

Strategies Applied:

•Although not quite as pretty, this dish is wonderful left over; we often simply eat it cold like some kind of a salad.

•**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. One pound: 99 cents.

•**Chicken Stock:** If you read me regularly, I make my own with scraps of vegetables and bones – here's the basic recipe I use for [Best Turkey or Chicken Stock](#) – it's not particular and though it simmers for a long time, the burner is barely on – I just count it as free.

•**Russet Potatoes:** Potatoes are dirt cheap – look for a great sales price of \$1.99 for 10 pounds in the fall and winter; regular sales price is \$1.99 for five pounds in my area. Store in a cool dry area, not near your onions – I like to store in a loosely closed paper bag. Don't know what to do with a large bag? Make what recipes you'd like to, then make [Freezer Twice Baked Potatoes](#) with the rest. I often pick out the smaller, misshapen potatoes for mashing and save the more regular sized ones for baking or other recipes. Whenever possible, I scrub and keep the skins on, even though they may not be shown that way in a recipe...

•A “medium” sized potato (in my mind) runs about 5 ounces, smaller a few ounces less and a large around 8. Large “baking” potatoes look gorgeous but are always pricier and way above normal serving sizes. Cost for a medium at \$1.99 for 10 pounds, is 8 cents, at \$1.99 for five pounds, about 4 cents. Cost for this recipe:15 cents.

•**Green Beans:** Buy on sale as they go on sale every couple of weeks during the summer and sporadically around 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 and are at their best when used 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.

•**Garlic:** I look for a price of about \$2.99 a pound, or about 54 cents a head. Check the pricing of the bulk per pound as opposed to the packaged. I never really find it on sale, but I use so much, I pay attention and buy a bit more when I see the price is lower. Cost for 2 cloves, around 5 cents.

•**Green Onion:** I try to buy on sale for about 50 cents a bunch (usually during Holidays) then put the white tips in a jar of water in a sunny window to regrow. Kids love taking ownership of the project. I only need to replenish every few months. Cost is so minimal that I don't even count it.

•**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: 16 cents.

•**Onions:** They keep well, so try to buy on sale. Aldi's 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 small onion, about 8 cents.

•**Lemon:** In season in the winter months here - lemons are often on sale through out the year 3 to 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 for 1, about 33 cents.

•**Sun-Dried Tomatoes:** A specialty product for sure, they can be a bit pricey, but they are a flavor enhancer, a very concentrated tomato and a little goes a long ways. As a matter of fact, be stingy with them as they can over power. If you're balking at the price, consider the price of a tomato. Seldom advertised on sale, they often are, especially around Holidays, and the producers do issue coupons now and then. They keep almost forever so check your coupon sites and by them on sale with a coupon – sometimes free and sometimes pennies. Watch for new brands, the competition is fierce on products like this. Cost for a few (for me free) but 50 cents is reasonable.

•**Wine:** I really shop the sales and speak to the employees – I find I can find great wines for a pittance. If you have a wine shop you like, I find you can get mailings or emails for their best sales – often in the fall and spring. My last bottle of a basic white was \$2.99 – I know, I know, they say always buy a wine you'd drink to cook with, but you'd be surprised at the bargains you can get and how long you can use a bottle for quick little recipes like this and my bargain wine really is quaffable.

•If I were making a recipe with a long, slow reduction like a stew, especially with a red wine, I'd be a lot more careful, because any tannins or off flavors might be even more exaggerated, but all I want here is a well-rounded flavor and a bit of acidity. I'll even throw the wine in some dishes if it's starting to turn to vinegar, and if I didn't have any wine, I'd add a bit more stock and a few teaspoons of white wine or champagne vinegar, or even a red wine vinegar, or a squeeze of lemon juice depending on the recipe. Cost for 1/4 cup is pennies, about 40 cents.