

simply cook

easy, healthy meals



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chapter one:

simply cook

Get ready to prepare meals in healthy, affordable ways. *Simply Cook* is filled with great advice, recipes and tips for cooking at home. Discover delicious ways you can make every meal special. A lifetime of good health starts at home.





As the challenge of fighting hunger continues in all of the communities we serve, it's more important than ever to come together to help our neighbors make ends meet. Meijer has a long-standing commitment to hunger relief in the Midwest that goes beyond keeping prices low for our customers. It's a commitment to those who are struggling to put food on the table.



In 2008, we set out to develop relationships with food pantries and food banks in the markets we serve. They've shared their concerns over the growing need, and we've listened. By inviting support from our generous customers, the *Simply Give* program at Meijer has helped fill a void. As our program has grown, our food pantry partners have found other ways we can help.



This book responds to a need expressed by those partners. Not only is it important to provide families with nutritious food, they realized, but also to encourage healthy and easy food preparation.

Our team of healthy living advisors and registered dietitians took this project to heart. The result is *Simply Cook*, a resource that shares nutritional and food safety tips, busts food myths, and offers basic recipes using ingredients frequently found in food pantries.



We hope you'll find this book helpful in making better food choices for you and your family.

Hank and Doug Meijer

about this book

Are you ready for a delicious adventure? This book is filled with great advice, tools and ideas to help you make satisfying meals you will love, without going over your budget.

It all starts with getting the best value—for both your wallet and your nutrition—to keep your family healthy and satisfied. We're sharing useful ideas on how to use common ingredients, tips for stocking your kitchen, and more.

At Meijer, we have a long-term vision of maintaining a strong, healthy community where people have the resources and tools they need to establish healthy

habits. We hope this book will be a daily resource with meal ideas to improve both nutrition and overall wellness.

how to use this book

- **Explore it.** Start at the beginning and work your way through. Each section of this book provides important insight for creating healthy, delicious, low-cost meals for your family. While the recipes at the end of the book might seem like the most helpful section, it's the tips and techniques throughout that will help you work with what you have and learn how to shop smartly.

- **Use it to create a plan.** Meal planning is important to the busy family. Create weekly meal plans by digging into this book, checking out what you have to cook with, and going to the recipes and reference sections to find ideas for using ingredients in new and interesting ways. Not sure where to begin? Chapter 9 will help you learn how to effectively plan meals for your family.
- **Nothing is set in stone.** Use this book as a guide for making better food choices for you and your family, and choose the recipes and ideas that apply to your unique situation. If your family dislikes something, then it's not for you. Instead, choose the things that you like and make smart substitutions (for instance, if beans aren't your thing, canned chicken or tuna might be a good replacement).
- **Believe you can.** Whether you're a cooking expert or just learning, you can make better meals for your family if you only try. Give the techniques, tips and ideas in this book a chance.



chapter two:

nutrition & meal planning

2

Healthy cooking starts with understanding what you're making. We've gathered the best information to help you read food labels for better nutrition, and to make portions that are just right for your family. You'll cut down on waste and save money.



basic nutrition & getting started

Meal planning can seem hard. How can you decide on Saturday what to eat on Tuesday? However, once you get into the meal planning habit, it can make meals less stressful since you won't be scrambling for ideas at the last minute.

With a little time and patience, you can create healthy, affordable meals using common ingredients—both fresh and packaged. The first step? Arm yourself with some practical nutrition information found in this chapter. The goal is to get the whole family to make better food choices.

how to read a food label

Reading nutrition labels can be tricky, but we can help. Below, you will find all the information you need to fill your plate with our know-how and nutrition tips.

Servings: Always check the serving size and number of servings in the package you're looking at. You may choose to eat more than one serving, but the number of servings should give you an idea of how much you should be serving from that container. Aim for a variety of food types (carbs like pasta or rice; fruits, veggies, proteins like meat or fish) on your plate, so it's always a good idea to stick closer to the serving size and fill your plate with other healthy foods.

Dietary fiber and other nutrients: When it comes to dietary fiber and other nutrients (like calcium and Vitamin A), bigger is better. These are healthy nutrients that fuel your body and fill you up when you're eating.

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size 2/3 cup (51g)		
Servings Per Container About 9		
Amount Per Serving	Cereal	Cereal with 1/2 cup Skim Milk
Calories	240	280
Calories from Fat	70	70
% Daily Value**		
Total Fat 8g*	12%	12%
Saturated Fat 2.5g	13%	13%
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	0%
Sodium 50mg	2%	5%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%	14%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%	12%
Sugars 13g		
Protein 4g	8%	16%
Vitamin A	0%	4%
Vitamin C	0%	0%
Calcium	2%	15%
Iron	6%	6%

Saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sodium:

You also want to pay close attention to the trans and saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium (salt) in a product. The percentage of daily value is based on a 2,000-calorie diet. You always want those percentages to be on the lower side—less is more in this case.

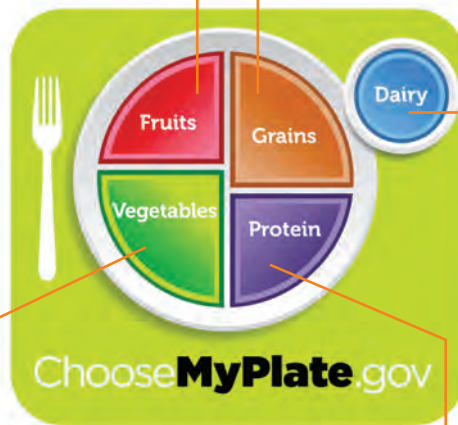
fill your plate well

Fruits: The possibilities are endless. This portion of MyPlate includes all fruits and 100% fruit juices. Whether the fruits are fresh, frozen, canned or dried, it all counts here. And you can enjoy them any way you want.

Grains: Grains include foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley and other cereal grains. So for this portion of MyPlate, reach for the bread, pasta, oatmeal, cereal, tortillas, grits, rice and other grain products. Whole grains (like whole-grain bread, whole-wheat pasta and oatmeal) are best. They naturally have the most fiber, which is good for your digestive system.

Vegetables: Like fruits, you have so much variety to choose from here. All veggies and 100% vegetable juices count toward this portion of MyPlate. Whether they are raw or cooked, fresh, frozen, canned or dried, it all counts. And you can enjoy them however you like. Want to get the most out of your veggie eating? Try to eat a rainbow of veggies as each color of veggies has unique nutrients.

Dairy: The dairy group includes milk and foods made from milk such as cheese and yogurt (as long as they contain calcium). Dairy foods with little to no calcium like cream cheese and butter don't count. If you're trying to control your weight, choose fat-free or lowfat dairy products.



Proteins: Proteins include meat, poultry, seafood, beans, peas, eggs, processed soy products (like tofu), nuts and seeds. You should eat a variety of proteins each week.

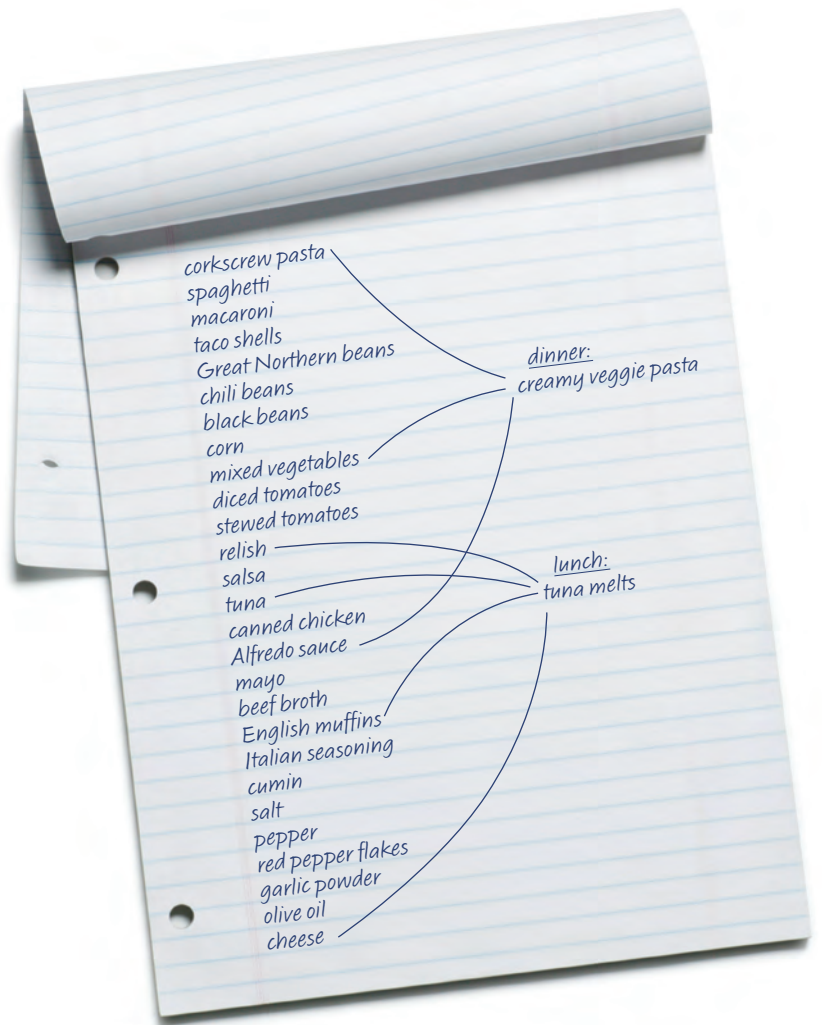
tips for easy meal planning

How would you like to save time, save money and still put healthy meals on the table? With meal planning, you can. Here's how to get started.



