

## Eating on a shoe-string budget in 2011

You have survived 2010 but must be hoping that Jamaica and the world's financial state will improve. Many of us made drastic changes in food choices in 2010 because of high food costs. As we move into 2011, it would be beneficial if some important guidelines are followed as we cut back.

Eat from the six food groups. Go for more economical options. Cheaper does not always mean inferior.

1. Staples - cornmeal, flour, green bananas.
2. Food from animal - eggs, canned fish, stews, powdered milk.
3. Peas, beans, nuts - dried peas or beans, raw peanuts.
4. Fruits - any fruit in season, citrus fruits.
5. Vegetables - greens such as callaloo, others from different colour scheme, which are affordable on the day.
6. Fats - coconut, other affordable vegetable oils

### One-pot meals

Make porridge from cereal such as cornmeal, adding powdered milk or soy and serve with a fruit. Make more one-pot meals such as soups and use up peas, beans, nuts and cheaper cuts of meats in these dishes. Make one-pot meals such as seasoned rice with vegetables and canned fish. Be creative, children will benefit from the nutrients, the love and care you put into the preparation and the lessons on spending wisely while eating lip-smacking meals.

I remember as a child having porridge or fried dumplings and some sort of 'fish kind' for dinner on numerous occasions and I did not think that there was a problem. I just cleaned up my plate. I remember too how tasty it was and the fun I had with my sister and brothers.

Encourage children to consume the fruits and vegetable you can afford. Explain to them what is happening economically in the family, and let them know that it is a good thing to use your limited resources wisely. Do not spend limited money on food items which are wanting in nutrients or laden with those additives which will cause problems later on.

Wherever you live, you can plant something in a pot, or in the ground. Beans are easy to plant and maintain and the returns are great in terms of protein, carbohydrate and fibre.