

Emergency Mode Grocery Bootcamp Video 2

Hi there, and welcome back to Video #2 of my training series, Emergency Mode Grocery Bootcamp. My name is Jaime Bacon, founder of Meal Planning 911 and No Getting Off This Train, and I am so glad to be back here with you.

In this video, we're going to talk about your main priorities when you have no income. But more importantly, I'm also going to show you how this training will help you overcome your worry of how you'll feed your family and be confident in your new-found meal planning abilities.

In video #1, we talked about how to figure out your new Emergency Mode budget, which was intended to set the foundation for your temporary grocery situation. If you haven't seen that video, go back and watch it now and then come back to this one!

Today I'm going to build on what we've already learned by talking about what exactly you should focus on with your new Emergency Mode budget. This will help give you ideas, stretch your creativity, and give you more confidence that you can thrive in this season of Emergency Mode!

We have a lot to cover today so be sure you have some paper and a pen ready to take notes and follow along.

The truth is that figuring out how to feed your family on a super tight budget is pretty frustrating sometimes.

You feel like there's no way you can lower your budget further.

You have no idea what to eat with the money you have.

And that means that if you've ever faced these before, you're totally normal. Even so, you can't let those frustrations stand in your way of thriving in Emergency Mode.

Life happens. It has its ups and downs, and sometimes we have to live in the valleys. It's hard, it's heart-breaking at times. But remember, it's only a season. You live super thrifty now so that later, when your income goes back up, you come out stronger, wiser, and able to take on anything else that life throws at you. I know this from experience.

That's why in this video we're going to get super practical and talk about exactly what to eat when you lose your income so you can make your money stretch. So, are you ready to dig in?

Before we begin, I need to add a disclaimer: If you qualify for government assistance, there is no shame in taking it. You do what you need to do to feed your family; that's what the assistance is there for. That being said, my family probably qualified for it during these times, but we chose not to take it unless we ran out of money. And thank God, we never did. But it's there if you need it!

With that out of the way, I'm happy to tell you that even though your budget is cut short, you

can still eat pretty healthy food! You may not have a ton of variety, but you can still buy different kinds of food and prepare them in ways that you won't get bored.

When John lost his job in both 2016 and 2018, I chose to lower our grocery budget to \$30 a week. With that kind of a budget, I had to prioritize the food we needed to make sure we at least had enough to eat that week. Thanks to my blog, I have records of my weekly shopping trips from those times; and I'll be sure to link those for you for reference.

So when you're in Emergency Mode, what kind of foods can or should you eat? What will give you the most for your money?

First of all, your main priority is just to get food in your belly. You don't need to worry about whether your food is organic, or even the healthiest. If all you can afford is a box of macaroni and cheese, eat it! There is no shame in buying packaged foods if it means your family is fed.

When we spent a year eating for \$37 a week, our menu consisted of a LOT of Kraft macaroni and cheese, deli sandwiches, and simple side salads. I took advantage of Meijer's Buy 5, Save \$5.00 events to get those items really cheap; and I was happy on the weeks I only spent \$18.00 on a week's worth of food. It wasn't the most nutritionally balanced, but we survived.

During 2016's job loss, I began to focus on buying more fruits and vegetables, and other nutrient-dense foods. Here are the main foods we focused on during those times:

Milk and eggs made it onto our list every week- they're pretty much a national household staple. Both are good sources of cheap protein, and we used them a lot for breakfast foods. Scrambled eggs, french toast, pancakes, waffles, and oatmeal bakes were our main breakfasts.

Oats were a huge breakfast staple. We bought a huge container of oats at Aldi for around \$2.29, and that lasted us almost 2 weeks. We made simple bowls of oatmeal with peanut butter and sliced bananas, and also made oatmeal bakes that fed us all week. During 2018's job loss, I even made our own granola bars which saved us a ton of money on snacks.

Rice was eaten at least twice a week, if not more. We bought 2-pound bags of brown rice wherever it was cheapest- usually Aldi or Meijer. Dinner consisted of a ton of Mexican food because it was so easy to throw some rice into our rice cooker, and a bag of rice lasted us awhile.

