

## Strategies Applied:

•**Green Beans:** Buy on sale as they go on sale every couple of weeks during the summer and sporadically around green any holiday week. A great price is 99 cents a pound in my area, \$1.49 is still good. Aldi often has wonderful green beans for a budget price. A few spots here and there are rust and don't necessarily hurt the flavor or cause any harm, but are unattractive. Use green beans within two to three days as they can deteriorate quickly. A quick blanch and subsequent plunge in ice water can hold them for another day or two if you can't get to them asap. Never let them go to waste...add a quick marinade and serve left overs cold. Cost: 99 cents.

•**Near Deli Cheese:** This is my term for the grocery store "fancier" cheeses often found near the deli - Of course, if your budget allows, buy the best cheeses you can afford, but those on a budget shouldn't shy away from dishes that need a little more punch from their cheese for monetary or taste reasons. While one may not wish to put a grocery store cheese out for a tasting, for instance, most are just fine in dishes or sprinkled on top, and can be bought for very little money by watching sales and using coupons.

•Pick the coupons up (generally on hang tags near the cheese) when you see them, not when you want to buy them. Sales seldom seem to happen at the same time the coupons are out, but most of the coupons have very long expiration dates. Hang on to them and use them when sales pop up. Watch your coupon matching sites, too - they'll let you know when the sale is and if the producer has any coupons on their websites. I've often gotten things like goat cheese, tubs of ricotta or balls of mozzarella, etc., for no cost or just pennies. Cost for Bleu Cheese, about 25 cents.

•**Pecans:** I try to stock up on nuts around Christmas and I seem to find the lowest prices at our local hardware/feed store. Aldi sometimes has great prices. It doesn't hurt to compare the bulk bin prices to the bagged ones in the cooking aisle. I paid \$1.99 for about 8 ounces and used two - cost 50 cents.

•I used to disregard nuts as a high priced, high calorie item until I learned exactly how good these are for you!