



Create a Bountiful Thanksgiving on a Budget

Higher fuel and energy costs have many people wondering; can they feast at Thanksgiving and still afford the rest of the holiday season? Educators with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County’s Nutrition Education Program have great news for you not only can you create a traditional Thanksgiving meal on a budget, but based on our research that meal will even cost you less money this year!

The traditional Thanksgiving dinner of fresh roast turkey with oyster stuffing and store-bought giblet gravy, fresh whole cranberry sauce, pecan candied yams, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes, Waldorf salad, crescent rolls and butter, and pecan pie and pumpkin pie can easily cost close to \$80. Last year our budget meal cost \$30.82 to make. This year, with the only substitution being carrot-raisin salad for tossed salad, the cost of the meal went **DOWN** to \$26.89.

TRADITIONAL MEAL, WITHOUT BUDGET

Smoked Roast Turkey (12lb)	\$19.08
Oyster Stuffing	13.30
Store Bought Giblet Gravy	7.56
Fresh Cranberry Sauce	2.99
Pecan Candied Yams	4.75
Green Bean Casserole	7.29
Boxed Mashed Potatoes	1.57
Waldorf Salad	3.35
Crescent Rolls	1.99
Butter	1.25
Pecan Pie	4.99
Wine	10.00
Total	\$78.12

TRADITIONAL MEAL WITH BUDGET

	Cost 2005	Cost 2006
Frozen Roast Turkey (12lb)	\$11.88	\$9.48
Savvy Stuffing	.73	.89
Quick Low Fat Gravy	1.26	.79
Cranberry Gelatin Ring	1.03	.99
Fruit Candied Yams	2.79	1.69
Sauté Green Beans	2.38	1.07
Homemade Mashed Potatoes	.93	.98
Carrot-Raisin Salad	1.02	1.99
Brown and Serve Rolls	1.29	.99
Soft or tub Margarine	1.19	1.19
Low Fat Pumpkin Pie	3.98	4.49
Fruit Tea or Pilgrim Punch	2.34	2.34
Total	\$30.82	\$26.89

What changed? How did we do it? Here are some tips to help you create a Thanksgiving that is frugal with money but rich in gratitude and love:

Have a plan! This lets you buy the items you are planning to prepare when they are on sale. Most staple items, including turkeys, are on sale several weeks before the holidays arrive. As you can see from above, purchasing a frozen turkey right now will cost approximately .79 a pound, saving you \$2.40 (equivalent to a gallon of gas for your car!) over the cost from last year. Checking grocery store ads weeks in advance can save you time and money by avoiding last minute shopping. Purchasing items such as brown and serve roll or the things needed to make our quick low fat gravy right now can help the savings add up too

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- Eat seasonally thanksgiving started out as a celebration of the harvest. Most foods associated with it such as pumpkins, apples, cranberries and root vegetables such as sweet potatoes and squash are plentiful, in season and often on sale. As you can see from our shopping above buying yams now and keeping them in a cool, dry place can save you nearly \$1 from last year.
- Buy only what you need. In purchasing a turkey, allow one-half to one pound of turkey per person. The smallest turkeys usually weigh about 12 pounds, which is large enough to feed a family of four with leftovers. If cooking for one or two people, consider turkey drumsticks instead of a whole bird. After they're cooked, the meat can be carved off the drumstick and served on a platter. If your family only eats white meat, consider buying just turkey breast. Check store sale papers for the best price.
- Forget the candied pecan yams---forget the pecans, leave out the margarine and butter. Use two tablespoons of brown sugar, ground cinnamon and cup juice (apple juice, orange juice, or mango juice) for 1 lb of yams.
- Potatoes can be a good source of vitamin C and they're also economical. A pound of potatoes only costs about thirty cents. Contrary to popular opinion, a potato contains virtually no fat. Potatoes become "fattening" only when fat is added in the form of margarine, butter or sour cream. If you mash potatoes, use low fat milk and skip the butter or margarine. You also can add a bit of plain yogurt or non-fat dry milk to make the potatoes taste "richer."

Instead of a green bean casserole, try cooking fresh green beans in boiling salted water until crisp-tender. Drain and transfer beans to a serving bowl. One and a half pounds of cooked green beans tossed with one-tablespoon virgin olive oil, thyme, chives or other herbs of your choice, will make five servings.

- Rather than more expensive cranberries, try making a holiday mold by combining one of the new cranberry-flavored gelatin mixes with a small can of whole cranberry sauce.
- Save time and cooking energy by baking several dishes at the same time when possible. And skip the decorative napkins, candles or other holiday decorations. Their expense can add up quickly and they are unnecessary for most families the joy of the holiday is found in being with each other and reflecting on their blessings.

- What to do with your leftover turkey meat and carcass? Enjoy in soup, sandwiches and salad.
- **Put safety on the menu.** For free fact sheets (In English and Spanish) on how to safely thaw and cook your turkey, as well as information on handling and storing leftovers, call the nutrition staff at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County at 845-340-3990. For more information about food safety, you can also call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

RECIPES:

Amazing Pumpkin Pie

1 cup low fat milk
 2 cups (16 oz. can) pumpkin
 1 tsp. salt
 ½ to 1 tsp. cinnamon
 ½ tsp. allspice or ground ginger
 ½ tsp. nutmeg
 Pinch ground cloves
 ¾ cup sugar
 1 tsp. baking powder
 3 eggs
 ½ cup flour

Mix all ingredients together using a blender or mixer. Pour into a well-greased pie pan. Bake at 350 for one hour or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Savvy Stuffing

1 cup chopped celery
 ½ cup chopped onion
 2 tablespoons margarine or butter
 8 cups day old bread cubes
 ½ teaspoon poultry seasoning
 1/8 teaspoon pepper
 1/8 teaspoon thyme
 ¾ cup turkey broth or prepared chicken bouillon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Cook onions and celery in margarine until tender. Remove from heat. Mix in bread cubes, seasonings and broth. Place in a greased 8 x 8 baking dish. Cover and bake one hour.

Low-fat gravy

2 cups prepared chicken bouillon

¼ cup of turkey drippings

2 to 3 tablespoons of cornstarch

Pepper to taste

Mix the cornstarch with enough water to make a thick paste. Slowly add the cornstarch mixture to the combined bouillon and turkey dripping while stirring over medium heat until thickened. Add pepper to taste.

Fruit Tea Punch

1 cup honey

1 cup orange juice

½ cup fresh lemon juice

1 cup fresh fruit, crushed

1 ½ cups fresh tea (fruit flavored or decaffeinated)

1 pint ginger ale

Mix all ingredients except ginger ale. Just before serving add ginger ale and crushed ice. If the punch is too strong for your taste you can dilute with ice water or more ginger ale.

Raisin-Carrot Salad

6 medium carrots

¾ cup raisins

2 tablespoons plain low fat yogurt (or light mayonnaise)

1 tablespoon orange juice

Wash, peel and grate carrots. In a large bowl mix all ingredients together well. Chill and serve.

Pilgrim Punch: Mix together in a pitcher 2 cups cranberry juice, 2 cups apple juice, 4 cups ginger ale. Add a few lemon slices.