



MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT

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Holiday Entertaining on a Budget

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season will soon be here and spending time with family and friends tops our "to do" list! Remember you don't have to spend a lot of time or money in the kitchen preparing a big meal. Keep it simple by serving some snacks and beverages that are easy to prepare but make you look like the perfect hostess! Here are some ideas.

Creamsicle Punch

- 1 carton egg substitute (equal to 3 eggs)*
 - 2 tablespoons honey
 - 1/3 cup lemon juice
 - 2 cups orange juice
- Mix well. Pour into a punch bowl.
- Add: 2 liters lemon lime soda and 1-2 quarts vanilla ice cream or ice milk. Mix and serve.

Egg Nog (Eggless)

- 4 cups low fat milk
 - 2 cartons egg substitute (equal to 6 eggs)*
 - 1/2 cup sugar
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - Ground nutmeg
- Mix egg substitute and sugar together until sugar is dissolved. Add remaining ingredients, mixing well. Garnish each serving with nutmeg.



*Do not use raw eggs in recipes since there is a risk of food poisoning from salmonella bacteria.

Spiced Nuts

- Preheat oven to 250°. Sift into a shallow pan.
- 1/2 cup sugar
 - 1/4 cup cornstarch
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
 - 1/2 teaspoon allspice
 - 1/3 teaspoon ginger
 - 1/3 teaspoon nutmeg



Combine and beat slightly:

- 1 egg white
- 2 tablespoons cold water

Dip into the liquid:

- 1/4 pound nutmeats

Drop nuts one at a time into the sifted dry ingredients; roll them about lightly. Keep nutmeats separated, place them on a cookie sheet. Bake at least 1 hour; remove from oven and shake off excess sugar. Store in a tightly covered jar.

Susie's Spinach Artichoke Dip

- 2 cans artichoke hearts in water
- 1 pkg. frozen, chopped spinach, thawed
- 1 cup parmesan cheese
- 1 cup light mayonnaise
- garlic powder



Drain artichoke hearts. Squeeze

moisture from defrosted chopped spinach. Mix with parmesan cheese and light mayonnaise. Add several shakes of garlic powder. Mix everything together and place in pie plate uncovered. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes until brown. Serve with crackers or favorite dippers. (See ideas below)

Flavored Chips



Cut 7 or 8-inch wedges. Pita bread, wonton wrappers or thinly sliced bagels also work well.

Lightly spray the cut tortillas with vegetable cooking spray. Apple juice, orange juice or water also can be substituted. Add a seasoning like: basil, chives, dill, oregano, chili powder, ground red pepper, lemon/herb blend, paprika, sesame seeds, cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, sugar, or brown sugar

Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake at 375° for 7 to 10 minutes or until crisp. Cool completely and serve with your favorite dip.

Food Safety

Remember food safety comes first. Send your guests home with good memories, not food poisoning.

Keep hot foods hot (use crock pots, chafing dishes).

Keep cold foods cold (place ice under platters and bowls).

Keep food covered.

Never leave perishable foods at room temperature for more than 2 hours.



Planning a Party

Limit the length of the party. Don't feel obligated to entertain the entire day and serve a complete meal.

Ask "Aunt Sue" to bring her famous desert.

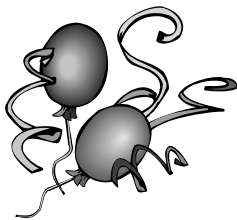
Simple is better, cheaper, and easier on the hostess.

Be kind to your guests. Many foods can be fat-reduced or sugar-reduced. Serve a sugar-free beverage like ice tea or coffee.

How much can be done ahead? Plan the menu, shop, cook, and freeze days before the party.

Try to plan a maximum of one last minute food item. It's your party- enjoy your guests.

Shop a little at a time to spread out the expense; take advantage of sales.



Budgeting

If you entertain often, you may want to invest in large packages of paper goods, etc.

Cut brown paper bags on fold. Stamp stars, trees, snowflakes or draw something special on bags. Use as wrapping paper and tie with string or ribbon. Makes inexpensive wrapping paper with a country look!

Shared by: Susan Kelly-Selby

Prepared by: Barbara Johnson

Kid's Corner

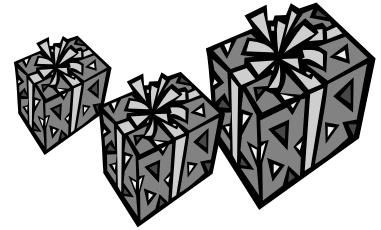


"Santa Sack"

Instead of wrapping all the presents, put out a "Santa Sack" made from Christmas fabric. Use approximately 2 yards of fabric and 2 yards of 1-inch ribbon for each sack. Put the presents in the sack and tie it shut. The kids get to pull out the gifts one at a time. No wasteful wrapping paper and extra time for you-know-who!

"Kid's Table"

Kids are people too. Set a special table, a special place to sit, with planned activities and food to make them feel part of the group. Use a roll of paper and crayons and markers —have children color a section then cut and have them bring it home to a wrap a special present in.



Free Nutrition Education Programs



Nutrition Teaching Assistants are available to help limited income individuals and families throughout Herkimer County stretch their food dollars to feed themselves and their families better.

Lessons can take place in participants homes or worksites as well as at community centers. Newsletters and other resources are also available by mail.

Topics include:

- Budgeting and stretching food dollars.
- Basic nutrition and menu planning.
- Preparing low cost, easy recipes and menus.
- Preserving, storing and preparing food safely.

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