



Holiday Food Budget



Special occasions and holiday meals may mean a big jump in the food bill at the grocery store. Here are some ideas to help you make holiday meals special without breaking the bank:

Use less.

When it comes to holiday meals, many families have a tradition of having much more food than is needed. When planning meals, consider less total food, smaller meat portions, less of other expensive items or serve a smaller number of foods.

Serve healthy foods.

Healthier foods give more nutritional value for the food dollar. If you choose pumpkin or squash pie, the cost may be similar to pecan, but is more nutritious. Choose a healthy green salad or a mixed fruit salad, rather than a salad made mostly of gelatin, marshmallows and whipped cream.

Serve water as well as other beverages.

People will drink less of the other beverages served if they drink water to quench their thirst.

Get your money's worth out of the leftovers.

Handle leftovers safely (refrigerate or freeze promptly) so they will be useful for meals in the days ahead. Freeze the ham bone or turkey carcass and use later to cook for broth or soup.

The cost of paper products can add to your "grocery" bill.

Don't buy fancy paper plates, napkins, cups, and decoration items. Get family members to help wash dishes rather than using disposables. Use cloth table coverings and napkins.

Make more meals into potlucks.

Your guests, whether family or friends, are usually glad to contribute a favorite dish to a holiday get-together.

Remember, being together with family and friends is more important than spending a fortune on holiday food.



Vegetables for the Holidays

Don't forget the vegetables. They add color, crunch and few calories.

Red and Green Salad

- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 3 cups cherry or grape tomatoes
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- Black pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp vinegar
- 1 Tbsp chopped parsley

Heat oil over medium high-heat. Sauté the garlic until golden, add the tomatoes and spinach and cook briefly. Add the rest of the ingredients. Stir and serve hot.

Serves 4.

Nutrition information: 63 calories, 4 gm fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 36 mg sodium, 6 gm carbohydrate, 3 gm fiber.



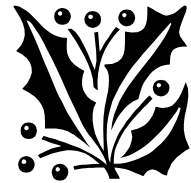
Baked Squash

- 1 pound cooked fresh or frozen winter squash
- 2 tsp syrup
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon

Mix ingredients in a medium-sized bowl and place in a covered casserole dish. Cover and bake at 350°F until hot, about 45 minutes. Serve hot.

Serves 4.

Nutritional information: 60 calories, 0 gm fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 5 mg sodium, 14 gm carbohydrate, 2 gm fiber.



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