

Pardine
19

IDEAS FOR QUICK MEALS
Teachers Guide
Ida Lee Knapp

USE THE BASIC COOKING TECHNIQUES -
OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON - COOKING FOR ONE OR TWO

- Develop strategies to prepare quick, economical and nutritious meals
- To share ideas for quick meals
- To discuss quick menu ideas for the recipes in this lesson
- To get ideas for a well stocked cupboard/pantry, refrigerator and freezer
(Remind them that this is just ideas and not to go out and buy things that they will not use.)

An idea that you may want to include with the lesson: Have people bring their favorite quick recipe to share.

Did you Know?

In the year 2000, the typical U.S. consumer spend about 15 minutes a day preparing meals. (The Canadian Grocer, July 1995)

Few people report planning their meals more than a half hour ahead of time. (American Demographics, April 1997)

At 4:00p.m. each day, 75% of us do not know what we will cook for dinner. The average time from when we enter our kitchen until we are eating is 18 minutes. (Wendia DeMattio Holsinger, CEO, Ask Foods)

About 40 cents of every food dollar is spent on food eaten away from home. (Food, Nutrition and Health Trends, 8/95)

The National Livestock and Meat Board Survey of 1991 on 8,000 consumers found that 41% indicated they are too busy to prepare meals that take more than 30 minutes to fix.

Peanut Butter
Stew
Chili
Spaghetti Sauce
Chili Peppers
Canned Pie fillings
Canned minced garlic

Whole Tomatoes
Diced Tomatoes
Pizza Sauce
Mushrooms
Canned fruits and juices
Canned vegetables

Other Staples

Herbs and Spices (like salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, etc.)

Grains (Rice, Couscous, Bulgar, Barley, etc.)

Cereals (Ready to eat and Quick cooked)

Flour

Macaroni and Cheese

Instant Potatoes

Bouillon's

Dried Onions

Cornstarch

Bread

Biscuit Mix (like Bisquick)

Crackers

Pastas

Cake and Cookie Mixes

Sugar

Olive Oil

Refrigerator

Milk

Catsup, Mustard & Mayonnaise

Pickles

Sour Cream

Cheeses (some grated)

Deli sliced meats

Fresh Fruits

Refrigerated Biscuits (like Crescents, pizza dough, etc.)

Butter/Margarine

Salsa

Eggs

Salad makings

Onions (also Shallots, scallions, garlic)

Yogurt

Potatoes

Freezer

Quick fix items: pocket sandwiches, stuffed potatoes, hashbrowns, burritos, etc.

Quick Fix meats: chicken breast, wings, pre-pressed ground meat, veggie patties, meatballs, etc.

Tortillas

Frozen Vegetables

Casseroles

Bread Dough

Fruit Juices

Bacon and sausage

Filled Pastas

Tip

Meat, poultry and fish are cheaper when you buy the "family size". When you get them home, divide the packages into single portions and then wrap and freeze. You can also purchase bags of frozen chicken breasts, fish fillets and cooked meatballs use just what you need. Bread, rolls, and bagels can be frozen, double bag them to preserve quality and freshness. Bags of shredded cheese, pasta sauce, salsas, tortillas as well as unused portions of pepper and onions can be frozen and used in all kinds of cooked dishes. Buy spices and herbs in bulk. Then you can buy

as much or as little as you want. You can use old spice bottles to put your bulk spices and herbs in.

Discussion:

What are some of the most versatile food items that are stocked in your kitchen? How do you use them in dishes?

Using different appliances can save time and energy also. Here are a few examples:

Microwave
Slow Cooker
Rice Cooker
Electric Skillet

Salad Shooter
Food Processor
Blender
Grill

S-T-R-E-T-C-H BREAK

Use the stretch exercise to get the group to think about meal planning. Stand up if you do or did and sit if you don't or didn't.

- *Ate breakfast this morning.
- *If you eat out 3 or more times per week.
- *If you pack a lunch to take to work or to all day meetings.
- *If you use a shopping list when going shopping and pretty much stick to it.
- *If you own a slow cooker.
- *If you use the microwave for more than re-heating foods and thawing.
- *If you involve other family members in meal preparation.
- *If you use the food pyramid as a guide for planning family meals.
- *If you have a recipe file for quick and easy dishes.
- *If you read the weekly grocery specials and plan your meals around them.
- *If you regularly buy foods at the deli.

