

Keep Your Food Budget in Check During the Holiday Season

During the holiday season, we often enjoy special foods and visits from family members and friends. Sometimes that adds up to higher food bills.

How can you maintain your food budget and eat healthfully during the holidays? Enjoy a variety of foods, and consider some cost-saving strategies for each of the food groups.



Grains

- Buy regular rice and oatmeal instead of instant varieties to save money and calories and avoid added sweeteners.
- Look for bargains on day-old bread. It costs less and is still nutritious.

Vegetables

- Buy large bags of frozen vegetables if they are the best buy. Seal tightly in the freezer between uses.
- Compare prices between bagged salad mixes and heads of lettuce. You may save money by cleaning and preparing your own greens.

Fruits

- Buy fresh fruit when it is in season. Purchase the amount you can use within a few days.
- Frozen and canned fruits are good buys all year round.

Milk

- Buy fresh, low-fat milk in the largest size that you can use before it spoils.
- Consider using nonfat dry milk mixed with water as a substitute for fluid milk, especially in cooking and baking.

Meat and Beans

- Compare prices of different cuts of meat. For example, bottom round roast is lower in fat and less expensive than sirloin, although it may be less tender. Use less-tender cuts in soup and stew.
- Consider beans and peas as a good source of protein and fiber. They last a long time in your cupboard, too.
- Look for sales on meat. If you buy in bulk, rewrap the meat in recipe-sized amounts at home. To preserve the quality and prevent freezer burn, use freezer paper.

Visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise for more information.

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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We are trying to have more family meals, but we are just too busy to sit at the table for a long time. How long should a family meal last? Are they worth the time?

According to a new study, even 20-minute family meals give families a chance to reconnect. About 86 percent of the people surveyed said dinnertime was the best time for family members to talk.

Family meals provide numerous benefits. Kids who eat more often with their families eat more fruits and vegetables, more calcium-rich foods and less high-fat, highly sweetened foods. They're more likely to meet their needs for fiber, iron, vitamin E and folate, too.

Children who eat meals more often with their families are less likely to engage in risky behavior, such as drinking alcohol, smoking or drug abuse. They're also less likely to be depressed and less likely to have eating disorders.

Seasonal Produce Guide for Winter

These fresh fruits and veggies are in season in the winter. "In season" means they are at best quality and often lowest price. Check the sales ads of your favorite grocery store.

Bananas	Oranges
Broccoli	Parsnips
Cabbage	Pears
Cauliflower	Potatoes
Celery	Sweet potatoes
Cranberries	Tangerines
Grapefruit	Winter squash
Kiwi	

Happy Holidays!

POTATO SOUP

½ c. chopped onion
 ½ c. chopped celery
 6 diced potatoes
 2 Tbsp. margarine
 ½ tsp. salt
 ⅛ tsp. pepper
 1 c. nonfat dry milk
 3 c. water
 2 Tbsp. flour



Melt the margarine in a large saucepan on low heat. Add the onion and celery. Cook for a few minutes. Add the potatoes, salt, pepper and 1½ cups water. Cook for 15 minutes until the potatoes are tender. In a small bowl, stir together the dry milk and flour. Add 1½ cups water slowly, stirring as you add it. Add the milk mix to the potatoes. Cook until the soup is heated and slightly thickened, approximately 10 minutes. Adjust the seasonings.

Note: You can substitute 4 cups of milk for the 1 cup nonfat dry milk and 3 cups water. Use 2 cups milk where water is called for in the directions, and omit the dry milk.

Makes six servings. Each serving has 130 calories, 4 grams (g) fat, 17 g carbohydrate, 4 g fiber and 310 milligrams sodium.

MEAL IDEA

Potato Soup, whole-grain crackers and cheese, broccoli florets with ranch dip, orange slices, ice water

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Contact the local office of the
 NDSU Extension Service
 for more information
 on food and nutrition or
 managing your food dollar.

