

## Strategies Applied:

Use your left over Tuna or Salmon in this recipe - save money and time.

Tuna Cakes work better when refrigerated before cooking, for at least 15 minutes and preferably an hour. I often double or triple the recipe, but stop before breading. I'll bread the ones I wish to use for that night's dinner and the others I'll simply divide (unbreaded) on a parchment or plastic lined tray and freeze. When frozen, individually wrap, bag and label. When ready to use for another meal, remove frozen, dip in a mixture of an egg mixed with two tablespoons of water, bread and fry.

- **Tuna:** Lent is a great time to buy canned fish, especially tuna. Coupons and sales abound. If you miss the season, a “surprise” place to find budget tuna fish? Your local pharmacy, especially Walgreens often has little coupons in their ads, and CVS, I’ve noticed, has great sales and sometimes coupons from their Coupon Spitter Outer Machine. While I can get Tuna for free with a coupon during Lent now and then, I think about 68 cents is a good sales price. (Lent in 2014 is March 5th to April 19th) Cost 68 cents. \$1.36
- **Bell Pepper:** There are two types of sales, per pound or per pepper. I usually look for the per pepper pricing; in my area it’s generally cheaper – I’ll then buy the biggest, most gorgeous ones I can find. The peppers are often bagged and sold by a unit price, too. A really good price in our area is about a seventy cents a pepper for the red, yellow or orange ones, and 50 to 75 cents for the green bell. Cost, about 40 cents.
- **Onion:** They keep well, so try to buy on sale. Aldi is a good place to find reasonably priced onions. Always less expensive in the fall/winter months, the pricing in my area runs from 33 to 66 cents a pound. Store them in a dark, cool place but not near potatoes. If you've bought too many onions, don't let them go bad.
- Slice or dice them, saute and portion into Ziplocs labeled “onions” and freeze. You’ve just saved yourself a step for next time you make a dish. If you have enough, consider making [French Onion Soup](#). If you use half an onion, consider if you can sauté the rest and put it in a Ziploc in the freezer. If not store in the door where you'll see it when you're cooking next. 1/2 an onion (at 56 cents a pound) about 8 cents.
- **Celery:** generally inexpensive, but does go on sale from time to time, so I buy extra when it does. Celery keeps so well, there’s no reason to not buy when it’s not on sale. Remember to use your leaves, they’re full of flavor, and if you don’t use them in your cooking, save them, along with the bottom parts for soup or stock. Always wash your celery extremely well. To keep longer, slip a plastic bag loosely over the exposed top of the celery. A good price in my area is 98 cents a sleeve, with about 15 or so stalks in a sleeve. Cost 3 cents.
- **Eggs:** Stock up on eggs when they’re inexpensive, normally during Holiday weeks. Low prices in my area range from free (often with other purchases) to anywhere from 50 to 88 cents. They last for weeks in the fridge – The date on the container is a ‘buy’ date, and you can expect them to last a good six weeks past that date. If you pick up two or three packages when they’re at their low, you’ll rarely need to pay full price. Refrigerate right away and never store in the door; eggs keep best in a colder part of the refrigerator, in their own box. (Then put your partially

used vegetables in the door where you'll see them and remember they need to be used ASAP – the half a bell pepper or onion, etc.) In doubt about an egg? If it floats in water, discard, just to be on the safe side. Cost for 1 at 88 cents a dozen? about 7 cents.

- **Bread crumbs:** I've brought bread crumbs once, when a friend asked me if I'd pick up a can of Progresso Crumbs on my way to a dinner at their house. I was horrified how expensive they were. I always make my own from the left over bread and toss them in the freezer for when I need them (see my post on [bread crumbs](#).) When I am sautéing something, I use the once I've toasted rather than soft bread crumbs. Since they are made from a discarded ingredient, I don't count any cost.
- **Dijon:** I always pick up a lot of Dijon (and all my other condiments) during the [summer holidays](#) when condiments will reach their all time lows and coupons abound. A second chance always comes around during [Super Bowl week](#). We go through tons of Dijon because it's called for in so many recipes and I'll use it for vinaigrettes, marinades and things like cole slaw. If I can't find a deal with a coupon, the store brands on sale are often a good value. (When I can't get any more out of my container, I add a little red or white wine vinegar and a bit of olive oil, salt and pepper and shake it for a quick salad dressing in the jar.) Cost- a guess- about 2 cents.
- **Lemon:** In season in the winter months here - lemons are often on sale through out the year 4 to a dollar. The rind holds as much or more flavor than the juice, so I often grate it off before using and store in a Ziploc in my freezer - the little bit dries up but still holds more flavor than the store-bought. If I'm in a pinch and don't have lemon, I'll use it instead. Microwave your lemon for a bit if it's hard and/or roll it on the counter before you juice it and it will break down easier. If you just need a small amount, pierce your lemon with a fork and squeeze out, then remember to use it - later. I bag it and put it in the door of the fridge. Cost: negligible.
- **Olive Oil:** I have a little strategy for buying [olive oil](#) – using coupons and sales to lower the price, so click on the link. I think it's important to use olive oil as opposed to many others – the health benefits outweigh a bit more extra cost, and it can be had at a very reasonable price. I also like the fact that Olive oil contains no hidden trans fats like Canola or Vegetable oil. Cost for this recipe: 24 cents.
- **Glazed Carrots:** Glazed Carrots with Parsley Butter are one of our family's favorite sides, and for four costs about (if carrots are on sale, 50 cents a pound, about 65 cents - if they are running about a dollar a pound, about \$1.15.)
- **Salad:** Bought on a deep sale, a head of Red Lettuce (about a pound) was 89 cents. I used half and a smidge of other ingredients - cost about 60 cents.
- **Dressing:** I'm currently intrigued by Melissa D'Arabian's Mustard vinaigrette, cost for enough to dress a salad for four: 20 cents.