Quick Meals Ideas

Quick Cook Pasta Meal Ideas

Prepare a quick cook, pasta noodle. After the noodles are cooked, put some frozen vegetables and any leftover meat like ham, chicken or other cooked meat in a strainer and drain off the water from the cooked pasta over the vegetables and meat. This will warm them up or you can warm them up separately. You can also add tuna, salmon or cheese. Season with a low fat or no fat dressing or a can of condensed chicken or mushroom soup. Sour cream or low fat plain yogurt can also be added. Season with herbs; salt and pepper to taste. Serve the pasta with whole wheat bread and a salad or fruit.

Potato Bar

Bake potatoes make a quick meal. The potatoes can be cooked in the microwave. Topping ideas include:

- Chopped broccoli and cheese sauce
- Canned chili and cheese topped with chopped onion or salsa
- Creamed Tuna or Creamed Chicken

The potato bar can be served with a tossed green salad, French Bread and a quick fix dessert, like instant pudding topped with fruit.

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Omelet Meal

An omelet filled with:

Chopped vegetables (onions, mushrooms, broccoli, tomatoes and sprouts)

Chopped ham, bacon, sausage and cheese

Top with salsa, low fat or no fat sour cream or plain yogurt

Serve with a green salad and whole grain bread. Dessert could be a bowl of canned fruit.

Stir-Fry

Pre-sliced or chopped fresh or frozen vegetables, meat, poultry, fish or tofu

Add an oriental seasoning and serve with rice or noodles or add a Mexican seasoning and serve in tortillas.

There are a variety of already prepared vegetables, soy products and meats in the store and deli that are ready to stir-fry.

You can also pre-cut your own and have them ready to cook when you arrive home.

Planned Leftovers

When preparing food for one meal, try to make it work for two or more meals.

Roast a turkey breast, roast or other meat. Use half for dinner and the rest for sandwiches, tortillas or salad. The base protein can be added to many combination dishes for another meal.

Leftover chili can be used for toppings for baked potatoes, rice or tortillas. It can also be used as a filling in steamed bell peppers and topped with grated cheese.

Pasta and sauces freeze well, so make extra for later.

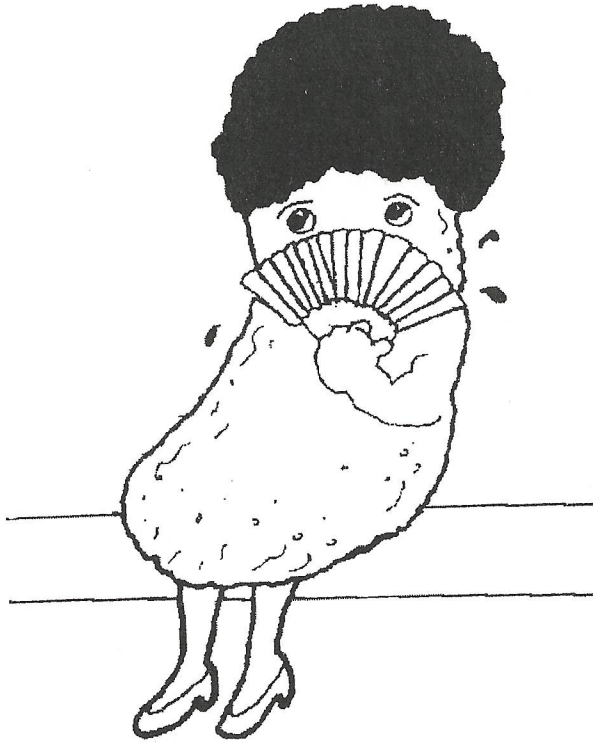
Spaghetti sauce can be used as a pizza sauce, mixed with noodles or added as seasoning for pot roast, soups and stews.

Discussion:

Go over the recipes in the members handout. Pick out a recipe to use as a base to plan a meal around. You may want to do more than one meal. Pass out the members handout to do this discussion so they can see the ingredients in the recipe. Let the group plan the meal around the recipe that you picked out. If there is time share recipes for Quick Meals.

