

Strategies Used:

- **Zucchini:** A common garden vegetable, zucchini can be expensive at the store. Watch for specials, look at Aldi. 3 were \$1.68 at Aldi, 56 cents a piece.
- **Yellow Squash:** 99 cents a pound, one was about 59 cents.
- **Bread crumbs:** I've brought bread crumbs once, when a friend asked me if I'd pick up a can of Progresso Crumbs on my way to a dinner at their house. I was horrified how expensive they were. I always make my own from the left over bread and toss them in the freezer for when I need them (see my post on [bread crumbs](#).) When I am sautéing or frying something, I use the ones I've toasted rather than soft bread crumbs. Since they are made from a discarded ingredient, I don't count any cost.
- **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 also look for new brands and stock up - heavy competition means that when a new brand comes to the store, it is often at a fantastic price for a few weeks, then settles in at around the same price as the others. 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.
- **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. For a salad like this, I made an exception and bought a lemon flavored yogurt. Cost 70 cents?
- **Cheese:** Cheese is an item that I almost always buy on sale. Often with store specials, coupons and special offers from the producers I can get cheese very cheaply, and sometimes at no cost. I'll stock up then – if it's not open, it keeps forever. If I have to freeze, I will sometimes do this – it's ok when used in a casserole, but not very good for eating. I look for a price of a dollar (or less) for an eight ounce block of store cheese. I used about 2 ounces; cost 37 cents.
- **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. I bag it and put it in the door of the fridge. Cost 5 cents?