

Strategies Applied:

- **Ground Beef:** I always buy on sale and freeze - I don't think there is ever a reason to pay full price. If I have a bit left over, I put the remainder in a Ziploc and freeze, noting the weight on the package. I'll add to it until I get enough to make something. Cost \$2.49 a pound, a pound and a half is \$3.74.
- **Red Onion:** Red Onions do go on sale now and then, but store really well. I often look for them at Aldis. 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. Cost 40 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.
- **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 3 cloves, around 5 cents.
- **Parmesan:** When I make a dish like this, I don't have a problem with substituting the canned - I wish I could always use the best, but I just have to cut corners to stay on budget. I save the good stuff for when it really matters. I'll look for store specials (often buy so many products, get so much off,) coupons from Kraft or buy a store brand. My buy price is \$1.99 for a can, so my cost is about 75 cents.
- **Condiments:** I always pick up a lot of condiments during the [summer holidays](#) when condiments will reach their all time lows and coupons abound. A second chance always comes around during [Super Bowl week](#). If I can't find a deal with a coupon, the store brands on sale are often a good value, but with coupon deals, most of my condiments are free. That's a huge savings for me because being a scratch cook, I go through a lot! Cost: a guesstimate of 35 cents; that was a lot of ketchup.
- **Eggs:** Stock up on eggs when they're inexpensive, normally during Holiday weeks. Low prices in my area range from free (often with other purchases) to anywhere from \$1.89 for 18 eggs. They last for weeks in the fridge – The date on the container is a 'buy' date, and you can expect them to last a good six weeks past that date. If you pick up two or three packages when they're at their low, you'll rarely need to pay full price.
- Refrigerate right away and never store in the door; eggs keep best in a colder part of the refrigerator, in their own box. (Then put your partially used vegetables in the door where you'll see them and remember they need to be used ASAP – the half a bell pepper or onion, etc.) In doubt about an egg? If it floats in water, discard, just to be on the safe side. If they float, it means the egg inside is drying out, not that it is bad in any way. Cost for 2 eggs, about 20 cents.
- Other ingredients: negligible