

# Dollars and sense

by David Uffington

## Grocery Packaging, Portions Shrinking

Grocery manufacturers have figured out that consumers are less disturbed by smaller packages than they are by higher prices. So they're counting on consumers not to notice the smaller packages now on store shelves in increasing numbers for everything from ice cream to sandwich spread.

In some cases, the packaging isn't shrinking, but the contents are. Peanut butter is an example: What used to be an 18-ounce jar of a major brand of peanut butter is now 16.3 ounces — a full serving gone — in the same size jar. It's the same with margarine: same package with less in it.

It's more important than ever to read the unit cost and per-serving price of each item you buy. In many cases, what you're getting now isn't what you were getting only a few months ago. (Double check to be sure that the unit pricing sticker has been changed to reflect the now-smaller item. Some stores are slow to make those changes.)

Those who are dieting or who have special dietary requirements, such as diabetics, need to be

extra vigilant about calories and carbs, as the contents of a package could be different, even if it looks the same.

Cooks, too, are finding that recipes are suffering if the ingredients suddenly change. If your recipe calls for a certain amount of tomato paste, check the can to see if it's still the size you expect. The same goes for cake and cookie mixes: If you expect to make cupcakes for three dozen children at school as you always have, check the box to see how many cupcakes the mix will actually make now.

If ever there was a time to investigate store brands, it's now. Let the unit pricing be your guide about whether an individual product is a good buy.

Start clipping and using coupons, even if you haven't done that in the past.

Suggestion: If you have a favorite food that hasn't shrunk yet, and if you can combine a purchase with coupons to make it truly worth your while, load up. Check the expiration dates to make sure you'll use it in time. It's a feel-good step, but one with benefits.

*David Uffington regrets that he cannot personally answer reader questions, but will incorporate them into his column whenever possible. Write to him in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send e-mail to [columnreply@gmail.com](mailto:columnreply@gmail.com).*

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## King Crossword

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**Answers on Page 10**

**ACROSS**

- 1 Tibetan monk
- 5 Brooch
- 8 First victim
- 12 Blackbirds
- 13 Buck's mate
- 14 Portrayal
- 15 Personal aura
- 17 River of England
- 18 Strips in the kitchen?
- 19 Housecoat of a sort
- 21 Pinion partner
- 24 Architect I.M.
- 25 Diastemata
- 28 Fibs
- 30 Proof abbr.
- 33 Volcano output
- 34 Easter symbol
- 35 E.T.'s craft
- 36 The air up there
- 37 Give a makeover
- 38 "Little Women" woman
- 39 Caribbean or Coral
- 41 Wings
- 43 East-of-the-Urals folks
- 46 Collision
- 50 Common queries, on a Web site
- 51 Review
- 54 Chills and fever
- 55 Fine, to NASA
- 56 Undressed
- 57 Oboist's sliver
- 58 Larry's pal
- 59 React in horror

**DOWN**

- 1 Ella's real name
- 2 Author Seton
- 3 Uncategorized (Abbr.)
- 4 John Jacob and kin
- 5 Without delay
- 6 Debtor's letters
- 7 Requirement
- 8 Got up
- 9 Small shop
- 10 Otherwise
- 11 Groucho-like look
- 16 - jiffy
- 20 Daisy lead-in
- 22 Hint
- 23 In a way
- 25 Petrol
- 26 Invite
- 27 Bod
- 29 Carbon compound
- 31 Small salamander
- 32 Homer's interjection
- 34 Cereal choice
- 38 Alaska explorer
- 40 Made comfortable
- 42 Performance
- 43 At a distance
- 44 Full of wisdom
- 45 Con game
- 47 Blue hue
- 48 Lather
- 49 Dickens' Uriah
- 52 Kanga's kid
- 53 Mamie's man

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