

The background of the entire page is a collage of various food items and British coins. The food items include slices of kiwi fruit, grapefruit, and what appears to be a cross-section of a red cabbage or similar vegetable. The coins are of various denominations, including a ten pence coin with a lion, a twenty pence coin, a fifty pence coin, and a one pound coin. The overall color scheme is a mix of green, red, and yellow/gold.

BUDGET BITES

Food and budgeting training

"Giving people the confidence and skills to cook from scratch on a budget"

**food
matters**

sustainable, fair food systems

Food Matters is a national food policy and advocacy organisation working on sustainable food policy issues and community food work, working with a variety of organisations on a range of diverse issues. Through consultancy, research, evaluation, training and delivery, at both a local and national level, Food Matters works to create sustainable and fair food systems.

Food Matters believes that building sustainable food systems requires a localised approach which gives communities greater control of their food system. Food Matters has pioneered local food systems work in the UK through our work in Brighton and Hove, where for the last ten years we have worked successfully with community members and statutory agencies to create a sustainable food system in the City.

Much of this work has involved training individuals and community food groups providing the skills required to better understand their own food habits in order to support positive change. Budget Bites is part of that legacy enabling people to make more informed food choices not only by knowing more and having more confidence but also understanding how to use their food budgets more effectively.

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Introduction

Food is fundamental to our lives, our health and wellbeing but often it is the one element of the budget that is squeezed when things get tight. Managing on a low income is difficult and often people's health suffers as a consequent. A diet made up of highly processed foods, high in fats, sugars and salt, and that lack whole-grains, fruit and vegetables is not only detrimental to physical health but can also exacerbate to poor mental health. Poor mental health can lead to debt, debt can cause mental health problems, and people on low incomes are burdened with increasing levels of debt. Learning to manage this flexible part of the budget more effectively supports wellbeing and healthier lives.

“It was fun because I like making new things! And I need these skills when I grow up!” **Sophie**

Budget Bites supports people to understand the links between good food budgeting, managing debt, and how healthy meals are a vital component of wellbeing in all aspects of their lives. **Budget Bites** works by giving

people the confidence and skills to cook from scratch, using low cost ingredients that can be bought at the local corner shops, food co-ops, or supermarkets to create meals and snacks that are affordable, healthy and appetizing for everyone.

Budget Bites helps people who are struggling to live healthy lives to feel confident about cooking with healthy, affordable, non-processed foods in a fun, friendly environment.

Weekly sessions include:

- ✓ Understanding the basics of a balanced diet
- ✓ Meal planning, adapting recipes, and store cupboard basics
- ✓ How to budget meals for a week
- ✓ Creating appetizing healthy affordable meals
- ✓ Cooking with special offers
- ✓ How to save money and eat well
- ✓ Sharing meals
- ✓ Practical money management advice and support from Debt Advocacy Workers
- ✓ Practical kitchen skills

“More Budget Bites please! This invaluable course has been a real gem in a community which was number 37 in the 2001 Government indices of Deprivation. More please!”

Mary



Budget Bites

Top Tips for trainers

To run a successful **Budget Bites** course you will need to consider the following:

➡ **Budget Bites** requires a community kitchen which is reasonably well equipped

➡ Contact time needs to be approximately two hours (minimum)

➡ In addition to contact time you will need one hour for planning and shopping prior to start time and fifteen minutes post course tidy up

➡ Use the types of shops that are used by participants but also have a list of shops/ co-ops/box schemes that can be used which offer alternatives and support local produce

➡ Use recipe books, on-line recipes, shopping lists, menu plans to prepare and explain the value of these tools when trying to save money and avoid waste

➡ Recruit at least one volunteer as this helps with supporting individuals (this can be someone from a previous group)

➡ The planned sessions can be used in any order

➡ Be prepared to adapt sessions to accommodate the group's abilities and to reflect their issues and concerns

➡ Encouraging participation by supporting the group to help decide what is covered in the sessions

➡ The course introduction should cover ground rules, setting up a group agreement, and include confidentiality and knife safety

➡ Be mindful of disclosures and self disclosures

➡ Be genuine

➡ Plan each week in advance



Week one: One pot wonders

Introduction

The Cookery Trainer and Debt Advocate introduce themselves and the general aims of the project. Participants are asked to introduce themselves and what they hope to gain from the course.

The course

The course covers cookery and kitchen skills as well as managing personal household budgets and debt. Depending on the needs of the participants, topics might include: one pot wonders, meat free protein, cooking with pasta, rice and freezing food, lovely leftovers, savoury store cupboard and celebrations, loans, budgets, and income and expenditure skills.

The overarching aim

To support participants' access a healthy diet and to learn skills to manage their household budgets with increased confidence. In the first session the Cookery Trainer sets the scene, helps the group to establish ground rules and a group agreement, and then turns to look at what will be covered each week of the training.

