



## Celebrating on a Budget

Celebrations can be challenging when on a tight budget. However, this can be an opportunity to think creatively. Reusing, repurposing, crafting and home baking can help to keep costs down and can also be rewarding. Remember that it's the people and the time you share together which really make a celebration, so try not to feel under pressure.

### Planning

Try to plan in advance, so that you can manage things such as:

- Budget - set a budget and stick to it. Only spend what you can afford.
- Starting early can give you time to make things rather than buying them.
- Shopping list: make a shopping list and only buy what is on the list.
- Check what you already have; check what food you may already have and aim to incorporate this.
- Look around; see what you have at home which you could reuse, gift or repurpose.

### Food for celebrations

- If you are able to plan in advance, keep an eye out for reduced items which you can buy and freeze until you need them.
- Use fresh, natural ingredients and cook from scratch, freezing extra portions for another time.
- Ask everyone to bring a dish - if you're inviting friends, plan a loose menu of what you'll be making and ask them to bring something to accompany it.
- Use food creatively - many vegetables can be used in cakes, such as the one in our recipe.
- Remember portion sizes - you may not need as much food as you think to create a memorable celebration.
- Cook one pot meals, such as a stew, soup or tray bake. These can be quicker to make and can reduce cooking time. You can also save any leftovers for the next day!
- Use higher fibre ingredients such as wholewheat (brown) pasta and bread. These will help people fuller for longer.
- Cook with beans and lentils, which are less expensive than meat and cook more quickly than meat. They can also be reheated and frozen.
- Try to buy and eat the most nutritious food you can within your budget. Pre-cooked ready meals and fast food are usually lower in nutritional value and are more expensive than cooking yourself.

### Quick Party Food Makes

Some ideas for quick, low cost party foods:

- Potato wedges: part-boil sliced potatoes and brown off in the oven.
- Dips: Blend soft vegetables / beans to make your own dips.
- Crudities: Slice carrots and celery to go with dips.
- Pasta salad: Mix cooked wholewheat pasta with cooked frozen mixed vegetables, season and drizzle with olive oil.
- Frittata: Whisk eggs and mix in some frozen mixed vegetables, and a little grated cheese. Season and bake in an oven dish. Cool before slicing and serving.

### Decorations

Decorations can easily be made on a budget.

- Use old magazines to make paper chains or bunting. You'll just need some glue/sticky tape and some string.
- Hunt for old pine cones, give them a quick wash and paint them - these can also be hung on strings.
- Oranges/lemons can be sliced thinly and dried (usually in the oven), then hung on strings.
- Cut up old cards and make into bunting or decorations.

### Gifts

Gifts do not have to be expensive; they can be homemade, repurposed, brought from charity shops or pre-loved things of your own.

Here are some ideas for low cost gifting with meaning:

- Gift a book you have which you have enjoyed and would like to share.
- Fill a jar with messages on folded pieces of paper.
- Try knitting - charity shops often have wool; start with something simple.
- Bake a cake - a cake makes a wonderful gift, whether it's a cupcake or a larger cake.
- Write a poem - a truly personal, memorable gift.

For wrapping, use brown paper, old magazine pages or newspaper - give it a 'vintage' style and make paper flower or fan style decorations to stick onto it. Gift tags can easily be made from cutting up old cards.

## Where to get help when you need it

If you need help with food or other aspects of your life, you are not alone. Bath Mind's Support Directory lists places across Bath and North East Somerset where you can find help.

**Visit [www.bathmind.org.uk/service-directory/](http://www.bathmind.org.uk/service-directory/)  
to search the listings.**