

'Super' sleuths trim market bills

There are two types of shoppers: the haphazard spender and the alert planner.

It's almost effortless to hit the grocery store when you must restock the pantry and refrigerator, maybe scribbling a few needed items on a scrap of paper, filling the shopping basket, heister-skitter as you scoot up and down the aisles, not paying any attention to displays or prices. But it is very foolish.

It's smarter to organize shopping trips. There are guidelines to follow that pay dividends before I depart for the supermarket. They include:

Checking newspaper ads for sales and coupon bargains. Making a list of what is needed for the week's menu. Deciding on the store offering the biggest bargains. Considering stops at two stores if worth the savings. Placing coupons, bonus-stamp cards and special cut-outs in one envelope per store, writing the items on the outside.

PLANNING TO buy foods in season, when they're most plentiful and less expensive.

Once you're inside the supermarket, the key words are "be alert." It is not a shopping aim to devote from your list. Frankly, I've realized more savings from unadvertised sales than published ones — like the time I made a killing on Swiss cheese at the deli counter.

The slicing Swiss was \$1.09 a quarter pound, but I noticed prepackaged cubes were \$2.59 a pound. I picked up two packages and discovered that someone's mathematical error was my reward. One package was .58 of a pound for \$1.26; the other .42 of a pound for \$1.14. I got a pound for \$2.40.

Another time I was at the beer cooler when I saw two stacks of six-packs



selling for \$2.19 each, limit two. Close by the stack of 12-packs for \$5.19 each, no limit.

I've been most successful at the meat counter. While my wife mulls steak that loses some redness, I find the \$1 to \$1.50 per pound saving more than compensating. However, I must peel off the "special" sticker before I get home so Anita doesn't give me any flak. I've never had to make excuses for the taste when I cook them the same day.

WHILE I usually shop on Fridays because it's banking day, I have no qualms about returning to the supermarket to take advantage of the sales on Sundays through Wednesdays. For instance, I've purchased ground beef for 99 cents a pound on Tuesday. For every three pounds I bought, I figured I received one pound selling at the regular price free.

I've also found ground veal selling for about the same price as ground chuck side by side.

I've done extremely well with coupons when cashing them in with bonus stamps. I bought an eight-ounce

box of corn flakes this year and made 18 cents profit. I got a pound of spaghetti and it cost the store six cents. The best day I've had was a \$6.60 saving on a \$44.08 food bill.

Soft drinks cost me from \$1.23 for two eight-packs to 74 cents for one with the double coupons. I bought a 15-ounce jar of non-dairy creamer for six cents.

But I've made out the best with tuna fish, buying 6 1/2-ounce cans for about 30 cents. That's why I usually have five or six cans in the pantry and am always looking for new recipes.

TUNA-ARTICHOKE CASEROLE
1/2 cup dry white wine
1 can (10 1/2 oz.) condensed cream of celery soup

2 cans (14 oz.) artichoke hearts, drained and halved
2 cans (6 1/2 oz.) tuna, drained and flaked
1/4 cup broken up cashews
1/4 cup dry bread crumbs
1 1/2 tbsp. butter, melted

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In small saucepan, combine wine with soup, bring to boil, occasionally stirring, and remove from heat. In 1 1/2-quart casserole, in order, layer half of artichokes, tuna, cashews and soup mixture; repeat. Top bread crumbs with butter, sprinkle over casserole and bake uncovered 25 minutes, when crumbs turn golden. Serves 6.

Broccoli, mushrooms and cherry tomatoes add the "garden fresh" to Garden Fresh Rice Pilaf. Because the vegetables are cooked briefly, they retain their fresh-picked flavor, crisp texture and bright colors.

Veggies add texture to rice

A revolution has been sweeping kitchens here and abroad, bringing with it a strong emphasis on fresh and light. The fresh refers to ingredients — the freshest fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish and dairy products the market has to offer — while the light describes the simpler, cleaner methods used to prepare the fresh ingredients.

A dish ahead of its time in terms of freshness and lightness is the pilaf. The pilaf, one of the world's oldest rice dishes, forms the basis of the cuisines of Greece and most Near Eastern countries. Traditionally, pilafs have been exceptionally flexible dishes because ingredients could be varied to suit individual tastes and available foods. While the ingredients may vary, the success of a pilaf depends upon the rice. In a pilaf, the rice grains must emerge well cooked but separate, never sticky or too soft.

Paired with the fluffy, separate-grained rice in today's pilafs are fresh-from-the-garden vegetables. Broccoli, mushrooms and cherry tomatoes star in Garden Fresh Rice Pilaf. Because the vegetables are cooked ever so briefly, they retain their fresh flavor, crisp texture and brilliant colors. Ground nutmeg and shredded mozzarella cheese add a touch of the unexpected to this international side dish which goes from garden to table in just 30 minutes.

Adding a refreshing change of pace to warm weather meals are cool and colorful rice salads. A European favorite for many years, rice salads are now becoming popular in the United States and Canada. Dilly Garden Rice Salad, with its decidedly American flavor, features zucchini, green onions and vine-ripened tomatoes in a light and tangy dilled yogurt dressing. Rice salads require firm, separate grains of rice which won't become lumpy when chilled or soft and sticky when tossed with other ingredients. Dilly Garden Rice Salad can be prepared in advance, too, for added time-savings. Dilly Garden Rice Salad and Garden Fresh Rice Pilaf are only two of the dozens of recipes featured in Uncle Ben's 40th Anniversary Recipe Collection. All are easy to prepare and many are easy on the budget as well. For your copy, send \$1 in check or money order and one proof-of-purchase from Converted Brand Rice to: Uncle Ben's 40th Anniversary Recipe Collection, P.O. Box 55199, Houston, Texas 77255. Enclose name, address and zip code.

GARDEN FRESH RICE PILAF

1/2 pound fresh mushrooms, thinly sliced
1 clove garlic, minced
2 tbsp butter or margarine
1 cup rice
1/4 tsp nutmeg
2 1/2 cups beef broth or bouillon
1 tsp salt
2 cups small broccoli flowerettes
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese

Saute mushrooms and garlic in butter in 10-inch skillet over medium heat 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in rice and nutmeg. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until rice is golden. Add broth and salt. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat. Cover tightly and simmer 15 minutes. Stir in broccoli. Cover and continue to simmer until all liquid is absorbed, about 10 minutes. Stir in tomatoes. Sprinkle with cheese. Makes 6 servings.

DILLY GARDEN RICE SALAD

1 cup rice
1 carton (8 ounces) plain yogurt
1 tbsp sugar
1 tsp salt
1/4 tsp dill weed
1 medium broccoli, thinly sliced
4 green onions with tops, sliced
2 medium tomatoes, chopped

Cook rice according to package directions. Transfer to large bowl. Cover and chill. Combine yogurt, sugar, salt and dill weed. Stir into rice. Stir in broccoli and onions. Chill at least 1 hour. Just before serving, stir in tomatoes. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

Recipe takes the cake

Here is a recipe for a scrumptious cake with little work. Bake an easy-mix packaged lemon chiffon cake and spread this special-tasting, crispy walnut frosting on top. In a small saucepan over medium heat, stir together constantly 1/2 cup each butter or margarine and medium chopped walnuts until light golden brown. Remove from heat; stir in 1/4 cup sifted powdered sugar, 1 teaspoon vanilla and 1/4 teaspoon grated lemon peel. Gradually blend in about 5 teaspoons milk until spreadable.

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