

Cooking for Mum

Problem(s):

- Ev would like to build a PC and it will take a long time to save up.
- Dee would like to teach Ev a life skill that he wished he'd learned when he was younger.
- Dee also needs to spread the cost of helping Ev build a PC over time so it is affordable to him.
- Mum needs to be happy with whatever plan is conjured up.

Solution:

- Ev cooks for his mum (and gives his mum a night off from food prep in the process).
- Dee pays Ev to learn how to cook.
- Mum helps Ev by adding ingredients to the weekly shop to enable this.
- Ev saves up what he earns.
- At the end of this, Dee helps Ev build a computer (if that is how Ev wants to spend the money he has earned at that time).

So how would this work?

First up... you'd need to do this because you want to. You can stop any time and you're not obliged to continue doing this... whatever you've earned to date will be yours to keep and spend how you wish or to save for the future.

The agreement

1. Dee will pay Ev £40 for each meal he cooks for his mum:
 - a. at the maximum rate of once per calendar week (Monday - Sunday)
 - b. for a maximum of 6 months (maximum earnings being 26 weeks at £40 = £1,040)
2. Dee will pay Ev a bonus of £260 if in the last 4 weeks the following are all true:
 - a. Ev cooks all 4 meals in the last 4 weeks
 - b. Everything in these meals are cooked from scratch, meaning pasta is made from flour, sauces are made from raw ingredients (although you can use olive oil and other single ingredient prepared things).
 - c. The meal is not a simple one, i.e. not a salad or stir fry - this is subjective so Dee gets to decide this and it's best to err on the side of caution when thinking of what to make
3. Proof of a meal being made will be a photo of the meal to a Signal group where we will also keep track of earnings to date
4. The 6 months start when the first meal is made, but does not start later than the end of September (therefore you should have earned all the money to build a PC by the end of March at the latest).
5. Ev needs to tell his mum what he wants to cook before the weekly shop.

Considerations

So that sounds simple! What's the catch? There isn't a catch. You earn with every meal you make your mum, and at the end there's a bonus if by cooking things from scratch you show off everything you've learned, and you do this for as long as you want to do it.

If you want to skip a week you can, but you don't get paid for that week. Don't feel like you *have* to cook every week, but at the same time skip as few weeks as possible. And if you want the bonus at the end then you can't skip in the last 4 weeks..

In addition to the above, Dee will also buy a maximum of 4 recipe / cook books from Amazon during the 6 month period, but it's also recommended to look at BBC Good Food recipes <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes>

When the 6 months are up we'll look at the amount earned and Dee will give this to your mum for you to spend on whatever you wish. If at this time you do want to build a PC then Dee will help support you in doing so as he's built a number of PCs and knows what to look out for and where to get the good parts that you'll need. Dee is also happy to engage in dreaming about this and planning it before the 6 months are up, we can do that in another Google doc.

How to game this in your favour?

The maximum earnings are $(26 * £40) + £260 = £1,300$, but it can feel like a chore to have to cook every week. The easiest way to get the maximum earnings is to not have it be a chore and to be working towards those last 4 weeks. It's not a chore if it's exciting, you're learning, and you're feeling achievement as you go - and most importantly that you cook something yummy for you too! The more you learn, the easier it is to make each meal and to earn more.

Make a plan! Focus on the bonus as that's the biggest chance of extra money, with the bonus factored in the last 4 weeks being effectively £105 per meal cooked! So always keep in mind that you need to be improving every week so that you can easily do the last 4 weeks.

Research some recipe books and ask your mum what her favourite meals are in different types of restaurant, what she likes to eat on holiday. Ask your gran what your mum enjoyed when she was younger. Make a long list of recipes that excite you, that your mum likes, that your gran has tipped you off about... put these in a Google Sheet and add some extra columns to the spreadsheet where you assess the difficulty involved and what each recipe teaches you (i.e. this one teaches a sauce, that one teaches how to prep certain veg) and make a plan... start simple, and slowly build up your skill. Always know what you want to cook in advance of your mum doing the shopping as it's far easier to cook from a plan than it is to cook from whatever is available in the fridge.

