

# Quick Meals for the Family

**Q**uick meals are a necessity if you stay busy with small children, if you are involved in many community activities, or if you are employed outside the home. They are also sometimes a necessity in cases of emergency. There is no magic way to prepare quick meals without some work, including advance preparation. You can save time, energy, and money, though, if you make a plan and follow it. Careful planning is the secret, whether it is for a full-course meal, a snack, or a party.

## Planning Good Meals

Food dollars are the most important dollars you spend. They can be spent wisely to buy nourishing meals, or they can go for spur-of-the-moment purchases. Good, nutritious meals don't just happen; they are planned.

Everyone needs adequate amounts of protein, vitamins, minerals, and kilocalories\* each day. Over a period of time these nutrients affect the health and well-being of every member of your family.

Easy, quick meals must be prepared by someone—you (with help from family members) or processors who prepare convenience foods. In either case, good health for the family is the ultimate goal. This can be achieved only by providing the essential nutrients every day.

Today, the role of homemaker is often a shared one. In dividing household responsibilities, grocery shopping, food preparation and prepreparation, or cleanup often falls to the husband or older children. Meal planning guides as well as information on the purchase and preparation of food are even more important for you who are new to this area.

Planning menus for 3 to 7 days at a time will save you time in shopping and preparing food. If the person who shops is not the person who prepares the meals, menu planning is a must. Also, knowing what will be prepared for dinner each night means this question doesn't have to come to your mind during a busy day or on the drive home.

After planning your menus, check to see that they provide your family with foods from each of these food groups: protein, fruits and vegetables, breads, and milk. You need food from each group each day for good nutrition. Alabama Cooperative Extension System publication HE-133, "Food Guide Pyramid: Daily Food Guide," can help you plan the amounts needed from each group.

As you select foods, think of your family preferences, favorite recipes, and various ways to make your meal attractive and tasty. Consider flavor, color, texture, temperature, size, and shape of the foods you will serve together. By realizing the importance of satisfying the senses, you can develop your own quick and easy methods of cooking.

Whether you spend all day or only 45 minutes to prepare a meal, its presentation and special touches make it a success.

## Using Convenience Foods

Convenience foods are those that are partially or fully prepared. They can be canned, frozen, ready-to-eat, ready-to-use, or packaged mixes. When deciding what to buy, think about your time, energy, the quality of food you can purchase, and your food budget. Many convenience foods are actually less expensive than the home-prepared counterpart. Frozen orange juice concentrate and frozen french fries are two good examples. Seasonal vegetables or those vegetables with limited growing regions are less expensive in the plain convenience form; staple vegetables in season are usually cheaper in the fresh form.

\*Kilocalorie is the scientifically correct name for what we commonly know as calorie.

Fresh foods, such as fruits and vegetables, generally require some kind of preparation—either washing, peeling, cutting, or shelling. The trade-off is time spent in preparation for money spent on the convenience food.

**Canned foods**, such as meats, soups, vegetables, chow mein, and chicken a la king, are completely cooked and ready to heat and serve. Many canned vegetables may be used in casserole-type main dishes. Canned fruits can be chilled and served.

**Frozen foods** are both cooked and raw. Frozen foods that must be cooked before using may not save much cooking time but will save in preparation time. Meat, poultry, fish, soups, whole dinners, fruit pies, and breads that have been completely cooked and then frozen need only to be heated and served. Meat, poultry, and fish that were frozen raw must be cooked, of course.

Frozen vegetables are usually raw and need to be cooked. Some have been cooked and only need reheating. Fruits and fruit juices only need to be defrosted. Most juices must be mixed with water or other juices before using.

Freezing home-prepared main dishes, desserts, or a complete meal can be a real convenience. The trick is to buy and fix two or three times your usual quantity. You can successfully freeze almost any casserole or main dish. Undercook the dish slightly before freezing since it will cook a little more as it thaws and warms. Biscuits and rolls can be made ahead and frozen either cooked or uncooked.

As a rule, cooked potatoes, spaghetti, and macaroni don't store well in the freezer. They should be added to casseroles and sauces just before heating to serve. Also, add seasonings sparingly; freezing may increase the flavor.

