

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service



K-State Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program

DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

October, 2003

Meal Making Cost Cutters

The holiday season is fast approaching! Could you afford to save a few extra dollars? Follow these helpful hints to cut costs in the kitchen!

- Look for specials, sales, and coupons in newspaper, radio, and TV ads. Buy non-perishable discounted items in bulk. If possible, preserve perishable items by freezing them. When taking advantage of special pricing, remember that discounts only save you money on products you need and normally buy.
- Try store and generic brands which usually cost less than name brands.
- Use the unit price when comparing products of different brands and product sizes. The unit price is calculated by dividing the total price by the number of units it contains. Most stores also list the unit price on the shelf.
- Purchase fresh fruit and vegetables in the produce section of the store rather than the salad bar. Salad bar items tend to cost more. However, remember that for some families, buying a smaller amount of food results in less waste and money saved.
- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season when they are cheaper.
- Prevent food waste. Buy the types of foods your family members like and only the amount they will eat before the food spoils.
- Use canned or dry beans to occasionally replace more costly sources of protein like meat, poultry, and fish.
- Build main dishes around pasta or grains, such as noodles or rice. Combine the dish with smaller amounts of meat, poultry, or fish. For example, prepare a main dish by combining rice, vegetables, and chicken.
- When buying meat, consider the amount of cooked lean meat or the number of servings obtained for the price. The cut with a low price per pound is not always the best buy if it contains a great deal of bone, gristle, or fat.

Remember to Separate. Don't Cross-Contaminate.

Cross contamination is the transfer of harmful bacteria to foods from other foods and cooking tools that are not properly handled. Cross-contamination most often occurs when handling raw meat, poultry, and fish. Therefore, it is wise to keep these foods and their juices away from cooked or ready-to-eat foods and fresh produce. Follow these simple steps to prevent cross-contamination and reduce the risk of food borne illness.

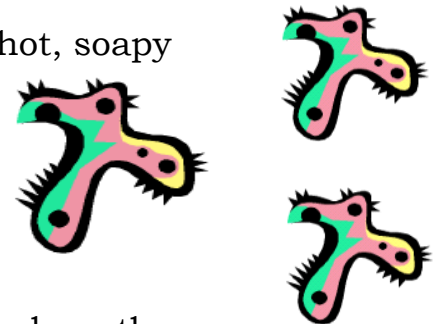


When refrigerating food:

- Place raw meat, poultry, and seafood in containers or sealed plastic bags on lower shelves to prevent their juices from dripping onto other foods.
- Store eggs in their original carton and refrigerate as soon as possible.

When preparing food:

- Wash hands with soap and hot water before and after handling food, after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets. Washing hands helps prevent the spread of bacteria to food, kitchen tools and countertops.
- Use hot, soapy water and paper towels or clean cloths to wipe up kitchen countertops or spills.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, and countertops with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item and before you begin preparing the next item.
- Replace cutting boards once they become very worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves.



When serving food:

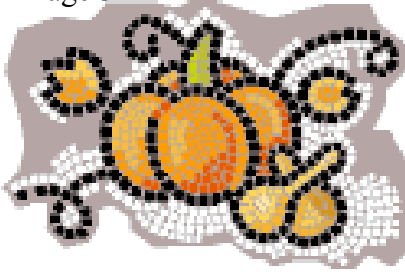
- Always use a clean plate. Never place cooked food back on the same plate or surface that held raw food.
- Make sure your hands and serving utensils are clean.

When storing leftovers:

- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within 2 hours or sooner in clean, shallow, covered containers to prevent harmful bacteria from growing.

Source: Excerpted from USDA's [Be Smart. Keep Foods Apart. Don't Cross-Contaminate.](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/keep_apart.htm) Sep. 2000, at www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/keep_apart.htm

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Pumpkin Particulars

Mounds of pumpkins abound in all sizes during the fall season. While children may be excited to carve them into jack-o-lanterns, pumpkins can also be a great treat eaten alone or in pies, breads, puddings, custards, and soups. Pumpkin is a great source of

vitamin A, and one-half cup of cooked or canned pumpkin contains only 40 calories. Read on to learn how to select and store pumpkin, and then check out how to roast your pumpkin seeds for a fun, healthy snack!

Quality

Choose a pumpkin that is fully ripe with a firm rind, bright orange color, and heavy weight. Be sure there are no blemishes, cracks, or soft spots.

Shelf Storage

If you find yourself with a good supply of pumpkins in the fall, store them for later use at about 50 degrees F. and about 70% humidity. Be sure the stem is attached. They should keep for several months.

Freezing

Select firm, mature pumpkins. Wash, cut into pieces, and remove seeds. Simmer until tender in a small amount of water. Drain well and remove rind. Mash or put through a sieve or blender. Cool. Put it into cartons or air-tight bags to freeze. Seal and label.

Source: Excerpted from Oregon State University's Preserving Pumpkins and Winter Squash, Mar. 1999, at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/lane/food-preservation/docs/SP%2050%20767.PDF>

Roasted Pumpkin Seeds

Wash the seeds well and dry with a paper towel. Spread in single layer on cookie sheet and sprinkle with salt. Bake at 350 degrees F for 15-30 minutes or until crispy, but not brown. Cool and serve. 1 Tablespoon of seeds: 20 calories, 1 g fat.

Source: Excerpted from Loma Linda University Health Sciences Center's A Healthy Tomorrow, Sep./Oct. 2002, at www.llu.edu/news/healthy/recipes/kids-rpumpkin.html

K-State is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material was funded by USDA's Food Stamp Program through a contract awarded by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS). The Food Stamp Program can help people 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 Cooks' Corner

Make an easy, delightful dessert for your family this Thanksgiving that's a twist off of a traditional favorite. Everyone is sure to enjoy this delicious pumpkin pie pudding!

Pumpkin Pie Pudding

Ingredients

15 ounces canned solid pack pumpkin
12 ounces evaporated milk
3/4 cup sugar
1/2 cup baking mix
2 eggs, beaten
2 Tablespoons melted butter
2 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice

Directions

In a large bowl mix together all ingredients. Transfer to a slow cooker coated with non-stick cooking spray. Cover and cook on LOW for 6-7 hours. Serve garnished with whipped cream.

Serves 4. Each serving: 360 calories, 64 g carbohydrate, 12 g protein, 6 g fat.

Source: www.lazygourmets.com



Cooperative Extension Service

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