

FN-SSB.016

# COOKING *for* ONE or TWO

Cooking for one or two can be creative and rewarding. Special touches are easy to add when preparing only a serving or two. You can afford the occasional extravagances, such as out-of-season fruit or a more expensive cut of meat. You can experiment with new recipes, new techniques and new foods because there isn't a large quantity involved. In addition, you can easily adjust meal timing, size and content to meet your needs.

By planning menus before grocery shopping, you can take advantage of "family pack" or "two-for-one" specials, especially if it's a food you really enjoy eating. You can even use larger quantity recipes by consuming part of the dish now and storing the rest for later. Proper storage of large-size purchases and favorite recipes can help minimize food waste, as well as allowing you to avoid the monotony of eating the same dishes day after day.

## MyPlate

Developed by the USDA, MyPlate is a guide to help the consumer choose a more healthful diet. It emphasizes eating a variety of foods, while limiting fat and sugar intake. Half your plate should be fruits and vegetables; half your grains should be whole; dairy products should be low-fat; and protein food choices should be varied. By eating different types of foods in different amounts, you will be consuming the nutrients you need and the correct number of calories to maintain a healthy weight. Remember, no one food is more important than the other. All food groups should be included in the daily diet to ensure good health. You can enter

your specific information to develop your daily food plan at [www.supertracker.usda.gov](http://www.supertracker.usda.gov).



## Meal Planning

Planning ahead each week can save a great deal of time later in the kitchen. Forethought on weekly menus is necessary; a shopping list is mandatory. Use grocery advertisements, coupons, and recipes and/or cookbooks to determine how much of an item to purchase and prepare and where to find the best bargains. Check those items you have on hand to ensure there are adequate quantities already available and that the items are fresh and of good quality.

Meals should be planned for overall ease of preparation with the least amount of leftovers possible (unless this is intended). Combine make-ahead dishes with fast or easy recipes. When choosing dishes, be sure to read the recipes from start to finish. Make changes as needed, especially if modifying

your recipes by decreasing fat, sodium, sugar, etc. Remember to adjust your shopping list as well. Know the yields of your recipes. If leftovers are inevitable they can be incorporated into a meal later in the week.

Become familiar with the weights and yields of vegetables, fruits, meats, shellfish, poultry and other foods for which no weight is indicated on the label. If yields are expected for more than two servings, incorporate the extra portions of produce or meat into your weekly menus to create new dishes or complete other meals.

## Food Purchasing

Serving good meals for a few begins with buying the right groceries. There are many excellent quality convenience products packaged for one or two persons. These include the 8-ounce can of soup or vegetables, small size cake mixes and frozen entrees. Frozen waffles and yeast rolls can be removed from the package one at a time. Bulk packages of frozen vegetables allow you to remove what you need for a meal and return the rest to the freezer for later use.

Certain meats come in individual servings or can easily be divided. They include ground meats and poultry; steaks and chops; smoked, cured or fully cooked meats such as bacon, ham slices, sausages or wieners; turkey quarters or parts; chicken parts; and fish or shellfish which is sold fresh or in individually frozen serving sizes. You can also buy large cuts of meat, such as roasts or hams, and divide them into meal-size portions. Prepare and consume one portion immediately. Wrap the remaining portions in an airtight container, label and freeze for later use.

Here's a good example of how a thick beef chuck roast can be used for more than one meal. Cut the roast into thirds. Use the round end for beef stew, the center

for a one-meal pot roast and the remaining third for two Swiss steaks. A full shank half of ham can also be utilized for more than one meal. Ask the butcher to cut through the bone. Prepare a boiled dinner with the shank end. With the remaining two portions, bake the bone-in half and slice the other to broil.

## Refrigerator Storage

Maintain refrigerator temperature around 35°F. Check the temperature weekly. Store meat, fish and dairy foods in the coldest section. Produce is best stored in a produce drawer. Refrigerate opened staples, such as peanut butter, jams and jellies, ground coffee, cooking oil, nuts and flour, to maintain the freshest flavor. Use food as quickly as possible for best flavor, nutritional value and overall quality.

## Freezer Storage

Be sure to label packages, noting the contents and date of preparation. The faster food freezes, the better. Taste, texture and nutritional quality all suffer when freezer temperature exceeds 0°F. Use moisture-proof, airtight containers or bags specifically

<b>Freezer Storage Timetable</b>	
Ground Beef	3-4 months
Meat Loaf (cooked or uncooked)	1 month
Cooked Beef	2 months
Steaks, Roasts (most cuts)	9 months
Chunks (for stewing)	4 months
Liver, Heart, Tongue	6 months
Ground Pork	2 months
Pork Sausage	2 months
Pork Cuts (most)	4-5 months
Lamb/Veal Cuts	6-9 months
Chicken, Turkey Parts	9 months
Cooked Poultry	1 month
Cooked Poultry in Broth or Gravy	6 months

designed for freezer use. Date and label before freezing. Be familiar with the proper

storage time of food to maintain a quality product.

