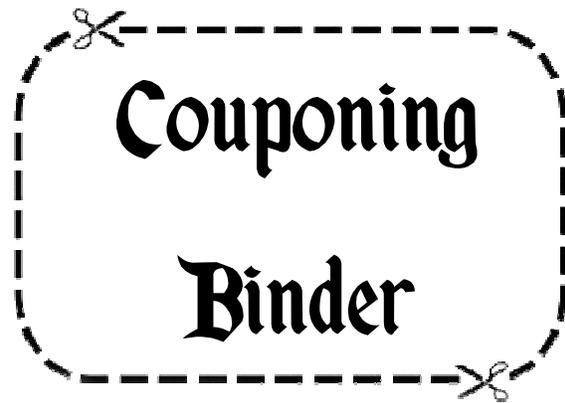


# How to Organize Your



Here are the supplies you will need to organize your Coupon Binder:

- Baseball Card Inserts (at least 30)
- 5 Tab Dividers
- 3 Hole Punch
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Paper Clips
- Coupons
- Coupon Binder Worksheets
- 1 inch or larger binder

Cut out the Category Labels. Make sure you keep them in alphabetical order. If you do not have a baby or pets, feel free to throw out those labels.

Insert 30 baseball card organizers into the front of your binder. Place a category label in the lower right corner on each page going in alphabetical order. If you need more than one page per category, insert a blank baseball card insert behind that category label and make sure you keep a coupon for that category in the lower right corner at all times (this way when you are flipping through the binder, you will know that specific page is a continuation of the category on the previous page) .

After the baseball inserts, insert the Shopping List. Feel free to print multiple copies of the shopping list and store them in this spot in your binder.

Behind the Shopping List, insert the 5 tab dividers. Here is what you will place in each tab:

Tab #1 (Pricebook) –

- Pre-Printed Price List
- Blank Price List

#### Tab #2 (Stockpile) –

- Stockpile Inventory
- My Freezer Inventory
- Spices Checklist
- How Long To Store & Freeze Your Stockpile
- How To Store Produce
- How To Store Produce (blank)
- School Supply Stockpile List

#### Tab #3 (Menu Planning) –

- What's For Dinner? Menu Planner (you might want to print multiple copies of this page and store them here in your binder)
- Go To Meals
- Food Substitutions

#### Tab #4 (Get More Coupons) –

- Get More Coupons
- Sign Up For Newsletters
- My Rebate Tracker

#### Tab #5 (MISC) –

- Money Saving Tips Worksheet

Finally, insert the binder and spine covers if you plan to use them.

#### **How To Organize Your Coupons**

First you will need to organize your coupons. There is no wrong or right way to organize coupons, but here is what works for me.

**Whole Inserts** – Each week, I go through the inserts from that week's Sunday paper and cut out only the coupons I know I definitely want to use, no matter what. I leave the rest of the insert intact and place them into a file box in a compartment labeled with the week the inserts came from. I place the coupons that I cut out into the coupon binder.

**Check File/Coupon Organizer** – I carry a coupon organizer in my purse at all times. I have labeled each compartment with the names of the stores that I shop at. As I prepare my shopping trip each week, I place the shopping list for that store and the coupons that I plan to use within each store's compartment. I also keep any store cards or gift cards I have to use for that store. In the back of the organizer, I keep restaurant and retail coupons.

**Coupon Binder** – Within the coupon binder, I keep all the coupons I have cut from inserts as well as coupons that I have printed, received in the mail, cut from store circulars, etc.

## Organizing Coupons In The Binder

Take 20 index cards and label each card with a category from your binder. Keep these index cards with the coupons you need to organize.

When you are ready to organize your coupons, lay the 20 index cards out on your kitchen table (or other surface) in alphabetical order. As you sort your coupons, lay them on top of the index card that is labeled with the category that they belong in. Once you finish sorting your coupons onto the index cards, you can now place them into the baseball card inserts within your binder. I find that by doing this, you save valuable time because you aren't having to constantly flip between categories.

