



Food Bank NYC Challenge Tool Kit

What Is the Food Bank NYC Challenge?

By agreeing to take the **Food Bank NYC Challenge**, you are attempting to **live on a Food Stamp budget for one week**.

That means you only have **\$29** to spend for **all** of the food you consume in 7 days.

While living on a food stamp budget for just a week cannot come close to the struggles low-income families encounter month after month, take the Challenge to see for yourself what even this brief experience is like.

When a gallon of milk costs almost as much as your entire day's food budget, you'll never look at food shopping the same way again.



Why Take the Challenge?

NOW IS YOUR TIME TO **ADVOCATE**

The Food Stamp Program (now known as SNAP, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is the first line of defense against food poverty and the nation's single **most important program in the fight against hunger.**

CUTS ARE HURTING NEW YORKERS

Over the past year, Congress has cut Food Stamps twice, and soup kitchens and food pantries saw an immediate increase in visitors - New Yorkers can't afford to ANY cuts to Food Stamps.

Challenge Your Network

EVERY VOICE MATTERS

The Food Bank NYC Challenge draws **public attention** and illuminates the reality of living on a food stamp budget. Together, we can lift our voices through awareness and advocacy to protect Food Stamps.



Facts about Food Stamps...

**46.3 MILLION
AMERICANS
RELY ON
FOOD STAMPS**

**1.7 MILLION
PEOPLE IN NYC
RELY ON FOOD
STAMPS**

**80% OF THOSE ON
FOOD STAMPS
ARE WOMEN &
CHILDREN**

**IN 2013 CONGRESS CUT
BENEFIT TO ONLY
\$1.38 PER MEAL**

**76% OF FOOD BANK
MEMBERS SAW
IMMEDIATE INCREASE IN
NEED AFTER 2013 CUTS**

**84% OF RECIPIENTS WHO USE FOOD PANTRIES
& SOUP KITCHENS REPORT THEIR BENEFITS DON'T
LAST PAST THE 3RD WEEK OF THE MONTH**

How to Take the Challenge...

DO

- Shop the day before and limit yourself to **\$29 total food budget** for the week, per person participating
- Make **grocery lists** to help keep food shopping focused on healthy, affordable foods
- Cut **coupons** for savings
- **Share** your experiences on your social networks and Food Bank's
- **Challenge Congress** protect and expand Food Stamps by visiting www.foodbanknyc.org/challenge-congress

How to Take the Challenge...

DON'T

- **DON'T** accept free food from friends, family or colleagues – this includes food served at work, parties or events you are attending*

**Participating children can continue to eat school meals*

- **DON'T** use food you already have in your home*

**You may use common spices and condiments already in your pantry*

- **DON'T** give up! You may find it difficult to complete the Challenge due to schedule or the limited budget. It is still important and worthwhile to track your experiences.

General Suggestions:

- Being on a budget means **planning ahead**. Get your followers involved in your planning by asking for suggestions of low-cost healthy snacks & meals for the week.
- **Share** photos of some of the meals your followers suggested or meals that are significantly different from what you typically eat.
- You may notice yourself **feeling hungry or tired** at different stages of the day or week. Share moments like this with your followers - how does your nutrition shape your exercise habits and your work performance?
- Mealtimes are a good time for taking a second to **check in on Twitter and Instagram** (#FoodBankNYCChallenge) or **post to Facebook** about why you are taking the Challenge.
- If you have **children** or a partner participating, checking in throughout the week to share your experience as a provider and their experience joining you on the Challenge.

Share Your Story...

Sharing your experiences is a powerful way to raise public awareness about the challenges people face when they try to eat on a tight budget.

TWEET: Mention us **@FoodBank4NYC** and use hashtag **#FoodBankNYCChallenge** to join the online conversation and share your challenges and triumphs.

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM: Share pictures of your meals, your grocery shopping cart, recipes, questions, and experiences and tag us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

CHALLENGE YOUR FRIENDS: “I took the *Food Bank NYC Challenge*, and challenge [friend’s name] to experience a food stamp budget for one week. To learn how, visit www.foodbanknyc.org”

ADVOCATE: Tell Congress to protect Food Stamps, visit www.foodbanknyc.org/challenge-congress to send an email.



Share Your Story...

These questions are meant to help you identify specific moments throughout the Challenge.

- Day 0:** Post a photo of your cart at the grocery store & share your meal plan for the week.
- Day 1:** What did your day's food intake look like? How does this differ from what you usually eat?
- Day 2:** Link to the Food Bank NYC Challenge page & share your support!
- Day 3:** How much time are you spending thinking about, planning and preparing your meals? How is this different from your usual routine?
- Day 4:** You are halfway through the challenge! How do you feel? Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Be honest, have you skipped breakfast (or any other meal, for that matter) because of your budget?
- Day 5:** Have you been to a Holiday party? Could you afford to bring something to share?
- Day 6:** Have you had any moments where you've been forced to make a choice based on your budget? How do these choices highlight the importance of food stamps in the lives of people who live every week on a limited budget?
- Day 7:** Welcome to the final day of the challenge! How will you continue to advocate against the proposed cuts? Will you challenge your friends?