- **Prep ahead.** Vegetables like peppers, onions and tomatoes can be chopped in advance and stored in airtight containers in the fridge. Then, it's just a matter of grabbing the right ingredients to start cooking. On page 35, you'll also find a whole section on make-ahead options for delicious breakfasts that can have you ready to go ahead of time.
- **Get the family involved.** You know what they say about the family that cooks together, right? They eat really well. Including your family in the process of planning and cooking is a great bonding activity that teaches essential life skills. It empowers kids to help with important eating decisions, encourages them to learn to cook and can make them more eager to try new foods. Try making Creamy Peanut Dip (page 28) as a quick and tasty snack with your kids.

- **Use a calendar.** A large calendar can help with meal planning. Hang yours on the wall. Use it to keep track of all your family's daily activities and what dinner will be each day. You'll be able to see at a glance what you'll be making. In chapter 9, you can see how a calendar like this works.
- **Be organized.** You need to know what's in your pantry to know what you need at the store. Be sure to keep your cabinets organized and know what's in them. Not only will organized cabinets make shopping easier, but it will save you time when cooking and money when shopping, too.
- **Make a list.** One of the simplest ways to plan meals is to make a list of what you have. Then, use that list to create meal ideas. Be sure to always plan quick and easy meals to have on hand for busy nights.



- **Leftovers are a good thing.** When cooking proteins like whole chickens (which are very wallet-friendly), use the leftovers for dinner on another night. For instance, leftover chicken can be mixed with chicken broth, mixed

veggies and pasta for an easy chicken noodle soup. Leftover chili can top tortilla chips or a baked potato for quick and easy dinners as well. For more great leftover ideas, turn to page 46.

portion sizes 101

So, how much food should you be eating in one sitting? While food labels can help ensure that you aren't going overboard on calories and fat, when it comes to portions, you want to be sure that the food on your plate is nutritionally balanced. That means having servings of several different foods, such as a grain, two fruits or veggies, a protein and a dairy.

Don't worry if you aren't sure how to size up your portions. This handy table will help you plan perfect servings of each food using everyday objects as a guide.



grains	everyday objects
½ cup cooked rice, pasta or hot cereal	lightbulb
1 slice of whole-grain bread	stack of index cards ½" thick
1 pancake	CD
vegetables	
1 cup green salad	baseball
1 cup cooked broccoli	baseball
1 baked potato	computer mouse
fruits	
½ cup fresh or canned fruit	lightbulb
1 medium apple or orange	baseball
¼ cup raisins	golf ball
protein foods	
2 tablespoons peanut butter	golf ball
3 ounces cooked meat or poultry	deck of cards
3 ounces baked fish	checkbook
1 ounce nuts	enough to cover a 3"x3" sticky note
dairy	
1½ ounces cheese	3 dice
8 ounces milk	1 measuring cup
1 cup yogurt	baseball
oils	
1 teaspoon butter	tip of thumb
1 tablespoon salad dressing	3 dice
snack foods	
1 ounce pretzels	tennis ball
3 cups popped popcorn	3 baseballs



chapter three:

food myths

Old habits are hard to break. However, some habits are based on “facts” that aren’t true. Often, we can save money and live more healthful lives by making subtle changes. Don’t let food myths stop your family from eating well. We’ve gathered five big ones and exposed the truth.

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5 food myths busted

Have you ever made a food excuse? Perhaps it's going for the "easy" prepackaged frozen dish, or ducking past the fruits and veggies since they simply must be too expensive. We've all made these excuses, but it's time to let those excuses go and start making healthier choices for you and your family.

To help, we've taken the top most common food myths and revealed the truth about each one. You can eat better without spending a lot of money.

Myth #1: "It takes too much time to cook for my family."

Truth: Many filling, healthy meals can be made in minutes with kitchen basics like pasta tossed with diced tomatoes, salt, pepper, rinsed beans and a dash of Italian seasoning. Or, in a pinch, toast spread with peanut butter and topped with sliced bananas is a nutritious, filling option for breakfast. Cooking doesn't have to be complicated or time-consuming to produce delicious meals, like the Make-Ahead Options on page 35, which can also be perfect for breakfast for dinner!



Myth #2: "It costs too much to eat healthy."

Truth: Yes, some foods are expensive, but healthy eating isn't necessarily more costly. Preparing meals at home is less expensive than eating out—and you can ensure that what you and your kids are eating is healthy. Use this book to help you prepare simple, healthy recipes that your family will love. A well-stocked pantry can help make this easier. A good diet also keeps your body healthier, which may help you avoid costly illnesses.



Myth #3: “Fresh produce is too expensive.”

Truth: You can provide your family with fresh fruits and vegetables and stay within your budget. Look for in-season produce (produce that is growing at the time you’re shopping). It’s generally better-priced.

Pre-cut, ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables look great, but are often more expensive. Buy fresh, whole fruits and vegetables instead and cut them up yourself to save money.

Look for recently discounted items. Even if that discounted produce is a little blemished or bruised, it can still be cooked in delicious dishes. Spotted bananas can be mashed and mixed into oatmeal or added to a smoothie. Blemished tomatoes and peppers can be chopped and cooked in soups and sauces.

When you find produce your family enjoys at a good price, buy it in bulk. Those soups and sauces can be enjoyed now—or they can be frozen for quick, convenient, healthful and inexpensive meals later on.



Myth #4: “Canned and frozen foods are not as healthy as fresh.”

Truth: In terms of nutrition, frozen and canned fruits and veggies can be just as good as fresh. Frozen fruits and veggies are often picked at peak freshness and then frozen. When foods go through the canning process, nutrients are locked in and maintained for at least a year. Look for low-sodium canned veggies, and fruits packed in fruit juice or water. Drain and rinse your canned veggies to reduce the sodium by up to 40%. Keeping a variety of frozen and canned produce items in your kitchen can help you stretch your grocery budget, and they’re a great option for a quick and easy meal, so you don’t have to eat out.

Myth #5: “My kids won’t eat that.”

Truth: Providing your family with healthy choices is very important. Studies suggest that kids who eat diets rich in fruits and vegetables maintain a healthier weight and perform better in school. These are good reasons to offer the healthiest choices you can. As a parent, you set the tone for your family’s eating habits, so go into every meal believing they’ll eat it.

Also, kid favorites like Chicken Noodle Soup (page 27) and French Toast (page 33) are perfect for sneaking extra fruits and veggies into their diet. This way, kids can have foods they love while also getting a healthy meal. Even if they aren’t fans, they may learn to like new foods by being served them again and again. You might be surprised by the foods they *do* like. That’s a good thing.





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chapter four:

kitchen basics

A well-stocked kitchen makes home cooking so much easier. Make your pantry work for you by stocking up with the best pantry staples and the right kitchen gadgets to help you make delicious meals every day. Here's what you need to have.

basic cooking tools

Ready to get cooking? Here are some basic tools needed for healthy, affordable cooking at home.



A pot and a pan: With a good nonstick skillet (preferably with a lid) and a good-sized pot (with a lid), you can make just about anything. Having a small set of pots and pans is great, too—the different sizes open up the ability to cook larger amounts. If you're only going to have a few pans, be sure at least one skillet is nonstick, which makes eggs, pancakes and other items easier to cook without adding extra fat.

A food thermometer: Make sure your foods are cooked properly by inserting this specially designed thermometer. See page 20 for a temperature guide.

A nonstick spatula, slotted spoon, whisk, ladle and can opener: These basic cooking tools are your go-to gadgets for most any work in the kitchen.

A burner: Many homes have a working stove and oven to use for cooking, but even if you don't, you need a burner. Many basic cooking functions can be performed using a single burner, so even if your home doesn't have a stove (or a working one), that burner is essential. The good news? You can purchase a plug-in burner (sometimes called a hot plate) for under \$20.



A mixing bowl: Whether you're scrambling eggs, mixing up a batter or something else, a mixing bowl is a must for cooking. In a pinch, it can double as a salad bowl, too.

A large colander or fine-mesh strainer: Need to drain potatoes or pasta? A colander or fine mesh strainer can be used to rinse berries or the goo off canned beans. There are many uses for these items. Just be sure yours is large, so you can do large and small quantities at once.



A baking sheet: A baking sheet is a good all-purpose tool to have since you can bake many different foods, such as chicken breasts, veggies, fish and steak. It's also handy if you love to bake desserts.

