



K-State Extension Connection

Holiday Entertaining on a Budget

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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 are some ideas from K-State's November/December Dining on a Dime Newsletter:

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, and shop the top and bottom shelves in the store for the best bargains.

Coupons or Generic Brands? By buying generic or store brands, you could save up to 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.

For more information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Labette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at [facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district](https://www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district).

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Pumpkin Cream Cheese Dip

This tasty dessert featuring pumpkin and apples would be a healthy choice for a holiday get-together.

Ingredients for Dip:

8 ounces low-fat cream cheese (room temperature)
3/4 cup of canned pumpkin (unsweetened, unsalted)
3 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Serve with:

6 apples sliced

Directions:

Mix all ingredients for the spread together in a mixing bowl by hand or with an electric mixer (medium speed). Serve with apple slices for dipping. Serves 12.

Nutritional - 3 Tablespoon serving: 107 Calories; 3 grams total fat; 2 grams saturated fat; 10 mg cholesterol; 91 mg sodium; 18 grams total carbohydrate; 3 grams dietary fiber; 2 grams protein.

Source: Mayo Clinic