Objectives



To begin to understand the barriers to successful budgeting – household income and expenditure

The session will begin by looking at income and out goings- a general open discussion guided by the Cookery Trainer who takes notes on a flip chart and facilitates the participants' experiences moving towards identifying positive achievable steps.





To introduce basic cookery skills

The Cookery Trainer will then introduce the practical session, covering:



safety in the kitchen



basic knife skills



basic cooking skills

Participants are encouraged to take part but no-one is obliged to. The practical session will include talking about:



store cupboards ingredients and costs



making cheap and healthy treats



myth busting – healthy foods verses unhealthy foods, price, frozen verses fresh

Practical Session: Cooking one-pot meals

- Risotto
- Stir fry
- Spanish Omelette
- Noodle Soup
- Salads
- German apple cake



Take home resources:

Budget plan sheet
Myth busting facts
Recipes





Week two: What, no meat?

Introduction

Food is one of the most flexible items in a household budget and when money gets tight the food bill almost certainly has to shrink. For individuals and families that are already finding it hard to buy a healthy diet this can tip them over the edge. This session looks at how to stretch the food budget further and how to create meals that have enough protein that are both affordable and healthy.

Aims

To assess and prioritise the financial out goings and manage the priority debts to ensure a realistic food budget is available that can support wellbeing.

Objectives



Group activity: using an 'income and outgoing' form to identify the static outgoings, including debts, and incomings.

- Rent
- Gas
- Food
- Council tax
- Water
- Debts
- Electricity



Group Activity: With completed 'income and outgoings' form the Cookery Trainer will work with the course participants to discuss how to make their budgets go further. This will include looking at:

- Menu planning
- Shopping with the seasons
- Shopping lists
- Offers - Bog Offs etc
- Shopping on-line
- Recipe alternatives



Practical cookery session introducing healthier cooking methods and learning healthy alternatives to meat recipes.



“The recipes were useful to me – especially the vegetarian ones and learning how to use new types of vegetables and store cupboard ingredients and different spices – healthy and cheap food.”



Practical Session: Cooking with alternatives to meat proteins

- Lentil mousaka
- Lasagne
- Shepherd's pie
- Bolognaise
- Chicken goujons
- Homemade burgers with beans
- Rice pudding made on the hob



Bolognaise sauce or shepherd's pies can easily be made vegetarian, healthier and cheaper by using dry or frozen soya mince, lentils or pulses.



Take home resources:
Top tips for shopping and saving money
Recipes



Week three: Too much pasta, again!

Almost everyone throws away more food than they think they do. One of the main reasons for throwing away food is usually cooking or preparing more than you can eat and the usual culprit is cooking too much rice or pasta and leaving the excess in the saucepan or on the plate. This session explores how we can save time and money through reducing what we waste.

Aims

To understand and be confident with cooking and freezing to save both time and money, and to avoid wasting food

“Can now cook some and store some in the freezer, so good, healthy meals are more available and accessible.”

Tom

Objectives



Reflective learning session to facilitate understanding the health benefits of using whole-grain rice and pasta in place of refined carbohydrates



Practical demonstration on cooking in bulk and freezing meals to understand what can and can't be frozen and the principles of freezing



Group activity: sharing tips around cooking and freezing foods



One-to-one debt advice sessions offering practical solutions by Debt Advocate

Practical Session: pasta, rice and so much more

- Rice, pasta and big batch sauces
- Tomato Sauce
- Tomato and Chilli sauce
- Philadelphia sauce
- Carbonara
- Cooking wholewheat pasta
- Risotto
- Meringues and Fruit



“Information given by Money Advice Advocate was very useful” **Sally**



Take home resources:
Recipes
Conversion chart - weight & measures



Week four: yesterday's dinner tomorrow's lunch

However good we get at reducing our waste there will always be some leftovers. Whether it's too much rice or pasta, bits of cold meat or limp veg most people will find something lurking at the back of the fridge. These forlorn items can make tonight's dinner or tomorrow's lunch. There are lots of delicious dishes that work best with leftovers. This session is dedicated to showing participants how using up leftovers safely, can save money and produce some surprisingly tasty dishes.

Aims

To give participants the confidence, skills and desire to use leftovers to create interesting, cheap and tasty dishes

“Stir-fries have become my
“pièce de résistance””

Ruth

Objectives



Group Discussion: Everyone's top leftover tips, what and how we use up leftovers now and what we might be able to use leftovers for.



Practical session to understand how to reduce leftovers by developing skills to foster increased confidence to use leftovers to make new healthy dishes

Practical session: making new dishes from leftover foods

- Sticky fried rice
- Spanish omelette
- Banana Pancakes
- Vegetable Fritters
- Smoothies
- Pesto made from salad bags and roasted nuts



Take home resources:

Recipes
Keeping food safe leaflet



Week five: Store cupboard stars

When money is tight the food budget is often squeezed. Careful planning and shopping can help enormously but inevitably by the end of the month there is not much left in the fridge. This session focuses on how to plan and use from the store cupboard, tins and frozen foods to create meals and dishes that are tasty, nutritious and will fill up the family.