A baking dish: Casseroles are an easy way to make a one-pot meal. A 9x13-inch baking dish is very versatile and can help you make everything from lasagna to meat loaf to tuna casserole.

Knives: While a full set of knives isn't essential, a few good knives will help you in the kitchen. With a good all-purpose sharp knife, like a chef's knife, you can perform most cutting techniques needed for cooking.

pantry basics

With a well-stocked pantry, creating nutritious, wallet-friendly meals gets a little easier. Here's a list of kitchen basics that can be used again and again in different ways to make great meals.



Rice: A quick and easy grain that makes dishes more filling.



Pasta: This quick-and-easy ingredient is easy to transform into many different dishes.



All-purpose flour: Flour thickens sauces, coats meat for breaded dishes, and is the main ingredient in quick biscuits, and so much more.



Sugar: Just a sprinkle of this versatile sweetener can improve the flavor of foods from tomato sauces to plain cereals. But don't overdo sugar; use moderate amounts for good health.



Beans: Either dried or canned, beans are a great, low-priced protein. They can also count as a vegetable serving, too.

Vinegar: Choose your favorite kind (apple cider vinegar is a great, low-cost one), and it can be used to make salad dressings, marinate meat or fish (the acid helps the marinade work), and flavor some dishes.

Oil: Cooking oil (such as vegetable oil or canola oil) can be used to sauté or roast vegetables, make salad dressing, grease pans, and so much more. Used in small amounts, oil is very versatile and necessary in many recipes (including boxed pancake mix).



Italian seasoning: This is a great all-purpose seasoning that can transform canned tomatoes into a lovely sauce, boring eggs into something fun and different, and so much more. It's a good thing to have on hand as an inexpensive way to make dinner a little more flavorful.

Red pepper flakes: A little goes a long way with red pepper flakes, and they can bring new life to even the most ordinary dishes.

Garlic powder: You can easily add garlic's distinctive flavor to grilled meats, pasta, veggies, pizza, etc. One medium clove of fresh garlic is equal to $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. of garlic powder.

Salt: Used in moderation, salt helps improve the flavor of everything from vegetables to salads to proteins. It's a low-price item that should be in every pantry. One large container of salt can last about a year for a family of four.

Pepper: Like salt, pepper is an important seasoning that is a must for every pantry. Use it in small amounts, and it will bring out the flavor of your food.



Canned tomatoes: Filled with healthy nutrients like lycopene and antioxidants, tomatoes are a nutritious addition to meals. Use them to make easy, inexpensive marinara sauces, mix with rice or pasta, serve with eggs, and more. The possibilities are endless.

5

chapter five:

food safety & storage

Did you know that if you don't properly store food, you run the risk of it spoiling due to harmful bacteria? This can be dangerous for everyone you're feeding. Bacteria that cause foodborne illness can't be seen, smelled or tasted. That's why safe food-handling habits are essential.



what you should know about foodborne illness

From grocery shopping to food storage and preparation—anytime food isn't handled properly, there's a risk of contamination. In most cases, however, foodborne illness can be prevented by taking a little extra care and using safe food-handling practices while shopping for, storing, preparing and cooking foods.



The Partnership for Food Safety Education recommends following the four Fight BAC!® steps to help keep food safe from harmful bacteria:

- 1 Clean.** Wash hands and surfaces often.
- 2 Separate.** Don't cross-contaminate.
- 3 Cook.** Cook to proper temperatures.
- 4 Chill.** Refrigerate promptly.

how do you store foods safely?

- Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, dairy and other perishables (food that goes bad at room temperature or warmer) as soon as you get them home from the store. Cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood in airtight food storage containers or leak-proof plastic bags to prevent their juices from dripping onto other foods in the refrigerator.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate from other foods in the refrigerator.
- Don't let perishables, prepared foods or leftovers sit at room temperature for more than two hours before refrigerating or freezing. In the summer, or when temperatures are above 90°F, refrigerate foods within one hour.
- Do not overload the refrigerator. Air must circulate freely to cool foods evenly.
- Keep a constant refrigerator temperature of 35°F to 40°F and a freezer temperature of 0°F. (If possible, use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer.)

cooking to proper temperatures

Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Test for doneness with an instant-read meat thermometer. Insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the meat (making sure that it's not touching bone or fat) for about 15 seconds.

fresh beef, veal, lamb, pork (roasts, chops, steaks)	145°F*
precooked ham (to reheat)	165°F
poultry (chicken, turkey, duck)	165°F
ground beef, pork, veal, lamb	160°F
ground chicken, turkey	165°F
seafood	145°F
egg dishes	160°F
leftovers	165°F

**Let meat rest 3 minutes after removing from heat source.*



avoiding cross-contamination

When you're working with raw poultry, beef and other meats, harmful bacteria can get onto hands, cutting boards, countertops, utensils and food, causing cross-contamination. Always make sure to wash hands and surfaces often to keep bacteria from spreading. Also,

you should never use a surface where you've had raw meats until it's been thoroughly washed with soap and water. If possible, use one cutting board for poultry, meat and fish, and a separate one for produce, which will help reduce the risk of cross-contamination.

storing leftovers

Got leftovers? Leftovers are great for transforming into new meals or packing for easy lunches. Casseroles, meat dishes, soups, stews, potato dishes and certain baked goods freeze well, and can be reheated for later use. However, it's vital that you keep your leftovers safe with proper handling and food storage techniques. Here's what you need to know:

- Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90°F).
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into several small, shallow containers with covers, so they cool more quickly.
- Use cooked leftovers within 4 days.
- Heat leftovers to 165°F for safety.



chapter six:

pantry basics

6

Have you ever looked into the pantry and wondered what you could possibly make with the assortment of canned goods and dried foods in there? We've rounded up some of the most common pantry items and put together 6 great ideas for using each in delicious meals the whole family will love.



ready to dig in?

abbreviations:

tblsp.	tablespoon
tsp.	teaspoon
lb.	pound
oz.	ounce

potato craze

A simple baked potato with some seasoning, vegetables, cheese or meat can become a quick and healthy dinner. Before we share our topping ideas, let's start with the basics of cooking a baked potato.



you need:

Russet potatoes—also known as Michigan White, Idaho or baking potatoes—are best to use. If you don't have russets, try large red potatoes or Yukon golds.

in the oven:

- Preheat oven to 400°F.
- Scrub potatoes clean under water, dry with paper towels, then prick several times with a fork.
- Place potatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet.
- Bake 1 hour or until tender.

in the microwave:

- Scrub potatoes clean under water, dry with paper towels, then prick several times with a fork.
- Place potatoes on a microwavable plate. If desired, wrap potatoes in wet paper towels.
- Microwave on HIGH 5 minutes. Turn potatoes so that both sides cook evenly. Microwave 3 to 5 minutes more. If needed, cook potatoes in 1-minute bursts, checking after each minute until tender.

cheeseburger potato

Cook $\frac{3}{4}$ - to 1-lb. ground beef in a skillet with 1 small chopped onion. Spoon over 4 baked potatoes. Top with shredded cheese, chopped tomato and lettuce.

pizza supreme

Top each of 4 baked potatoes with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup spaghetti or pizza sauce, 2 tbsp. mozzarella cheese and 3 turkey pepperoni slices. Transfer to a baking sheet. Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes or until bubbly and cheese melts.

shepherd's pie spuds

Cook 1 lb. ground beef in a skillet with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped onion, 1 tsp. Italian seasoning, 1 tsp. garlic powder, and 2 cups frozen peas and carrots. Spoon over 4 baked potatoes.

garden veggie

Top baked potatoes with a colorful variety of your favorite cooked vegetables, such as broccoli, spinach, onions and fresh tomatoes. Sprinkle with your favorite cheese and seasonings. (This is a great way to use leftover veggies.)



taco taters

Mix together 1 (11-oz.) can drained corn, 1 (15-oz.) can drained black beans and 1 cup salsa. Microwave until warm, then spoon over 4 baked potatoes. Top with sour cream and shredded cheese, if desired.

chili 'n cheese

Top each of 4 baked potatoes with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup warmed canned chili and 2 tbsp. shredded cheese.

Although name brand products are the most recognizable, store brands offer the same quality, often at a lower price. Look for Meijer brand products whenever you shop at Meijer to enjoy high-quality products that are reasonably priced.

beyond the tuna sandwich

Canned tuna is one of the easiest proteins to keep on hand for a quick and healthy meal.