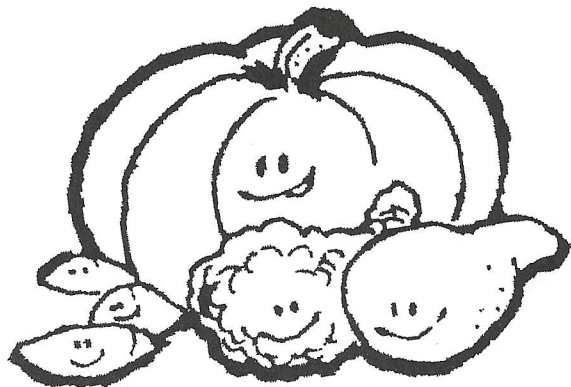
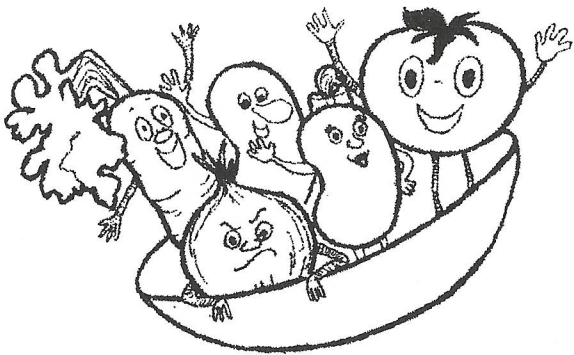
Conclusions:

Remember that having a well stocked cupboard, refrigerator and freezer helps you to be able to prepare quick, economical and nutritious meals. Some ideas for these quick meals involve such things as pasta, potatoes, omelets, stir fry, and leftovers. The recipes show how you can utilize one recipe to make a quick meals. Start trying some recipes now and store your favorites in a special place for future use.



IDEAS FOR QUICK MEALS

Members Handout



Members Handout
Ideas for a Well Stocked Cupboard/Pantry, Refrigerator & Freezer

Cupboard/Pantry

Soup

Tomato	Chicken Noodle
Cream of Mushroom	Cream of Chicken
Beef and Chicken Broth	Dried Onion soup mix
Top Ramen Noodles	Cup of Soup

Canned Items

Canned beans - kidney, black, white, chick peas etc.	
Salad Dressing and Sauces (like salsa, teriyaki, mustards, Italian, etc.)	
Stewed Tomatoes (try various seasoned varieties like Italian, Mexican, Cajun, etc.)	
Tuna	Tomato Sauce
Clams	Tomato Juice
Peanut Butter	Whole Tomatoes
Stew	Diced Tomatoes
Spaghetti Sauce	Pizza Sauce
Chili Peppers	Mushrooms
Canned Pie fillings	Canned fruits and juices
Canned minced garlic	Canned vegetables
Chili	

Other Staples

Herbs and Spices (like salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, etc.)	
Grains (Rice, Couscous, Bulgar, Barley, etc.)	
Cereals (Ready to eat and quick cooked)	
Flour	Biscuit Mix (like Bisquick)
Macaroni and Cheese	Crackers
Instant Potatoes	Pastas
Bouillon's	Cake and Cookie Mixes
Dried Onions	Sugar
Cornstarch	Olive Oil
Bread	

Refrigerator

Milk	Butter/Margarine
Catsup, Mustard & Mayonnaise	Salsa
Pickles	Eggs
Sour Cream	Salad makings
Cheeses (some grated)	Onions (also Shallots, scallions, garlic)
Deli Sliced Meats	Yogurt
Fresh Fruits	Potatoes
Refrigerated Biscuits (like Crescents, pizza dough, etc.)	

Freezer

Quick fix items: pocket sandwiches, stuffed potatoes, hashbrowns, burritos, etc.

Quick fix meats: chicken breast, wings, pre-pressed ground meat, veggie patties, meatballs, etc.

Tortillas

Fruit Juices

Frozen Vegetables

Bacon and sausage

Casseroles

Filled Pastas

Bread Dough

Notes: Other Ideas Cupboard/Pantry, Refrigerator and Freezer

RECIPES

Oriental Beef Skillet

A fast one dish meal, using ground beef, Ramen noodles and frozen vegetables to speed preparation.

2 packages instant Ramen noodles - oriental flavor

2 cups water

1 pound lean ground beef

1 bunch scallions - sliced

16 ounces frozen oriental vegetables

1 tablespoon soy sauce

Break the Ramen noodles into a medium bowl. Sprinkle with just one seasoning packet. Cover with 2 cups of boiling water, stir and allow to sit while you prepare the remaining ingredients.

