



# A Year of Living Sustainably

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Welcome and introduction



Share your name,  
favorite plant-based food,  
and what you'd like to learn today.

**Give your audience a few moments to get to know each other in pairs or small groups by asking them to share their name, favorite plant-based food (it can be a recipe or just an ingredient), and what they'd like to learn today.**



Take a moment to discuss the Year of Living Sustainably campaign. It’s a multi-faceted campaign that hopes to engage residents with the goals outlined in the 2018 Green Cincinnati Plan and foster community building and local leadership.

**Monthly challenge:** Each month we ask residents to participate in monthly ‘neighborhood’ challenges that help make Cincy more sustainable, equitable, and resilient. This month we’re partnering with La Soupe to see which neighborhood can sign up the most drivers for their ‘Food Rescue US’ App. Learn more at <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/oes/a-year-of-living-sustainably/take-action/commit-to-one-sustainable-behavior-each-month/>.

**Pledges:** Each month (and at the end of this presentation) we ask people to commit to one behavior or action that will reduce their impact on the planet. At the end of 30 days they’ll receive a survey asking them to evaluate the action (did they complete it, what did they like about it, what advice do they have for others trying to do the same, AND do they plan to continue it) and one pledger will receive a prize! This month it’s 4 weeks of CSA boxes from Our Harvest Cooperative.

**Community engagement:** We have recurrent monthly events where participants can

share their progress, get connected to local resources, and help build their social circles. If you're interested in hosting a presentation in your community or workplace, contact Liz Congleton at [liz.congleton@cincinnati-oh.gov](mailto:liz.congleton@cincinnati-oh.gov). We also post daily tips on our Facebook ([@greencincinnatiplan](https://www.facebook.com/greencincinnatiplan)) and Twitter([@living\\_year](https://twitter.com/living_year)).

**Fostering leadership:** Each month, we ask the community to nominate someone who they feel embodies the monthly theme and inspires them to live more sustainably. Then, we select a 'Leader in Sustainability' and recognize them with a Mayoral Proclamation!

## Rank the solutions

The group **Project Drawdown** has ranked the most effective climate change solutions, and below, we've separated some of the top ones by category.

Actions are labeled to indicate whether they can be implemented by individuals, companies or policymakers.

👤 What you can do
🏢 What industries can do
👥 What policymakers can do

Drag the solutions below to rank the ones you think would have the biggest effect on curbing climate change.

### Our food

1 of 8

🔄 Drag the cards to rank the solutions

1st	2nd	3rd	4th
<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Cook over clean stoves</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: #007bff;">👤</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Compost your waste</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: #007bff;">👤</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Throw away less food</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: #007bff;">👤</p> </div>	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Eat a plant-heavy diet</p> <p style="text-align: center; color: #007bff;">👤</p> </div>

**How'd I do?**

I hope everyone brought snacks because today, we're going to talk about food. Specifically, we're going to cover: tips for eating locally and in-season, limiting the consumption of animal products, and reducing food waste. But before we do any of that, let's see what you already know.