Both water- and oil-packed tuna can be used to create healthy options. Three ounces of tuna canned in water has around 100 calories, 1 gram of fat, and 22 grams of protein. Oil-packed tuna has more calories and fat than water-packed tuna, and the price is usually higher than water-packed.



tuna quesadillas

Mix 2 (3-oz.) cans drained tuna with ½ cup salsa and ½ cup chopped onion. Stir in 1 cup shredded cheese. Spoon evenly onto 1 side of 3 (12-inch) tortillas. Fold each tortilla in half over filling. Cook each quesadilla 1 minute per side in a hot pan until cheese melts. Cut into wedges, and serve.

tuna and veggie wrap

Mix 1 (3-oz.) can drained tuna with ½ cup shredded carrots and 2 tbsp. light mayonnaise. Spread tuna mixture onto 1 (10-inch) tortilla, top with lettuce, and roll up.

tuna melts

Combine 2 (3-oz.) cans drained tuna with ¼ cup light mayonnaise and 1 tbsp. pickle relish. Toast 2 English muffins. Top each muffin half with tuna mixture, plus 1 tomato slice and 1 cheese slice. Microwave just until cheese begins to melt.

spicy tuna spaghetti

Cook 12 oz. spaghetti according to package directions. Drain, and return to pot. Add 1 (24-oz.) jar pasta sauce, ¼ tsp. red pepper flakes and 1 (3-oz.) can drained tuna. Stir together and cook until hot. Top with basil, if desired.

tuna burgers

Mix 2 (3-oz.) cans drained tuna with ¼ cup chopped onion, 2 whole eggs, 1 cup breadcrumbs and ½ tsp. pepper. Form into 4 patties, then cook in a pan with 1 tbsp. oil for 4 minutes per side or until browned and heated through. Serve on hamburger buns with mayonnaise or tartar sauce. Add lettuce, tomato and cheese, if desired.

tuna mac 'n cheese

Cook 1 (7.25-oz.) box macaroni and cheese dinner according to package directions. Add 1 cup frozen peas, ½ cup chopped celery and ½ cup onion during the last 3 minutes of cooking. Stir in 1 (3-oz.) can drained tuna. Cook until heated through, stirring occasionally.



Always buy eggs before the expiration date on the carton. You can keep fresh, uncooked eggs refrigerated in their cartons for 3 to 5 weeks after your purchase date.

simply eggs

Eggs are a great protein that can be enjoyed in many ways. Be sure to store eggs in the refrigerator. The carton you purchase the eggs in helps keep them from picking up odors and flavors from other foods, and helps prevent moisture loss.

how to make hard-boiled eggs

Place eggs in a single layer in a large pot. Add cold water to cover eggs; bring to boiling. Remove pot from heat, cover and let eggs stand 12 to 15 minutes. Drain and let cool. Gently crack shells and peel eggs. Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate up to 1 week. For easier peeling, use eggs that are 7 to 10 days old.



eggs olé

Melt 2 tsp. butter in a pan over medium-high heat. Add 2 eggs. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes or until cooked through, stirring to scramble the eggs. Top with salsa and guacamole. Serve with tortilla chips.

egg salad sandwich

Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup mayonnaise with 6 chopped hard-boiled eggs, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced celery, and salt and pepper to taste. Serve on bread, English muffins or rolls.

baked eggs in muffin cups

Combine 4 eggs, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked spinach, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheese and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lowfat milk. Spoon into 6 nonstick muffin cups. Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes or until eggs are cooked and cheese melts.

egg muffin melt

Scramble 2 eggs in a pan with 2 tsp. oil. Spoon eggs onto 2 toasted English muffins. Top each muffin with 1 cheese slice and 1 tomato slice. Microwave on HIGH for 30 seconds or just until cheese melts.

one-minute ham and egg bowl

Place 1 thin ham slice in the bottom of a small microwave-safe bowl. Top with 1 beaten egg. Microwave on HIGH for 30 seconds. Stir egg. Microwave for 15 to 30 seconds more or until egg is cooked through. Top with shredded cheese.

mini egg pizzas

Thinly slice 2 hard-boiled eggs. Place 8 toasted English muffin halves on a baking sheet. Brush each half with olive oil. Top with 1 tomato slice, egg slices and 1 mozzarella cheese slice. Broil until cheese melts.

double-duty beans

Canned beans are a quick and easy protein that can be enjoyed in so many ways. But beans aren't just a protein—they also count as a vegetable. This double-duty food is perfect for busy nights. Since beans come out of the can ready to eat, many of these recipes can be made in minutes.

One thing to be careful of with canned beans is sodium (salt). Look for low-sodium varieties, or, to reduce the amount of sodium in the beans by up to 40 percent, always drain and rinse the beans before using.

easy beef and bean chili

Brown 1 lb. ground beef with ½ cup chopped onion. Drain fat. Place beef mixture in a slow cooker. Top with 2 (16-oz.) cans drained pinto beans, 2 (14.5-oz.) cans diced tomatoes with green chilies, 1 (11-oz.) can drained corn, 2 cups water and 1 (1-oz.) envelope taco seasoning. Cover and cook on LOW for 6 hours.

Mexicali salad

Mix 1 (15-oz.) can drained black beans with 1 cup drained corn, ½ cup each chopped red bell pepper and onion, ⅓ cup salsa, and 1 cup cubed mozzarella cheese. Serve on chopped lettuce.

slow-cooked pork and beans

Place 1½ lbs. boneless pork chops in a slow cooker. Top with 1 (15-oz.) can pork and beans, ½ cup sliced onion and ½ cup barbecue sauce. Cook on LOW for 6 to 8 hours.

fast three-bean salad

Mix 1 (14.5-oz.) can drained green beans with 1 (15.5-oz.) can drained kidney beans and 1 (15.5-oz.) can drained garbanzo beans. Add ⅓ cup each chopped tomatoes and onions. Top with ½ cup Italian dressing. Toss. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

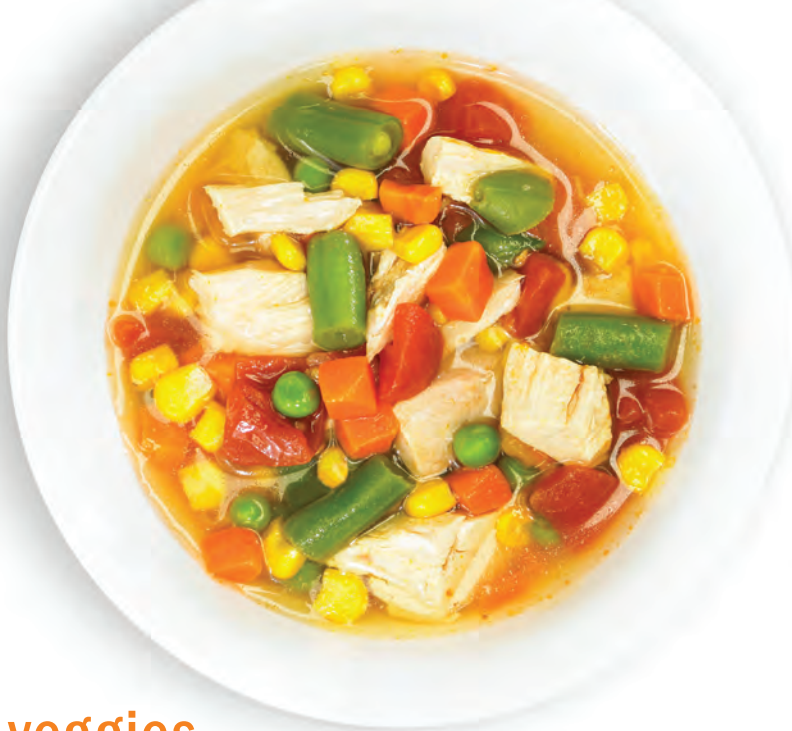
pasta with white beans

Cook 8 oz. elbow pasta according to package directions. In a nonstick skillet, cook 2 (14.5-oz.) cans Italian-style diced tomatoes, 1 (19-oz.) can drained cannellini beans and 2 tsp. Italian seasoning. Simmer for 10 minutes. Spoon over pasta. Top with Parmesan cheese.

minestrone soup

In a large pot combine 1 (15.5-oz.) can hot chili beans, 2 (14-oz.) cans Italian-style diced tomatoes, 1 (15-oz.) can drained mixed vegetables, 4 cups beef broth and 1 tsp. garlic powder. Bring to boiling. Add ½ cup dried mini pasta and 1 sliced zucchini. Cook for 10 minutes.





veggies from the pantry

Canned vegetables are a good way to add extra nutrition to your meals. Vegetables are filled with healthy vitamins and other nutrients that keep your body healthy. Like beans, canned vegetables are available in low-sodium and salt-free varieties.

ham and green bean pasta

Cook 8 oz. elbow pasta according to package directions. In a large nonstick skillet combine 1½ cups sliced mushrooms, 1 cup cubed ham, 1 (14.5-oz.) can drained cut green beans and 1 tsp. olive oil. Cook for 5 minutes. Stir in ½ cup light ranch dressing, and cooked pasta. Stir to combine. Cook until heated through.

fiesta beans and rice

In a medium pot combine 1 (15-oz.) can chili beans, 1 (15-oz.) can drained fiesta-style corn, 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes with onions and, if desired, ⅓ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes. Cook for 15 minutes. Serve over cooked rice.