In large skillet or wok, brown ground beef over medium heat until cooked. Drain. Add the scallions and sprinkle with the contents of the remaining seasoning packet. Cook for an additional minute.

Add the noodles and the water in which they were soaking, the frozen vegetables, and the soy sauce. Cover and bring to a simmer, Cook until the frozen vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

Miracle Baked Pork Chops

It is hard to believe only two ingredients make up this flavorful recipe.

2 - 4 teaspoons honey mustard

4 boneless center-cut pork loin chops, ½ inch thick

Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. It is important that it be this hot.

For each chop, cut a 10 inch length of aluminum foil. Spray with cooking spray and place a pork chop on each sheet. Smear ½ to 1 teaspoon of honey mustard over each chop. Fold foil into a tight packet using a drugstore fold so it is completely sealed.

Place packets on a baking sheet and bake until the chops are no longer pink, about 15 minutes, do not overcook. Serve immediately.

Yield: 4 servings.

Caramelized Garlic Chicken

Simple, low-fat flavorful and made with only 4 ingredients.

2 teaspoons olive oil

4 garlic cloves, minced

4 teaspoons brown sugar

4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves

Heat oven to 500 degrees. Line shallow roasting pan with foil; spray foil with nonstick spray.

Heat oil in small nonstick skillet over medium-low heat until hot. Add garlic; cook 1 to 2

minutes or until garlic begins to soften. Remove from heat; stir in brown sugar until well mixed.

Place chicken breast halves in sprayed foil-lined pan; spread garlic mixture evenly over chicken.

Bake at 500 for 10 to 15 minutes or until chicken is fork-tender and juices run clear.

Yield: 4 servings.

Believe It or Not Pork Chops

These three common ingredients seem like an unlikely trio, but they bake into a delicious main dish.

2 tablespoons oil

6 to 8 pork chops

1 cup ketchup

1 cup Coke (not diet)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Heat oil in a heavy skillet. Brown pork chops and place in a baking dish.

Mix ketchup and Coke together and pour over chops. Cover baking dish and bake for 45 minutes, until chops are tender.

Yield: 6 - 8 servings.

Cheesy Chicken Spaghetti

Only four ingredients for this quickly assembled dish that will become a family favorite.

12 ounces thin spaghetti

1 pound processed American cheese (Velveeta), cubed

10 ounce can diced tomatoes & green chilies

4 cups cubed, cooked chicken

Cook spaghetti according to package directions.

Meanwhile, combine the cheese and tomatoes (undrained) in a saucepan and cook until cheese is melted. You may also do this in the microwave. Add the chicken to the cheese mixture and heat through.

Drain the spaghetti and toss with the cheese sauce. Serve immediately.

Yield: 6 servings.

Ramen Tuna Noodles

A quick one-pot tuna casserole made easy with Ramen noodles.

2 packages Ramen style noodles, creamy chicken flavor

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

½ cup mayonnaise

1 6 oz. Can tuna fish, drained and chunked

Parmesan cheese, to taste

In a medium saucepan, boil just the noodles (without the seasoning packets) in enough water to cover, until tender. Drain and return to the hot pan.

Add the seasoning packets, cheese, and mayonnaise and stir well. Toss in tuna, season with parmesan cheese and stir gently until mixed and warmed through. Serve immediately.

Yield: 2 servings.

Beef Sandwiches Stroganoff

You can use leftover roast beef or buy sliced roast beef from the deli to make these great hot, open-faced sandwiches. Use fat-free gravy and fat-free sour cream to significantly reduce the fat.

4 oz. Can mushroom stems & pieces, drained

1 ½ cups leftover beef gravy or 18 oz. Jar prepared beef gravy

½ cup sour cream

8 thin slices roast beef

4 slices bread

In a large skillet over medium heat, stir mushrooms and gravy until hot. Stir in sour cream until smooth. Add roast beef slices and cook until heated through. Top each slice of bread with two roast beef slices and some gravy and serve open-faced.

Yield: 4 servings.

Tropical Snapper

Homemade pineapple salsa lends a taste of the tropics to snapper or any other firm-fleshed catch of the day - or even to chicken breasts.