Examples of do-it-yourself convenience foods to freeze are chili, chicken and dressing, baked beans, and chicken or turkey in gravy. You can also cook, chop, and freeze chicken or turkey for use in stir-fried rice, chicken salad, chicken a la king, or turkey pot pie. Ground beef can be prepared and frozen as a meatloaf to be baked, as meatballs or croquettes (seasoned, shaped, and ready for browning) or for use in Italian sauce for spaghetti, lasagna, or chicken parmesan.

Remember that cooked foods should be stored in the freezer for only a short time. Use them within 8 weeks of freezing for the highest quality. Freeze

them in loaf-size pans; then remove when frozen solid and package tightly in freezer bags or wrap. Label the packages with name of dish and date. To serve, put a frozen casserole in a freezer-to-oven container and heat in the oven or a double boiler. If the food is already cooked, it will only need warming. To heat a 6-serving casserole from the frozen state, bake for 30 to 45 minutes at 350 degrees F. This is only a rule of thumb; time may vary. Cooking partly thawed food will take less time. If you have a microwave, you may use it to defrost and warm frozen dishes.

**Packaged mixes** are available in every food group. These mixes save a great deal of time in assembling, measuring, and blending ingredients as well as in washing and storing measuring equipment after use. They also tend to produce products of consistent quality. Prepare some in advance and freeze them. You may choose to make your own quick mixes to keep on hand for baked goods or coatings.

**Ready-to-eat foods** include cold cuts of meat, sliced cheese, breakfast cereals, crackers, condiments, and bakery products. These are handy for lunches but can also be served with a salad, vegetables, or fruit for a quick meal.

**Ready-to-use foods**, in addition to canned and frozen foods, are items such as chopped and shredded ingredients for slaw or salad; instant milk, coffee, tea, and cocoa; salad dressings; bouillon cubes or granules; prepared stuffings; brown-and-serve sausage; instant potatoes; chopped meat, etc. The cooking, heating, or mixing required for these foods takes only a short time before the food is ready to serve.

You can make your own ready-to-use foods. When you are chopping onions or green peppers for one dish, go ahead and chop the entire item and store it in the refrigerator or freezer in recipe proportions. For example, green pepper frozen in 1/2-cup portions and onion in 1/4-cup amounts are useful. If you have leftover meats that can be used later in casseroles or sandwiches, chop or slice and freeze them also. A little planning ahead and doing the preparation when you have the time will provide you with your own convenience foods in your freezer. This also saves waste by allowing you to keep leftovers or planned-overs till another week.



## Preparing Quick Meals

### 1. Use foods that take little preparation.

Steaks, chops, liver, and ground beef take little or no preparation time. Some vegetables and fruits can be prepared quickly, such as peach or pear halves, apples, cabbage, carrots, spinach, or tomatoes. Another choice may be ready-to-eat or ready-to-use foods like canned chicken, frozen cakes, and salad or cooked entrees from the grocery deli. Some of these dishes cost more than the same foods prepared at home; however, some do not. Compare costs and quality.

### 2. Use foods with short cooking times.

The tender cuts of meat cook faster but may cost more. Fish, ground meat, and steaks or chops cook quickly. Canned vegetables, puddings, instant potatoes, quick-cooking rice, quick breads from a mix, or canned biscuits are all quick cooking and are generally in the same price range as their more time-consuming counterparts. You can plan good meals using these foods. Vegetables cut in small pieces cook very quickly and retain nutrients well when stir-fried. Vegetable soup, cheese toast, gingerbread with applesauce, and a glass of milk make a good lunch in a short time.

**3. Use foods that cook the same length of time and at the same temperature.** In planning a meal, plan foods that take about the same cooking time and oven temperature so they can be cooked together. This increases your time efficiency and conserves energy. Check your cookbook for cooking times. Oven temperatures for foods such as casseroles, baked potatoes, and roasts (cooked to an end-point temperature using a thermometer) are not critical. Oven temperature can be adjusted upwards or downwards by as much as 25 degrees F.