chicken and vegetable soup

In a large pot combine 4 cups chicken broth, 1 (14.5-oz.) can Italian-style diced tomatoes, 1 (14-oz.) can drained mixed vegetables, 1 (14-oz.) can drained cut green beans, 1 cup cooked diced chicken and ¼ tsp. onion powder. Bring to boiling. Reduce heat to low and cook for 10 minutes.

green beans with tomatoes

In a medium pot combine 2 (14.5-oz.) cans drained whole green beans, 1 cup chopped onion, and 1 (14.5-oz.) can Italian-style diced tomatoes; bring to boiling. Reduce heat to low. Cook for 10 to 15 minutes more.

chicken pot pie

In a 9-inch pie dish combine 1 (10.75-oz.) can cream of chicken soup, 1 (15-oz.) can drained mixed vegetables, 1½ cups cubed cooked chicken and ½ cup lowfat milk. In a small bowl mix ½ cup lowfat milk, 1 beaten egg and 1 cup biscuit baking mix. Spread over chicken mixture. Bake at 400°F for 30 minutes or until golden brown and bubbly.

veggie stir-fry

In a large skillet cook 1 (16-oz.) package stir-fry frozen vegetables and 1 (14.5-oz.) can drained cut green beans in 1 tbsp. vegetable oil over medium-high heat for 2 minutes. Stir in 3 tbsp. soy sauce and ½ tsp. garlic powder. Cook until heated through. Serve over cooked rice.

chicken in minutes

Canned chicken is among the quickest and easiest proteins to have on hand for delicious, healthy meals. Each 2-oz. serving has only 70 calories and contains 10 grams of protein. It can be used cold, straight from the can for easy salads and sandwiches, or heated in quick homemade soups, pasta dishes and more.

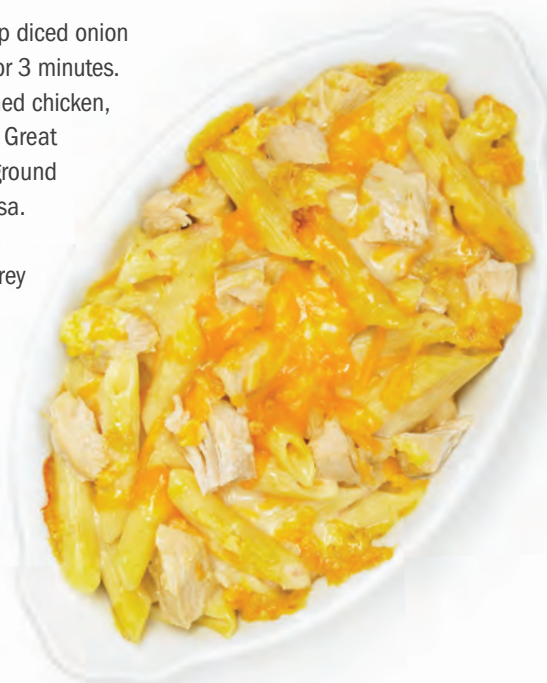


chicken salad wraps

Mix 1 (10-oz.) can drained chicken with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced red grapes, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup diced celery, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced green onion. Add $\frac{1}{4}$ cup ranch dressing and mix well. Spoon evenly into 4 (10- to 12-inch) tortillas and top with lettuce. Roll up to close, and secure with a toothpick.

white chicken chili

In a large pot cook $\frac{1}{2}$ cup diced onion in 1 tbsp. vegetable oil for 3 minutes. Add 1 (10-oz.) can drained chicken, 3 (15-oz.) cans drained Great Northern beans, 1 tsp. ground cumin and $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups salsa. Cook 15 minutes. Stir in 2 cups shredded Monterey Jack or Cheddar cheese and stir until melted.



baked chicken pasta

Cook $\frac{1}{2}$ (12-oz.) box penne pasta according to package directions. In a large bowl combine 1 (10-oz.) can drained chicken, 2 cups shredded cheese, 1 (10.75-oz) can cream of chicken soup, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water. Stir in cooked pasta and mix well. Pour into a baking dish. Bake at 350°F for 30 to 35 minutes.

crunchy chicken tacos

In a large nonstick skillet cook 1 (10-oz.) can drained chicken and 1 cup salsa until heated through, stirring occasionally. Spoon into 4 crunchy taco shells. Top with 1 cup shredded lettuce, 1 cup chopped tomatoes and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheese.

chicken and spinach salad

In a large bowl combine 6 cups fresh spinach, 1 (10-oz.) can drained chicken, 1 (11-oz.) can drained mandarin oranges, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped nuts and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shredded cheese. Top with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vinaigrette dressing and toss to coat.

chicken noodle soup

In a large pot combine 4 cups chicken broth, 1 (10-oz.) can drained chicken, 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups diced potatoes and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. Italian seasoning. Cook for 10 minutes. Add 1 cup uncooked egg noodles. Cook for 8 minutes or until potatoes and noodles are tender.



PB without the J

Peanut butter isn't just for PBJ sandwiches. It's actually a great source of heart-healthy fats and protein that keeps you feeling full longer. And since it's so delicious and affordable, it's great to add to meals and snacks.

peanut butter popcorn

In a small bowl microwave 3 tbsp. peanut butter and 3 tbsp. butter on HIGH for 20 to 30 seconds or until hot. Stir to combine. Pour over 6 cups popcorn, and toss.

creamy peanut dip

Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup creamy peanut butter with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice, 2 tbsp. chopped peanuts and 1 cup lowfat vanilla yogurt. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Serve with apple slices and graham crackers.

banana and peanut butter smoothie

In a blender combine 1 banana, 2 tbsp. peanut butter, 1 cup lowfat milk, 4 ice cubes and 1 tsp. honey (optional). Blend for 30 seconds or until smooth.

fruity peanut butter sandwich

Spread 2 tbsp. peanut butter on 2 bread slices or waffles. Top 1 bread slice with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sliced bananas, strawberries or apples. Top with remaining bread slice.

Asian chicken wrap

In a small bowl mix 2 tbsp. peanut butter, 2 tsp. soy sauce and a sprinkle of crushed red pepper. Stir in water to make to desired smoothness. Spread onto a 10-inch tortilla. Top with lettuce, shredded carrots, cooked chicken strips and a dash of salt and pepper. Fold tortilla over filling and roll into a wrap.



ants on a log

Cut 4 celery stalks into 3 pieces to make 12 sticks. Fill each stick with 1 tbsp. peanut butter and top each with 1 tsp. raisins.



filling meals with rice

Complex carbohydrates like rice can make you feel full faster, so you tend to eat less. While brown rice has the most fiber, any type of rice can be used in these dishes to make a satisfying meal that will fuel your day.



Florentine rice

In a large skillet cook $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. ground beef for 5 minutes; drain fat. Stir in 2 (14.5-oz.) cans stewed tomatoes, 2 tsp. Italian seasoning and 1 (10-oz.) box frozen spinach (thawed). Cook for 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in 3 cups cooked rice and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shredded mozzarella cheese.

chicken and rice soup

In a large pot cook $\frac{1}{2}$ cup onion, 1 tsp. minced garlic and 1 cup sliced carrots in 1 tbsp. oil for 3 to 5 minutes. Add 6 cups chicken broth, 1 cup water and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. oregano. Bring to boiling. Reduce heat to low, and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in 2 cups cooked rice and 2 cups shredded chicken; cook until heated through. Add a dash of salt and pepper.

Mexican skillet rice

In a large skillet cook 1 lb. ground turkey, 1 medium chopped onion and 2 tbsp. taco seasoning for 5 minutes. Mix in 3 cups cooked rice, 1 (16-oz.) can drained pinto beans, and 2 (4-oz.) cans diced green chiles. Cook for 5 minutes or until heated through. Top with chopped tomato and shredded cheese.

cinnamon and raisin rice pudding

In a medium saucepan combine 3 cups cooked rice, 3 cups lowfat milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt (optional) and 2 tbsp. butter. Cook over medium heat for 25 to 30 minutes or until thickened, stirring often. Add 1 tsp. ground cinnamon and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins. Serve warm or cold.

blueberry breakfast rice

In a small skillet combine 1 cup cooked rice, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup lowfat milk, 1 tbsp. honey and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground cinnamon. Cook for 10 minutes or until thick and creamy. Let cool slightly. Top with blueberries.

pork and veggie fried rice

In a large skillet cook 1 lb. ground pork in 1 tbsp. oil for 5 minutes or until browned. Stir in 1 (14-oz.) bag stir-fry vegetables and 1 tsp. minced garlic; cook for 4 minutes. Stir in 2 cups cooked rice, 3 beaten eggs, 2 tbsp. soy sauce and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground ginger. Cook and stir for 3 minutes or until heated through.



flavorful tomatoes

year-round

Canned tomatoes are a great alternative to fresh tomatoes, especially in winter, spring and fall when tomatoes aren't in season. Low in calories and packed with vitamin C, fiber and lycopene (a powerful antioxidant), canned tomatoes can help you lower your risk of heart disease and some cancers.