Heat broiler. For salsa, drain 20 oz. Can pineapple tidbits in their own juice, reserving ¼ cup juice. Combine tidbits, ½ cup each chopped cucumber and sweet red pepper, and ¼ cup chopped red onion in bowl. In small bowl, whisk reserved pineapple juice, ¼ cup fresh lime juice, 2 tablespoons honey, ½ teaspoon chili powder, ¼ teaspoon each ground red pepper and salt. Reserve ¼ cup dressing; pour remaining over pineapple-cucumber mixture. Place 8 small red snapper fillets, skin-side down, on oiled broiler-pan rack. Brush fillets with reserved dressing. Broil 8 to 10 minutes. Serve with salsa. Makes 8 servings.

Two-For-One Noodles

This dish is fantastic for dinner one night and for the leftovers make **Mock Spinach & Ricotta Lasagna** (recipe below)

4 cups (16 oz.) penne

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 small onion (1/2 cup) diced

3 slices bacon (turkey, regular, or low-sodium)

1 tablespoon fresh parsley leaves (optional)

1 large container (15 oz.) reduced-fat ricotta cheese

1/4 cup already-grated Parmesan cheese, plus additional for serving

1/2 teaspoon dried basil (if fresh substitute 1 tablespoon for the dried)

3 tablespoons hot water from the pasta pot

salt and black pepper to taste

Place the penne in 3 qts. Of already boiling unsalted water and cook until tender, 11 to 13 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in an 8 inch or larger nonstick skillet, over low heat. Peel and dice the onion and add it to the skillet. Coarsely chop the bacon, add it to the skillet and cook until the onion is tender and the bacon is not quite crisp, about 3 minutes. While the onion and bacon cook chop the parsley (if using).

Using a slotted spoon, remove the bacon and onion to a 3 qt or larger serving bowl. To the bowl add the ricotta, the 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, parsley, basil and hot cooking water from the pasta pot. Stir well and set aside.

Drain the penne well and pour half immediately into the bowl with the ricotta mixture. Stir well to mix, then add the remaining penne and stir well again. Season with salt and pepper and serve, passing extra Parmesan at the table.

Yield: 4 servings with leftovers to make Mock Spinach and Ricotta Lasagna.

Mock Spinach and Ricotta Lasagna

1 package (10 oz.) frozen chopped spinach

4 cups leftover Two-for-One Noodles

1 jar (26 oz.) spaghetti sauce

1 cup (4 oz.) already-shredded mozzarella cheese

Heat the oven to 425 degrees.

Place the block of frozen spinach in a microwave safe dish, cover, and microwave on high for 5 minutes to defrost.

Meanwhile, place the Two-for-One Noodles in a 13x9 inch glass baking dish, separating any that may be stuck together. When the spinach is defrosted, drain well and scatter over the noodles. Top with the spaghetti sauce and sprinkle with the cheese.

Bake until bubbly hot, 12 minutes. Serve at once.

Yield: 4 servings.

Golden Fish Fillets

The potato flakes form a wonderful, crispy golden crust around the fish while the mustard adds the perfect flavor.

1 egg

2 tablespoon prepared yellow mustard

½ teaspoon salt

mashed potato flakes to coat, about 1 ½ cups

1 ½ pounds fish fillets (any thin white fish like flounder, sole, etc.)

¼ cup vegetable oil

Lightly beat the egg, mustard, and salt in a shallow dish. Place the potato flakes in another shallow dish. If the fillets are very large, cut them in half to make them easier to handle. Heat the oil in a large skillet until hot. Dip the fish fillets in the egg mixture then coat in the potato flakes to coat. Fry the fish for 3-4 minutes on each side, until it is golden brown and flakes easily with a fork.

Yield: 4 servings.

Corned Beef & Cabbage Potato Salad

A cross between potato salad and cole slaw embellished with corned beef and a mustardy dressing.

2 pounds red new potatoes, boiled, cooled and sliced

½ head cabbage, coarsely chopped

2 carrots, shredded

2 to 3 cups diced corned beef

¾ cup mayonnaise

2 tablespoons Dijon mustard

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon dried dill weed

salt and pepper to taste

Toss potatoes, cabbage, carrots and corned beef in a large bowl.

Blend the remaining ingredients together in another bowl. Pour over the vegetables and toss gently to mix. Refrigerate several hours or overnight to blend flavors.

