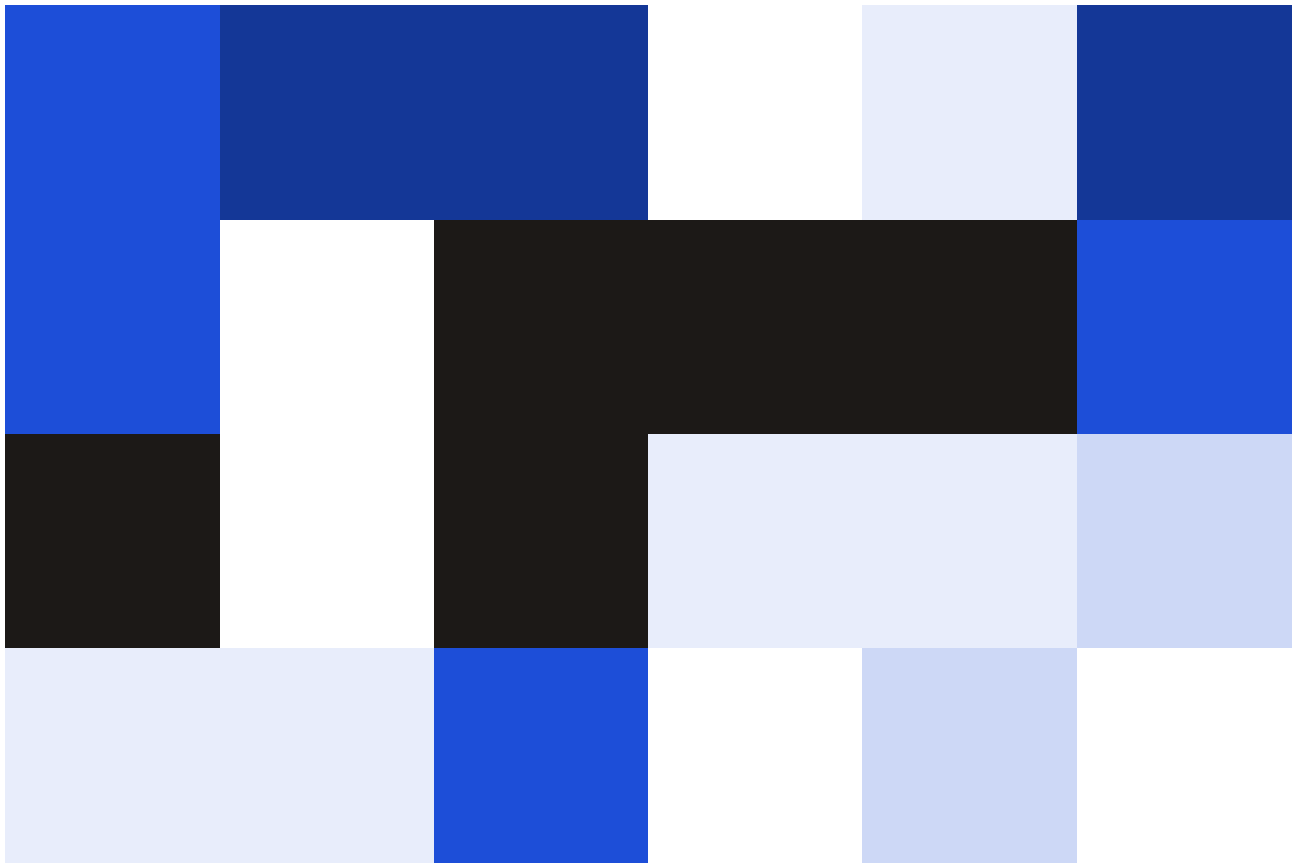




GUIDE · LIFESTYLE

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Simple, Affordable Meals for Busy People

WRITTEN BY	EDITION	FORMAT
Your Name	First edition, 2026	Editable guide

Healthy Eating on a Budget

Simple, Affordable Meals for Busy People

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This book is for general information and education. It is not professional, financial, medical or legal advice; consult a qualified professional for decisions about your own situation.

Examples, names, organisations and figures in this book are illustrative and should not be read as statistics.

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How to Use This Book

This guide focuses on everyday Indian foods and practical habits. It offers general information only and is not medical advice.

Use the meal-planner pages to put the ideas into practice each week.