As you place the coupons into the category pages, you will find that you need to fold many coupons. I recommend folding them in half so that the name and brand are visible on the front of the baseball card insert and the remaining information is located on the backside. As I place them into the slots, I try to put them in order by expiration date to make it easier to know how long I have to use a coupon.

Take paperclips and place them over the top slots on each baseball card insert. This helps these coupons to stay in place as you flip the pages. Otherwise you'll end up with coupons flying everywhere!

Once you have finished organizing your coupons, it is time to move on to the next sections of the binder.

## How To Use The Worksheets In The Coupon Binder

**The Shopping List** – I designed this 2 store shopping list to help you save on paper. At the top of each column, write the name of the store that it is for. On each of the lines beneath the page, write in the quantity, the name of the item that you need and where you can find the coupon. For example, if you needed 2 boxes of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese and the coupon was located in the Smart Source insert from Sunday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, you would write in 7/28 SS in the coupon space. Then you would know that you need to locate your inserts from that date and cut out the coupons from the Smart Source insert.

Once you complete your shopping list, gather up all your coupons and place the cut shopping list and coupons into the store's compartment within your coupon organizer that I suggest you keep in your purse. You can also place these inside envelopes and store them in the front cover of your coupon binder.

**The Price Book** – Keeping a price book will help you to keep track of what the best price is for produce, meat and dairy items that you buy on a regular basis. Take your new price book to your favorite store and write down the current prices for the items you buy in the My Favorite Store's Regular Price column. If you normally shop at Aldi's for produce, you would write down all of Aldi's prices for the items you routinely buy there. If you normally shop at your local mom and pop grocery store for meat, you would write down all the meat prices there. It's okay if you normally buy items at multiple grocery stores. Just make sure you write down the price for the store you shop at the most for those items. In the notes section, you can indicate which store the prices came from.

Each week, take the sale circulars for your stores and write in the standard sale price for the items. You'll probably have to update your price multiple times so make sure you always write it in pencil.

In the My Personal Best Price box, keep track of the lowest amount you find that item for.

For example, my favorite store usually sells boneless chicken breast for \$1.98 a pound. I know that if the sale price is \$1.79 or lower, it's a great deal and I should buy about a month's worth (because that is about how often it goes on sale at that price). The best price I have ever found boneless chicken breast for was \$1.49, so I know if I ever find it at that price again, I should buy as much as my budget allows and freeze it.

I also included a blank copy of the price book if you want to keep track of other grocery/health and beauty items that you buy on a regular basis.

**Stockpile Inventory** – On this page, you can keep track of how many of each item that you have. Take a moment to take this page around your house and put a check mark for each individual item you have in your stockpile. For example, if you have 3 bottles of dish soap, you would put 3 checks. I only use this to track unopened items, so I always know how many I have in my stockpile.

Aim to have a 6 month supply of each item in your stockpile at all times. Once you have a 6 month supply of an item, you can stop stockpiling it until you start to use the items up.

Reference this sheet as you make your shopping list so you know what sale items you need to stock up on and which items you are well stocked on.

**Freezer Inventory** – This page works a lot like the Stockpile Inventory. You want to keep track of how many items you have in your freezer. However, each check mark should represent a meal's worth of meat. For example, if you have a 5 pound pork loin that you know makes 4 meals for your family, you would put 4 check marks. If you have 4 bags of broccoli but you know that you use 2 bags per meal, you would only put 2 check marks.

Aim to have at least 20 meals worth of meat in your freezer at all times. Reference this sheet as you make your menu and shopping list.

**Spices Checklist** – Knowing what spices you have on hand when planning your menu and shopping list is crucial. Instead of having to jump up constantly to check the spice cabinet, take a moment to write down all of the spices you have. I included the most common spices for you at the top of this page, but left plenty of room for you to write in other spices you might have.

If you need to grow your spice stockpile, try to add one new spice to your shopping list each week until you have all of the spices you commonly use.

