

Cheapskates' Christmas Dinner



Christmas Dinner is just one meal during the year and yet if we let it this one meal can cost us the equivalent of a week's grocery budget.

Don't get me wrong, I love Christmas and I love Christmas Day and having the whole family together. I just don't think it has to be hideously expensive and that includes Christmas Dinner.

Having strong English and Scottish roots, we enjoy a traditional hot roast for Christmas dinner – despite the fact that it can be a blazing 40 degrees!

I've done the sums and walked the supermarkets to check the prices and this year our Christmas dinner will come in at under \$50 including some treats and nibbles. We'll be having Golden Roast Chicken with gravy, Potato Bake, honey carrots and peas and corn. For dessert we'll have Ice Cream Christmas Pudding (my own easy version), custard and cream – I can almost hear our arteries hardening.

We'll have bowls of lollies and of course our traditional scorched almonds on the table. And I'll make an onion dip and a taco dip to have with carrot and celery sticks and Shapes – Barbecue, Cheese and Savoury.

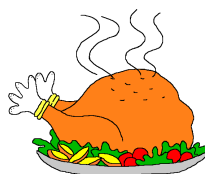
Of course for afternoon tea, which

we include as a part of our Christmas Dinner, we'll have cake and Royal Puddings.

If you're thinking that our Christmas Dinner is just a standard roast – you're right! It is. We make it special by the way we set the table and the way we serve it, and of course by sharing it with family and friends.

I use my best dishes and linen, including my favourite tablecloth and real linen napkins, to set the table, decorating it with a small Christmas tree centre-piece, bonbons and candles.

We're eating with people we like, the table looks lovely, we have food we all like and best of all we've spent less than lunch for two at a restaurant!



Cheapskates Journal

December 2005

Shopping list:

- 1 fresh chicken No. 20
- 1.5kg medium potatoes
- 1 loaf bread
- 7 small onions
- 1 lge tomato
- 1 egg
- 500g peas
- 500g corn kernels
- 3 lge carrots
- celery
- 2L chocolate icecream
- 1 jar fruit mince
- 1 300ml bottle cream
- 500g mixed lollies
- 2 x 200ml sour cream
- 1 pkt onion soup mix
- 1pkt taco seasoning
- Shapes
- 1 bottle lemonade
- 1 bottle dry ginger
- 2 litres pineapple juice
- Chocolate royals
- Spearmint leaves
- Jaffas
- White chocolate

Christmas Candles

Put those paper towel tubes to use by storing your candles in them. Wrap the candles in a layer of paper towel and then store them in the tube. Write the colour of the candle on the outside of the tube so you can find them easily. They won't get damaged from being left

loose in a drawer and you'll be helping the environment by re-cycling the tube.



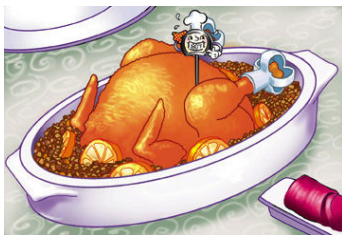
Bread Stuffing

8 slices day old bread, torn into small pieces.
Chop 1 large tomato and 1 large onion. Add a beaten egg and a good pinch mixed herbs.
Add the breadcrumbs and mix into a dough.

Rinse and dry the inside of the chicken. Fill the cavity with the stuffing mixture.

Dry the outside of the chicken and then lightly brush with oil (not too much).

Bake in a moderate oven for 1 ½ hours or until the chicken is cooked.



Cheapskate's Ice Cream Christmas Pudding

This is the easiest dessert ever and it looks spectacular turned out on a platter for serving.

Line a pudding shaped, freezer safe bowl or basin with foil and then plastic wrap. Make sure to over lap the edge so that you have enough to fold over to seal the container.

Soften a two-litre tub of chocolate ice cream. Stir in a jar of fruit mince and a packet of chopped glace cherries. Spread into your pudding basin. Cover with greaseproof paper, fold the edges over to seal and re-freeze until

Gravy

This is my easy chicken gravy.

To 1 cup cold water add 2tsp gravy powder and 1 chicken stock cube. Drain the pan juices and add to the mix.

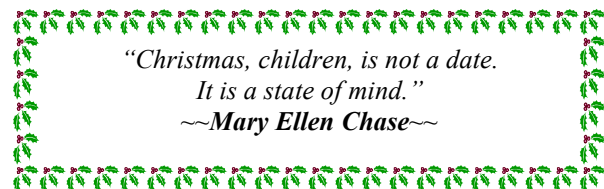
Put into a microwave safe jug and cook on high power for 1 minute. Stir. Cook a further 1 minute in 30 second intervals, stirring well between cooking times.

Gravy is ready when it is slightly thickened and comes to a boil.

Tip: Use a kitchen whisk to stir – takes all the lumps out.

almost ready to serve.

To serve, take out of the freezer and soften for a few minutes before turning out onto a serving platter.



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Royal Puddings

1 pkt Chocolate Royal biscuits
250g block white chocolate
pkt Jaffas
pkt spearmint leaves

Melt the chocolate and let it cool until almost set. Carefully spoon it over each biscuit, letting it run down the sides to resemble custard.

Top with a Jaffa and a spearmint leave on either side.

Store in an airtight container in the fridge.