

## Strategies Applied:

- **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 \$1.89 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. \$1.41.
- **Grapes:** On sale this week for \$1.29, I often find them now and then for 89 or 99 cents a pound. Use the rest as a snack or throw together a Fruited Chicken Salad with any leftovers. Make sure to wash your grapes very well, and make sure they're dry before roasting. Cost for ½ pound is 75 cents.
- **Wild Rice:** Look for it on sale around Christmas and Thanksgiving. If you don't live "up North" request it if you visitors from there- the price difference is amazing in different parts of the country, although it's more widely available in the past few years with the advent of commercial wild rice. I'll cook up the whole box or bag at once, then ziplock and freeze. It's really easy, then, to make my own rice blends, add to vegetables, waffles, bread, etc. Dry, wild rice keeps nearly forever in your pantry, too, so don't be afraid to pick up a larger bag if it's on sale. Cost \$1.40 • You'll also find different grades of wild rice: the perfect whole grains are more expensive, and quite elegant, but don't have any more flavor than the lesser grades that perhaps have some broken grains. If perfect isn't your goal, get the cheaper stuff! By the way, there is often left over liquid when cooking wild rice. I save this and use it as a part of the stock when I make a deep, earthy soup like Beef Barley. I usually end up with about a cup or two - I reduce it down to 1/2 cup and label and freeze - with a note saying how much water is needed to bring it back to the original amount. If you have leftover wild rice from a holiday dinner, it would be wonderful in this dish.
- **Cashews:** 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 (Walgreens, 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 cashews are some of the pricier of the nuts, and I last paid about \$6.99 a pound. so the cost for 1/2 cups (2 1/2 ounces) is \$1.10.
- **Water Chestnuts:** The same strategy applies when shopping for many Asian items: Look for big sales around the appropriate “New Years” when sales and coupons apply. Check the websites and coupon matching sites for coupons. Look in the Ethnic Aisle as well as the section where the more American type products are sold and compare prices. If you have an Asian market near you, you may be surprised at how inexpensive many items are compared to the grocery store. Water chestnuts are often no cost with sales and coupons because they are relatively inexpensive to start with. The other items are often considered specialty items and

you could pay enough for them to up the price of the recipe. Cost 89 cents.

- **Mayonnaise:** I buy several jars throughout the summer so I'll have cheap mayo all year round. I have to say I prefer Hellmanns, but as you can see, I've picked up Kraft due to price. Best to buy in the summer with coupons, I often find for \$1.00 a jar. You could use yogurt or Greek yogurt, the thicker the better in this. Make your own Greek style yogurt by layering cheese cloth over a strainer, placing the whole works in a bowl, making sure there is space between the strainer and the bowl and then loosely covering it and placing in the fridge for 12 to 36 hours. Cost 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.
- **Lemon:** Generally there is some sale on citrus in my area every few weeks; I try to pick up extra when it's on sale. Make sure to keep it bagged and check after you've refrigerated it for condensation. If there is any, turn the bag inside out and return the citrus to the bag. Consider zesting your lemons and freezing the zest in a small bag - add to it as you go. The zest can add some oomph in dressings, baked goods and fruit salads. If you won't use a whole lemon, but just need a bit of juice, roll it on the counter, pierce it with a knife and squeeze, leaving a pretty much intact lemon to use later. Cost about 59 cents.