

# Budgeted Birthday Blast

I think I blogged about my daughter's upcoming 10th birthday party a few weeks ago, looking for activity ideas. There was no need to worry, because we had the party last weekend, and everyone had a blast!

We ended up extending the party to make it last 3 hours instead of 2, and two of the girls were even able to spend the night. It was actually really easy to entertain 8 nine and ten-year-old girls, as well as the birthday girl's two little sisters, ages 3 and 5. Seventeen-month-old little brother was a nuisance, but the poor little guy was really very outnumbered by all those girls!

As we waited for the girls to arrive, they played a video game on the tv where there are floating balloons they get to break using their bodies instead of controllers. Next, Dad led the girls in about 5 rounds of the [party game Mafia](#) – they loved it! Then, we made English muffin pizzas – I set out the English muffins, pizza sauce, cheese, pepperoni, and mushrooms, and the girls made their own pizzas and then I put them in the oven for 5 or 10 minutes. The entire activity cost about \$6, and the kids loved it! Then we had cake, but I had realized ahead of time that with 4 kids, we spend about \$80 on birthday cake per year! Wow, does that add up! So I had a talk with my oldest, and she really had no problem with me getting mini cupcakes instead of a personalized birthday cake and numbered candles. This decision saved us about \$15! I got two 2 liters of pop, and a few cheap bags of snacks for the sleepover, and the entire party cost us under \$20! Most importantly, my daughter and her friends had an awesome time and made some great memories! Happy birthday Taylor!!



*(No, the party wasn't so boring everyone fell asleep! This what a group of kids playing the party card game Mafia look like!)*

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## Outlaws And Hideouts Revisited

All of this talk of hideouts and outlaws (see my previous post about Robber's Cave) makes me think about a really fun card game we've recently discovered – it's easy to become a Bandits junkie!



[Bandits is a card game by Buffalo Games](#), and it's fun for the entire family. It accommodates 2-6 players and is recommended for ages 10+, but we've found that our 9-year-old daughter and her friends can learn it and play quite easily.

Basically, a player begins with a hand of six cards, and he

has 3 options on his turn: start a gunfight, draw a card, or stash loot in his Hideaway. Many shoot-outs and much thievery ensues until the deck runs out of cards, and players count their stash in their Hideaways to determine the winner. Those are the basics – there are many other fun cards that offer various twists on the game play (double-crossing lawmen and outlaws, booby traps, backfires, to name a few), and I'm just skimming the surface of the game; you really should play to appreciate it. I don't know that I've ever played such a fun card game (I like [Pit](#) a lot, but it's another type of game altogether), and each game of Bandits is unique dependent upon the number of players – a 2-player game plays out much more differently than does a 4-player game. I'd like to try it with 6 players, but we can never haul it out at game night since we always have more than 6 players. However many players there are, Bandits is definitely worth playing and highly recommended by this game collector!