

Planning Meals for a Crowd

Whether you are planning to feed 20 or several hundred people you can do things to make it easier for you to be well-organized, and be able to relax and enjoy the meal you prepared. Plan for the way you want things to look and taste.



Get Organized

If you are in charge of the food committee or hostess for the family reunion, follow these steps:

1. Plan the menu at least two weeks in advance.
2. Make a grocery list.
3. Calculate how much the food and supplies are going to cost and make changes as needed.
4. Write out a detailed schedule of what you need to do before, during, and after the event.
5. Ask family and friends to help with task as needed.

Food Safety Tips

- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold so people do not get sick.
- Make sure that you have the appropriate space and equipment (refrigerator, freezer, stove, etc.) necessary to keep the food you choose to serve at safe temperatures.
- Wrap or cover food if it is going to be stored on the table or counter.
- Use foods that require less preparation. For example, pre-made rolls.
- Use canned food rather than raw food if equipment and space for the following are not available:
 - Sinks to wash fresh fruits and vegetables.
 - Refrigeration before or during food preparation.
 - Cooking equipment (microwave, stove, etc.).
- Make foods that can be served on paper or plastic plates if dishes cannot be washed.

Know how. Know now.



Plan Within A Budget

- When making your budget, make sure to include all of the costs that will go into the event, such as food, ice, utensils, plates, napkins, paper towels, labor, room rental, dish and hand soap, garbage bags, etc.
- Try to buy the food in bulk to save money.
- Sometimes service from a restaurant or caterer is easier and more convenient.

Menu Ideas

- When planning your menu, remember to include a variety of food. Use MyPyramid to help you plan a nutritious meal.
- Plan foods that offer a variety of colors, textures, temperatures, shapes and sizes, and different preparation methods.
- Pick a theme and decorate the tables and room to help set the mood. Remember to check with your budget when adding additional expenses.

“Special Occasion” Potato Dish

(Serves 6-8)

This recipe can be increased as needed for a group.

1 (2 pound) package hash brown frozen potatoes
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1/2 cup onion, chopped
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 (10.75 oz) can cream of chicken soup
1 cup milk
1 cup sour cream
1 1/2 to 2 cups grated cheese (Cheddar or Colby)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9x13-inch pan with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In a small pan, saute onion in melted margarine.
3. Mix all the ingredients together.
4. Place in prepared pan and bake for 45 to 60 minutes.

Menu Idea

Ham Balls
“Special Occasion” Potato Dish
Green Beans
Fruited Gelatin Salad
Rolls and Margarine
Cake and Ice Cream

Ham Balls

(Makes 30-34 balls)

3 pounds ground ham
2 pounds ground beef
1 pound ground pork
3 eggs
2 cups milk
3 cups graham cracker crumbs
1 teaspoon onion salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon liquid smoke

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9x13-inch pan with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. Mix all ingredients together and form into balls. Place in prepared pan.
3. Mix sauce ingredients together:
1 can tomato soup
1/2 cup water
1 tablespoon dry mustard
1 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup vinegar
4. Place sauce mixture over the ham balls and bake for 45 to 60 minutes.