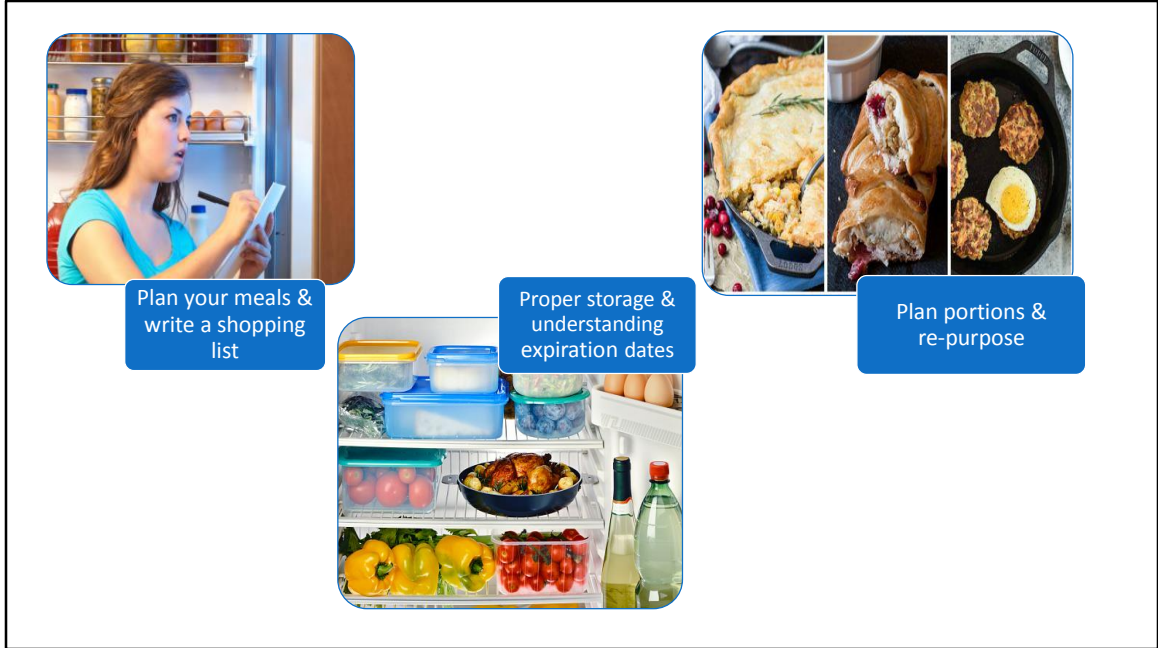
CNN put together a quiz based on 'Drawdown', a collection of essays about the 100 most effective strategies for reversing climate change. Drawdown quantifies the potential impact of a number of different actions for individuals, businesses, and governments. This slide asks you to rank the potential impact of the following 4 food-related, individual actions: cooking over clean stoves, composting waste, throwing away less food, eating a plant-heavy diet.

(You can visit the actual page for real time answers)

[https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2019/04/specials/climate-change-solutions-quiz/index.html?fbclid=IwAR2npPPZnmBvpPWS2XerMOzk3ECO032\\_g\\_yIKLbJcDXOGFu9J3DNpTLEQU](https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2019/04/specials/climate-change-solutions-quiz/index.html?fbclid=IwAR2npPPZnmBvpPWS2XerMOzk3ECO032_g_yIKLbJcDXOGFu9J3DNpTLEQU)

**Ask participants to work with a partner to order these solutions from 1<sup>st</sup> (biggest potential impact) to 4<sup>th</sup> (smallest potential impact).**

**Answers:** 1. Throw away less food 2. Eat a plant-heavy diet 3. Cook over clean stoves  
4. Compost your waste



As we just learned, reducing food waste is one of the highest impact actions you can take, and it doesn't tend to be the first thing most people think of when 'greening' their diet. There is a ton of great literature about how to make sure you're eating everything you buy, from <https://challenge.ivaluefood.com/toolkit/> to Green Umbrella's Waste Reduction Action team's resource page (<https://www.greenumbrella.org/page-1075460>). Encourage your audience to utilize these; some resources break food waste prevention into '5 tips' or checklists or other things of that nature. We're going to break it down into actions before you shop, immediately after you shop, and when it's time to eat.

### Before you shop

- Do an assessment of what you have (half an onion? 4 eggs that are a few weeks old?). Incorporate them into your meal plan for the week.
- Plan your meals. Figure out which days you'll have time to prepare something versus grab and go, post a weekly 'menu' so your partner/family/roommates know what to expect.
- Write your shopping list at home and eat before shopping. You'll avoid buying ingredients you already have or deviating from the list. If you find an unbeatable deal, especially on produce, see if you can't swap it out with something else on the list.

