



Don't Let the Holidays Break Your Budget

<p>Holidays often mean special foods and gifts for family and friends. The extra spending can strain your budget. You can gain some budget-stretching ideas by trying this activity. Answer the questions and mark an "X" in the box that applies to you.</p>	<p>Yes, I already do this.</p>	<p>No, but I plan to do this.</p>	<p>This won't work for me.</p>
<p>■ Do you set a holiday budget and keep track of what you spend? <i>Don't forget to include costs for holiday cards and postage, food, etc.</i></p>			
<p>■ Do you set a spending limit for each person? <i>Consider writing the name of the person on an envelope, write the total on the envelope and subtract the cost of the purchase. Put the gift receipts in the envelope.</i></p>			
<p>■ Do you draw names for gifts instead of buying for everyone? <i>Along with drawing names, set a limit on the amount to be spent.</i></p>			
<p>■ Do you give gifts of time or talent? <i>Consider giving homemade gift mixes, or "coupons" for baby-sitting, cleaning, help with cooking, repairs or painting.</i> – For food mix ideas, see www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1494.pdf – For beverage mix ideas, see www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1625.pdf</p>			
<p>■ For holiday gatherings, do you have a potluck where everyone brings food to share? <i>This spreads the work and the costs among people, and allows everyone to have fun. Be the person who promotes health, too, by bringing a healthful salad or fruit platter.</i> <i>Or try swapping lower-calorie for higher-calorie ingredients in your recipes. See "Now Serving: Recipe Makeovers" at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1447.pdf for some tips.</i></p>			
<p>■ Do you comparison shop for grocery prices and gift items? <i>Be sure to read the sales fliers, but also consider the cost for mileage when you shop in many stores.</i></p>			

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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I'm trying to save money at the grocery store so I have a little extra for gifts for my grandchildren. What do you suggest?

Try these tips to save money at the store and enjoy your food at its best. Make a check mark in the boxes of the ones that will work for you.

- Make a shopping list. This helps you stick to your budget.
- Plan your meals. Planning helps put leftovers to good use.
- Look for coupons, sales and store specials.
- For added savings, sign up for the store discount card.
- Don't shop when you are hungry. That helps you stick to your shopping list.
- Try store brands. They usually cost less.
- Compare products for the best deal.
- Check "sell by" dates. Buy the freshest food possible. It lasts longer.
- Store perishable food in the refrigerator right away to preserve freshness.
- Freeze food in meal-size portions to prevent spoiling.
- Divide foods into small portions for children and elderly to prevent waste.
- Use foods with the earliest "use by" dates first.

FoodWise Tip of the Month

Invite Kids Into the Kitchen!

Kids learn many things from being involved in the kitchen. When they are included in the meal preparation, they usually are more likely to try and enjoy the food. Want to take it a step further? Once a week, have each person in your family plan a meal. Most will enjoy this responsibility, and it might bring about new and exciting recipe ideas.

Trisha Jessen, Ward/Renville



Just for Fun

How do snowmen get around?
On their icicles!

Cranberry Oatmeal Cookie Mix

- 1 c. plus 2 Tbsp. flour
- 1 c. rolled oats
- ½ c. dried cranberries
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ c. brown sugar
- ¼ c. white sugar
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ c. white chocolate chips



To make a gift mix:

Layer the ingredients in a clean, quart-sized jar. Cover the jar tightly with a lid, decorate it and attach a copy of the directions.

To make right away:

Place the cookie mix ingredients in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Proceed as follows.

Directions:

- 1 container Cranberry Oatmeal Cookie Mix
- ½ c. butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, mix butter, vanilla and egg together until smooth. Add cookie mix and mix well. Place by spoonfuls onto a greased cookie sheet and bake for eight to 10 minutes until golden brown. For best flavor, use this mix within nine months.

Makes 28 cookies. Each serving has 100 calories, 4.5 grams (g) fat, 13 g carbohydrate and 70 milligrams sodium.

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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.

