

Successful Cash Flow for Servers and Bartenders

Budgeting When Your Income Isn't Consistent

1. The Guarantee

How much money can I count on making per shift?

It's so easy to say, "I can't budget because I don't know how much I'm going to make each shift."

But I call bullshit. You have an idea of what you can pretty much guarantee you'll make during an average shift. Even if it was a miserably slow night, I knew that on a Saturday I was walking out with **at least** \$280. Tuesdays? \$105. Etc.

Find that minimum number for each of your weekly shifts.

2. The Math

What does that translate to for the month?

Add up your minimum shift income for a week and multiply by four. **THIS IS YOUR BASELINE GUARANTEED INCOME.**

Look, I *know* that you'll probably make way more than that each month. But I'd rather that extra be icing on the cake than to have you rely on it and then have a few dead weeks that have you stressing.

3. The Necessities

Food + Shelter + your other Must Haves

Be honest with yourself. What do you really need to survive each month?

Write down all of those expenses and add up how much they cost.

(If you don't already have a six-month emergency fund, I highly recommend saving towards that as a necessity. Even \$20 a week. But I'm not your Momma.)

4. What's Left?

Subtract your Necessities from your Guaranteed Income

Whatever is left over is money that you get to budget however you want to!

(This is where we start to make sure that you're living within your means. Making a budget isn't super useful if you're already spending more on the necessities than you're making.)

If your Guaranteed Income is less than your Necessities and you don't have savings intentionally set aside for that, it's time to make some tough decisions. Maybe you need cheaper rent, a roommate, or to pick up some extra shifts.)

5. The Niceties

How do you want to spend your leftover money?

Sit down and really take stock of your life. Sure, some things aren't Necessities, but they're what I call Niceties - it's just really nice to have them.

Your niceties are up to you. What are the things that you want to spend the extra money you have in your budget on? Then stick to it!

Write them up in a list along with how much each costs, and decide exactly how you want to spend the money you're guaranteed to make each month. (This can include free money for unplanned purchases.)

6. Celebrate!

Make more than your minimum guarantee? Treat yo' self!

Have a baller shift and make \$100 more than you're guaranteed? Sweet!

Since your Necessities and Niceties are already handled, you can treat yourself to whatever tf you want, whether that's a fancy night out or boosting your savings bucket. You're amazing!

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