

Embrace Celebratory Spring Brunches With Cost-Effective Entertaining Tips Ⓣ

(NAPSA)—April showers bring more than May flowers; spring months welcome an array of special occasions to celebrate. Brunch gatherings in honor of Mother's Day, graduations or showers present a flavorful way to bring family and friends together in a cozy setting.

While hosting a large-scale brunch can be costly, there are simple ways to save at the register and still impress your guests:

- Revert to the vintage style and appeal of a custom-made punch. Forego purchasing several types of beverages, which can add to the bottom line of your bill, and instead opt for two or three containers of 100 percent fruit juice, combined with slices of mixed fruit. Serve in a family heirloom punch bowl to add a sentimental element to your special occasion.

- Casseroles offer an affordable and delicious way to satisfy your guests' hunger. Save time and money by preparing one or two large dishes in place of many small items and sides. Hearty egg or noodle dishes are traditional brunch favorites and require few ingredients.

- Look in the frozen food aisle for a variety of high-quality food and beverage options that pack the same nutritional punch at a fraction of the cost, such as 100 percent frozen concentrated Florida orange juice.

- Ask family and friends to each bring a delicious dish to share. You'll save on time spent in the kitchen, as well as on expenses, while benefiting from a variety of cooking styles.

Spring-inspired recipes, such as a festive punch, can add a splash of nutrition and brighten the flavor of your next special-occasion brunch.

"It's easy to prepare mouth-

watering recipes that offer both health and cost-saving benefits," says Gail Rampersaud MS, RD, of the University of Florida. "Orange juice is extremely versatile beyond the breakfast table and enhances the health benefits of dishes. On a budget, frozen concentrated orange juice provides the same fresh taste as ready-to-drink orange juice and helps consumers meet almost 25 percent of their USDA daily recommended servings of fruit and vegetables."

Mint Orange Agave Cooler Punch

Makes 2 gallons or 24 (8-ounce) servings

- 1 cup loosely packed mint leaves, roughly chopped**
- 8 cups ice**
- 4 (12-ounce) containers frozen concentrated orange juice**
- 5 quarts water**
- 3 cups fresh lime juice**
- 3 cups agave nectar**

Place mint leaves in the bottom of a punch bowl. With the back of a spoon, bruise mint to break up slightly to release flavor. Add ice.

Combine thawed frozen concentrated orange juice with 3 quarts of water. Add fresh lime juice, agave nectar and remaining water; stir well.

* Agave nectar is a naturally occurring sweetener that has a lower glycemic index value than other sweeteners. It is available at supermarkets and natural foods stores.

To learn more about the nutritional benefits of cooking with orange juice, or for more budget-friendly recipe ideas, visit www.floridajuice.com.