Aims

To build participants' knowledge and awareness of what makes for good store cupboard foods and how to use those foods when they are needed to make healthy meals.

Objectives



A group activity looking at ingredients which are suitable for storage and that can be used in emergencies to create nutritious delicious meals



Practical cooking session to develop confidence in cooking with tinned, frozen and dried ingredients

Practical session: dishes with store cupboard basics

- Soups
- Lentils
- Noodles
- Potatoes
- Fish fingers from tinned fish
- Flapjacks



Take home resources:
Recipes
Guide to food labelling leaflets





Week six: Affordable foods fit for celebrations

Managing day to day on a limited budget is hard enough when everything goes to plan – there's no unexpected bills, or expenses but when birthdays, anniversaries, or Christmas comes along it's difficult to give loved ones a special treat without the danger of breaking your budget. This session looks at how to create special dishes with less and how to make everyone feel that they are not missing out.

Aims

Make celebrations affordable, healthier and increase confidence improving and developing skills.

Objectives



Practical cookery session to develop confidence around cooking delicious unusual dishes for parties



Group activity and game to identify healthier oils versus less healthy oils, covering omega fats, hydrogenated fats and vegetable oils.



Group discussion on myths about the costs of cooking for celebrations



Follow-on advice session from the Debt Advocate

Practical session: foods fit for celebrations

- Vegetable fritters
- Falafel
- Sausage rolls
- Pitta Bread Pizzas
- Quiche
- Super salads
- Homemade salsas
- Orange polenta cake
- Mineral water
- sparkling tropical juice



Take home resources:

Recipes
Portion guide

Budget Bites

Top money saving tips

for trainers

Write a **meal plan** for the week- check what the recipes need and what you already have in your cupboards -plan for who is eating and who is visiting.



GOLDEN RULE

Never shop when you are hungry (and if possible try to leave the kids at home)



Shop on-line

The items you buy regularly are saved in a list so it saves you time, and money as you are less tempted to buy other items. Some supermarket websites list offers as well. However don't be seduced by things that look like a deal but aren't on your list or that you don't need.



Be conscious of **BOGOF OFFERS** that might not be the cheapest way to purchase what you want or need. And they may equally create waste.

Don't use a basket

If you're just popping to the shop for milk, bread or fruit, you won't be tempted to over-shop and spend more.



Try using the **local butcher** or **green grocer** as this may work out cheaper. They don't bite and are usually very helpful and friendly – selling items in smaller quantities than the supermarkets.

Cook in advance and
freeze



Frozen

meals, this works if you are only cooking for small numbers, if you work, or if you are unwell.

fruit and vegetables also avoid waste by using only what you need, equally they are frozen at source so their nutrient value is not compromised.



Cook one meal for the family

if you have small children remove their portions before adding extra salt or spices.



Try the **basic lines** offered by supermarkets as this can dramatically reduce your food bill. But remember to look at the labels for foods high in saturated fat, sugar and salt.



Use up leftovers !

Sunday roast- makes a shepherd's pie or a curry; leftover rice makes a stir fry rice dish – left over pasta makes a pasta salad, macaroni cheese etc.



BUY SEASONNALLY

Where possible use seasonal fruit and vegetables – they are often cheaper, fresher and tastier.



Useful links:



Brighton and Hove Food Partnership: www.bhfood.org.uk – This is Brighton and Hove's go to organisation delivering cookery courses, growing projects, running the Harvest project and a campaign to reduce food waste 'Love Food Hate Waste'



Netmums: www.netmums.com has a complete section dedicated to food and budgeting, great for mums looking for tasty budget recipes



"Dealing with your debts" booklet by **Money Advice Trust**, available for free at: www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Recipes:

BBC Good Food: www.bbcgoodfood.com

The Resourceful Cook: www.resourcefulcook.com

Delia Smith: www.deliaonline.com

Jamie Oliver: www.jamieoliver.com, www.jamiesministryoffood.com

Vegetarian recipes: www.vegsoc.org/cordonvert/recipes

Government - tips about healthy eating

www.eatwell.gov.uk - meal ideals: at home and eating out

www.takelifeon.co.uk - meal and ideas for healthy lifestyle

www.nhs.uk/5aday - recipes and ideas

Recommended books:

Delia Smith - *Complete Cookery Course, Frugal Food, One is fun*

Jamie Oliver - *Cook with Jamie and Jamie's Ministry of Food*

Jeanette Orrey - *The Dinner Lady and Second Helpings from the Dinner Lady*

You can borrow a wide range of cookery books from your local library or look out for second hand books in charity shops.

Also look out for recipes in magazines and newspapers, especially in the weekend colour supplements