



TRASH TALK

BARBARA O'NEAL

Buying bulk for bargains

Growing up in a frugal household, I learned and embraced waste reduction early on. My mom's focus was on the reduce and reuse parts of the "reduce, reuse, recycle" motto, but one of my earliest childhood memories was being picked up by our local police for recycling. That is how I see it anyway, picked up for recycling.

I was about seven or eight years old and a friend and I had found the path to penny candy paradise. We discovered that the apartment dumpsters at the edge of the neighborhood had heaps of empty pop bottles. She would boost me into the big box dumpsters and I would toss out the empty bottles which she loaded into our little red wagon. A short trot down to the corner market, and we turned those bottles into cash and then just as quickly into penny candy. Paradise. We thought we were Brilliant with a capital B.

Well, for some reason the police, once they discovered us, did not think it so wise for young girls to be hanging around in apartment dumpsters. And, inexplicably to me, my parents agreed. It was a good gig while it lasted.

Now, instead of saying I'm frugal, I just admit I'm cheap. So cheap I squeak, as my father used to say. It is not unusual for me to leave a grocery store with only sale items in my bags. Buying in bulk, when possible and practical, is a great penny-pinching strategy. The cheapskate in me is over the moon when bulk items are on sale.

The other advantage of buying in bulk is that it reduces packaging waste. Even if you don't bring your own containers, the paper or plastic bags by the bulk bins are often less wasteful than the bags and boxes on the shelves and are generally reusable.

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DORY'S DIARY

DOROTHY SWART FLESHMAN

Hoping to have a chance to help again

Pain is something that can linger on long after the occasion that caused it has passed by.

The thought that reminds us isn't always present but comes and goes, sometimes at surprising times or places.

Wherever we encounter it, it must be dealt with in the moment that it makes its appearance whether alone or in a crowd of people.

Of all places recently, I met it at the Friendship Center yard sale quite unexpectedly and had no idea that it would manifest itself at home hours later in retrospect.

The large room where the yard sale was held was filled with potential shoppers intent on finding the best buy or the necessary item available among the many tables.

I didn't need anything but I am very interested in recycling, so I spoke to a few relatives and friends briefly as I passed among the tables to see what I could help recycle.

It was amazing how many things I no longer need but it doesn't keep me from looking, for just the most important item might be snuggled among the many things spread out on the tables for all to see.

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Keeping Cooking Costs Under Control

Cut Cost, Not Flavor

By Daniel Neman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Once again, I mysteriously failed to win the lottery.

That means one thing: back to having a food budget. But I want the food I cook to taste good, no matter how little it costs.

So this week, I set out to make a handful of great-tasting dishes that were not a strain on my wallet.

The idea was to use inexpensive ingredients, but in an artful way. I cut out pricey frills and kept to classic combinations of flavor. I made sure that I got my protein. And I cooked dishes that made me smile. They may not be fancy, but they're awfully good.

Also, they're kind of fancy. One is a traditional Italian dish, one is based on a dish I saw at a wonderful restaurant, one is hearty German fare and the dessert is a traditional, all-American favorite.

Not only are they inexpensive, but they are all easy to make. In fact, the hardest part for me was figuring out how much each one cost me per serving.

I'll admit to cheating a little in this respect. I did most of my shopping at a store in my neighborhood that is noted for perfectly decent-quality food sold at particularly low prices. If you go to one of the better-known grocers, your mileage may vary. But not by much.

I bought the size of each item that I typically buy, keeping in mind that my pantry is small. For instance, I used a 4-pound bag of sugar instead of a less-expensive (per ounce) 10-pound bag, however I used a 5-pound bag of flour instead of a 2-pound bag. I prorated only the amount of each item that I used.

The results are in, and I spent no more than \$2.09 per serving on any of the dishes.

The cheapest of all was the Italian dish, spaghetti al tonno, which I made for a paltry 73 cents per serving. I wouldn't call it elegant, necessarily, but it was delicious.

The "tonno" in spaghetti al tonno means "tuna," and this particular tuna comes out of a can. That's how they serve it in Italy, too. There is nothing wrong with frugality when it tastes this good.



Colter Peterson/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Apple crisp a la mode

For the sauce, you just saute garlic in olive oil and add canned tuna. The sauce comes together in less time than it takes to boil the pasta. It will be a little dry, so simply add a bit more olive oil and a dash of butter to the mixture.

No one needs to know how inexpensive it is. I went vegetarian for my next entree. This is the one that was inspired by a description of soup I didn't even try, the kale and garbanzo soup at Union Loafers.

When I'm counting my pennies, I look to polenta. I look to polenta when I'm not counting my pennies, too, because it is so deeply satisfying that it gratifies the soul.

I particularly love polenta cut into wedges and fried. It takes more work and fills you with more calories, but that is nothing when the result is so sublime.

I fried some wedges of polenta and topped them with a garlic-scented mixture of wilted kale, garbanzo beans, diced tomatoes and onion. People raved about it, and it only cost 98 cents per serving.

