

Strategies Applied:

- **Smoked Salmon:** An often pricey ingredient, the packaged grocery store salmon is a budget saver, here. Watch for it on sale around holidays. If you have Salmon for dinner, this recipe would also be made with left overs. \$4.89.
- **Cream Cheese:** Regularly drops to a \$1.00 on sale in my area, and even lower around Holidays, although these lower prices are often limited to one or two packages – get to know your rock bottom price and pick up multiple packages. Cream Cheese last for weeks in the fridge. Cost for this recipe: \$2.00.
- **Green Onion:** I try to buy on sale for about 50 cents a bunch (usually during Holidays) then put the white tips in a jar of water in a sunny window to regrow. Kids love taking ownership of the project. I only need to replenish every few months. Cost is so minimal that I don't even count it.
- **Gouda:** The smoked Gouda ran about \$4.23. While this is what really "makes" this recipe, if you're having to be really budget conscious, substitute Mozzarella or another cheese that will melt nicely and compliment the flavors.
- **Eggs:** Stock up on eggs when they're inexpensive, normally during Holiday weeks. Low prices in my area range from free (often with other purchases) to anywhere from \$1.89 for 18 eggs. They last for weeks in the fridge – The date on the container is a 'buy' date, and you can expect them to last a good six weeks past that date. If you pick up two or three packages when they're at their low, you'll rarely need to pay full price. 20 cents.
- **Whipping Cream:** Whipping cream varies wildly in price – look for it on sale around any holiday. Store brands are often less expensive than brand names, often half the price. If you aren't using it to whip, consider if 1/2 and 1/2 will work and be less expensive. If you're looking at a pint container, milk is about 8 cents a cup, so a pint of half and half should be roughly half the cost of the 8 ounce whipping cream to be cost-effective. This whipping cream was \$1.79 for 16 ounces (a pint) at Aldi cost for this recipe: 20 cents.
- **Ritz Crackers:** Never pay full price for basic items like this - there are too many sales and too many coupons. During holiday weeks I expect to pay about \$1.00 a box. Nearly one sleeve goes in the recipe, the rest served with it. \$1.00.
- **Butter:** A bit of a splurge, cost and calorie wise – but for taste and health, I'd rather use real butter than trans fat laden margarine or oils. Yes – they do have trans fat, even if the label says they don't. Harvard, for instance, says unequivocally: "*The key to a healthy diet is to substitute good fats for bad fats and to avoid trans fat.*" Buy on deep specials, often around the holidays with store coupons. I shoot for \$2.50 a pound and freeze, where it stays fine for months. Cost for this recipe: 3 tablespoons, 23 cents.