cucumber, tomato and rice salad

In a large bowl combine 2 cups diced cucumber, 1 cup canned diced tomatoes, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped onion, 2 cups cooked rice and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Italian dressing. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Southwest chili

In a large pot cook 1 lb. ground beef until browned. Add 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes with garlic and onion, 1 (15-oz.) can drained pinto beans, 1 (4-oz.) can diced green chilies and 1 tbsp. chili powder. Cook, uncovered, for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Top with diced onion and shredded cheese.

alphabet turkey soup

In a large pot combine 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes, 2 (14.5-oz.) cans chicken broth, 2 tsp. Italian seasoning and 1 (16-oz.) bag frozen mixed vegetables. Cook for 10 minutes. Add 2 cups cooked turkey and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup alphabet pasta. Cook for 8 minutes more or until pasta is tender.



black bean and tomato salsa

In a large bowl combine 1 (15-oz.) can drained black beans, 1 (4-oz.) can diced green chiles, 1 (14.5-oz.) can drained diced tomatoes, 1 (15-oz.) can drained corn, 1 tsp. garlic salt, and 1 cup Italian dressing. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Serve with tortilla chips.

beef taco salad

Cook 1 lb. ground beef, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water and 1 (1-oz.) package taco seasoning for 8 to 10 minutes. Place 1 (5-oz.) bag chopped romaine lettuce in a large bowl. Top with beef mixture, 1 (14.5-oz.) can drained diced tomatoes, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced green onion and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded Cheddar cheese. Drizzle with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ranch dressing.

stuffed peppers

In a large skillet cook 1 lb. ground turkey until browned. Drain fat. Add 2 cups canned diced tomatoes, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cooked rice and 2 tsp. garlic powder; mix well. Cut tops off 4 large bell peppers and remove the seeds. Place in a baking dish. Fill peppers evenly with meat mixture. Cover with foil. Bake at 450°F for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with shredded cheese.



pasta *outside the box*

Another great source of carbohydrates, pasta cooks in minutes and can be tossed with delicious mixtures to create a variety of meals that the whole family will love. For a heart-healthy option, look for whole-grain varieties. Be sure to cook pasta according to package directions before preparing the recipes below.

tomato and mozzarella pasta

Cook 2 cups corkscrew pasta. In a large skillet cook 1 lb. ground beef until browned. Drain fat. Add 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes. Add pasta, 1 cup shredded mozzarella and 2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese. Cook until cheese melts.

spaghetti with meat sauce

Cook 8 oz. spaghetti. In a large pot cook ½ lb. ground beef until browned. Add 1 (26-oz.) jar pasta sauce. Cook for 10 minutes. Add spaghetti and toss to combine. Serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

tortellini with peas and sausage

Cook 1 lb. cheese tortellini. In a nonstick skillet combine 1 cup diced red bell pepper and 1lb. thinly sliced turkey sausage. Cook for 5 minutes. Add 1 cup drained canned peas and ½ cup Italian dressing. Cook until heated through. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

hearty ravioli soup

In a large pot combine 2 (14.5-oz.) cans chicken broth, 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes, 1 (15-oz.) can mixed vegetables and 1 tsp. Italian seasoning. Cook for 20 minutes. Add 3 cups cooked cheese ravioli and ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes. Cook just until heated through.

creamy veggie pasta

Cook 16 oz. corkscrew pasta. In a large saucepan combine 1 (26-oz.) jar light Alfredo sauce and 1 (16-oz.) bag frozen mixed vegetables. Cook for 10 minutes. Stir in pasta and cook until heated through.

Mediterranean pasta salad

Cook 16 oz. small shell pasta. Rinse in cold water to cool. In a large bowl combine pasta, 1 cup diced tomatoes, ½ cup pitted sliced black olives and ½ cup vinaigrette dressing. Sprinkle with ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese.



7

chapter seven:

start with breakfast

You've probably heard this before: Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. A nutritious breakfast fuels your brain and body for the day, allowing you to concentrate at work, and helping kids perform better in school. Studies have also shown that eating breakfast can help people maintain a healthy weight.



breakfast ideas from the freezer

A well-stocked freezer can be magic in the mornings. By mixing up a few well-selected items, you can create healthy smoothies, filling egg dishes and twists on delicious classics.



strawberry and banana oatmeal

In a medium bowl mix 1 cup lowfat milk and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup quick-cooking oats. Microwave on HIGH for 1 to 1½ minutes, then stir. Top with 1 sliced banana and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup thawed unsweetened strawberries.

Tex-Mex eggs

Cook 2 cups frozen diced hash brown potatoes according to package directions. In a nonstick skillet scramble 4 eggs in 2 tsp. oil. Stir in 1 cup salsa; cook until heated through. Place potatoes on 4 plates. Top with eggs and salsa.

mini egg muffins

Mix together 1½ cups frozen shredded hash brown potatoes, 1 tbsp. butter, and salt and pepper to taste. Divide mixture and press into bottoms and sides of nonstick muffin cups. Bake at 400°F for 12 minutes or until browned. Combine 4 eggs, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked onion, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped green bell peppers, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheese blend and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lowfat milk. Pour into muffin cups. Bake for 13 to 15 minutes or until set.

berry good French toast

Heat two pieces of frozen French toast according to package directions. Top with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vanilla yogurt, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup thawed mixed berries and a drizzle of honey.

peachy parfait

In a tall glass layer $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cottage cheese, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup thawed peach slices and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup granola. Drizzle with honey, then sprinkle with cinnamon.

breakfast pizza

Cook 2 frozen breakfast sausage links according to package directions. Spread 2 tbsp. pasta sauce on each of 2 English muffin halves. Slice sausage links; place on muffin halves. Sprinkle with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded mozzarella cheese. Place on a baking sheet. Bake at 400°F for 10 to 12 minutes.





ideas for breakfast on the go

In a rush? These quick, easy ideas for grab-and-go breakfasts won't take long to pull together. Plus, they will leave you feeling full and satisfied.



wake up to eggs

1 hard-boiled egg, string cheese, whole-grain crackers and 1 cup grapes.

berry smoothie

1 fruit smoothie (in a blender combine ½ cup frozen strawberries, half a small banana, ½ cup milk and 4 ice cubes, and blend until smooth) and 1 slice toasted bread.

bagel to go

1 small bagel with 2 tbsp. cream cheese and ½ cup 100% orange juice.

pineapple parfait

½ cup cottage cheese, 2 tbsp. granola and ½ cup diced, canned pineapple.

wrap 'n go

1 wrap sandwich (spread a 10-inch flour tortilla with 2 tbsp. peanut butter, 1 tbsp. strawberry preserves, ¼ cup banana slices, 2 tbsp. granola) and 1 cup lowfat milk.

grab 'n go

1 granola bar, 1 small banana and 1 (6-oz.) container lowfat yogurt.

Remember to reuse containers whenever you can. Some sour cream or cottage cheese containers are great for taking breakfast or lunch on the go.

make-ahead options

Like a heartier breakfast? Try these make-ahead options, which can be whipped up on the weekends (or the night before) and reheated when you need them. There's even an overnight slow-cooker option.

quick & easy treats

- **apple pie à la mode:** 1 cup vanilla yogurt, ½ cup diced apple, sprinkle of cinnamon
- **blueberry bliss:** ½ cup blueberries, 1 sliced banana, 1 tbsp. sliced almonds

mini veggie quiche

Prepare day before: Combine 4 eggs, 1 cup canned mixed vegetables, ½ cup shredded cheese and ¼ cup milk. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

In the morning: Pour egg mixture into 6 nonstick muffin cups. Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

overnight oatmeal

Prepare day before: Coat a slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Add 2 cups steel-cut oats and 8 cups water. Cover and cook on LOW overnight for 7 to 8 hours.

In the morning: Spoon into bowls. Top with canned or frozen fruit, peanut butter, and nuts and/or spices (cinnamon, pumpkin pie spice, allspice, ginger). Makes 8 servings.

stuffed French toast

Prepare day before: In a baking dish mix 2 cups vanilla yogurt, 4 eggs and ½ tsp. cinnamon. Spread 2 tbsp. yogurt and 1 tbsp. strawberry preserves on 2 thick bread slices. Top with 2 additional thick bread slices and place in baking dish. Turn to coat. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

In the morning: Remove sandwiches from baking pan. Cook in a nonstick skillet coated with nonstick cooking spray over medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes per side or until golden brown. Serve with lowfat milk. Makes 2 servings.

easy apple breakfast cobbler

Prepare day before: Coat a slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Place 6 cored, sliced apples in slow cooker; stir in ¼ cup honey and 1 tsp. cinnamon. Top with 2 cups granola and 1 tbsp. melted margarine. Cook, covered, overnight on LOW for 7 to 9 hours.

In the morning: Spoon into bowls, and top with lowfat milk or vanilla yogurt. Serve warm. Makes 4 servings.



no-bake granola treats

Prepare day before: Mix 4 cups old-fashioned (rolled) oats, ¼ cup unsalted chopped peanuts and ½ cup honey. Mix in ¾ cup peanut butter. If dough is still too dry, add more peanut butter, 1 tbsp. at a time, until moistened. Press dough into a baking dish. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour.