### Techniques for Easy Cooking

Double batch cooking gives you two meals with one preparation time. Cook a full recipe; serve one portion now and freeze the rest. To use oven cooking bags, place half of the food in one bag and seal. Follow the directions on the cooking bag and cook. Place the remaining food in a second bag. Mold the bag close to food to remove the air, seal and freeze. Wrap individual servings of meats in foil for cooking and storing or use individual baking dishes that can be sealed. Make a complete meal for one in a dish with compartments. Cover, freeze and cook in the same tray.

Foods that have been frozen in cooking bags can be taken directly from the freezer to the oven. Allow one-half to one-third more cooking time than for the same thawed food. Prepared casseroles frozen in aluminum foil need to have the cooking time increased by one-half. Lightly grease aluminum foil; wrap around seasoned frozen fish. Bake one-half to one-third longer than for the same thawed fish.

### Meal Service

An attractive table goes a long way towards an enjoyable meal. Table, flatware, and glassware should be clean and free of chips. Purchase items that are easy to clean or fit in your dishwasher. Table linens and accessories can individualize your table and set the tone for the meal.

If your particular situation warrants being thrifty, then eliminate those items considered "extra." Store, sell or give away the rest. Depart from the ordinary and do the unexpected when setting your table. Make your meal fun and enjoyable - even if it is a meal for one!

### Recipes for One or Two

#### Elegant Pork Chops

*Yield: 2 servings*

- 2 pork loin chops
- 1/8 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine
- Dash pepper
- 1 can (7 1/2 ounces), semi-condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 6 tablespoons instant rice, cooked

Brown pork chops. Combine remaining ingredients; divide evenly between two storage containers. Place pork chops on rice. Freeze if desired. To bake, transfer frozen food to an oven-proof container. Bake in 350°F oven for 40 minutes.

*Nutritional Analysis:* 530 Calories, 26 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 35 g fat, 88 mg cholesterol, 1199 mg sodium.

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## Veal Parmesan

*Yield: 2 servings*

- 2 veal cutlets, 4 ounces each
- 3 tablespoons cracker crumbs
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- Dash pepper
- 1 egg, well beaten
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine or apple juice, divided (optional)
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup tomato sauce
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon leaf oregano
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt (optional)
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup shredded Mozzarella cheese

Pound the veal until  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick. Combine cracker crumbs, Parmesan cheese and pepper. Combine egg and 1 tablespoon wine. Dip each cutlet in egg mixture; coat with cracker mixture. Arrange cutlets in lightly greased foilware pan. Bake in 400°F oven for 20 minutes. Combine remaining wine, tomato sauce, oregano, salt and garlic powder and spoon over cutlets; top with Mozzarella. Bake 7 to 10 minutes longer or until cheese melts.

*Nutritional Analysis:* 511 Calories, 47 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 28 g fat, 255 mg cholesterol, 1204 mg sodium.

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## Burgundy Pot Roast

*Yield: 2 servings*

- $\frac{3}{4}$  pound beef chuck arm steak, boneless, cut 1-inch thick
- 1 medium potato, pared and quartered
- 1 carrot, pared and quartered
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup burgundy wine or red grape juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water
- 1 envelope instant onion soup mix (1 cup serving)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt (optional)
- $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon pepper
- 1 bay leaf

Place chuck steak and vegetables in oven cooking bag. Combine remaining ingredients. Close bag with tie. Marinate in refrigerator overnight. Make 6 half-inch slits in top of bag. Cook in 350°F oven, 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$  hours or until tender. Remove bay leaf before serving.

*Nutritional Analysis:* 698 Calories, 48 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 44 g fat, 169 mg cholesterol, 703 mg sodium.

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## Apple Stuffed Squash

*Yield: 2 servings*

- 1 small to medium acorn squash
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt, divided (optional)
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 apple, cored and thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons raisins
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon ground nutmeg

Parboil squash 5 minutes for easy cutting; cool to handle. Cut squash in half; scoop out seeds. Sprinkle  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon salt on each half. In fry pan, melt butter; lightly sauté apple slices and raisins; add sugar and spices. Fill squash halves with apple mixture. Bake one stuffed squash half in 350°F oven for 45 to 55 minutes or until squash is tender. Place the other in a freezer-safe container and freeze. When ready to serve, transfer frozen food to an oven-proof container. Bake in 400°F oven for 50 to 60 minutes.