**How Long To Store & Freeze Your Stockpile** – There are a lot of foods besides the ones you find in the freezer section of the grocery store that you can freeze. I made this sheet so you can quickly reference freezer time on many popular grocery item so you know if you can stock up on them and freeze the excess when you are shopping. This is a list of how I personally freeze items, but you can also find how to freeze items just by googling freeze + the name of the item (ex: freeze cottage cheese).

**How To Store Produce** – Throwing produce all together into the crisper drawer is not always the best way to store it. I made a list of how I store commonly purchased produce items, but I also included a blank list so that you can write down how you store produce. You can use this sheet as a quick reference when you are putting your produce away to make sure you are extending the life as long as possible.

**School Supply Stockpile List** – Every year, the kids have to go back to school. Instead of waiting to purchase all their items at (gasp!) regular price, purchase items throughout the year when they are on sale. Keep track of what

you have on this list. Aim to purchase as many items on sale as you can so that when you get the new school year's list, you can fulfill it with items from your stockpile.

**What's For Dinner Menu Planner** – Planning meals for your family each week is a critical part to being successful at couponing. You always want to plan your menus around your stockpile and grocery store sales. Aim to plan 6-7 meals a week and keep track of the ingredients that you need to purchase on the side of this menu. That way, you can reference this list as you make your store shopping lists to make sure you purchase these items where you can get the best deal.

I labeled the menus #1 - #7 that way you know how many meals you have the ingredients for. The best part is that you don't have to feel like you need to eat a specific meal on a specific day. Just pick one of any of the 7 meals to cook each night.

Make sure you reference the Spices Checklist, Freezer Inventory, Go To Meals, Food Substitutions, Price Book and Your Sale Circulars as you make the menu.

**Go To Meals** – Each cook has a handful of meals they love to prepare for their family. Keep a list of these recipes and ingredients on the Go To Meals worksheet. When you are planning your menu and shopping list, you can quickly reference what items you need for these meals instead of having to look up the recipe to double check the ingredients.

**Food Substitutions** – When you are preparing your meals, sometimes you realize you don't have something on hand. Instead of scrapping the meal (and possibly ending up going out for dinner), check the Food Substitutions List. I've also listed some items that are fairly expensive to purchase for just one meal but that you can make at home (like buttermilk).

**Get More Coupons** – Writing to companies to get coupons is a great way to save more money. On this sheet, you can keep track of what companies you have emailed and when you emailed them. Most companies will send out coupons every 6 months if you write to them.

Learn more at <http://www.couponingtodisney.com/contactcompanies>

**Sign Up For Newsletters** – Almost every restaurant and retail store you frequent has an email newsletter on their website. Keep track of every company's newsletter you have signed up for on this list. They will frequently send out coupons and even birthday freebies! If you plan to shop/dine there in the next year, make sure you sign up for their list now.

Learn more at <http://www.couponingtodisney.com/retail-newsletters> and <http://www.couponingtodisney.com/dining-newsletters>

**My Rebate Tracker** – Rebates are a great way to grow your fund. Keep track of the rebates you have on hand and the rebates that you have mailed on this sheet.

**My Favorite Money Saving Tips** – Couponing isn't just about saving money at the grocery store, it is also a lifestyle. Use this page to list the new money saving tips you learn that you want to apply in your own home. Aim to try at least one new money saving tip per week.

Find more at <http://www.couponingtodisney.com/moneysavingtips>

## How To Save Money With The Couponing Binder

Each week, gather up the sale circulars for the stores in your area. Flip through each circular and circle the items you think are a good deal. Start by making a menu for your family for the week using the **What's For Dinner Worksheet**. Print as many copies of the **Shopping List** as you will need for the week. Write the store names that you will be shopping at on each list and add in the dinner items that you will need to purchase at each store.

Next, browse the sale circulars and write down any items you see on sale on that store's shopping list that you know you need during the week or even coming weeks (snacks, breakfast foods, etc).

Then write in any items that you need to purchase that aren't on sale (use your price book to know which store usually has the best non-sale price on these items).

Finally, write in any items you see that are a really great deal that you want to stock up on and items that you have coupons for that you want to purchase this week. Make sure that you don't go over your weekly grocery budget stocking up on items that you won't use within 2 weeks.

