

Strategies Applied:

Portion your chicken, double down on the chicken and the dressing; make a large amount of spice rub to use for this recipe and others, and avoid paying a premium price at the store!

- **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 \$1.69 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. These were actually made with [Frozen Boneless Breasts](#) - see how I work with them! \$2.11
- **Buttermilk:** I rarely have buttermilk on hand unless I'm planning to bake – so 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. If you don't have buttermilk, just use milk with a little mayo and sour cream or yogurt to add a little thickness and maybe a teaspoon of vinegar for a little tang. Cost for 3/4 cup, about 30 cents.
- **Yogurt:** I habitually buy the large cartons of yogurt, even when I can get the individual ones on sale with a coupon, just because I try to avoid as many additives and as much sugar as possible and I find them to be a bit better quality. If I feel like a flavored yogurt, I'll add in a bit of fruit to my bowl, or maybe a teaspoon of jam. 1/2 cup about 18 cents.
- **Romaine lettuce:** Look for 99 cents a head, [buying by the head](#) is much less expensive than the prebagged varieties. I used about 1/2 a head, cost 50 cents.
- **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. 3 medium tomatoes, about five to six ounces each: \$.60
- **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 fifty to seventy cents a pepper for the red, yellow or orange ones, and 40 to 75 cents for the green bell. This is one item I seldom buy at Aldi but sometimes they have great deals. The yellow bell was 69 cents.
- **Red Onion:** Red Onions do go on sale now and then, but store really well. I often look for them at Aldis. Even not on sale, a half an onion is about 20 cents. Peel your onions carefully, leaving as many layers intact as possible...most of the healthful nutrients (just like with many vegetables) lie just below the skin. I used part of the onion in the slaw, and priced it there. If I

don't have an immediate use for my onion, I'll wrap the rest in plastic and place in the door of the fridge where I'll see it. Cost 20 cents.

- **Raisins:** Buy these at Christmas, if possible, when dried fruits and nuts of all kinds go on sale for some of the lowest prices of the year. Coupons are generally available for the name brand ones. If they come in a box, I keep them in their box, but I put them into a Ziploc so they stay moist for a long time. If the original wrapping is flimsy, put in a heavy Ziploc, too. Cost per pound \$1.89 on sale, 1/4 cup is about 18 cents.
- **Pecans:** It's really worth while to look at alternatives to your grocery – I often buy at Aldi or our Mill's Fleet Farm – which is a farm supply store with all sorts of products – everything from saddles to outdoor furniture. Sometimes the drug stores (Walgreen, CVS, etc.) have good prices. If you have a “nut supply” house in your area, their prices can't be beat. In the regular grocery store, check the baking aisle, the snack aisle and the bulk aisle - and check for coupons, too, on some nuts. I also stock up around Christmas and freeze my nuts. I look for a price of \$4.99 a pound, but pecans are some of the pricier of the nuts, and I last paid about \$6.99 a pound. so the cost for 1/4 cups (2 1/2 ounces) is \$.50. Keep nuts in the freezer.
- **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.
- **Fresh Herbs:** I grow my own in the garden, and keep a few ones I often use on the back steps in a strawberry pot. When winter comes, I bring indoors. Indoors is not always ideal for herb growing, but since a plant costs about the same as a bunch, there's really no loss, even if it dies off; just snip and dry. Cost: nominal.
- **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.
- **Vinegar:** I pick up a jug of white & cider vinegar around Easter - often with a coupon, and often on an unadvertised sale. mIt keeps forever and is dirt cheap. The better vinegars are often on sale at Easter, and on sale with coupons sporadically through the summer. Many can be picked up at no cost or for just pennies. Stock up because great sales other times of the year are much less likely and vinegar is a component of so many recipes. Cost nominal. If your vinegar grows a "mother" just remove it, it's still perfectly fine.