Dried beans can be much cheaper than buying cans, and they're easy to cook if you have a slow cooker or Instant Pot. One pound of dried beans makes about 3 or 4 cans worth and you can use them in burrito bowls, enchiladas, or soups.

A box of Pasta would last a few days for our family of 3. It has 6-8 servings, so we would make a pasta casserole and eat the leftovers a couple days in a row. You can buy a box of pasta and a jar of sauce for \$2.00, which makes for a really cheap meal!

Produce was one of my main priorities in Emergency Mode. We had just finished losing weight, so we knew the importance of eating healthier and I wanted to continue that as much as I could. The cheapest produce you can find year-round are:

- Bananas
- Apples
- Spinach
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Onions

Those made it onto our list just about every week because I could make them stretch pretty far. I also looked at the front page of the store ads because that's where the best deals were. Most of the seasonal produce would be super cheap, so I would supplement as needed. It was Summer for us, so strawberries, blueberries, and zucchini were always part of our weekly menu.

Yogurt is something that we bought often but isn't really a necessity. I prefer the Greek yogurt, but it is more expensive, so regular yogurt would be okay too. Instead of buying the small cups, buy a large container and portion it out- it's much cheaper. We used yogurt in muffins, pancakes, and also topped them with granola and fruit for breakfast parfaits.

Cheap proteins are a must in Emergency Mode. A lot of the cheapest staples tend to have a lot of carbs, which is really good for filling you up. But you still need protein to help keep you full. Eggs, chicken, and ground turkey were pretty much the only proteins I bought in Emergency Mode. And we still got a lot of variety because of the different produce; I was able to cook the protein in different ways and not get bored.

Peanut butter is a cheap source of fat and we used it a lot for both breakfast and dinner. I put peanut butter in my oatmeal or on top of pancakes; and a lot of times, we had peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for dinner maybe once a week. Keeping things simple was really important, and the standard PB&J definitely kept it simple!

All of the items I just talked about helped us get through our three seasons of Emergency Mode. They're cheap, they're healthy, and they have variety so we didn't get too bored. To help you remember everything, I've created an Emergency Mode Grocery List that you can print and use every week to keep you under budget. You can find a link to that at the bottom of this video, or in the email that you received.

Okay, so now that you've learned exactly which foods to buy in Emergency Mode, let's spend a few minutes looking at what this process looks like in action through a short case study.

Suzie and her husband live on a fixed income. They're retired, and her husband's income is flexible. Like you, Suzie was looking for a way to lower her grocery bill to keep in line with their lowered income.

Back in September, I launched a beta version of Meal Planning 911 and Suzie jumped right on board. She went through all 11 lessons and learned how to create her Emergency Mode budget, how to eat healthy, and even where to shop and how to make her own foods.

Since then, she's started reducing the amount of meat they eat every week. She makes pasta

and sauce and meat to cut down the amount of meat they eat at every meal (Stretching the grocery budget!).

She also makes more filling side items to reduce their meat intake (Making her food go further!).

Using the strategies I lay out, Suzie's now able to lower her grocery bill and her family can live beneath their means.

Pretty amazing story, right? I think so too!

Okay, so let's do a quick review of what we learned today.

I showed you exactly which foods to buy in Emergency Mode when you find yourself with little or no income; how to use them; and I provided you with a grocery list of all the foods I talked about to help you in this season. It's a lot of info, so be sure to review your notes and try to take action right away!

In the next video I'm going to show you the exact track to run to get to stability with your new Emergency Mode budget. If you've lost your income or are looking to live well below your means, this is going to be a game changer for you!

Speaking of living with an Emergency Mode budget, I've also been getting a lot of questions about Meal Planning 911. In the next video I'll tell you all about it and how you can get started.

Now that you have your Emergency Mode grocery list, you can start lowering your grocery bill right away. Next up, we'll talk about how to take the next step towards living in Emergency Mode. I'll see you in the next video!