

## #126 - The Lazy Genius Guide to Grocery Shopping

Hi, everyone! You're listening to The Lazy Genius Podcast. I'm Kendra Adachi, and I'm here to help you be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. This is episode 126 - The Lazy Genius Guide to Grocery Shopping. There are lots of ways to approach shopping for groceries from where you go to making a shopping list, and today I'm going to share my seven principles for buying groceries like a Lazy Genius. We can, in fact, Lazy Genius just about anything, including how, when, where, and even why you buy groceries. I think you'll really be encouraged and motivated by the end of this episode.

First, I wanted to let you know that next week, The Swap will be available for just a couple of days! It's been part of the Ultimate Bundles Homemaking Bundle for the last few months, and they're bringing back that bundle on October 16 and 17, and that's the only way to get your hands on The Swap for at least another month or two. If you're new around here, The Swap is The Lazy Genius Guide to Decluttering for Life. It's a downloadable short, actionable ebook that will help you not just get your clutter under control but help you establish easy, personal practices to mostly keep it that way. Nobody keeps clutter at bay forever, but with The Swap, you'll likely come closer than you have before. Again, it's only available through the company Ultimate Bundles, and lucky for you, it's part of a bundle of literally hundreds of homemaking resources - ebooks, digital courses, pretty printables, all kinds of stuff. If you're on my VIP mailing list, you'll get a direct link to that flash sale once it begins next week on the 16th. I'll mention it in next week's episode, but in case you listen to that one a couple of days after it hits your phone, you might miss the sale, so if you want first word, be sure to join the VIP list. There's a link in the shownotes.

Okay, let's talk about how to grocery shop like a Lazy Genius!

I have seven shopping principles I want to share with you that will hopefully help make everything feel easier and more intentional.

Number one: name what matters. This might feel like a weird thing to begin with you're talking about grocery shopping, but I assure you it's not. The challenges with buying food are varied. You want to save money, you want the experience to be good, you want convenience, organic options, and an awesome selection. It's what I call House Hunters syndrome. I'll put a link in the shownotes to a post I wrote awhile back about how your meal plan has House Hunters syndrome, and your shopping practices might, too. You've likely seen the show on HGTV. House Hunters follows a couple usually in their quest to find their perfect house. We all laugh because they want five bedrooms, three bathrooms, an open concept floorplan, a two car garage, a pool, a huge backyard, plenty of space for entertaining, they want the house in the perfect neighborhood, close enough to walk to a coffee shop, in a good school district, but they only have seventy five dollars to spend. We all watch that show and go, "you guys, you can't get everything!" The same is true for so many things, including grocery shopping.

You want to save money and stick to a budget but you also want convenience foods. You want a lovely shopping experience and organic choices. But again you want everything to be its absolute cheapest. You want every thing to be in one store and all at the lowest price, but we can't House Hunters our grocery shopping. You have to name what matters in order to know where and how to shop.

If sticking to a budget is the most important thing that matters, that will inform your shopping. If you really need options to get food on the table quickly because you're a working parent and have a literal half an hour from getting out of the car to sitting down at the table, a really frugal grocery budget is much harder to stick to. Convenience by nature costs more. You rarely can get both, and so often our frustration is looking for those conflicting things to exist together and they just rarely do. The energy you spend trying to find a unicorn takes more out of you than you probably think. If saving money is not the thing that matters the most but you're still going to five different stores over a couple of days to get the cheapest price on every single thing on your list, you'll lose your actual mind. Because the price doesn't actually matter as much as your time does, but you haven't said that out loud yet. You haven't accepted that convenience and going to just one or two stores is all you have time for, even if you have to pay thirty cents more per lime than you do that third store.

Name what matters. Cost, convenience, experience, organic options, efficiency, how much the shopping process fits into the rest of your life, whether or not the store has really good curbside pickup. Name what matters, and you can't say all of them. Name the one main thing, and that will help you decide everything else.

Second principle: Choose what to accept and what to change. We all have some kind of frustration around grocery shopping whether it's all the running around, spending money on food that always seems to land in the trash, that a certain store never seems to have stuff in stock, or any number of things. There's no shortage of things to find frustrating, but you don't have to keep living in that. So either choose what frustrations to accept, namely the things that don't matter as much as you thought, or choose to change something.

