



DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

December

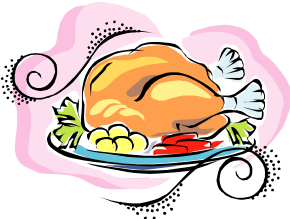
The Holidays Are Merrier with Money-Saving Meals

Saving money is on everyone's mind during the holidays. This issue of *Dining on a Dime* offers several ways to help you get the most out of your food dollars. Be merry this holiday saving money on your meals!



Delay Your Meal Celebration: Day-After Deals

The day after a holiday can be a great time to find festive food bargains at the store. Consider delaying your holiday meal by several days to take full advantage of sales. Special-event foods may be marked down in price by as much as 70 percent. Look for reduced prices on certain meats, such as turkey and ham; dairy products; baked goods, such as holiday rolls; and specific fresh and canned fruits and vegetables. Be sure to check the "sell-by date" before purchasing items.



Delegate Dessert

Save money and add surprise to the menu by asking guests to bring a dish. One person can prepare the salad while another can share a dessert.

Portion Planning

Limit waste by buying only as much meat as your family needs. Do you want to serve enough turkey for just one meal? If so, buy one pound per person. Want a few leftovers for sandwiches? If so, plan to bake one and one-half pounds per person. To provide for an entire extra meal, buy two pounds per person. Each pound of a bone-in ham will provide two to three servings. A pound of semi-boneless ham will yield 3 to 4 servings. One pound of a boneless ham will provide four to five servings.

Convenience Costs

Some convenience foods are money-savers, but many others are not. Compare costs per serving. Canned sweet potatoes may be a good buy compared to fresh ones. Pre-baked brown and serve rolls can often be found for under \$1 a package. Similarly, pumpkin pie filling mix on sale is usually less expensive than buying canned pumpkin and adding spices, evaporated milk and eggs. But you can prepare your own gravy and stuffing inexpensively with items that you probably already have in your home. Never made your own stuffing? Check out page four for an easy and inexpensive savory skillet stuffing!

Bacteria...The Unwanted Holiday Guest

Ever have a stomach ache after eating a hefty holiday feast? You may think that you just ate too much, but it could be a case of food-borne illness. Here are ways to handle food safely and enjoy a healthy holiday!



Serving Strategies

Cold foods should remain at 40 degrees F. or lower. Hot foods should have an internal temperature of 140 degrees F. or higher. Do not leave perishable foods at room temperature for longer than two hours, including preparation, serving and travel time. Check foods with a clean food thermometer to assure foods are being held at a safe temperature. Wash the thermometer with hot, soapy water.

Keep hot foods hot by using slow cookers and warming trays. Keep cold foods cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice. Serve small bowls or trays of food with about the number of servings that will be eaten in 30 minutes or less. Avoid adding fresh servings to perishable foods that have been sitting out.

Potluck Protection



Guests traveling less than a half-hour can bring perishable foods, such as foods containing meats, eggs, dairy products, and fruit or vegetable mixtures. When traveling with food, keep hot foods hot by carrying them in insulated containers, or wrap in foil and heavy towels. Place cold foods in a cooler with ice or freezer packs. On arrival, place cold foods in the refrigerator and hot foods in an oven to keep them hot. Guests traveling long distances might bring uncut fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, crackers, rolls, breads or cookies.

Planning Ahead for Safety

As a general rule, purchase fresh meat products no more than one or two days before the holiday meal. For longer storage, freeze it. Thaw frozen meat products in the refrigerator, not on a counter. Allow 24 hours thawing time for each five pounds of weight.



Prepare perishable foods no more than one day before a meal, unless the food will be frozen. For example, assemble a casserole one day in advance. Refrigerate and then bake the day of your dinner. Allow an extra 15 to 20 minutes cooking time for the refrigerated casserole. Similarly, you could cut up fruits and vegetables for salads and relish trays one day before your meal. Place them in covered storage containers or plastic bags on shelves above, not below, raw meat.