*Nutritional Analysis:* 379 Calories, 4 g protein, 73 g carbohydrate, 12 g fat, 390 mg sodium.

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## Corn Pudding

*Yield: 2 servings*

- 1 can (8½ ounces) whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon flour
- ½ teaspoon salt (optional)
- Dash pepper
- 1 egg, beaten
- ½ cup milk
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted

Combine corn, sugar, flour, salt and pepper. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour in mini loaf pan foilware. Bake in 325°F oven for 50 to 60 minutes, or until knife comes out clean.

*Nutritional Analysis:* 255 Calories, 9 g protein, 35 g carbohydrate, 11 g fat, 111 cholesterol, 1038 mg sodium.

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## Fresh Tomato and Asparagus Frittata

*Yield: 3 servings*

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ cup mushrooms, sliced
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 3 slices (¼ cup) bacon, cooked, crumbled
- ½ small tomato, sliced
- ¼ pound asparagus spears, trimmed, cooked
- ½ cup cheddar cheese, shredded

In a 6-inch skillet, heat oil until sizzling. Add mushrooms and onions. Cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Pour eggs into skillet. Stir in bacon. As egg mixture sets, lift edges with spatula to allow uncooked egg to flow underneath. Arrange tomato slices and asparagus on top. Cover and continue cooking until eggs are set, about 4 to 5 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese and cut into wedges. Note: any combination of cooked

vegetables such as broccoli, peppers, carrots, zucchini, or yellow squash can be substituted for tomato or asparagus.

*Nutritional Analysis:* 290 Calories, 15 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 24 g fat.

*Adapted from:* Land O'Lakes, May 2007, <http://www.landolakes.com/mealideas>, Used with permission.

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## Sinful Chocolate Pecan Pie

*Yield: 2 servings*

- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon water
- 1 (1.2 ounces) dark chocolate candy bar OR 1 square (1 ounce) semi-sweet chocolate
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ teaspoon butter or margarine, melted
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 1 (4½-inch) baked tart shell

In small saucepan, combine sugar and water; cook over medium heat until sugar dissolves and mixture is bubbly. Remove from heat. Stir in chocolate and heat until chocolate is melted. Cool slightly. Stir in eggs, vanilla, butter and salt. Fold in pecans. Pour into shell. Bake in 350°F oven for 40 to 50 minutes or until set. Cool before serving.

*Nutritional Analysis:* 647 Calories, 12 g protein, 57 g carbohydrate, 44 g fat, 212 mg cholesterol, 298 mg sodium.

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## Mixed Berry Parfait

*Yield: 2 servings*

8 ounces vanilla yogurt, fat-free  
2 tablespoons oats, quick cooking  
2 tablespoons walnuts, chopped  
¼ cup blueberries  
¼ cup raspberries  
½ small cantaloupe, seeds removed

In medium bowl, combine yogurt and oats, mixing well. Gently fold in walnuts and half of berries. Scoop mixture into melon and garnish with remaining fruit.

*Nutritional Analysis:* 225 Calories, 9 g protein, 38 g carbohydrates, 6 g fat.



## Fruit Kabobs

*Yield: 2 servings*

½ cup pear, chunks  
½ cup honeydew, chunks  
½ cup cantaloupe, chunks  
½ cup strawberries, halved  
¼ cup blueberries  
lemon juice  
4 6-inch bamboo skewers  
½ cup plain yogurt, fat-free  
1 cup granola

Toss fruit in a small amount of lemon juice to stop browning. Alternate fruit chunks on the skewer with a blueberry between each. To serve, dip fruit in yogurt, coating all sides. Put granola into a shallow bowl and roll kabobs.

*Nutritional Analysis (2 kabobs):* 350 calories, 14 g protein, 65 g carbohydrate, 9 g fat.

***Other FCS publications that you may find helpful in meal planning and preparation:***

NEP-SBB101, Menu Ideas for Spring

NEP-203, Vegetable Group: Vary Your Veggies

NEP-204, Fruit Group: Focus on Fruits

NEP-205, Meat and Bean Group: Go Lean with Protein

NEP-202, Grain Group: Make Half Your Grains Whole

NEP-206, Milk Group: Get Your Calcium-Rich Foods!

NEP-208A, Menu Planning

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