Yield: 6 main dish servings.

Tex-Mex Cornbread Salad

A very satisfying salad, with cornbread, beans, salsa, sour cream and more. Leave out the bacon for a vegetarian version.

- 1 package cornbread, prepared according to directions
- 2 15 oz. Cans pinto beans, drained
- 2 fresh tomatoes, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1 or 2 fresh jalapeno peppers, minced
- 12 strips bacon, cooked and crumbled
- 2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup salsa

Use a large clear glass salad bowl or trifle bowl for best presentation. Crumble half of cornbread in the bottom of the bowl. Top with half of the beans.

In a small bowl combine the tomatoes, onions, green pepper and jalapeno. Spread half of this tomato mixture over the beans. Next sprinkle half the bacon and half the cheese.

In a small bowl stir together the sour cream and salsa. Spread half of this mixture over the cheese (drop by spoonfuls and then spread gently).

Repeat the layers with the remaining ingredients. Cover and chill several hours before serving.

Yield: 6 to 8 servings.

Chicken, Avocado and Wild Rice Salad

An unusual main dish salad for the hot weather and a great way to use up leftover chicken or turkey.

- 1 package white & wild rice, original flavor
- 2 ripe avocados
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3 cups cooked chicken, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 4 scallions, chopped
- 1 cup Italian dressing
- ½ cup toasted pine nuts or sliced almonds
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes

Prepare rice according to package directions. Dice avocados and toss with lemon juice. When the rice is ready, stir in chicken and scallions, add dressing and toss well. Pour into a serving dish and chill. Garnish with avocados, nuts and cherry tomatoes.

Yield: 6 servings.

Stir-Fried Spinach with Garlic

It takes just a few minutes and a couple of ingredients to create this flavorful fat-free dish.

2 packages pre-washed spinach (10 oz. Each)

6 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced

1 tablespoon light soy sauce

¼ - ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Remove the stems from the spinach, and tear the leaves into bite-sized pieces. Set aside.

Coat a 12 inch nonstick skillet or large wok with cooking spray; and preheat over medium high heat. Add the garlic, and cook, stirring constantly, for about 2 minutes, or just until the garlic begins to brown. Add the spinach, and cook, tossing constantly, for 2 to 3 minutes, or until the spinach is wilted and hot.

Add the soy sauce and black pepper to the spinach, and stir to mix well. Serve immediately.

Yield: 4 servings.

Yummy Carrots

Ginger ale is the secret ingredient in this easy dish.

1 pound carrots, sliced

½ cup or so of ginger ale (not diet)

2 tablespoons butter

salt

Place carrots in a medium saucepan with the ginger ale. The ginger ale should just barely come up to the top of the carrots (depending on the size and shape of your saucepan, you may need to add more ginger ale). Simmer over medium heat until carrots are tender. The liquid should be almost evaporated. If the liquid evaporates before the carrots are tender, add more ginger ale.

Stir in butter, season with salt and serve immediately.

Yield: 4 servings.

Honey Mustard Green Beans

A fast and easy way to prepare delicious green beans.

1 pound fresh green beans

1 tablespoon butter

1 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

salt and pepper

Wash and trim beans. Steam in your favorite manner until tender (the microwave works well).

In a small dish, microwave the butter, honey and mustard until well blended. Pour over the green beans and toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

Yield: 6 servings.

Mexican Rice

This flavorful side dish complements other Mexican dishes or makes a nice contrast to serve with plainer fare.

4 tablespoons butter

1 cup long-grain white rice

1 small onion, chopped

1 cup hot water

1 packet chicken bouillon

1 cup salsa

In a heavy medium saucepan, melt the butter. Add the rice and onion and saute, stirring constantly, until the rice is toasty. Add the remaining ingredients, stir and bring to a simmer. Lower the heat, cover, and allow to cook for 15 to 20 minutes, or until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender.

Yield: 4 side dish servings.

Ranch Gratin Potatoes

Quickly assembled from convenience foods, this dish requires no additional effort, except baking.

2 pounds frozen hash brown potatoes, partially defrosted

1 cup Ranch dressing (not diet or fat-free!)

1 cup milk

8 oz. Cheddar cheese, shredded

In a large bowl, toss the potatoes with ranch dressing, milk and cheese. Place in a greased 9x12 inch baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 15 minutes, stirring once or twice.

