



**Lipsey, Fiona**  
**THE \$21**  
**CHALLENGE**  
Simple Savings Intl.  
(290 pp.)  
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A clever, merry approach to feeding your family while staying on the right side of debtors' prison.

New Zealanders and ministers of the website SimpleSavings, Lipsey and Gower are believers in the artful use of scant means, and they pursue that end with a jaunty, unstoppable enthusiasm. They contend, and then go about demonstrating, that you can feed a family of four for a week with \$21 (and if you have anything in the larder, so much the better). This is a challenge for one week, not every week of the year; neither Lipsey nor Gower suggests that. But when the cupboard and the checkbook are nearly bare, it's one problem off your plate to know you can feed a brood on a few bucks. The authors take you step by step through their plan: how to involve your family, how to take stock and inventory, develop shopping lists and meal plans and deal with the "minor hurdles"—"These are the underminer, the guilt tripper, the shopping victim, the sponge, the big kid, the snob and the high D.I. (disposable income)." They provide tips and tricks for meeting your goals and focus on a well-rounded diet, quality foodstuffs and healthy eating of the commonsense sort, with plenty of treats that don't lead down the road of morbid obesity. And the recipes aren't what you might expect for a measly \$21 for the week: sausage risotto, hotpots, cream pasta, potato cakes and bean pies and stretching a chicken five ways. They address leftover ingredients, such as opened cans of chickpeas and coconut milk, curry paste and chili sauce, gelatin, oats and the dreaded zucchini (BBQ, soup, stir fry), and then step into the breach with substitute ingredients when you can't find the one you want. When the portions seem small to you—one woman feeds her four on a pound of ground chuck one night, a half a chicken breast the next—just move on.

It's rare that paupery can be so much fun and a bracing thumb in the supermarket manager's eye.