



# DINING ON A DIME

## *Eating Better for Less*

*November / December*

### **Holiday Entertaining on a Budget**

Trying to cut back on expenses this holiday season? Holiday and party meals don't have to cost a fortune. With creativity and planning, you can scale down food purchases without cutting back on the fun and festivities. Here's how:

**Plan.** Establish how much you can afford to spend. Want to invite more guests than you can comfortably afford to feed? Host a potluck! Ask family and friends to bring a favorite dish and copies of the recipe for it. Bonus: everyone gets to try new foods.



**Downsize your Menu.** Consider your budget along with what's on special and seasonal at the grocery store. For example, plan a meal consisting of two or three kinds of homemade soups and one crowd-pleasing snack such as popcorn with raisins. Add a few kinds of bread and hot cocoa or an unsweetened beverage to complete the menu.

**Shop Wisely.** Use a grocery list. Watch for sales. Grocery stores periodically have great discounts on basic holiday foods. Use this to your advantage, but only buy items you need and avoid the "extras" that are not on your list. If you're serving fewer menu items, you'll need to buy greater quantities of each. This means you can buy ingredients in bulk, which can be a great way to save some cash. Look at the unit prices to ensure you're getting the best deals. In the store, look for bargains on the top and bottom shelves.

**Coupons or Generic Brands?** By buying generic or store brands, you could save 40 percent on your groceries. If buying name-brand foods, check for coupons in newspapers and on the Internet. Use coupons only for foods already on your grocery list, and on the store's double or triple coupon days, if available.

**Make Your Menu Do Double Duty.** We lose money whenever we throw away food because it spoiled before we could use it. Be creative in using leftovers. For example, use leftover dip as a sandwich spread instead of the usual mayonnaise, or sprinkle broken chips into chili or on top of a casserole.

Source (Accessed 10/22/2015): Adapted from: [10 ideas for entertaining without breaking your budget](http://www.extension.missouri.edu/ecregion/lifetimes/10ideas.html), University of Missouri Extension, [www.extension.missouri.edu/ecregion/lifetimes/10ideas.html](http://www.extension.missouri.edu/ecregion/lifetimes/10ideas.html)

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## Cooking Tips for the Holidays

No need to wait for the New Year to start healthier eating habits. Check out these easy cooking tips that will help everyone be a little trimmer this season!

### Meat / Poultry / Fish

- Choose from the many options for lean protein foods this season.
- When using lean cuts of meats, choose moist cooking methods, such as baking, boiling or slow-cooking.
- Limit breading. Consider using marinades or rubs for optimal flavor.
- For all types of meat and poultry, decrease the fat content considerably by cutting off visible fat and the skin and by removing the fat from pan juices before use. Use fat-free broth thickened with cornstarch or pureed potatoes for a sauce or gravy. Add a small amount of fruit juice for extra flavor.

### Side Dishes

- Include lots of vegetables in your meals, both raw and cooked. To cook, just steam and serve. Dress them up with herbs or pair with other vegetables, such as green peas with onions.
- Use a low-fat reduced-sodium cream soup with fresh mushroom slices added for a quick vegetable sauce.
- Use fat-free yogurt or fat-free cream cheese as a base for dips. For dippers, try veggie sticks or baked whole wheat pita squares.
- Use fat-free evaporated milk when making cream soups or white sauces.
- Flavor dressing with fruits, herbs, spices and whole grains, rather than with meat fat or chicken fat.
- Choose foods made with whole grains more often, such as brown rice, oats or whole wheat, instead of foods made with refined grains.

### Dessert

- You can make desserts that taste sweet yet have little sugar or fat.
  - Try poaching pears or baking apples or bananas that you have lightly seasoned with cinnamon and cloves.
  - Or mix fruits with plain or flavored non-fat yogurt.
  - Keep whole, dried, frozen or canned (in water or juice) fruit on hand for a quick and easy snack.
  - Consider serving traditional pie fillings as a custard in order to eliminate the calories and fat in the pie crust. (For example, see the recipe on page 4.)



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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



## Cooking Ahead for Holiday Meals

Last-minute hurried food preparations can drain any cook's holiday spirit. This month's *Dining on a Dime* aims to help you take some of the hassle out of your holidays, while keeping food quality and food safety a top priority.



### All Perishable Foods

Avoid leaving perishable foods (such as meats, fish, poultry, eggs, cooked dry beans, dairy products, and cut fruits and vegetables) at room temperature for more than two hours. This includes the total time for preparation and serving.

### Fruits and Vegetables

- Assemble vegetable casseroles a day in advance, cover and refrigerate. Bake on the day of your dinner, planning for 15 to 20 minutes extra heating time. Heat until they're hot and steaming throughout.
- Cut washed fruits and vegetables within a day of your meal for salads and relish trays. Keep cut fruits from turning brown by coating them with lemon, orange or pineapple juice, or a commercial anti-darkening preparation. Cover and store them in the refrigerator above raw meats and below cooked items.

### Protein Foods

- Purchase fresh raw meat, poultry or seafood no more than 1 to 2 days before your holiday meal. Freeze for longer storage.
- If you have frozen meat, poultry or seafood, place it on a tray on the lowest shelf in the refrigerator and allow approximately 24 hours for each 5 pounds of weight for it to thaw.
- If you cook meat, poultry or seafood the day before your meal, refrigerate it in small portions in shallow pans within 2 hours of cooking. You can place loosely covered foods in the refrigerator while they're still warm. Cover them tightly when completely cooled. On the day of your meal, reheat until hot and steaming, to 165 degrees F. as measured with a food thermometer.

### Baked Goods

- Almost all types of cookies, cakes, breads and muffins can be baked in advance and frozen for up to 2 months. Avoid freezing cakes with whipped cream or other soft fillings, since this will result in a soggy cake upon thawing.
- Cool baked goods completely before storing them in airtight moisture-proof containers.
- Thaw cheesecake in the refrigerator, covered, where it will remain fresh for seven to ten days. Thaw non-perishable baked goods at room temperature in their freezer container to prevent them from drying out.



Source (Accessed 10/22/2015): Adapted from: Get Out of the Kitchen When Company's Coming: Cook Ahead, <http://food.unl.edu/get-out-kitchen-when-companys-coming-cook-ahead>

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office.

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## Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

### Crustless Pumpkin Pie (Makes 8 servings)

#### Ingredients

6 graham cracker squares	1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
3/4 cup granulated sugar	1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/8 teaspoon salt	15 ounces canned 100% pumpkin
1 1/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon	12 ounces fat free evaporated milk
	3/4 cup pasteurized egg product

#### Directions

**1.** Crush graham crackers into 1/2 cup of crumbs. Set aside. **2.** In a small bowl, stir together sugar, salt and the three spices. **3.** In a mixing bowl, stir together pumpkin, milk and egg product. **4.** Add sugar mixture to wet mixture and stir until smooth. **5.** Add graham cracker crumbs and mix well. **6.** Spray a 9-inch pie pan with non-stick cooking spray. Pour mixture into prepared pan. **7.** Turn oven on to 325 degrees F. Bake pie for 50 to 60 minutes, or until a knife inserted near the center comes out almost clean. **8.** Serve cold. **9.** Cover and refrigerate or freeze leftovers within 2 hours.

*Nutrition Facts per serving: 160 calories, 1g fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 33g carbohydrate, 7g protein, 0mg cholesterol, 160mg sodium and 3g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 140% vitamin A, 2% vitamin C, 15% calcium, 6% iron.*



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