But I couldn't keep up the sub-\$1 servings forever, not when I wanted to make bratwurst and sauerkraut with apple. And I did, because

it's bratwurst and sauerkraut and apple. In Germany, that's as classic as it gets.

Bratwurst and sauerkraut with apple has one more ingredient that makes all the difference: caraway seeds. The lightly crushed seeds bring a sharpness to the mixture of flavors that adds a much-needed high note to the stick-to-your-ribs meal.

It all came out to \$2.09 per serving. It's still extremely reasonable, but I wish I'd bought a cheaper apple.

Dessert was an apple crisp, and, buying in bulk, I did actually pay less for the apples.

Apple crisps turn out not to be as old as I had thought; they have not been around for nearly as long as their cousins apple cobbler, apple brown betty and apple pandowdy. The first reference to them in a cookbook was only in 1924.

Like pandowdies, brown betties and cobblers, apple crisps begin with a layer of stewed apples lightly sweetened with a mixture of sugar and lemon juice. On top of this is a baked topping, and here is where the differences are to be found.

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Perennial promise: The primroses

A little talked about well-known perennial garden flower is the primrose. There are actually two plants with the common name primrose. The first is a small plant that likes cool, damp weather. It is of the Primula group.

Primulas are grown extensively in England, and require a lot of moisture and a sort of "boggy" soil. They come from woodlands and moist meadows, and most often from climates cool and humid. They form rosettes of leaves above which the flowers are carried either on individual stems, in a cluster at the ends of the stems, or in rows of clusters up the stems.

Each individual flower is composed of 5



BETWEEN THE ROWS

WENDY SCHMIDT

lobes indented at their tips. Sometimes the indentations are so deep it makes the flower appear to have 10 petals. The shooting star wildflower is a primula.

The other plant called primrose is actually called Evening Primrose, an Oenothera. Oenothera are native of the southern United States. They are drought-tolerant and can live in poor soil. The showiest of the yellow-flowered species is called the Ozark sundrop (Oenothera missouriensis).

Evening primrose is a lovely perennial spreading plant that grows about 9 inches tall on upward-turning reddish stems. The dark green, narrow leaves tend to lie prostrate along the ground with the bright canary

yellow flowers above. The flowers are spectacular, appearing too large for the plant. It blooms for many weeks during the summer.

Mexican evening primrose blossoms are rose pink. The plants are about 8 inches tall and are less aggressive than most of this type.

There is a white evening primrose that I have seen growing wild in the high plains of New Mexico and Northeast Arizona. It is called Oenothera speciosa. It's a taller, coarser plant with flowers that open white and then age to pink. This white form is said to spread rampantly.

You can grow Oenothera primroses in any well-drained soil. The plants are easy to start from cuttings and can be divided in autumn in areas where winters are mild.

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A memorable, and moving, trip to NYC

This past spring break, six of my immediate family of 10 were on the East Coast and one day they were all in New York City, but not together. This made me think back to October of 2017 when Dale and I were in New York. This was the last stop on the Canadian trip I shared with you some time ago and failed to give you the New York experience.

My most memorable moment of the trip was the morning we arrived, sailing in New York Harbor and seeing the Statue of Liberty. The closer we got, the most exciting it was. We were all standing on the deck watching and waiting until we finally got close enough to take a picture. What a thrill.

It was late morning when our ship docked in Brooklyn. After a quick lunch we readied ourselves for the 9/11 Memorial and Museum tour in the afternoon. We were



OUT & ABOUT

GINNY MAMMEN

in Brooklyn and our destination was on the island of Manhattan, so that meant a long bus ride was in store for us, including a section through the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, which is 9,117 feet long (almost 2.8 miles). One thing about bus travel is that you also get to see a number of city sites even though the glimpses are fleeting. The New York roadways and streets were quite crowded and we noticed a considerable amount of litter. But the weather was a perfect 67 degrees and the sun was shining, and we were not disappointed when we reached our destination.

The Trade Center is an oasis in the middle of the hurry scurry of New York City streets. The

original seven buildings in the World Trade Center were all removed and the current complex is composed of five skyscrapers, the Museum and the Memorial. One World Trade Center, standing at 1,776 feet in height and the main building in the new complex, is the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere and the sixth-tallest in the world. Its cost was \$8 billion.

The building that caught my eye was the beautiful and unusual Oculus Building, a white structure created to look like a bird in flight. This serves as the transportation center located at ground zero. The design of the building permits light to enter the subterranean rail station, known as Path Station, and shopping center below. This building has half a million people visiting in a week's time.

The Memorial Plaza was con-

structed where the Twin Towers once stood and occupies about half of the 16 acres in the World Trade Center complex. There are two enormous waterfalls (the largest manmade) and reflecting pools, each about one acre, set within the footprints of the original Twin Towers. Currently surrounding the reflecting pools there are more than 500 swamp white oak trees which will someday create a canopy of leaves over the plaza. These trees join the Survivor Tree, a Cullery pear, which is the only tree out of 313 to have survived the 9/11 attack. Although it had been severely damaged it was removed and nursed back to health by the New York Parks and Recreation Department. In 2010 it was replanted in the plaza as a reminder of survival and rebirth.

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