

CHECK IT OUT!

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Man chronicles dollar-store delicacies in new cookbook

By SIDHARTHA BANERJEE
The Canadian Press

A Montreal man who spent three years consuming meals consisting mainly of staples found at the local dollar store has parlayed his culinary journey into a cheap-eats cookbook.

But as Jonathan Lemieux tells it, the exercise wasn't a wild attempt to lose weight or partake in a dieting fad — it was driven by necessity.

The cookbook, *Survivre avec une poignée de change*, translates loosely to *Surviving With a Handful of Change*, and chronicles his time as a student trying to make do with limited funds.

Lemieux, now 30, had gone back to school at the time to do a second university degree in fine arts. With a bit of money from working and a budget based on loans and bursaries, he found himself on a very strict food budget.

"I decided it was too expensive for me to go to the grocery store, it was almost a luxury," Lemieux said in a recent interview.

He worked with a monthly food budget of between \$75 and \$115 — or roughly \$20 to \$25 a week. Armed with basic cooking skills, he was trying to figure out how to stay fed. A trip to the local dollar store triggered an idea.

"One day I was shopping at Dollarama for pens and pencils and I'd forgotten they sell food, so I started to buy all my food there," Lemieux said.

He estimates that 90 per cent of what he ate was bought at the store. He would supplement those foods on occasion with discounted, and nearly expired, meats and vegetables from the grocery store.

Lemieux said he tried to clip coupons when he could or go to the open-air market to pick up fresh foods in season.

"But most of the time I'd end up at Dollarama," Lemieux said.

Instead of eggs and milk, he used plenty of mayonnaise, soup base and oil. Dollar-store bread was a staple as were chick peas — lots and lots of chick peas.

Some of his favourite recipes include a version of seafood paella using canned mussels and oysters and with beef jerky replacing chorizo sausage.

"It was probably much more fattening but it was still good," assures Lemieux.

He made a shepherd's pie using tinned beef, canned corn and a box of mashed potatoes. Another favourite was a beet soup, which he said was much like Polish borscht. There was also a pickle soup, "which sounds disgusting, but it's actually pretty good," he added.

Lemieux even found a way to come up with desserts, which he qualified as a luxury while on budget. His favourite was mustard cookies, which include mustard and lots of sugar. "I like them, they're pretty good, and I still make them actually."

The Montreal-area native kept his dietary habits from his family. He said he never told them because it was important to him to take care of himself without seeking handouts.

"I think they knew I was struggling with money but they didn't know it was to that extent," Lemieux said.

"I saw my mother and I gave her the book (recently) and she said to me 'I had no idea you ate like this.'"

Lemieux no longer does. After completing his second degree, he's been working steadily since 2011. But he still had the recipes he'd tried over the years scribbled out on paper. Of those, more than 90 made it into the book. Lemieux stands by the recipes — including a lot of soups, pastas and salads.

The book was a bit of an accident — joking around with a teacher about his eating habits led to the idea of publishing a book for friends.

But then the publisher expressed interest.

It's not the first time the so-called dollar-store diet has been attempted and experts often say consumption of that much processed food can be problematic in the short-term and long-term.

Purple pinkies for polio

Fredericton North Rotary Club invites everyone to donate a toonie during the month of October to help eradicate polio worldwide

By LORI GALLAGHER
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Don't be surprised if you spot some purple pinkies in the city this month, as six area elementary schools are taking part in Rotary End Polio Now Month.

Children across the city will be donating \$2 and having their pinky fingers dyed purple to signify that their contribution will pay to vaccinate a child overseas from polio.

Mayor Brad Woodside officially launched the project on Sept. 27 when he proclaimed October Rotary End Polio Now Month in the city.

"The plan is to run it for almost the entire month, leading up to World Polio Day, which is on Oct. 24," says John Bowles, co-chair of the Fredericton North Rotary Club's End Polio Now project.

There are two aspects of the project, he says.

"One is public awareness, particularly amongst young children in the Fredericton area," he says. "And the second is a fundraising function, because just \$2 pays for the cost of immunizing a child overseas from polio."

Though polio has been eradicated in Canada, there was a time that it was a big issue. For example, there was a scourge of polio in Fredericton from 1941 on, says Bowles.

According to the Fredericton Polio Clinic, 1941-1967 website, 1941 was the most devastating polio year in New Brunswick, though the province was hit by another epidemic of polio in 1952.

Polio is the virus that attacks the nervous system, notably of young children. It has no symptoms and can spread widely before paralysis is visible. There is no treatment, but the disease can be prevented by a vaccine.

"Polio has been expunged from the world except in three countries," says Bowles. "It used to be four. It included



STEPHEN MACGILLIVRAY/THE DAILY GLEANER

Purple for polio: Mayor Brad Woodside, centre, joined Jim Quigley, president Fredericton North Rotary Club, left, and John Bowles, board member Fredericton North Rotary Club, in having their fingers dyed purple to promote the Rotary Club's polio campaign.

India, but now it includes Nigeria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In those countries there is so much opposition to any kind of help and assistance, particularly from western countries, to help people in need."

India proclaimed itself free of polio in February 2013.

"They mounted a massive campaign to immunize so many, particularly children. It involved thousands of people and millions of immunizations," he says. "The cost of immunizing a child is just \$2. For that reason, we created a Purple Pinkies for Polio campaign in our Fredericton area elementary schools."

Fredericton North Rotary Club wants to show the connection with local children and children overseas.

"The kids overseas get their pinky finger dyed to indicate that they've been vaccinated against polio," says Bowles. "So what we are encouraging pupils at area elementary schools to do is to get their pinky finger dyed on a voluntary basis and donate at least \$2."

