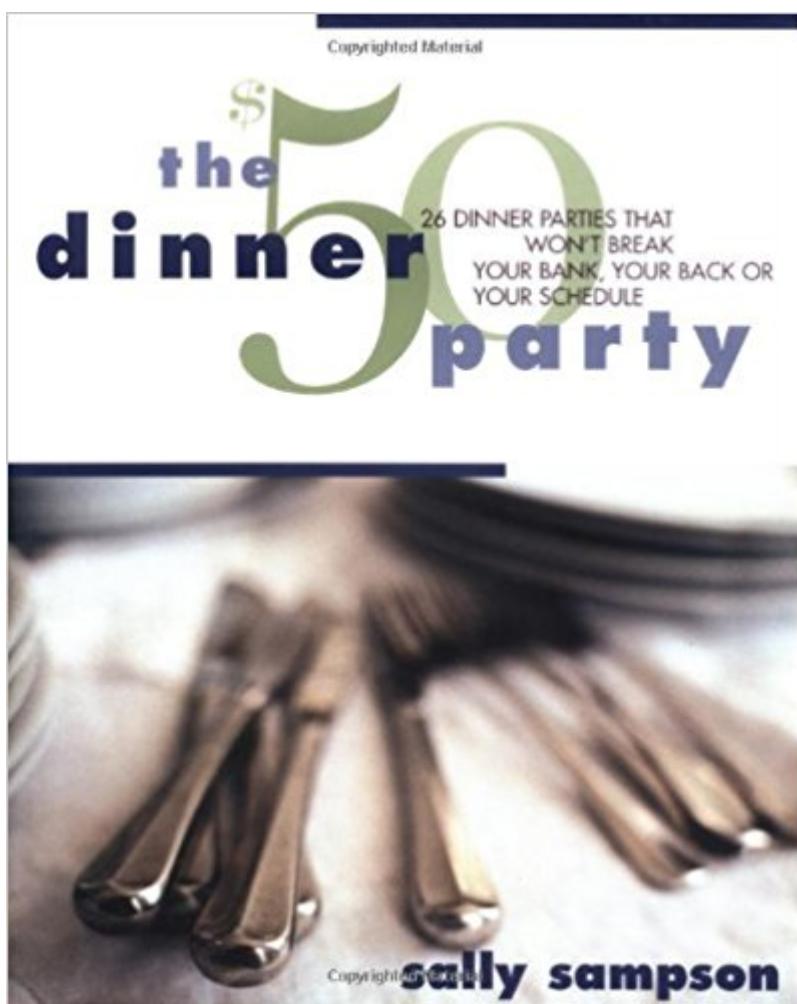


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# The \$50 Dinner Party: 26 Dinner Parties That Won't Break Your Bank, Your Back, Or Your Schedule



## **Synopsis**

Are you a victim of fear of entertaining? Do you break into a cold sweat at the thought of planning a menu? Do you think you have to take out a loan when you invite friends to dinner? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you need The \$50 Dinner Party. Do your guests have all-American tastes? Satisfy them with Grilled Marinated Flank Steak with Soy, Sherry and Dijon; Potato Cake with Garlic and Olive Oil; a Salad of Arugula, Avocado and Mango and Cheesecake with Raspberry Sauce. Feeling in a tropical mood? Try the Caribbean Spiced Chicken, Coconut Black Bean Risotto, Cucumber Salad with Yogurt and Mint and Key Lime Mousse with Toasted Coconut. Looking for something simple and elegant? Then serve Grilled Salmon Steaks with Citrus and Thyme, Pan-Steamed Spinach, Leek Mashed Potatoes and Engagement Brownies. And for a meal with a pan-Asian flavor, treat your guests to Spicy Scallops with Cashews, Steamed Basmati Rice, Watercress Salad with Orange Segments and Vanilla Ice Cream with Roasted Peaches and Gingerroot. Each of the menus in The \$50 Dinner Party will feed six people for fifty dollars, not including beverages. And if you want to treat your guests to a little something extra, try one of the dozen dips with some crackers and cruditÃ©s, and a plate of "\$50 Cookies" with your coffee or tea. Whether you're a new cook trying to coordinate a balanced dinner on an unbalanced budget or an old hand looking for new ideas that don't require spending a fortune at the market or hours in the kitchen, you'll find the perfect dinner in The \$50 Dinner Party.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The subtitle of Sally Samson's The \$50 Dinner Party astutely sums up the book: Twenty-Six Dinner

Parties That Won't Break Your Bank, Your Back, or Your Schedule. And boy, does she deliver. This is a no-frills cookbook, as spare as you can go, and is a sleek beauty as a result. Sampson opens with a chapter of little bites and dips, then it's right into the main menus, with detailed discussions on each of the 26 dinners, plus sidebars of information for clever timesaving ideas. A presumption is made that you are already comfortable in the kitchen, that you speak the language of recipes, and that you know how to time a meal to get the food out and onto the table when your guests are ready to sit down. Sampson leaves the marching orders to you. Her job--and she's brilliant at it--is stimulating your planning imagination with a lush array of possibilities for delicious dinners for six that she feels will come in under \$50, sans wine, coffee, and tea. A couple of wonderful meal examples: Roasted Chicken Breasts with Dried Figs, Apricots, and Prunes; French Bread; Mixed Green Salad with Red Onions and Toasted Pine Nuts; and Rice Pudding. Or, Grilled, Marinated Flank Steak with Soy, Sherry, and Dijon; Potato Cake with Garlic and Olive Oil; Salad of Arugula, Avocado, and Mango; and Cheesecake with Raspberry Sauce. Sally Sampson deserves a medal for taking the worry and guesswork out of dinner entertaining, all while watching the purse strings.