In the morning: Cut into squares, and serve with lowfat milk and 1 small banana. Makes 12 servings.

oven omelet

Prepare day before: Coat a baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Mix 4 large eggs and 2 cups lowfat milk. Stir in 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, 1 cup diced ham and 1 tsp. Italian seasoning. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

In the morning: Bake at 375°F for 25 to 30 minutes or until the top is golden and center is set. Makes 6 servings.

8

chapter eight:

budget-friendly lunches

Packing lunch is a great way to ensure that your midday meal is nutritious. Leftovers are a good option, but if you need fresh lunch ideas, the following pages will help. It's best to pack these in an insulated lunchbox with an ice pack to make sure your food stays safe.



lunch ideas

Many people skip lunch due to busy schedules or the expense of eating out. Try these healthy and affordable lunch options to boost midday energy levels:



Celery and saltine crackers with peanut butter
Raisins
Yogurt

Spaghetti with Meat Sauce
(see page 31)
Canned peaches

Chicken Noodle Soup
(see page 27)
Saltine crackers
Seedless grapes



Egg salad tortilla wrap
Baked chips
Milk

Grilled cheese sandwich
Tomato soup
Apple slices

Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
Mandarin orange slices
Carrot sticks with ranch dressing

Mexicali Salad
(see page 25)
Canned pineapple chunks

Pizza Supreme
(see page 22)
Applesauce





Tuna salad sandwich
Canned sliced pears
Lowfat milk

**Peanut butter,
honey and banana
sandwich**
Milk

Vegetable soup
Saltine crackers
with cheese slices
Sliced canned pears

**Garden Veggie
Potatoes**
(see page 22)
Cottage cheese
Canned peaches

**Macaroni
and cheese**
Mixed vegetables
Fresh orange

**Chicken and
Spinach Salad**
(see page 27)
Pretzel sticks
Pudding

**Fiesta Beans
and Rice**
(see page 26)
Milk

snack ideas

- Fruit with cubed or string cheese
- Rice cakes with peanut butter
- Chocolate pudding topped with nuts
- Oatmeal cookie with milk
- Apple slices with peanut butter
- Trail mix (cereal, dried fruit, nuts)
- Bagel with cream cheese and sliced fruit
- Granola cereal with milk
- Smoothie with banana, lowfat milk and peanut butter
- Granola or protein bar
- Applesauce and graham crackers
- Pita bread and veggies with hummus
- Crackers with tuna salad
- Fresh veggies with cheese slices
- Pretzels with honey mustard and milk
- Light popcorn sprinkled with Parmesan
- Fruit with cottage cheese
- Veggie chips with ranch dressing



don't forget the snacks

Snacking between meals isn't a bad thing anymore. Healthy snacks are a way to keep energy levels high and avoid cravings. It may even be necessary for some — especially kids, who may not be able to eat enough at meals to provide adequate calories and nutrition for their growing bodies.

Follow these simple steps for a healthy snack:

focus on carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are the body's main source of energy. Carbohydrates are found in foods like bread, potatoes and rice. They are also found in fruits, veggies and dairy products. When available, choose whole-grain options of breads, crackers, pretzels and chips. Whole grains, most fruits and most veggies are also high in fiber, which can keep us fuller longer. Limit foods like sweets, as they often provide excess added sugar and little nutrition.

balance with protein

Protein also provides energy, and will keep you full longer. Protein is found in meats like beef and pork, poultry and fish. It can also be found in non-meat options like eggs, nuts and seeds, and dairy products like cheese, milk and yogurt. When available, look for lean protein and lowfat dairy products.

add a little fat

Fats have the most satisfying effect on the appetite, which means they keep us full the longest. Fats are in meats, dairy products, nuts, seeds, oils, butter, sour cream, some vegetables (such as avocado and olives) and salad dressings. Some carbohydrate and protein foods already have some fat, so it's not always necessary to include it at snack time.

be mindful

To avoid unwanted weight gain, practice portion control while snacking. Turn off distractions like the television and mobile phone. Try sitting at the table and focusing on the taste, texture and smell of your snack. This is a great habit for the family and can help everyone avoid overeating.



9

chapter nine:

dinner hour

Eating dinner together benefits families in many ways. Children are more likely to make healthy choices outside the home and have better grades.

The table is a great place to learn manners and create those important family bonds. Use these recipes and tips to create enjoyable family dinners.



a month of quick, easy dinner menus

week 1	week 2	week 3	week 4
<p>monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · tortellini with peas and sausage (see page 31) · canned peaches · milk 	<p>monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · stuffed peppers (see page 30) · applesauce · milk 	<p>monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · spinach, mushroom and egg casserole (see page 43) · chopped melon 	<p>monday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · slow-cooked whole chicken (see page 46) · mashed potatoes · canned carrots
<p>tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · easy meatloaf (see page 42) · mashed sweet potatoes · steamed broccoli 	<p>tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · crunchy chicken tacos (see page 27) · refried beans · salsa · fruit salad 	<p>tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · one-pot Mexican pasta (see page 45) · yogurt · mixed fruit salad 	<p>tuesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · chicken pot pie (see page 26) · pudding with chopped peanuts
<p>wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · shredded cooked chicken · boiled redskin potatoes · canned mixed vegetables 	<p>wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · spaghetti with meat sauce (see page 31) · side salad · salad dressing · canned peaches · milk 	<p>wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · grilled pork chops · baked sweet potatoes · steamed cauliflower 	<p>wednesday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · breakfast pizza (see page 33) · canned pears · vanilla wafers
<p>thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Asian chicken wrap (see page 28) · yogurt with raisins 	<p>thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · tuna burger (see page 23) · cooked peas · mixed fruit 	<p>thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · chicken salad wrap (see page 27) · cucumber, tomato, and rice salad (see page 30) 	<p>thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · baked ham* (see page 45) · green beans with tomatoes (see page 26) · milk
<p>friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · tuna mac 'n cheese (see page 23) · pudding 	<p>friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · beef taco salad (see page 30) · tortilla chips · canned pears 	<p>friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · pork and veggie fried rice (see page 29) · milk · canned pineapple 	<p>friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · veggie lasagna (see page 44) · milk
<p>saturday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mexicali salad (see page 25) · fruit salad with whipped topping 	<p>saturday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · chili 'n cheese potatoes (see page 22) · canned mixed veggies · milk 	<p>saturday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · vegetarian shepherd's pie (see page 44) · oatmeal cookie · milk 	<p>saturday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · frozen cheese pizza topped with ham and pineapple chunks · side salad · salad dressing
<p>sunday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · slow-cooked pork and beans (see page 25) · steamed rice · canned green beans 	<p>sunday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · chicken and broccoli mac 'n cheese (see page 42) · fruit-flavored gelatin with whipped topping 	<p>sunday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · easy beef and bean chili (see page 25), topped with shredded cheese and sour cream · saltine crackers · canned peaches 	<p>sunday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ham and green bean pasta (see page 26) · steamed frozen broccoli · milk

*Reserve leftovers for use in leftover meals later in the week.

delicious dinner recipes

What's for dinner? That's the question that families everywhere face every night. This chapter will guide you through creating delicious dinners for any night, with ingredients you may even already have.



chicken and broccoli mac 'n cheese

8 oz. dry elbow or other short pasta	4 cups frozen cut broccoli
3 tbsp. melted butter, divided	2 cups shredded Cheddar
1 cup milk	¼ cup breadcrumbs
2 cups shredded, cooked chicken, or canned chicken	1 tbsp. grated Parmesan (optional)

1 Preheat oven to 400°F. In a large pot cook pasta according to package directions. Drain pasta and transfer to a large bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of the butter, plus milk, chicken, broccoli and Cheddar cheese. Mix well. Spoon into a greased baking dish.

