



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## For economical holiday feasts, shop the commissary

*By Kay Blakley,  
DeCA home economist*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – If money is so tight this year you're thinking of skipping the traditional holiday meal, consider this: All you need to do is shop the commissary and you'll be in surprisingly fine shape. Would you believe it's possible to purchase ingredients for the entire meal for eight to 10 people for just \$50? I'm here to tell you the answer is yes – I just did it!

I recently helped a young military couple, Chelsea and Dion Kirton, who wanted to stick to their \$50 limit, didn't want a lot of leftovers, didn't want to spend a lot of time in the kitchen, and wanted to keep all the preparation as simple and easy as possible.

Our menu consisted of:

- A 6-pound, bone-in turkey breast
- A 5-pound, "quarter"-spiral sliced ham
- Turkey gravy (made with the gravy packet included with the turkey breast)
- Dressing (celery, onion and chicken broth added to a bag of stuffing mix)
- Southern-style marshmallow yams (using canned yams)
- Spiced, fresh, green beans with walnuts
- Cranberry sauce (canned)
- Hot rolls (ready-to-serve)
- Pumpkin pie (ready-to-serve)
- Pecan pie (ready-to-serve)
- Whipped topping for the pumpkin pie

Total cost: \$48.06 plus 5 percent surcharge of \$2.40 = grand total of \$50.46.

We used ingredients such as milk, butter and spices the couple already had on hand. A \$4 coupon they had for the ham allowed us to buy the ready-to-serve pies, which saved a lot of preparation time. And, we used leaves harvested from the celery, along with two apples and a lemon the couple had on hand to garnish the meat platters.

To make sure both the ham and turkey were ready at the same time, we roasted the turkey breast in the oven, but cooked the ham in the slow cooker. It worked like a charm!

Lots of people spend a whole lot more, but that's usually because they buy more than is actually needed and several extras that happen to be among their holiday favorites. Adding favorites is absolutely fine, and your commissary has stocked just about any holiday favorite imaginable. However, if sticking to a budget is top priority, shop with a detailed list, and buy only what you need.

Don't know how much turkey or ham it takes to feed the number of guests you're inviting? Come to Kay's Kitchen at <http://www.commissaries.com> for the answer. Need to know how long it takes to thaw or roast the turkey you choose? We've got that answer, too, plus a collection of holiday recipes that is sure to include just what you're looking for.

**- DeCA-**

**Photo caption:** Dion and Chelsea Kirton and DeCA Home Economist Kay Blakley present a holiday feast that they prepared with ingredients from their local commissary. Price tag: \$50.46.

**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth about \$3,300 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*