--Schuyler Ingle

Sarah Fritschner author of Express Lane Cookbook Straightforward recipes and festive menus help the cook concentrate on matters at hand -- good friends and good times. -- Review

This book is going to save my life this year. I've been trying to figure out how to host a dinner party without breaking the bank and this books seems to help. It did cost more than one dollar though.

This is an old favorite of mine and I bought it again to send to my daughter. You know how some cookbooks look good but end up not being useful? Well, this one is just the opposite - full of recipes that actually work.

I love this cookbook! With easy to follow directions and affordable ingredients that are easy to find in your local grocery store it's perfect for anyone who likes to entertain on a whim! The recipes/menus are written in a clear, concise manner that is easy to follow along with.

The idea behind this cookbook is great -- take some of the mental obstacles away from entertaining by getting money and time out of the way. In the end the author accomplishes this goal. This book is great for inspiration to 'just do it' when it comes to dinner parties. That being said, her cooking

definitely has its limits. There are 26 menus, all including a main course, side dishes, either an appetizer or a salad, and a dessert. Personally, my cooking focuses a lot on desserts, so I couldn't help but notice that she totally cops out on the dessert portion of the book. There are several cookie recipes in the back of the book and she falls back on those for a number of her 'desserts.' Meanwhile, in trying to list easy dessert recipe, there's not a single pie!! My advice: don't serve cookies for dessert. Just get some fresh fruit and cream if you don't want to think about it. Or substitute your own favorite dessert recipes for hers. One minor thing: she mentions that she and her food processor are attached at the hip, and she does use her food processor in a lot of recipes. If you have one, great. If you don't, mostly you can get around it, no problem, but just be aware. Nonetheless, the book is good. Her philosophy of making things ahead and understanding that the real reason for a dinner party is to have friends over is great, and she sticks to the philosophy in her recipes. The carrot cake as mentioned in another review is good. As is the chicken saltimbocca, the sherry flank steak and her mashed sweet potatoes. also i like the butternut squash with apples and walnuts, etc. Some good recipes. If you need a bite sized way to jump start your entertaining aspirations, this is a good place to start. Also, you may find inspiration in thinking "I can do better than this!!" as I did. Go for it! If you don't mind doing a little more reading and a little more of your own thinking, there are some great easy menus and a similar philosophy to be found toward the back of Mark Bittman's *How to Cook Everything*. Also there's *Barefoot Contessa Parties* -- a similar philosophy but with a much more experienced author, great recipes and lots of pretty pictures. However, it doesn't have nearly as many menus as \$50, so take your pick.

I've been cooking my way through this book because she tells you what to do when, so that everything gets done on time and with no problems. The recipes are all easy and will make you feel very confident when you see the result, and I'm starting to get the hang of preparing meals on schedule - feels like she's coaching you all the way. I only gave 3 stars because although my roommate loves the dishes I make from it, I don't think they are the best recipes. They are good, but not great. Like, her recipe for Key Lime Mousse just tastes like flavored whipped cream. The chocolate date bars came out more like a cake texture, than a bar. The chicken recipes are overkill to my palate because her marinades are a ton of spices and herbs that go along with a nationality - Moroccan or Caribbean for instance - and personally, I don't think it's a good idea to put so many spices in one dish, then you can't really savor them. I've also noticed errors in the directions that make it seem that perhaps some of the recipes started out as high quantity and the scaling down of them was not perfected. I will continue to use this book for practice though, because for that, it has

been invaluable. When I've done all the menus in this book I think I'll have learned a lot about planning them myself, and then I can use whatever recipes I want! 1 other thing - she says to try not to buy ultra-pasteurized dairy products and I don't understand why -- this process is shorter than pasteurization and the end product is purer and tastes fresher.

Have you ever been at work on a Wednesday and decided just to invite some people over for dinner on Friday? This is the book to pull out in just those situations. My initial concern was that this was going to be a pasta-only kind of thing. I mean the \$50 limit can be a little intimidating. But no, there's everything in here for both carnivores and vegetarians. I made the dijon-sherry flank steak last night and it was tremendous! I love the fact that Sally obviously lives in the real world! Don't have time to marinate for 2 or 3 hours? She says fine, throw in in the fridge overnight and pull it out when you get home. Her menus are logical and easy to use. She even gives options of how to make adjustments whether you want to cook inside or out or even change a side dish. This is a great book for people (like me) who have trouble deciding what goes with what. It takes the guess work out of it. I really recommend it. Invite some people over. Have them bring wine!

Try the incredible chocolate-bread pudding, yum!! Amazing. This is just a fab cookbook for those people who want to entertain, who want to impress their friends' taste buds, but just don't have the time or the cash to do so Martha Stewart fashion. The menus I've tried all work so well together. This is my one cookbook that gets heavy usage, even though I've got all those Silver Palate ones too. Also having the menus makes it so easy to plan a dinner party, the recipes work very well together, saving you the time of searching cookbooks trying to figure out what goes well with what.

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