

Strategies Applied:

- Make this recipe seasonally for the best price, grow your own herbs, be creative in your search for specialty items like olive oil and pine nuts. Use coupons on your beans and pasta.
- Pasta:** I rarely pay for pasta, but in this case, I used a specialty pasta and these aren't often included in the sale with coupon deals. The "specialty" pasta cuts generally have fewer ounces in a package as well. Another pasta rarely included in those sales is the lasagna noodle. I did buy on sale, 88 cents for a 12 ounce box. If you wish to save some time and cook the whole box, the other half would be great in a simple tuna pasta salad. My cost 44 cents.
- 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: 8 cents.
- Red Onion:** A little more expensive than regular onion, cost is about 10 cents.
- Zucchini, Squash:** I used two small, about 50 cents each. Cost about \$1.00.
- Red Pepper:** When I see red peppers on sale, I start thinking of ways to use them – they are super pricey at full price. At \$1.89 a pound, two peppers (each around five ounces) ran about \$1.10.
- Tomatoes, fresh:** These vary in price (and quality) according to season, and a good price here in Minnesota is between 69 and 99 cents a pound. In the winter, I often look for plum tomatoes because they seem to taste better. Don't be swayed by the outside of the tomato – some of the best have imperfections, especially if they're vine ripened. Never refrigerate your tomatoes if you can help it. An old farm wife's trick? Add a sprinkle of salt and sugar if your tomatoes are tasteless. I used about a half a pint of grape tomatoes in this recipe, 89 cents a pound, cost about 40 cents.
- Cannellini Beans:** Ok, true confession – I never buy the canned beans unless I happen to get them on sale with a coupon, and I've never found Cannellini beans dried in my supermarket. I used a sales priced can of white beans bought with a coupon. Cost: 33 cents.
- Pesto** – Use half the recipe and freeze the rest...cost for full recipe, \$1.72, for $\frac{1}{4}$ 43 cents.
- Pine Nuts:** They are a bit of a specialty item, but lend that extra touch in so many dishes – pestos, pastas, salads, etc. I buy in the fall through New Years, when, along with other nuts that are at their bottom pricing. Keep them in the

freezer and they'll stay fresh for a long, long time. Look for the best prices on nuts at your general purpose hardware/feed type stores - here in the upper Midwest we have Fleet Farm, but I've spoken to enough people in different areas to realize that almost every part of the country has something similar. Some areas, like Denver, have places like Jerry's nut shops - wholesalers that offer wonderful pricing, and I've also found decent prices at Aldi's. 1/4 cup is about 20 cents.