For the first few years of my marriage, we had very little money. Kaz and I were both in college and didn't have jobs but still had bills. Even then, his first and still current job is being a school counselor which doesn't exactly pay well, and I had a parttime job at a church. So even when we were making money, it wasn't a lot. Saving money on food was a priority. I would spend a lot of extra time planning my shopping around store sales, I clipped coupons, I'd meal plan around what coupons I had and what sales there were, and I'd easily go to six different stores over the course of a week because I could.

When we started having kids and I was home with them, it was still easy to do those things because I needed things to break up the day of being home with diapers and babies who wouldn't nap. It was slightly annoying to go to all those stores, but it didn't really matter too

much. Well, about a year ago, I found myself dreading grocery shopping. It was just the worst possible thing, and I was surprised by that because I had never hated it before. Then I realized I that what mattered had changed but I wasn't changing my practices to go along with it. I was just living in the frustration. We didn't need to save as much money as we used to, and now that I'm working, I don't have even close to the same amount of time to go to all those stores. So rather than staying in the frustration, I decided to choose what to accept and what to change. I can accept being frustrated that this lime costs thirty cents more than the other one and choose to change how often I shop. It's absolutely worth it to me to go to only one store for everything and pay a little more than to be endlessly frustrated at all the time I was spending at different stores to save money that wasn't as important anymore as my time. Sure, it's still a little frustrating to not spend the absolute least amount on every single item I can buy, but I'm choosing to accept that as part of the trade-off. I'd much rather shop once and be done in my limited time.

So principle two: choose what to accept and what to change, and that is directly affected by the first principle of naming what matters.

Number three: you can't have it all. This is a short and sweet and almost repetitive principle to naming what matters, but it's important to say it here after the first two principles because you're going to rebel and want to have it all. We all feel it at some point, but you just can't. When you feel yourself frustrated by your grocery shopping experience, remind yourself that you can't have it all, and that's okay. You're not missing some magical piece of the puzzle that everyone else has. Even if you had more money to spend or more time to shop, you'd still find ways to be frustrated. We're human, most of us in very westernized cultures, and we're kind of taught to find fault in things so we'll buy more stuff to make it better. There's always something to complain about, so the sooner we can all remember that we can't have it all nor should we in some respects, the more pleasant grocery shopping will be.

Four: Rethink your routine. Some of your frustrations with shopping could be that you've been doing it a certain way for so long that you've kind of forgotten that you can change it. That happens in life all the time, y'all. I remember the first time The Nester told me that I can move around my own furniture wherever I want to, and I was like "I can?!" We forget that we can change things, even if they've been that way forever. So rethink your routine. Maybe you're ready for curbside pickup. Maybe your morning shopping doesn't work anymore because you're working parttime in the mornings and can't go but are still trying to cram it in super early. Maybe you've always kept a list on the fridge but now you plan dinner from your office rather than at home and need a digital list instead. Find your frustration, see if it's rooted to an old routine that is no longer serving you, and rethink it so that it will.

Five: Create your best scenario. This one is fun. If you could choose to grocery shop in the best way possible, what would that scenario be? Mine would be shopping one morning a week at two stores max, not getting mad about it, and then never going again until the next week. The fact that I didn't include anything about savings or what the food selection is hints at what matters to

me, back to principle one. Convenience and efficiency is the name of the game for me with a little bit of experience thrown in there. I haven't yet graduated to curbside pickup because I'm too much of a control freak, but really going in, getting all the stuff, not being mad about missing foods or unkind staff or a poorly laid out store, and then just getting out is what matters. It's okay if it costs a little more or if there isn't a super exotic selection since I shop pretty basic. The interesting thing about my best scenario is not a specific store or two but instead just the limit of how many I go to. Some weeks, I go to Walmart and Costco. Other weeks I go to Aldi and the international market. Some weeks, I drive the forty minutes to Trader Joe's. It all depends on what we need that week, but I would rather adjust our shopping list to my own shopping convenience than to getting every food ever at the lowest price possible. I'm guessing you're catching a theme now.