The six area schools already signed up to take part in Purple Pinkies for Polio are Park Street, Barkers Point, Garden Creek, New Maryland and Kingsclear Consolidated, with the

hope that more will get involved in this project during the month of October.

"We are teaching students to be global citizens and to learn to make the world a better place," says Chris Treadwell, principal of Park Street Elementary School.

"We are looking for opportunities to address real life problems. Certainly helping to eliminate polio is a noble cause for our children to be involved with."

He notes, "One toonie vaccinates a child so they will not get polio. Our children understand this and are proud of their contribution."

The school is glad that the Fredericton North Rotary Club asked the children of Park Street to partner with them to help eliminate polio.

"Our kids are better people for the experience," says Treadwell.

Why is this particular project of significance to Rotary?

"Rotary International, of which the Fredericton North Rotary Club is a part, committed themselves to supporting the eradication of polio worldwide."

"They did this going back to 1985. Since then, millions and millions of dollars have been raised by Rotary

clubs around the world," says Bowles.

On June 25, Rotary International and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced an extension of their existing fundraising partnership that could generate up to \$525 million in new money for polio eradication.

"Under this agreement, the Gates Foundation will match two for one every new dollar Rotary commits to polio eradication up to \$35 million per year up to 2018," he says.

The year 2018 is significant because world governments, the World Health Organization and Rotary International have committed enough money to totally eradicate polio in the world by that year.

It isn't just schools that can take part in this project to help the Fredericton North Rotary Club achieve this goal.

"We have eight pharmacies in Fredericton with collection boxes and we're asking everybody in Fredericton to donate a toonie, \$2, or they can drop off money at the Fredericton Inn front desk," he says, adding, "Every little bit helps."

To learn more about the Purple Pinkies project or End Polio Now, contact Bowles at 449-0562.

Are your pants too tight? Here's an easy solution

Dear Heloise: I've shared a Heloise hint with friends and family for years — the "ponytail rubber-band trick."

When your waistband is too tight, loop a rubber band over the button, through the buttonhole and then back over the button. Your waistband is suddenly an inch wider and much more comfortable.

— Pinky, via email

Hope you are wearing a shirt that covers this.

— Heloise

Heads, you lose

Dear Heloise: I would like to remind people of the dangers of allowing their dogs/pets to put their heads out of the window of a moving vehicle. It dries out their eyes and noses, which can lead to future veterinarian bills. Another hazard is the risk of small pieces of road debris being flipped up by the vehicle's tires and getting into the eyes, noses and ears of their loved pets. Most people are not aware of this danger. So, as much as people think they are doing this with love, that love can injure or kill a pet.

— Valerie B. in New Jersey

"Woof, woof!" Yes, dogs do love to stick their heads out, but you are so right about the potential dangers. Thanks for the reminder.

— Heloise

Empty clothes hangers

Dear Heloise: I was looking for a blouse and a pair of slacks in my closet. My hands kept grabbing empty hangers. This was frustrating and time-consuming, plus I realized the empty hangers were clogging up my closet. Now when I remove something from a hanger, I move the empty hangers to the far left of the clothing rod.

For laundry day, I grab empty hangers and take them with me to the laundry room.

— C.W., Baton Rouge, La.

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Upholstery cleaner

Dear Heloise: I was using an auto upholstery cleaner (the kind of can with the brush affixed). I started to throw away the empty can when I

thought to remove the brush head from the can and save it for future pet-hair removal. I gently drag it across my furniture, and it removes the pet hair.

— A Reader, via email

Gift-bag hint

Dear Heloise: Gift bags can be so pretty and decorative, but sometimes they cost more than the gift. I like to reuse them when possible, especially within my family at birthdays and Christmas. I avoid writing the name on the bag by applying a gift sticker to the colourful tissue paper used to cover the gift. That leaves the bag clean and ready to be reused.

— Sandra G., Tomball, Texas

Fluffy towels

Dear Heloise: You once had directions about how to keep towels soft and fluffy. I have misplaced the directions. Would you please reprint them?

— Verlyn in Lubbock, Texas

This is a common question, Verlyn. The problem most likely is that the detergent is not being completely rinsed out. To find out if this is so, put the towels in the washer with no detergent, and run a cycle. If you see suds, too much detergent.

To remove the buildup, wash the towels (only towels) in hot water and use baking soda or washing soda only. Add a cup or two, and do use a second rinse. Baking soda should

be in every household. To find out money-saving hints for using baking soda, order my pamphlet Heloise's Baking Soda Hints and Recipes by sending \$5 and a long, self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Heloise/Baking Soda, P.O. Box 795001, San Antonio, Texas, 78279-5001. Does your laundry have an odour? Add ½ cup of baking soda to the rinse cycle to wash away the smell.

— Heloise

Sorting tray

Dear Heloise: I have found a way to entertain children. I have a ton of beads left over from craft projects, so I place them in a large bowl. I then put out an ice cube tray and let the kids sort the beads. They can sort by colour or shape. It is entertaining and a great learning tool.

— Olive in Indiana

Flavoured oil

Dear Heloise: I have started saving the leftover oil from jars of marinated artichoke hearts, minced garlic, sundried tomatoes and roasted red peppers. I save the oil in the refrigerator. I put the oil on salad, vegetables or pasta for added flavour.

— Linda P. in New Mexico

Love it! That "oil" is flavoured, and you have already paid for it, so use it for other things. Try pouring it over cream cheese as a tasty appetizer.

— Heloise