Inside every chapter

- A short list of what you will learn
- Clear explanations with examples and tables
- “Try this” activities to apply ideas straight away
- Key takeaways and practice questions
- Worksheets to complete in the book

Contents

01 Eating Well Without Spending More.....	6
The Balanced Plate.....	6
Budget-Friendly Nutrition.....	6
Reading Labels.....	6
02 Planning Weekly Meals.....	9
Plan Around What You Have.....	9
Shopping List.....	9
Batch Cooking.....	9
03 Smart Grocery Shopping.....	12
Seasonal and Local.....	12
Compare Unit Prices.....	12
Store Well.....	12
04 Quick Healthy Breakfasts.....	15
Fast Options.....	15
Add Protein.....	15
Prep Ahead.....	15
05 Lunch Boxes and Office Meals.....	18
Balanced Boxes.....	18
Freshness.....	18
Snacks.....	18
06 Eating Well for Students and Hostellers.....	21
Minimal Kitchen.....	21
Canteen Choices.....	21
Hydration.....	21
07 Building Lasting Habits.....	24
Start Small.....	24
Track.....	24
Setbacks.....	24
08 Weekly Meal Planner.....	27

09 Glossary and Resources.....	40
Glossary.....	40
Further Reading and Resources.....	40
About the Author.....	40

01 Eating Well Without Spending More

Healthy eating does not require expensive superfoods. Traditional Indian staples – dals, seasonal vegetables, whole grains and curd – form a balanced, affordable diet.

In this chapter you will learn

- What a balanced plate looks like
- Affordable sources of nutrients
- Reading food labels

The Balanced Plate

Fill half the plate with vegetables, a quarter with whole grains and a quarter with protein such as dal, eggs, paneer or legumes.

Budget-Friendly Nutrition

Seasonal vegetables, pulses, peanuts, eggs and millets give good nutrition at low cost.

Reading Labels

Check serving size, added sugar, salt and the ingredient list on packaged foods.

Nutrient	Affordable sources
Protein	Dal, chana, eggs, peanuts, curd
Fibre	Vegetables, whole wheat, millets, fruit
Iron	Green leafy vegetables, jaggery, rajma
Calcium	Milk, curd, ragi, sesame

Table 1: Nutrients and affordable sources (general guidance)

Try this

Plan tomorrow's meals using the balanced plate idea.

Key Takeaways

- Use the half-quarter-quarter plate.
- Seasonal and traditional foods are affordable.
- Read labels on packaged foods.

Practice Questions

1. Draw your typical lunch plate. How balanced is it?
2. List five affordable protein sources.
3. Check the sugar content of one packaged snack.

Worksheet 1: Eating Well Without Spending More

Write your answers here, or print this page.

Draw your typical lunch plate. How balanced is it?

List five affordable protein sources.

Check the sugar content of one packaged snack.

Action Plan: Eating Well Without Spending More

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Use the half-quarter-quarter plate.			☐
2	Seasonal and traditional foods are affordable.			☐
3	Read labels on packaged foods.			☐
4				☐

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

02 Planning Weekly Meals

A weekly meal plan saves money, reduces waste and makes healthy choices easier.

In this chapter you will learn

- How to plan a week of meals
- Making a shopping list
- Batch cooking basics

Plan Around What You Have

Start with ingredients already at home and seasonal produce.

Shopping List

Write a list by category and stick to it to avoid impulse buys.

Batch Cooking

Cook dals, chutneys and grains in larger quantities and use them in different meals.

Try this

Use one of the meal-planner pages at the back of the book for next week.

Key Takeaways

- Plan before you shop.
- Use a categorised list.
- Batch cook staples.

Practice Questions

4. Plan meals for three days.
5. Write a shopping list for them.
6. Which dishes can you batch cook?

Worksheet 2: Planning Weekly Meals

Write your answers here, or print this page.

Plan meals for three days.

Write a shopping list for them.

Which dishes can you batch cook?

Action Plan: Planning Weekly Meals

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Plan before you shop.			☐
2	Use a categorised list.			☐
3	Batch cook staples.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

[Looking back](#)

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

03 Smart Grocery Shopping

Where and how you shop affects both cost and quality.

In this chapter you will learn

- Buying seasonal produce
- Comparing unit prices
- Storing food to reduce waste

Seasonal and Local

Seasonal vegetables are cheaper and fresher. Local markets often have better prices late in the day.

Compare Unit Prices

Look at price per kilogram or litre, not just the pack price.

Store Well

Store greens wrapped in cloth, keep onions and potatoes separate and use older items first.

Try this

Track food you throw away for one week and find the main cause.

Key Takeaways

- Buy seasonal.
- Compare per-unit prices.
- Store food properly.

Practice Questions

7. List vegetables in season now.
8. Compare unit prices of two pack sizes.
9. What food do you waste most often?

Worksheet 3: Smart Grocery Shopping

Write your answers here, or print this page.

List vegetables in season now.

Compare unit prices of two pack sizes.

What food do you waste most often?

Action Plan: Smart Grocery Shopping

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Buy seasonal.			☐
2	Compare per-unit prices.			☐
3	Store food properly.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

04 Quick Healthy Breakfasts

Breakfast sets the tone for the day. Simple options can be ready in ten minutes.

In this chapter you will learn

- Ten-minute breakfast ideas
- Adding protein to breakfast
- Preparing the night before

Fast Options

Poha with peanuts, vegetable upma, besan chilla, oats with fruit and boiled eggs are quick and filling.

Add Protein

Add curd, sprouts, paneer or eggs to stay full longer.