**4. Use foods that can be cooked and served in one dish.** A skillet meal or a one-dish meal that includes both a meat and a vegetable saves much time in assembling equipment and cooking space, watching pots, and washing and storing equipment after use. You can add a mixed green salad, fruit for dessert, and a glass of cold milk for a colorful, appetizing, and timesaving meal. Today, many baking dishes and skillets are attractive enough to go directly from the range to the table.

### 5. Use larger portions of only a few foods.

You can make a meal of only two or three foods and still feed your family well with a minimum of time and effort if you are careful to select highly nutritional items. A large portion of one vegetable may be served instead of regular-sized portions of two, and you will still get the necessary nutrients and calories.



## Hints for Saving Time

### When Planning Meals and Grocery

**Shopping:** Become familiar with your grocery store. Know where to find things and shop when it is not too crowded so you will have time to select foods carefully. Shop only once a week if possible and if you have enough storage space. Shop for staples once a month.

Plan meals and make a grocery list from your menus. This saves time and assures you of getting everything you will need. List foods according to the way they are arranged at your market. This prevents your having to run back and forth and reduces the chance of overlooking items.

Keep a pad and pencil in the kitchen so you can jot down items you might forget later such as spices, flour, sugar, etc. Look for food specials in your newspaper and jot down good buys.

Be flexible and substitute one food for another if one is a better buy at the grocery store. Be sure the food you substitute provides the same nutrients. Become a label reader—check grade, amount, list of ingredients, nutritional label, net weight, and price.

Compare brands for best buys. Check the unit price tag on the shelf or calculate the price if package sizes differ.

Buy the right form of food you need, such as fresh, canned, dried, frozen, partially prepared, or ready-to-serve. Pieces and chopped vegetables will be appropriate for most casseroles rather than the higher-cost whole vegetables. Likewise, generic brands offer the same nutrition without the frills.

When you find a good buy, purchase foods for future use. This may be for an emergency, for unexpected guests, or just for next week. Buy a large roast, ham, or turkey and plan to use it for several meals in different ways. Freeze the leftovers in meal-size portions. Be certain to wrap and label everything that goes in your freezer.

When you return from the market, store your food promptly and properly to preserve quality and to avoid spoilage and waste.

**When Preparing Food:** Think about the work to be done and cooking time for each dish before starting a meal. Generally, it is best to start with the food that takes the longest time to cook. Then you can prepare the others while the first one is cooking. When all the foods cook in the same amount of time, start with the one that will hold up best. Try to time everything to finish just at mealtime.

Eliminate preparation steps if possible. Many vegetables and fruits don't have to be peeled. Scrub potatoes, carrots, apples, and pears well and they will be ready for most uses. You may want to peel waxed vegetables such as cucumbers and turnips from a grocery store.

Save bread ends and crusts and toast them in the oven when baking something else. Then use a blender or food processor to make bread crumbs. Store them in the refrigerator or freezer.

Food in smaller pieces cooks faster. However, in preparing vegetables or meat for stewing in water, remember that the smaller the pieces the more surface is exposed causing loss of water soluble vitamins and minerals. Use only a small amount of liquid and serve the cooking liquid for the most nutritional value.

**In Kitchen Arrangement and Equipment:**

Think about your kitchen. Is it arranged for easy use? A few minutes spent reorganizing may save hours of your time. Be sure to allow yourself enough counter or work space.

Group equipment and utensils near the area where they are most often used. Dishes should be near the sink for storing after washing and, if possible, near the eating area as well for setting the table. You may have to compromise on this suggestion.

Arrange kitchen shelves so the items used most often are the easiest to get to. The lower shelves of your upper kitchen cabinets are the most accessible.

Some appliances, such as a pressure saucepan, convection oven, and microwave oven, will enable you to cook foods in a shorter time. A food processor may reduce preparation time considerably. You may wish to investigate these further. However, unless you use the appliance it will not be worth the cost.

A toaster oven will heat in less time and use less energy than your larger oven. This is useful for meals when only one food is to be baked.