2 In a small bowl combine breadcrumbs, Parmesan and remaining 1 tablespoon butter. Sprinkle over pasta mixture. Bake for 30 minutes or until heated through and top is golden brown. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

serves 6

Per serving: 445 calories, 19g fat, 90mg cholesterol, 415mg sodium, 38g carbohydrate, 3g fiber, 28g protein

easy meatloaf

1½ lbs. ground beef	½ cup chopped onion
¾ cup cornflakes, crushed	½ cup chopped green bell pepper
1 egg, lightly beaten	Ketchup
½ cup milk	
1 tsp. garlic powder	

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl combine beef, cornflakes, egg, milk, garlic powder, onion, bell pepper, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well. Shape mixture into a loaf and place in a baking pan. Spread ketchup evenly over the top. Bake for 1 hour, 15 minutes or until an instant-read thermometer registers 160°F. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

serves 6

Per serving: 195 calories, 8g fat, 80mg cholesterol, 280mg sodium, 9g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 20g protein





barbecue chicken pita pizzas

- | | | | |
|---------------|--|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 6 | (6-inch) whole pitas | 1 | cup shredded mozzarella cheese |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ | to 1 cup barbecue sauce | $\frac{1}{4}$ | cup sliced green onion |
| 2 | cups shredded, cooked chicken, or 1 (10-oz.) can drained chicken | | |

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place pitas on baking sheets, then spread evenly with barbecue sauce. Top evenly with chicken, cheese and green onion. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes or until bubbly and cheese melts.

serves 6

Per serving: 345 calories, 8g fat, 50mg cholesterol, 890mg sodium, 46g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 21g protein

spinach, mushroom and egg casserole

- | | | | |
|---------------|---|----|--|
| 2 | tsp. vegetable oil | 1½ | cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ | cup chopped onion | 12 | eggs |
| 1 | (10-oz.) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed, drained and squeezed dry | 2 | cups half-and-half or whole milk |
| 1 | small can sliced mushrooms, drained | | |

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9x13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook and stir for 3 to 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in spinach, mushrooms and 1 cup of the cheese. Transfer to baking dish.
- In a medium bowl beat together eggs, half-and-half, and salt and pepper to taste. Mix well. Pour over vegetable mixture in baking dish. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes or until lightly browned and a knife inserted in center comes out clean. Sprinkle with remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cheese. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting.

serves 6

Per serving: 360 calories, 26g fat, 415mg cholesterol, 500mg sodium, 8g carbohydrate, 1g fiber, 24g protein





veggie lasagna

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 (15-oz.) container part-skim ricotta cheese | 3 cups frozen cut mixed vegetables |
| 1 (28-oz.) jar pasta sauce | 1 (8-oz.) bag shredded mozzarella cheese |
| 1 (8-oz.) box oven-ready lasagna noodles (12 noodles) | |

1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9x13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. In a bowl combine ricotta and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. Mix well. Set aside.

2 Spread $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the pasta sauce in bottom of baking dish. Layer evenly with 4 noodles, plus $\frac{1}{3}$ of the ricotta, $\frac{1}{3}$ of the pasta sauce, $\frac{1}{3}$ of the vegetables and $\frac{1}{3}$ of the mozzarella. Repeat layers twice more, beginning with noodles and ending with mozzarella cheese.

3 Cover baking dish with foil. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until bubbly and cheese melts. Remove foil. Bake 5 minutes more until cheese begins to brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

serves 6

Per serving: 460 calories, 15g fat, 50mg cholesterol, 870mg sodium, 58g carbohydrate, 6g fiber, 26g protein

vegetarian shepherd's pie

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 tbsp. vegetable oil | 3 tbsp. flour |
| 1 large onion, finely diced | 1 (14-oz.) can vegetable broth |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ cup finely chopped carrot | 1 (15-oz.) can black beans, rinsed and drained |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen corn kernels, thawed | 2 cups fresh or frozen mashed potatoes, warmed |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried thyme | |

1 Preheat broiler to high. Coat a baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. In a large nonstick skillet heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, carrot and 1 tablespoon water. Cover and cook for 3 to 5 minutes or until carrots are softened, stirring occasionally. Stir in corn, thyme, and salt and pepper to taste. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes. Sprinkle with flour, then stir to coat.

2 Stir in broth. Bring to a simmer, then cook and stir for 1 minute. Stir in black beans. Cook and stir 2 minutes or until heated through and thickened. Transfer mixture to baking dish. Top evenly with mashed potatoes.

3 Broil for 8 to 10 minutes or until potatoes are lightly browned, rotating baking dish halfway through broiling.

serves 4

Per serving: 215 calories, 4g fat, 0mg cholesterol, 845mg sodium, 39g carbohydrate, 7g fiber, 7g protein





one-pot Mexican pasta

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1 lb. ground beef or turkey | 1 (20-oz.) can red enchilada sauce |
| ½ small onion, diced | |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced | 8 oz. corkscrew (rotini) pasta |
| 1 (1-oz.) packet taco seasoning | 1½ cups shredded Colby-Jack cheese, divided |
| 2 cups chicken broth | Sliced green onions |

1 In a large skillet cook beef, onion and garlic over medium-high heat for 5 to 8 minutes or until beef is browned, stirring to break up meat. Stir in taco seasoning. Mix well. Add broth and enchilada sauce. Stir to combine. Bring to boiling, then reduce heat. Simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in pasta. Cook for 10 minutes more or until pasta is tender.

2 Remove from heat, then stir in 1 cup of the cheese. Cover and let stand 3 minutes or until cheese melts. Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup cheese and green onions, and serve.

serves 4

Per serving: 610 calories, 24g fat, 115mg cholesterol, 2115mg sodium, 58g carbohydrate, 5g fiber, 45g protein

brown sugar-baked ham

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 (4-lb.) bone-in fully-cooked ham | ⅛ tsp. ground cinnamon |
| ½ cup packed brown sugar | ⅛ tsp. ground ginger |
| ⅓ cup maple syrup | ⅛ tsp. ground cloves |
| ½ tsp. ground mustard | Dash of ground nutmeg |

1 Preheat oven to 325°F. Line a baking dish with foil. Place ham, cut-side down, on baking dish. Bake, uncovered, for 1 hour, 15 minutes. Remove from oven.

2 Meanwhile, for the glaze, in a small bowl mix together brown sugar, syrup, mustard, cinnamon, ginger, cloves and nutmeg. Brush glaze on top and sides of ham. Bake for 30 minutes more, brushing with additional glaze as needed. Carefully remove ham from oven. Cover ham loosely with foil, and let stand 10 to 15 minutes for easier carving.

serves 6

Per serving: 365 calories, 8g fat, 130mg cholesterol, 2035mg sodium, 31g carbohydrate, 0g fiber, 43g protein





slow-cooked whole chicken

2	tsp. salt	½	tsp. garlic powder
2	tsp. paprika	1	(4½- to 6-lb.) whole chicken (with a pop-up timer, if possible), giblets removed
1	tsp. cayenne pepper		
1	tsp. onion powder		
1	tsp. dried thyme	1	cup chopped onion (optional)
1	tsp. black pepper		

1 In a small bowl stir together salt, paprika, cayenne, onion powder, thyme, black pepper and garlic powder. Rinse chicken and pat dry with paper towels. Rub spice mixture on all sides of chicken. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or overnight.

2 Coat the bottom of a large slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Add onion to slow cooker, if desired. Add chicken, breast side up.* Cover and cook on LOW 6 to 8 hours or until an instant-read thermometer registers 165°F.† Transfer chicken and onion to a platter. Let stand 10 minutes before carving.

serves 6

Per serving: 390 calories, 20g fat, 145mg cholesterol, 920mg sodium, 1g carbohydrate, 0g fiber, 47g protein

*Slow-cooked chicken produces its own juices, so there is no need to add liquid.

†For crisp, brown skin, place chicken on a baking sheet and broil for 3 to 5 minutes or just until browned.

leftovers

The term “leftovers” is sometimes met with dread. But leftovers can be a hidden gem when transformed into new, delicious meals. Leftover vegetables can be used in salads, stir-fries, soups, casseroles, pastas, and wraps or sandwiches. Meats tend to be a little pricier, so here are some ideas to stretch your food dollars and help cut down on meal preparation. With these handy ideas, you can cook one big meal and enjoy it in different ways for 3 days.

	chicken	pork	beef	ham
day 1	slow-cooked whole chicken (see page 46)	slow-cooked pork and beans (see page 25) served over rice	beef and bean chili (see page 25)	baked ham (see page 45)
day 2	white chicken chili (see page 27) or chicken pot pie (see page 26)	shredded pork and bean tacos (serve with tortillas, cheese, avocado and lowfat plain yogurt)	chili 'n cheese potatoes (see page 22)	ham and green bean pasta (see page 26) or ham and bean soup
day 3	chicken salad wrap (see page 27) or Asian chicken wrap (see page 28)	Use the leftover rice from day 1 to make stuffed peppers (see page 30) or create a casserole using the shredded pork and beans mixed with cheese, peppers and rice, and bake for 20 minutes.	Add cooked rice to chili and make stuffed peppers (see page 30).	Add chopped ham and pineapple chunks to a frozen cheese pizza.

weekly meal planner

week of

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breakfast

lunch/snacks

dinner

	breakfast	lunch/snacks	dinner
monday			
tuesday			
wednesday			
thursday			
friday			
saturday			
sunday			

weekly meal planner

week of _____



breakfast

lunch/snacks

dinner

	breakfast	lunch/snacks	dinner
monday			
tuesday			
wednesday			
thursday			
friday			
saturday			
sunday			



clockwise, from top left: Tina Miller, MS RD; Maribel Alchin, MBA RD LDN;
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selected sources

The Meijer Healthy Living Advisors accessed
these quality sources for the *Simply Cook* book:

Del Monte Recipes

delmonte.com/recipes

USDA MyPlate Food Guidance System

choosemyplate.gov

American Egg Board

incredibleegg.org

American Journal of Public Health

ajph.aphapublications.org

Michigan Apples

michiganapples.com



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