

## Strategies Applied:

How does this price compare to the store-bought frozen [Chicken Nuggets](#) we tried last week? If I were to figure this per pound as I did those nuggets for pricing, this would be \$1.20 per pound. The Tyson nuggets at regular price of \$6.99 for 29 ounces were \$3.68 per pound. On sale, with a doubled coupon, I could get the same 29 ounce package for \$3.99, or \$2.22 a pound. Regardless, these **TASTE** so much better, even if they only cost about half as much as the Tyson's.

- **Chicken:** I never buy full price chicken – it goes on sale too often. Some sales are better than others, but usually every few weeks it will drop to 99 cents a pound, and I stock up then. I prefer bone in breasts over boneless (see [Bone-In Chicken Breasts, How to Deal with in a Frugal Manner](#)) but I'll buy either bone in or boneless at this price. I portion the chicken in Ziploc bags, a breast per person for meals and freeze. If breasts are super large, I'll trim them down to about six ounces and make tenders for the kids or use the bits for stir fry. Cost for 24 ounces is about \$1.49. (By the way, I just use the same Ziploc I took the chicken out of to marinade the chicken in. Cost for this recipe: \$1.49.
- **Buttermilk:** I rarely have buttermilk on hand unless I'm planning to bake – but if I were to buy it for a recipe like this, I'd plan on making other items requiring buttermilk. Buttermilk will store better in a jar than in the opened container, and does last for several weeks without going bad. While buttermilk may need to be shaken together again if it sits in the fridge, that doesn't mean anything is wrong with it. Look for any discoloration or odd odor – trust your nose. For a recipe like this I often, as mentioned above, just use milk with a little mayo, sour cream or yogurt to add a little thickness and maybe a teaspoon of vinegar for a little tang. I just used milk here, so the cost is about 6 cents.
- **Panko Bread Crumbs:** I generally just use [homemade](#) (which I keep in my freezer) but Panko is a larger, very crisp bread crumb and is quite a bit crisper than, say, Progresso. I do find coupons every now and then for Panko, and it does go on sale, quite often when other Asian items do – stock up on things like Soy, etc. after the US New Years when the Chinese New Year is coming up. My cost I always count as free, since I'd be throwing away old bread at my house if I didn't come up with a use for it. If you're going to “splurge” on a convenience item, bread crumbs are a cheap one to splurge on.
- **Spices:** These are basic spices that should be in everyone's cupboard. I never count the cost of my spices – I just don't have the mental acuity to figure it out, and the amounts are so small. You can't go wrong with keeping any of the spices in this recipe on hand – all of these I buy in large quantities because I use them for things like rubs for ribs, steaks, pulled pork, chops and also for my own blends like Taco Seasoning. Buy your spices on sale or in the “bulk” aisle or even in the produce aisle in the bags. The common ones can often be bought very cheaply at the big box store in large plastic containers. Put what you're going to use in little jars and store the rest in a cool, dark cupboard.
- **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 coleslaw. 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 for a tablespoon – a guess- about 3 cents.

- **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.
- **Cooking Spray:** Yeah, it does have calories and some brands do have trans fat – they just make the “serving” size so small (one spritz) that it doesn't have to be counted according to Federal regulations. Most people use more than one “spritz.” Buy during the Winter Holidays with coupons and sale prices, or look for sales during the summer – it's sometimes on sale because it's a great grilling item. I generally buy it for no cost with a coupon. Cost for a few spritz? I'd have to say two cents? I was very excited a few years back to buy the little containers that allowed you to spritz olive oil (or any oil) but I found the oil quickly turned rancid and the device clogged up – a complete waste of \$14.00...
- **Ice-berg lettuce Salad:** The lows in my area runs 69 cents now and then with a store coupon up to 99 cents a head on sale. I pick it up now and then on the sale price; so often considered passé, there still is nothing like it for a crisp, fresh salad in the summer or as a topping for so many Mexican dishes. I used half a head, and will make sure to use the rest later in the week. Cost for four, 50 cents. For the dressing, I just mixed a few herbs from my pot, a good amount of pepper and a dash of vinegar with a little mayo/sour cream. The whole salad was around 65 cents.
- Carrots: I used Cook's Illustrated Recipe for [Carrots with Parsley Butter](#), a cost of about 65 cents.