Yield: 8 servings.

Chicken Taco Filling

This very popular recipe is simple (3 ingredients), easy (5 minutes), delicious and versatile. Use this flavorful meat in soft tacos, hard tacos, nachos, burritos, salads, or almost anywhere.

1 packet (4 tablespoons taco seasoning)

1 cup chicken broth

1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts

Dissolve taco seasoning into chicken broth. Place chicken breasts in crockpot and pour chicken broth over. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

With two forks, shred the chicken meat into bite-sized pieces. Use in soft tacos, hard tacos, burritos, nachos, etc.

To freeze, place shredded meat into freezer bags with the juices. Press out all the air and seal.

Spinach & Black Bean Burrito Filling

This five ingredient recipe is amazingly quick and easy and freezes well.

2 19 ounce cans black beans, drained (or 4 cups cooked black beans)

2 10 ounce packages chopped spinach, thawed & drained

3/2 ounce picante sauce

2 cups frozen corn

2 teaspoon ground cumin

Combine beans, spinach, and picante sauce in a nonstick pot over medium heat. Mix well, mashing about half the beans with a fork. Add corn and cumin. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until hot and bubbly.

This filling may be frozen.

Magic Lemon Blueberry Pie

Just five simple ingredients make this delicious no-bake pie.

1 can sweetened condensed milk

1/4 cup lemon juice

2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries

8 ounce container non-dairy whipped topping, thawed

prepared graham cracker pie crust

In a medium bowl, blend sweetened condensed milk and lemon juice. Add blueberries and mix gently. Pour into mixture into prepared pie crust. Top with whipped topping and chill until firm.

Icebox Cake

This simple recipe is basically layers of graham crackers and chocolate pudding, but after being refrigerated, it becomes cake like. The recipe calls for instant pudding, but it is even better if made with cooked pudding.

1 small package instant sugar-free chocolate pudding

2 cups milk

8 whole graham crackers

Break the graham crackers into pieces to line a 9x5 inch loaf pan. You should have enough crackers for 3 layers. Place one layer of crackers in the pan. Set the remaining crackers aside.

Prepare the chocolate pudding according to the package instructions, using the 2 cups of milk.

After mixing, work quickly so it doesn't set up.

Pour about one third of the pudding into the prepared pan, spreading it out evenly. Place a layer of graham crackers on the pudding. Pour another third of the pudding in, spreading it evenly.

Place the final layer of graham crackers and top with the remaining pudding.

Cover and chill overnight. To serve, cut into 4 pieces, using a spatula to place on dessert dishes.

Yield: 4 servings.

Lemon Cloud

A scrumptious cross between lemon mousse and lemon cheesecake. This easy dessert also has low-fat and diabetic variations that are as good as the original.

3 ounce box lemon Jello

1 cup boiling water

8 ounce package of cream cheese, softened

1 5 ounce can evaporated milk

1 cup granulated sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla

In a small bowl, dissolve lemon Jello in boiling water. Place in refrigerator until it starts to thicken. Place the can of evaporated milk in the freezer, along with the large mixing bowl, to chill. When Jello begins to thicken (about the consistency of egg whites) and milk is chilled, proceed with recipe.

In the small mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese and sugar until well blended. Add the thickened Jello and blend until well mixed, scraping down the sides often.

In the chilled large mixing bowl, mix the well chilled evaporated milk and vanilla and beat until stiff peaks form. Fold in the Jello/cream cheese mixture and beat at low speed until well blended, scraping the sides of the bowl often. Since all the ingredients are white, it is hard to tell if the Jello is well distributed, so blend thoroughly.

Divide the mixture among 6 dessert dishes and chill for several hours. May also be poured into a pie crust.

Low-fat variation: Use fat free evaporated milk and light cream cheese (in the 8 ounce package, NOT the fat free version in the tub).

Diabetic variation: Use sugar free Jello and substitute 12 packets of Equal for the sugar.

REFERENCES

OSU Extension Service lesson - "Quick and Easy Meals" written by Nellie Ochler, OSU/Lane County Extension Agent and Cheri Jo Carter, OSU/County Extension Agent
Meal Deals Less Time, Less \$\$, Better Meals, by Sharon Johnson, OSU Family and Community Development Agent
Internet information - busycooks.com, lightliving.com and ivillage.com

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