There is a bonus for cooking everything from raw ingredients, but that's only in the last 4 weeks. Start simple but each week try and learn 1 new thing that you didn't know how to do - don't take too much on at once. Rely on prepared ingredients in the first few months whilst

you focus on learning specific things, then use the middle couple of months to practise things you've already learned so that you're more comfortable with them, then you can relax and enjoy the last couple of months as by then it will be easy and super yummy.

Your mum will give you some help, and don't worry as it's very very hard to actually mess up cooking, almost everything can be salvaged (except chocolate in desserts, if you heat it too long or too harshly it turns into granules).

Use a calendar to tick off each week that you cook something. A rock band did this once when talking about trying to write and record songs (which they were struggling with at the time) and they called this "the chain"

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5e9TFTbItYBg2xThimr0rU?si=112c5c9ed0cd4352> and they used it to motivate themselves... "Never break the chain!" which becomes a game within the game.

If you find the inspiration isn't coming for what to cook... combine things together and create themes. You could do a film night and cook food that matches the film (hot locations like the desert scenes in Indiana Jones could be paired with Moroccan dishes like smoked aubergine, Indian scenes in James Bond can be paired with a curry, etc), or themes around seasonal things as Halloween, Guy Fawkes, Thanksgiving, and Christmas all happen during this 6 months.

How to get even more from this

The above plan lays down how to approach cooking for your mum and in doing so earning money to build your own PC... but if you want you can do far more than just this. You can make weekly TikTok videos showing the cooking process and what you made, or similarly you can do this on Twitter or YouTube. Don't doubt how cool it is to learn to cook aged 12, nor how popular it will be for others to see this. If you want to be creative about what you're doing then it is possible to turn this into a source of content creation.

Whilst this document lays the ground rules, consider them a little open to negotiation. For example, if you happen to cook for your gran around Christmas at the same time as cooking for your mum, you may earn a week off. Only the women in your family count though... your mum and your nan, as those have always been the people who have cooked for you.

Building your own PC

The budget Dee has set aside for this allows building a pretty good gaming / art PC. It's not the very best (GPUs costs are crazy this past 18 months as you probably know) but it's also not the worst... There are enough funds for a pretty good PC, and we can consider what your priorities are and tweak some things to be slightly better than others, i.e. a fraction less RAM for a slightly better GPU (for example if you want raytracing in the GPU for bigger Minecraft maps to be rendered from afar, then an Nvidia RTX will need to be the GPU. Maybe you don't need 32GB RAM but 16GB is enough and the money saved on the RAM can help get a better GPU).

Where to start?

- Which CPU you want (AMD vs Intel and which socket / generation) dictates which motherboard.
- Which motherboard dictates which RAM (speed) may be best.
- Which GPU and which motherboard dictates which size case (space to accommodate the GPU and motherboard).
- Which case dictates how best to cool the case (fans, heatsink, etc).
- All of the above dictate which PSU (peak wattage from the CPU + GPU + any optical drive).

Approach things in that order and it's hard to go wrong. We can check bundles of motherboard + CPU + RAM to see if we can get deals.

Additionally you'll need a monitor, keyboard, mouse, and probably a gaming headset. We'll try to avoid going into the world of mechanical keyboards and gaming mice for now so that you can make the PC as good as you can for the budget... it's easier to change the keyboard and mouse later on but changing the CPU or GPU is very expensive to do later so let's get that right first time.

Finally you'll need Windows or Linux depending on what you want to do... TBH I have all the things and I tend to use Windows the most as it just works for gaming, art, and everything else, plus the best drivers for the GPU exist on Windows and this will have the best compatibility with the art tablet you have.