Prep Ahead

Chop vegetables or soak sprouts the night before.

Try this

Try a new ten-minute breakfast this week.

Key Takeaways

- Keep breakfast simple.
- Include protein.
- Prepare ahead.

Practice Questions

10. Pick three breakfasts for next week.
11. How can you add protein to your usual breakfast?
12. What can you prep tonight?

Worksheet 4: Quick Healthy Breakfasts

Write your answers here, or print this page.

Pick three breakfasts for next week.

How can you add protein to your usual breakfast?

What can you prep tonight?

Action Plan: Quick Healthy Breakfasts

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Keep breakfast simple.			☐
2	Include protein.			☐
3	Prepare ahead.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

05 Lunch Boxes and Office Meals

Packed lunches are cheaper and usually healthier than eating out.

In this chapter you will learn

- Packing balanced lunch boxes
- Keeping food fresh
- Healthy snacks for work

Balanced Boxes

Combine a grain, a protein, a vegetable and curd or salad.

Freshness

Use insulated boxes and pack food after it cools slightly.

Snacks

Roasted chana, fruit, nuts and buttermilk beat packaged snacks.

Try this

Calculate how much you spend on eating out at work each week.

Key Takeaways

- Pack balanced lunches.
- Keep food safe.
- Choose whole-food snacks.

Practice Questions

13. Plan five lunch boxes.
14. Which snacks will you keep at work?
15. How much could you save in a month?

Worksheet 5: Lunch Boxes and Office Meals

Write your answers here, or print this page.

Plan five lunch boxes.

Which snacks will you keep at work?

How much could you save in a month?

Action Plan: Lunch Boxes and Office Meals

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Pack balanced lunches.			☐
2	Keep food safe.			☐
3	Choose whole-food snacks.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

06 Eating Well for Students and Hostellers

Students with limited kitchens can still eat well with a few tools and smart choices.

In this chapter you will learn

- Cooking with minimal equipment
- Healthy choices in canteens
- Staying hydrated

Minimal Kitchen

An electric kettle or induction plate can make oats, poha, maggi with vegetables and boiled eggs.

Canteen Choices

Choose dal, sabzi and roti over fried items; add fruit when possible.

Hydration

Carry a water bottle and limit sugary drinks.

Try this

Keep a fruit bowl or box in your room this week.

Key Takeaways

- Cook simple meals with basic tools.
- Choose wisely in canteens.
- Drink enough water.

Practice Questions

16. What can you cook with your equipment?
17. List three healthier canteen choices.
18. How much water do you drink daily?

Worksheet 6: Eating Well for Students and Hostellers

Write your answers here, or print this page.

What can you cook with your equipment?

List three healthier canteen choices.

How much water do you drink daily?

Action Plan: Eating Well for Students and Hostellers

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	Cook simple meals with basic tools.			☐
2	Choose wisely in canteens.			☐
3	Drink enough water.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

07 Building Lasting Habits

Lasting change comes from small, consistent steps rather than strict diets.

In this chapter you will learn

- Starting small
- Tracking habits
- Handling setbacks

Start Small

Change one thing at a time, such as adding a vegetable to dinner.

Track

Tick a habit tracker daily; streaks build motivation.

Setbacks

Missing a day is normal. Restart the next meal, not next Monday.

Try this

Pick one habit and track it for 21 days.

Key Takeaways

- One change at a time.
- Track to stay consistent.
- Restart quickly after setbacks.

Practice Questions

19. Choose one habit to start.
20. How will you track it?
21. What will you do after a missed day?

Worksheet 7: Building Lasting Habits

Write your answers here, or print this page.

Choose one habit to start.

How will you track it?

What will you do after a missed day?

Action Plan: Building Lasting Habits

Turn the ideas from this chapter into three concrete actions. Keep each one small enough to start this week.

#	Action I will take	First step	By when	Done
1	One change at a time.			☐
2	Track to stay consistent.			☐
3	Restart quickly after setbacks.			☐
4				☐
5				☐
6				☐

Reflection

Looking back

What surprised me most in this chapter?

Where did I struggle, and what will I try differently?

Who can I share one idea from this chapter with?

08 Weekly Meal Planner

Plan meals for the week and write your shopping list at the bottom.

Meal Plan — Week 1

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 2

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 3

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 4

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 5

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 6

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 7

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 8

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 9

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 10

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 11

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

Meal Plan — Week 12

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Reflection

Shopping list

09 Glossary and Resources

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Balanced plate	Half vegetables, quarter grains, quarter protein
Batch cooking	Cooking larger quantities to use across meals
Unit price	Price per kilogram or litre
Whole grain	Grain with bran and germ intact

Further Reading and Resources

- Your doctor or a registered dietitian for personal advice
- Official dietary guidelines from national health bodies
- Local markets for seasonal produce

About the Author

Write about your interest in food and nutrition.

Your notes

Use this space to write the three ideas from this book you will act on first, and the date you will start.