

The SNAP/Food Stamp Challenge

The SNAP Challenge gives participants a view of the struggle to obtain adequate food that is faced by millions of low-income Americans. For one week, participants take the challenge to live on about \$4 per day worth of food – the average food stamp benefit. On June 17, I participated in the SNAP/Food Stamp Challenge to shop for food choices on a limited budget, learn how difficult it is to avoid hunger, and afford nutrition foods and stay healthy.

To make my dollars stretch, I created my own concoction for dinner: Cajun Shrimp and Green Bean Sauté. I was able to stay within my budget, while feeding three others. Hence, if I did not have a garden (which really stretched my dollars) and could only feed myself, I would have had difficulty preparing recipes just for one. You could eat the same dinner four nights of the week, and if you like a little kick to your meals, you will be more than willing to eat leftovers!

Here is a breakdown of my day: Total Spent: \$3.93

Breakfast:

- 1 cup Wheat Berry Cereal (\$.13)
- 8 oz Skim Milk (\$.15)
- 2 Tbsp peanut butter (\$.20)
- 3 Strawberries, sliced (\$.38)

Snack 1:

- 1 small orange (\$.27)
- 8 oz peach-ginger green tea (\$.16)

Lunch:

- 1 cup greens from my garden (\$.05 for cost of seed)
- ½ cup vegetable blend (\$.44)
- ½ cup fresh pineapple (\$.25)
- 4 oz yogurt cup (\$.50)
- 8 oz Seltzer water (\$.29)

Dinner:

- Cajun Shrimp and Green Bean Sauté - Serves: 4
- 2 cups green beans, trimmed (\$.42)
- 1 ½ Tbsp olive oil, divided (\$.35)
- 1 medium onion, chopped (\$.33)
- 2 tsp salt-free Cajun spice (or Southwest) (\$.04)
- ½ lb medium cooked shrimp (\$2.50)
- ½ cup rainbow chard, finely chopped (from my garden - \$.05 for seed) (try chopped parsley if you do not have rainbow chard inexpensively available)
- Freshly ground pepper to taste (\$.01)
- 1 cup brown rice, cooked (\$.66)

Total Cost of recipe/4 servings: \$1.11

Directions:

1. Heat 1 ½ tsp olive oil in a medium skillet. Add green beans with 1/8 cup water. Sauté until tender-crisp, about 4-6 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, heat 1 Tbsp olive oil in a large skillet. Add onion and Cajun seasoning, stirring constantly until onions soften (about 3 minutes). Add shrimp.
3. Add rainbow chard. Stir occasionally until heated through, about 2 minutes.
4. Place beans over cooked brown rice. Top beans with shrimp mixture and freshly ground pepper to taste.