**Ask who in your audience writes a grocery list for their shopping trips. Invite them to share their own tips.**

Immediately after you shop

- Learn how to store food for its maximum shelf-life. **The picture of the refrigerator above contains a number of 'storage mistakes'. Ask your audience if they can spot any. (Uncut tomatoes should be stored at room temperature, peppers belong in a crisper drawer, eggs should not go on the door, meat is not covered, etc.)** / *recommend making this document from Hamilton County available ([http://www.hamiltoncountyclecyles.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_3788196/File/EnvironmentalServices/SolidWaste/Residents/Food%20Waste/FoodWasteGuideEdited.pdf](http://www.hamiltoncountyclecyles.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3788196/File/EnvironmentalServices/SolidWaste/Residents/Food%20Waste/FoodWasteGuideEdited.pdf))*  
*The National Center for Home Food Preservation is a handy guide for freezing, canning, drying, etc.: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>*
- Cultivate an 'Eat this first' section, with a sign to provide visual cues. Consider cutting and pre-portioning fruits and veggies for snacking, as these will often get overlooked in favor of more expedient snacks.
- Make sure you understand what the 'best by/use by/sell by' dates on your food mean – These have nothing to do with food safety (only baby formula is an exception), just peak quality. Most food will last well beyond the listed dates. <http://www.eatbydate.com/> is a great resource for knowing how long foods last and how to know if they're spoiled.

When it's time to eat

- Measure out and cook only what you're going to eat. Uncooked foods last longer than cooked ones, and most packaged foods contain 4 or more servings. Read the label so you know how much to prepare, alter recipes to reflect the number of people you're feeding, and have a plan for leftovers.
- Even well-planned meals can result in leftovers. You may need to designate one night 'leftover night' on your meal plan, or challenge yourself to re-purpose leftovers into something new!

**Activity: Plan a meal**

**Divide participants into groups of 5 and give each group a list of 'leftovers'. Give them 5 minutes to come up with a recipe using what's in the fridge plus a few pantry staples. Ask groups to share what they came up with. What are the takeaways? Did every group make the same meal? Were there any vegetarian/vegan meals? (This can help transition to our next topic)**

Another useful resource for reducing food waste:  
<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/lets-talk-trash>



sustainably meat consumption – just one 3oz serving of red meat and one 3oz serving of white meat every 3 days.

### **Sources for charts**

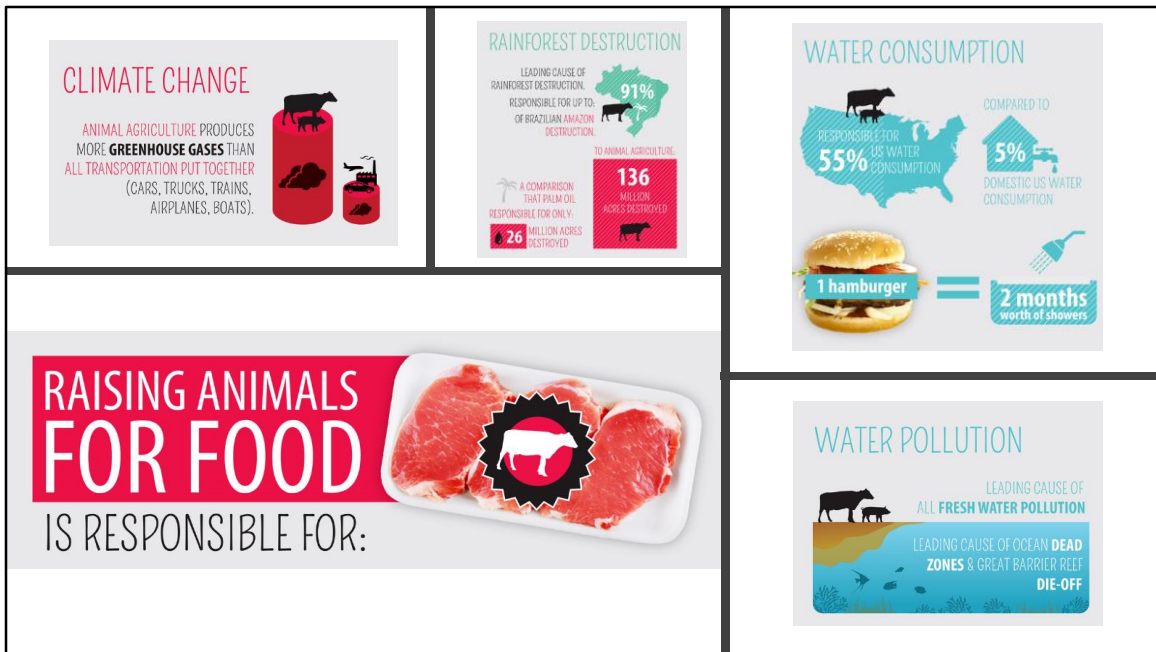
Acres: <https://michaelbluejay.com/veg/environment.html>