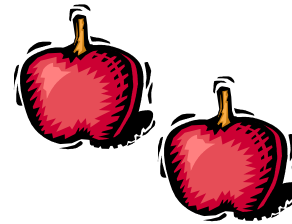
Keeping Leftovers Safe

Refrigerate leftovers promptly. Cool hot foods in shallow containers at a depth of two inches or less. Cover loosely for faster cooling. Cover tightly after foods are cool.

Eat leftovers within 2 days. Reheat hot foods to 165 degrees F. or higher. For longer storage, freeze leftovers. Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or heat in a microwave oven. Do not thaw foods on a counter. If food is thawed in a microwave oven, continue to heat it until it is fully cooked.

Managing the Holiday “Calorie Budget”

A popular belief is that most people gain five to ten pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day. Not true, according to a national study. Rather, people in the U.S. gain one to two pounds during the winter holiday season. The bad news is that body weight gained over the holidays often is not lost during the remainder of the year. Extra body weight then accumulates over the years. How can you prevent unwanted weight gain? Try to increase your physical activity. And take a look at what your holiday feasts may “cost” in terms of calories. Below, *Dining on a Dime* shows you the calorie content of some favorite American holiday foods and offers alternatives that can save you calories — and may save your waistline!



Traditional Holiday Fare	Calories	Lighter Fare	Calories
3 ounces roasted turkey, dark meat, with skin	199	3 ounces roasted turkey, light meat, without skin	141
Small potato, roasted in oil	195	Small baked potato	130
1/2 cup candied sweet potatoes	170	1/2 cup baked sweet potato	90
1/2 cup regular bread stuffing	178	1/2 cup cooked rice	122
1/2 cup green bean casserole	104	1/2 cup boiled green beans	19
3-inch frosted sugar cookie	224	Oatmeal raisin cookie	65
1 cup regular eggnog	343	1 cup fat-free eggnog	110
1 slice (1/8 pie) pecan pie	503	1 slice (1/8 pie) pumpkin pie	316
1 slice (1/8 pie) apple pie	411	1 cup sweetened applesauce, with cinnamon	194
1 slice (1/8 pie) banana cream pie	387	1 cup fresh banana slices	134
12 ounces regular soft drink	150	12 ounces diet soft drink	0
2 1/2 inch homemade biscuit	212	2 inch dinner roll	84

Sources (Accessed 11/12/05): Adapted from: 1. Holiday Weight Gain Slight, But May Last A Lifetime. NIDDKD, www.nidk.nih.gov/welcome/releases/3_22_00.htm 2. National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference. USDA, www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl

Newsletter developed by: Erin Henry, R.D., L.D., and Mary Meck Higgins, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., CDE, K-State Research and Extension Human Nutrition Specialist and Associate Professor, Department of Human Nutrition. Contents of this publication may be reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA’s Food Stamp Program through a program awarded by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS). The Food Stamp Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local SRS Service Center or call 1-800-221-5689.



Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

Savory Skillet Stuffing (Makes 4 servings, each 1/2 cup)

Ingredients

3 tablespoons light (40% oil) margarine
1 teaspoon crumbled or ground dried sage leaves
3 tablespoons fresh (or 1 tablespoon dried) chopped parsley
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/3 cup chopped celery
1/3 medium onion, chopped and boiled
5 slices stale bread, cubed or crumbled
1/3 cup prepared chicken bouillon or turkey broth

Directions

1. Melt margarine in a skillet. 2. Add sage, parsley, salt, pepper and celery. Cook for five minutes. 3. Stir in cooked onion, bread cubes or crumbs, and bouillon or broth.
4. Serve warm. 5. Cover and refrigerate leftovers promptly.

Each serving (1/2 cup) provides: 120 calories, 5 g fat, 18 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 0 mg cholesterol, 580 mg sodium and 2 g fiber. Daily values: 15% vitamin A, 10% vitamin C.



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Source (Accessed 11/12/05): Adapted from [Holiday Meals on a Budget](#).

Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/columncc/cc011211.html