



The Grocery Staples Starter List

Stock these once and you can always make *something*. This is the difference between "there's no food" and "give me 15 minutes."



Pantry (lasts forever-ish)

- ☐ Rice (the big bag — best value in the store)
- ☐ Pasta, 2–3 shapes
- ☐ Jar pasta sauce ×2
- ☐ Canned beans: black, kidney, chickpeas
- ☐ Canned diced tomatoes ×2
- ☐ Canned tuna or chicken
- ☐ Tomato soup / chicken noodle
- ☐ Peanut butter
- ☐ Oats
- ☐ Bread (freeze half the loaf)
- ☐ Ramen (with the upgrade plan)
- ☐ Tortillas
- ☐ Crackers



Flavor shelf (buy once, use for months)

- ☐ Salt & pepper
- ☐ Olive oil + a neutral oil (canola/vegetable)
- ☐ Garlic powder & onion powder
- ☐ Chili powder & cumin
- ☐ Italian seasoning
- ☐ Soy sauce
- ☐ Hot sauce of choice
- ☐ Sugar & flour (small bags)
- ☐ Ketchup, mustard, mayo



Fridge basics

- ☐ Eggs (the most useful food on Earth)
- ☐ Butter
- ☐ Milk (or your milk-adjacent beverage)
- ☐ Shredded cheese + sliced cheese
- ☐ Salsa
- ☐ Tortillas (they live in the fridge, fight me)
- ☐ Fresh garlic + onions
- ☐ Carrots & celery (cheap, last weeks)
- ☐ Whatever fruit is on sale



Freezer MVPs

- ☐ Frozen mixed veggies / stir-fry blend
- ☐ Frozen broccoli & peas
- ☐ Chicken thighs or breasts
- ☐ Ground beef or turkey
- ☐ Frozen fruit (smoothies, oatmeal)
- ☐ One emergency frozen pizza

Frozen veggies are picked ripe and cost half as much as fresh. Dad buys them too — it's not cheating.



How to shop without going broke

- ☐ Eat before you shop — hungry-you buys nonsense
- ☐ Make a list from what you'll actually cook this week
- ☐ Store brands: same factory, 30% cheaper
- ☐ Check unit price (the tiny number on the shelf tag)
- ☐ The store's edges have real food; the middle has snacks
- ☐ "Buy 2 get 1" only saves money on things you already buy



Rough starter budget

The full pantry setup (one-time)	\$60–90
Weekly groceries after that, one person	\$50–80
Same week of DoorDash instead	\$150+

Prices vary by city — the point is the ratio. Cooking is a raise you give yourself.



Dad's Quick Take: Eggs, rice, beans, frozen veggies, and a spice shelf — that's a survival kit that fits in one basket. Everything else is upgrades.