

Grilling On A Budget: A Blow-Out BBQ That Won't Break The Bank

Hosting a cookout on Memorial Day weekend is an excellent way to celebrate our freedom and respect the memory of those fighting for it. Like any other party, though, hosting a cookout can get expensive. With summer vacations and college tuition payments right around the corner, it's an important time to save as much as possible. Here are some handy tips to make your cookout the best it can be, on a budget.

1.) Bakery outlet shopping

There are lots of great deals at a clothes outlet. Garments that are out of season or slightly imperfect find their way to discount racks to be had for pennies on the dollar. It might seem ridiculous, but there's a system just like that for baked goods.

Commercial bakeries make the same amount of bread every day whether it sells at the supermarket or not. This leaves grocery shelves overcrowded with buns, breads, and desserts. These baked goods are perfectly fine, especially if you plan to use them in a day or two. Still, they're pulled from grocery store shelves to make way for a fresh supply.

The "old" baked goods are often taken to a day-old bakery, where they're sold at a significant discount. If you need a lot of hot dog buns for your cookout, this can be an excellent place to save. Don't forget to pick up mini-doughnuts and other desserts while you're there!

2.) Plan the meal for savings

If you're buying meat for the whole family, the costs can add up quickly. Fortunately, there are a few ways to knock the cost down a little bit. Get your family to try some new things!

If you have a very large gathering – 50 people or so – consider getting beef by the side. Prices for this vary from region to region, but costs are usually between \$4 and \$6 per pound. Sides usually contain about 200 pounds of meat. That will include several premium cuts of steak as well as enough hamburger to feed an army!

Alternately, you can veggie up your cookout. Asparagus, zucchini and potatoes all do well on the grill with a little bit of olive oil, salt, and pepper. They'll absorb some of the cooked meat juices for extra flavor. Veggies are cheap, nutritious, and filling. Plus, it'll be something new to talk about!

You can even go a step further and offer some veggie alternatives to cookout classics. Meatless patties made of beans, spices, and rice cost half of what a similar-sized beef patty would. These are healthier, cheaper, more filling and don't have the same dangers of undercooking.

3.) Mix your own drinks

One of the biggest cookout expenses can be the drinks, especially if you buy individual bottles and cans. Doing so also leaves you with the unpleasant task of picking up dozens of half-empty soda and beer cans. Try this instead:

Large plastic pitchers can be used to store homemade drink concoctions. Loaded with ice and kept in a shady spot, those pitchers will keep your drinks cool for hours. Be sure to label your pitchers with their contents so no one ends up with “grown-up punch” by mistake! This is a great chance to be creative. Mix iced tea and lemonade for big batch of Arnold Palmers, a wonderfully refreshing summer drink!

Not only will you save on costs, you’ll also save the planet. Using washable plastic cups instead of disposable Styrofoam will reduce your waste and make cleanup easier! Be the host with the most fun, not the most expenses!

SOURCES*:

<http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/my-money/2015/06/03/7-ways-to-save-on-your-summer-barbecue>

<http://thekrazycouponlady.com/2012/01/19/extreme-couponing-tip-buy-day-old-bread-and-save/>

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