Meat consumption: <https://ourworldindata.org/meat-and-seafood-production-consumption>

Energy: <https://www.ewg.org/meateatersguide/a-meat-eaters-guide-to-climate-change-health-what-you-eat-matters/climate-and-environmental-impacts/>

Recommended meat consumption: <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn21175-just-how-much-meat-can-eco-citizens-eat/>

Helpful article: <https://www.wri.org/blog/2016/04/sustainable-diets-what-you-need-know-12-charts>



If you have time and/or a curious audience you can do a deep dive on the impacts of the way we currently raise livestock (factory farming). Small-scale farming mitigates a lot of these effects, but produces less meat, so the fact remains: we need to reduce our consumption of animal products to make our diets more sustainable.

Sources for facts and infographics: <http://www.cowspiracy.com/infographic-1> and <http://www.cowspiracy.com/facts>

Transportation = 13% of emissions, animal agriculture = 18%

Water pollution: ‘Dead zones’ are areas where there are low rates of oxygen in water, causing marine life to suffocate. They often occur when runoff from farms and cities drains into an ocean or lake and loads up the water with excess nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus (think manure and fertilizer). Those nutrients feed a bloom of algae, and when those organisms die, they sink through the water column and decompose. The decomposition sucks up oxygen from the water, leaving little available for fish or other marine life. (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/ocean-dead-zones-are-getting-worse-globally-due-climate-change-180953282/>)





Going vegetarian or vegan can significantly reduce your ecological footprint and have a big impact on the planet, but it's can be a challenge and is admittedly not for everyone. Reducing the consumption of animal products, however, is something everyone can do and it's probably a lot easier than you think. We're going to spend the next 7-10 minutes addressing some of the more common misconceptions about to shifting to a plant-based diet.

**Activity:** Ask if there are any vegans or vegetarians in your audience and invite 3 or 4 of them to create a 'panel' to respond to the audience's questions. Try to get a diverse representation of age, gender, income-level, etc.

**Ask the audience to reflect on what they perceive to be the biggest obstacle to eating fewer animal products, whether it's social pressure, money, cooking ability, etc. and invite them to ask your panel for tips.**

If there are no brave volunteers for your panel, you can use the info below to respond to some common concerns:

1. "You can get enough \_\_\_\_"

**Protein:** Most Americans think of meat when they think of protein, but there are a ton of high-protein plants (seitan, soy, beans, lentils, oats, quinoa, seeds, and a myriad of grains) that tend to be leaner, rich in other nutrients, and high in fiber. In fact fiber deficiency is much more common among Americans than protein deficiency; most Americans, vegans included, eat more than the recommended 50g of protein per day.

**Calcium:** Dark leafy greens are the best sources of calcium for vegans—turnip greens, mustard greens, kale, bok choy, and collard greens. Some people also consume supplements or fortified products to ensure they're getting enough calcium.

**B12:** B12 is found in eggs, dairy, fish, and meat products, but vegans might need to pay special attention to incorporating it into their diet. Marmite, nutritional yeast, and supplements are good sources.

## 2. "It's hard to eat out."

Most vegans and vegetarians will tell you it's easier than ever to find restaurant and catering options that fit their diet. Specialty restaurants can be expensive, but even as traditional restaurants are adding options to their menus, many non-western cuisines feature dishes with no meat or animal products (Indian, Ethiopian, Thai, etc.) and opting out of or subbing ingredients can make many options vegan.

## 3. "It's more expensive."

'Substitute' products (think almond milk vs milk, veggie burger patties vs ground beef) tend to be more expensive, but meat tends to be one of the most expensive items at the grocery store and plant proteins are some of the cheapest (beans, lentils, peas). The real obstacle here is to think about your meals a little differently...many people tend to think of a main 'meat' dish with a side. Plant-based meals are often a one-pot mixture of veggies with legumes or grains.

