

# The Single Gourmet

By Gina Mancuso

*If you enjoy fabulous, healthy food that's big on flavor and low in calories we've got the Whole Truth.*



Living alone? Tired of tossing spoiled food away by week's end? Money down the drain you say? Many people say it's not easy feeding one, but I've got the skinny on how to stretch your dollars in an unlikely place. Some do say that Whole Foods Market is slightly more expensive than other area markets. Perhaps this is true on some items, but all it takes is a bit of savvy know how to stretch your dollars without compromising ingredients.

Another problem in a household of one is repetition. Made a nice big salad on Monday? Well, hope you like it enough to eat it two more times that week. Other dishes like one pot wonders, casseroles and lasagnas also produce a plethora of grub for one person. Sure it can be pennywise to prepare foods in bulk, but if you're like most Americans, you need choices and crave variety. It's a game of outsmarting your hunger and keeping your taste buds tantalized each night because it's downright boring to eat the same thing each night and let's face it, some food items are just not meant to be frozen for a later date. If you've dismissed **Whole Foods Market** from your supermarket runs, you've been hasty. Unleash your inner foodie and take a second look at our country's largest organic and natural foods store that's not exclusive to gaggles of ecologically responsible yuppies with disposable income. Whole Foods Market is for everyone and I'm out to prove it. Whether you are a college student, young professional, or solo senior who loves good eats, I'm sure you'll find the following ten tips helpful.

1. **I've got your number - 365!** Overwhelmed with all the new brands you don't normally see in most large grocery chains?

Keep it simple; buy items labeled with Whole Foods Market house brands (365 Everyday Value and 365 Organic Everyday Value). Look for the 365 colorful logo on many items throughout the store. They tend to be less expensive than their shelf neighbors and just as high quality. It's also a great brand to trust for pantry staples.

2. **The best singles bar around - The salad bar!** And don't bypass the soups. My favorite is Triple Squash. There are usually about five freshly made soups prepared each day. Now, back to the salad bar...don't think of the salad bar as just a salad bar. Personally, this is where I get creative. Talk about making meals with key ingredients. The Sante Fe beef salad becomes a fajita dinner and certain things make delicious pizza toppings. The salad bar allows timid, but curious eaters things to experiment with like temphe for the first time or BBQ tofu anyone? I like combining two items to make a sauce (fire-roasted tomatoes and olive salad for example). Pick your favorites and throw over pasta or pizza toppings!!! The containers are sturdy. Recycle them for future food storage needs.
3. **Portion Power! Take what you want from bulk dispensers...**there is no reason to buy a whole bag of this or an entire box of that. Hit the bulk food dispensers for items such as dried fruits, all types of nuts, about eight different kinds of granolas, yellow corn grits, rolled oats, white sushi rice, and a variety of loose pastas (try the whole wheat pasta for just \$1.99/lb). Take what you want. Try new things.
4. **Save on gas an electric.** Let the fabulous Whole Food Market chefs do the cooking! Pick up gourmet hot and cold items all of which would be perfectly acceptable to serve at a party for aristocrats and debutantes. Again items here can be portioned out. A little piece of London broil, one cinatro corn fritter, one

crab cake, just two Black Chertry BBQ chicken wings, who cares?... A little of this a little of that will liven up a meal. Customize your dinner and be inspired to recreate it on your own someday.

5. **Deep Freeze.** The selection of frozen entrees is vast and truly different. I bet you never even heard of some of these brands. People can not live on Lean Cuisine and Healthy Choice alone. Try Amy's, Wolf Gang Puck, Kashi etc. I especially like all the fabulous Thai food selections and other ethnic delights.
6. **Ditch your current BFF.** And become a Burrito Fan Forever!...elaborate on this and also on prepared quesadillas.
7. **Pre-diced is so nice!** Prepackaged veggies and fruit.
8. **Move over Bob Evans.** Grille up some gourmet sausages like apple bacon chicken sausage and sun dried tomato. Grab a side of pasta salad and you're good to go. This is one of my favorite go to meals because it's fast, low in fat and filling.
9. **Turning Japanese.** "I think I'm turning Japanese I really think so!"
10. **Eat Dessert First!** One of the best things about the Whole Foods samples bakery (aside from the free samples) is that they package small individual goodies just for one. So indulge in a cappuccino brownie or a coconut cupcake. Here's the thing...you will buy just one brownie not six. So, there won't be five left to eat in your house! Five less brownies equals five less times you'll hate yourself in the morning. That's less time on the treadmill...everything in moderation!

#### Must try/What a buy

1. WFM fresh in house sausage - twenty-two varieties made daily. Each link is approximately 4 oz. and is great grilled, sautéed, or used in a sauce.

2. WFM 365 Brand 4 cheese pizza. One of our most popular frozen entrees and at just \$3.79, a real bargain - along with a salad made from ingredients from produce or from the salad bar.
3. Fresh made seafood oven ready items like stuffed salmon, grouper wrapped in banana leaf, pecan crusted Tilapia filet - restaurant quality food at a fraction of the cost.
4. Fresh soups and chili's from the prepared foods department.
5. Any item from our chefs case.

#### New and Noteworthy

1. At Devon as well as many other Philadelphia area stores, we will be holding a farmer's market right in our parking lot twice a week. Will have up to twelve or more local vendors plying their wares.
2. A push by the company to bring in as many local vendors and artisans as we can find to broaden the scope of our offerings.
3. Continuing to expand our line of 365 products - where the quality and flavor always meets and usually exceeds that of the national brands while still providing reasonable cost to the consumer.

Take my challenge. Try these suggestions and email me your own tips/suggestions on how to get a WHOLE lot more for your money when shopping for good eats in perhaps the country's most fabulous market! And, enjoy your singleness. You won't be single for long once you start cooking for your dates!



*Jami Tryer is a freelance writer, who grew up in Margate, NJ., but has been a Center City Philly resident since 1991. She is a partner with Munroe Creative Partners, a well-known graphic design firm, where she is a Senior Project Manager and helps to develop new business. She has been freelancing in her spare time for five years for magazines such as Philadelphia Style where she has reported on trends in beauty, fashion, food and culture. For PhillyFIT, Jami has countered the myth that dining out can be frighteningly fattening in her column. Contact JamiTryer@phillyfitmagazine.com.*