

Strategies Applied:

- Consider doubling this soup - it's so inexpensive and besides, you may want left overs - wonderful for a lunch later in the week or another meal. In my opinion, this does not freeze well.
- **Bacon:** Used to be an inexpensive ingredient, its price has risen with its popularity. Let's face it, bacon isn't the healthiest - we seldom use it here on its own as a meat, but do use it in small amounts in recipes, where I consider it as a "flavoring" rather than a protein. I buy on store specials and take advantage of coupons - my go to price is between \$2.00 and \$3.00 a package. I freeze until needed, partially thaw (until a knife will go through) and cut across the bacon from top to bottom. 1/16th is the same size as a strip. I wrap the bacon back up and freeze again. If we're making something like a BLT, I'll think about cooking a bit extra for something like this recipe. Cost for the bacon for this soup, \$2.89 for the last pound bought, 2 slices are 36 cents.
- **Carrots:** An inexpensive item even not on sale – but it keeps so well I buy a couple of packages if it is cheaper. \$1.00 a pound is standard in our area, but the larger packages of 5 pounds are often on sale for \$2.50 – that's 50 cents a pound, or about 10 cents for two. Carrots will keep longer if you rotate the package, which is so often on the bottom of the drawer, so they don't sit in condensation.
- **Onion:** They keep well, so try to buy on sale. Aldi's is a good place to find reasonably priced onions. Always less expensive in the fall/winter months, the pricing in my area runs from 33 to 66 cents a pound. Store them in a dark, cool place but not near potatoes. If you've bought too many onions, don't let them go bad.
- Slice or dice them, saute and portion into ziplocs labeled "onions" and freeze. You've just saved yourself a step for next time you make a dish. If you have enough, consider making [French Onion Soup](#). If you use half an onion, consider if you can sauté the rest and put it in a Ziploc in the freezer. If not store in the door where you'll see it when you're cooking next. 3 tablespoons (at 56 cents a pound) about 4 cents.
- **Chicken Stock:** If you read me regularly, I make my own with scraps of vegetables and bones – here's the basic recipe I use for [Best Turkey or Chicken Stock](#) - it's not particular and though it simmers for a long time, the burner is barely on – I just count it as free.
- **Milk:** About \$2.50 a gallon in my area on sale, the cost for this recipe runs about 18 cents. Buy on sale – unopened it keeps a bit past it's "sale by" date – then you can pick up one for the beginning of the week, and another at the end of the week for the week following.
- Be careful with your milk, and even opened it will last a lot longer – pour, lid and put away, don't bring it to the table or leave it on the counter while you eat dinner or down your cereal and you'll notice it stay fresh last MUCH longer. We've cut way back on dairy, as most health experts suggest – putting it away helps with that, too. Cost for 2 cups, about 32 cents.
- **Garnishes:** The Bacon is already included in the price, but as shown, with a bit of cheese and green onion, expect to add about 20 cents for an ounce of cheese, if bought on sale (I pay about

a dollar or less for 8 ounces of grocery store cheese with coupons, sales and Catalinas.) Green onions I buy on sale, usually during Holidays; I throw the white portions in a glass of water on a sunny sill where they'll regenerate for months. Cost an additional 20 cents or so.