So create your best scenario. It will likely complement what you already said matters, it'll show you where you might be able to rethink your routine, and even if you can't follow your best scenario every time, it gives you a great jumping off point.

Six: Keep a list. There is a chance that what matters to you is the freedom to wander the store and buy whatever you feel like buying, but for most people, a list is a huge help to any number of grocery shopping priorities. A list keeps you from buying more than you need which helps you save money if that's your thing. A list keeps you from spending more time shopping and then putting away and finding places to store extra stuff which helps you if saving time is what matters. A list just keeps you on track of what you're buying which is super helpful for most people. You can add to the list as you shop, but having a list to start from is hugely helpful.

How might you keep a list? I'd start with what matters and then choose first either analog or digital depending on what makes the most sense. If you and someone else in your house share the shopping load but you don't always know who's going to go, it's nice to have a shared digital list so either person can go and know what's needed. You might have a dry erase board in the kitchen that you constantly add to. You could have an index card on the fridge where you do the same thing and then just take it with you when you go to the store. However you keep a list, the important thing is to just keep one. And because one of my personal grocery shopping priorities is ease and efficiency and convenience, I rewrite my shopping list into categories. I list all the produce first, freezer stuff together at the end, you get the idea. It helps me not forget something that I didn't notice on the list which drives me bonkers and I'm actively trying to avoid being driven bonkers.

There's more than one way to keep a grocery list, so in light of the other principles, think of a helpful way to keep your list. Just make sure you keep one. I think it'll be a huge help to you.

And finally, your time is valuable, too. That's a tough one to get behind. A lot of us weren't raised with that mentality. Saving money was the only thing ever worth saving, but saving time is also helpful for some people. The amount of time you spend pouring over store fliers, coupons, making five different lists for five different stores, and then actually going to those

stores... that's a lot of time. It might be worth it in the name of what matters, but it also might not be. I want to say very strongly that your time and sanity have a cost just like your budget does. Pay attention to that and claim a little freedom from that if you need to. It's a common thing I hear from a lot of you, so remember that your time is valuable, too, probably more than you're giving it.

So to recap: name what matters, choose what to accept and what to change, you can't have it all, rethink your routine, create your best scenario, keep a list, and remember that your time is valuable, too.

Now you might be frustrated with me right now because I didn't give you any tips on where to buy what stuff or what stores to go to or any super practical things. But you know I can't do that because what matters to you doesn't matter to everyone else. We all have different needs and priorities and schedules. One person's Lazy Genius solution to grocery shopping is just to buy everything at Whole Foods. Sure, it costs more, but the quality is excellent, organic food is super important, they have an Amazon partnership so you can get a discount and deliveries which is hugely helpful, and the experience is always great. That's your best scenario, and you're going to lean hard into that. But that is obviously not the solution for the grad student who is living on basically nothing but still has to eat. She's probably going to shop Aldi sales and sacrifice some quality for cost. And both scenarios are valuable and good and count equally. But I can't give you a magic formula for grocery shopping because there literally isn't one. Yes, Aldi has some great organic options at a reasonable price. Yes, Target and Costco give you a discount if you use their credit card. Yes, Whole Foods will always have the most beautiful produce and well sourced proteins. Yes, Trader Joe's is fun and mostly cheap. But there isn't a universal grocery store for all of us in all stages of our lives. That's why this is the Lazy Genius guide to grocery shopping. You have to think like a Lazy Genius and look beyond the prices and the list and name what matters and then create a system that makes the most sense for you.

I'll be live on Instagram this Thursday around noon eastern time, so now that you've listened to this episode, think through how these principles apply to your situation, and if you still have specific questions about how to create your system, ask me Thursday on Instagram. I'm @thelazygenius.

Alright, that's it for today! And don't forget that the Ultimate Bundles flash sale starts next week on the 16th, and The Swap will be included in that bundle. The link to the VIP list to get a heads up on that is in the show notes. Thanks so much for listening today. I appreciate each and every one of you. Until next time, be a genius about the things that matter and lazy about the things that don't. I'm Kendra, and I'll see you next week!