

FOOD COSTS



Good shopping habits can help you in the battle against inflation.

'We're all in this together'

By KRISTYNA JONES
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Large supermarkets aren't keeping their heads above water in this time of high inflation, says Marie-Paule Green, director of consumer affairs with Oshawa Group Ltd. "There are no enemies in the situation," she says. "We're all in this together — the worst inflation in memory — and the giant food chains aren't even succeeding."

At a recent informal discussion at Park Royal Library, Ms. Green gave her views on higher food prices and attempted to explain some of the reasons behind them. She says that often consumers don't see price increases the stores must live with. For example — there's been a 60.2 per cent increase in meat wrap and 69.3 per cent in produce wrap."

Money can also be saved, she says, by purchasing store brands as opposed to national brands. "Some people are still convinced that only Heinz makes the best ketchup."

Other ideas from Ms. Green: Buy in quantity, when storage space permits, but don't hoard; cater to family preferences — no use buying bargain food if no one will eat it; buy tougher, less expensive meat cuts and learn to cook them properly; avoid repeated trips to the supermarket the less you see, the less you'll want; cut down on convenience and snack foods and use the pricing system if a store has it.

Ms. Green says "production is not keeping up with demand" and food costs can't help but go up. There is no foolproof method to combat food-price inflation, says Ms. Green, but good shopping habits don't hurt. "The era of abundance is coming to an end and it's not a happy prospect."

Number one on her list of tips for shoppers is cashing in on weekly "specials." Ms. Green says that generally these are good deals. She notes that cruising from store to store for "specials" isn't the answer. Stay with the "specials" at one store and save your gasoline.

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Measuring cost per serving is a handy way of determining a good buy, according to Ms. Green. For instance, the price of a boneless roast may be high, but a less expensive cut may turn out dearer on a per-serving basis because it contains bone and more fat.

Ms. Green also suggests families cut the size of food servings. She says Canadians eat too much of the wrong food and it isn't necessary to eat huge helpings. She says "Temptation hits a shopper from time to time, but having a prepared list of needed items reduces impulse buying, Ms. Green says."

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How prices compare

This comparison of prices at Mississauga supermarkets is a regular Times feature. This week's offering: Tomatoes: Dominion, Clarkson Road Plaza, 69 cents per lb.; A & P Centennial Plaza, Lorne Park Rd., 59 cents per lb.; Food City, Dundas and Highway 10, 69 cents per lb.; Safeway, Dundas and Highway 10, 49 cents per lb.; Red & White, Lorne Park Rd., 45 cents and 89 cents per lb.; Miracle Mart, Erindale Station Rd., 59 cents and 69 cents per lb.; Loblaws, Lakeshore Rd. and Highway 10, 69 cents per lb. Dow Saran Wrap, 50 feet: Price is 49 cents in all stores visited except Red & White where it is 45 cents. Alpo Beef Chunks dog food, 14 1/2 oz.: Price is 37 cents in all stores visited.

For the Jews, a joyous celebration

Jewish residents celebrated a joyous festival last week — Hanukka.

"It's a very festive holiday," explains Ella Stoch of Mississauga. "It commemorates the religious freedom that was fought for over 2,000 years ago."

After a three-year battle, the Maccabees were victorious over the forces of the Seleucid king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

Hanukka which is celebrated for eight days beginning on Kislev 25, also is to mark the miracle which occurred at the rededication of the Temple following the religious war.

According to Talmud, the ritually pure oil available at the rededication of the Temple was sufficient for only one day's light, but miraculously it lasted for

eight days. Hanukka joy is expressed in festive meals, song, games and gifts to children. Each evening the children receive one small gift, and the traditional meal served is potato latkes (pancakes).

The Hanukka lamp or menorah is lit each evening. One candle is lit the first evening, and an additional candle each subsequent evening until eight candles are lit on the last evening. In comparison, Christians light four candles on an Advent wreath to mark the coming of Christmas.

Here is a frequently-used recipe for potato latkes:

- 6 grated potatoes
- 1 grated onion
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder

1 tbsp. oil
Drain potatoes, blend in rest of ingredients. Drop from ladle spoon into hot oil and brown on both sides. Serve with sour cream apple sauce or brown sugar.

Makes about one dozen. 25 minutes.

"We have pancakes a couple times during the week," says Mrs. Stoch.

"It's the grating that takes the time which is about 20

"Sometimes the pancakes are served as a side course or as a main meal. Because of Jewish dietary laws we don't mix dairy and meat products in the same meal."

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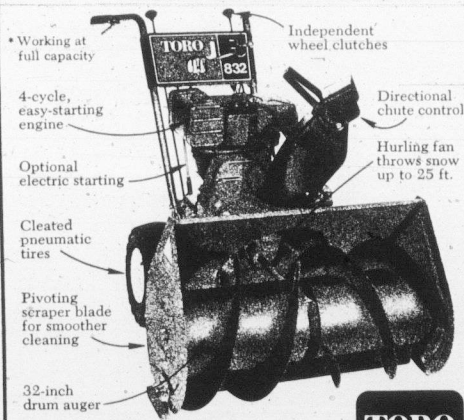
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