## 4. "It's unhealthy."

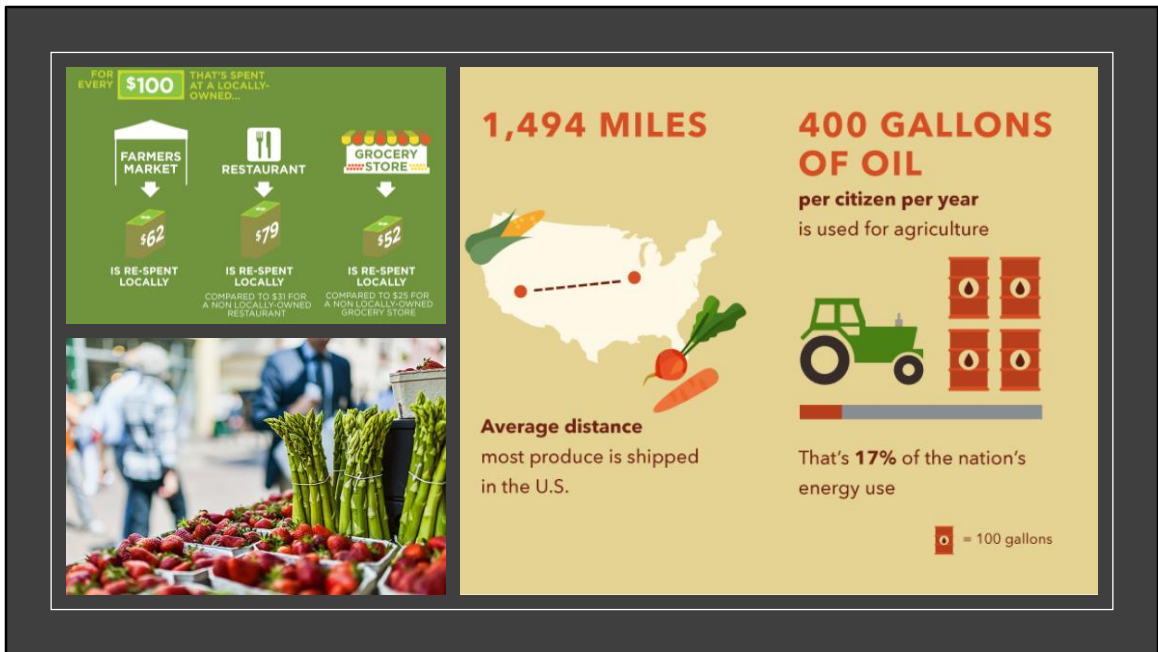
As with any diet, eliminating one food or group of foods doesn't necessarily equal 'healthy'. Replacing animal products with processed and refined foods isn't ideal; though reducing your intake of red meat and processed meats does decrease your chances of colorectal cancer and diabetes. In general, vegans and vegetarians have lower BMIs and a reduced risk of diabetes and heart disease; there's a correlation between these benefits and reducing your consumption of meat, eggs, and/or dairy.

## 5. "Vegans are too preachy."

No one likes unsolicited advice about their diet, but that doesn't seem to stop people from giving it. This is true for people with all kinds of diets, from paleo, to low-carb, to keeping halal. Be patient and remember that someone telling you what they do/don't eat isn't the same as them telling you what you should eat. There are just as many people who are 'preachy' about how much they love bacon or how Skyline is

better than Goldstar, it's just that those opinions are well-represented in our culture and therefore less likely to threaten our worldview.

Here are some famous folks you might not have realized were vegan: Venus Williams, Bill Clinton, James Cameron, Ellen DeGeneres, Cesar Chavez, Olivia Wilde...the list goes on. Most vegans



The last thing we're going to talk about is buying local food. That word 'local' can be a little tricky to nail down...What if some ingredients were grown elsewhere but packaged here? Does it count if it's not directly from the farmer? How far away is 'local'? For today's discussion, we're going to use Green Umbrella's definition of 'any food produced within 100 miles of Cincinnati', but I encourage you to do some research and decide on your own definition.

Ok, so why by local? **Ask your audience to come up with a list of 'Top 5 Reasons to Buy Local'. You can write them down to help illustrate.**

(Some possible answers)

1. It's good for the local economy: When you choose to spend money on locally grown food, more of that money stays in your community. Large supermarket chains funnel profits to their corporate headquarters where it's spent on marketing, expansion, etc. Because local farmers don't have the same transportation and distribution costs as large agricultural businesses, they can retain more of the profits from their sales.
2. It creates local jobs and represents an investment in a practical skill
3. It's good for your health: Eating food grown on a small farm often means fewer preservatives and pesticides, and you get all the nutrients that are often lost on long

journeys or in processing.

4. It's good for the environment: Small-scale farming promotes crop diversity and (as a guard against crop failure) and preserves farmland that supports wildlife (as opposed to industrial development)

5. It reduces carbon emissions: Reduced transportation = reduced fossil fuel consumption.

6. It tastes better: shipping food across the country doesn't just reduce its nutritional value...often foods are picked before peak ripeness to make sure they look good when they go to market...which makes them a lot like that girl you hated/dated in high school – attractive but bland.

7. There's more accountability: At a market, the people growing the food stand behind it, literally. Local growers rely much more on word of mouth than chains, so quality and integrity are critical.

8. It builds community: Farmer's markets and locally-owned businesses are community assets and create social cohesion and physical spaces for community.

9. They protect against food insecurity: Investing in local food ensures that farmland and the skills to cultivate it are spread across the region, protecting against crop failure, natural disasters, etc.

10. It's a learning opportunity: If you're buying at a farmer's market there's a good chance that at least one ingredient will be new to you. It's a great place to try new foods with an expert to give you advice on what to look for and how to prepare it.

**Take some time to discuss each of your top 5 reasons.**

Even when you shopping at a grocery chain, you can help support local growers by looking (and asking for!) locally-produced foods and buying fruits and veggies that are in season. They generally cost less and don't need to travel as far.

**Activity: Divide participants into small groups or pairs. Give one person a 'What's in season' chart (<https://ofbf.org/app/uploads/2015/06/Whats-In-Season-2018.pdf>). This person will quiz their group/partner by naming a fruit or vegetable listed and asking for other(s) to specify which month(s) that food is in season.**

**Take a moment to discuss takeaways following the activity.**

Local Economy Graphic:

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/constantine/initiatives/local-food-initiative/System.aspx>

Travel Graphic: <https://www.fix.com/blog/eating-with-the-seasons/#Sources>

# What can you do to green your diet?

## A Year of Living Sustainably: Food

### I already...

- grow some of my own food or buy local and in-season
- plan meals to prevent food waste
- avoid foods with a negative environmental impact  
(please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- other: \_\_\_\_\_

### I pledge to...

- spend 10% of my budget (\$\_\_\_\_\_/ week) on local food
- eat \_\_\_\_ plant-based meals per week
- reduce my food waste by: \_\_\_\_\_
- sign up for the Food Rescue US app
- other: \_\_\_\_\_



scan me



### Resources:

[Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team](#)

[CORV Local Food Guide](#)

[Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste District](#)

[Vegan Earth](#)

[La Soupe Cincinnati](#)

## Resources

Green Umbrella Local Food Action Team: <https://www.greenumbrella.org/Local-Food-Action-Team-Resources>

CORV Local Food Guide: <https://www.eatlocalcorv.org/>

Hamilton County Recycling and Solid Waste: [http://www.hamiltoncountyrecycles.org/residents/food\\_waste](http://www.hamiltoncountyrecycles.org/residents/food_waste)

Vegan Earth: <http://www.veganeartthus.org/Index.html>

La Soupe: <https://www.lasoupecincinnati.com/>

Take the 'Cook from your Fridge' Challenge: Create a recipe from the 'leftovers' listed below

'Odds and Ends':

frozen broccoli  
6 eggs  
1 can of beans  
2 chicken cutlets  
1 bottle of beer  
tri-color peppers  
1 block of cheese  
2 tomatoes  
1 lemon  
Fresh spinach

Pantry staples:

rice  
pasta  
flour  
butter  
salt  
sugar  
condiments (ketchup, soy sauce, etc.)  
any item you consider a staple