**For Family Participation:** Encourage family members to suggest the foods they would like to help prepare for certain meals. Family members can help with menu planning, shopping, food preparation, washing dishes, setting the table, and serving food. This provides time for family togetherness and teaches responsibility. Too, it means quick meals for the family.

**For an Emergency Shelf:** Stock an emergency shelf with the makings of several quick-and-easy meals. Keep them on your shelf at all times.

Keep extra supplies in the freezer for emergencies: bread, frozen orange juice, margarine, a cake, cheddar cheese (it freezes well), shaped and seasoned hamburger patties, and other freezable items you use often.

Nonfat dry milk, canned milk, and aseptically packaged ultra high temperature fluid milk are convenient dairy products you can keep in your kitchen cabinet.





## Eight Quick Meal Menus

Eight menus with recipes are given here. Use your favorite recipes for the more common vegetables and breads. Serve milk with each meal and add desserts, if desired, to meet your family's tastes.



### Menu #1

#### Taco Salad Cheese Tortillas Fresh Fruit

This is a fast favorite that has three of the five major food groups in one meal. Cornmeal muffins with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of chopped green pepper, pimento, or jalapeno pepper could be used in place of cheese tortillas.



#### Taco Salad

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 pound ground beef  | $\frac{1}{2}$ medium green pepper, cut into strips  |
| 1 medium onion, chopped  | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cheddar cheese or 1 cup of just one of the cheeses |
| 1 15-ounce can kidney beans, undrained                         | $\frac{1}{2}$ 6-ounce package coarsely broken corn chips (Place bag on counter and gently crush.)                                 |
| 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce                                     | 1 medium avocado, cut into wedges (optional)  |
| 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce package taco seasoning mix              | 4 green onions, chopped (optional)  |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ medium head lettuce, torn into bite-sized pieces |   |
| 2 medium tomatoes, cut into wedges                             |   |

Brown ground beef and onion. Drain if necessary. Stir in the beans, tomato sauce, and taco seasoning mix. Cover and simmer 10 to 15 minutes or until thick and bubbly. While the meat is cooking, combine the salad vegetables in one large bowl or individual bowls. Spoon meat mixture over the vegetables and top with cheeses and corn chips. Mix lightly and serve immediately. Garnish with avocado wedges and green onions.

For a change, you can use taco or nacho cheese flavored chips. Serve with sour cream, chili, or taco sauce if you like. *Serves 6.*

*Microwave Directions:* Combine beef and onion and cook in a 2-quart casserole until the meat loses its color, 4 to 6 minutes. Stir once halfway through to break up the meat. Add beans, tomato sauce, and seasoning. Microwave on medium until the mixture is thick, stirring once.



#### Cheese Tortillas

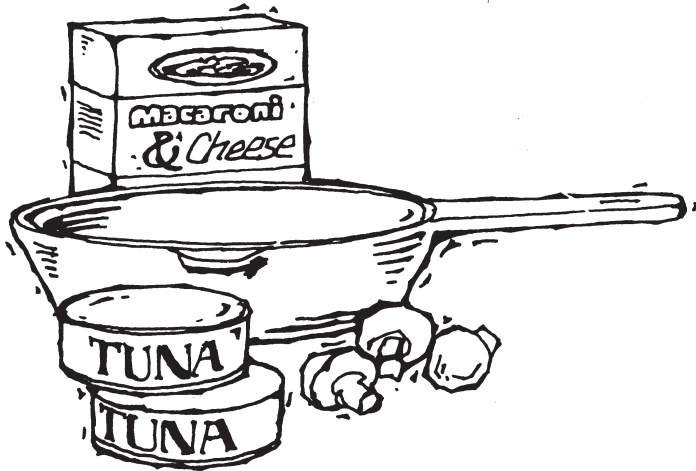
*These make good snacks, too.*

Purchase flour tortillas in the refrigerator or freezer case at your supermarket. Place them, one at a time, in a heavy skillet on medium heat. Sprinkle with shredded cheese and heat just till the cheese melts. Salt lightly if desired. Fold over, cut in half, and serve warm.

If you want to perk them up a bit, sprinkle chopped hot peppers, onions, or taco sauce over the cheese before folding over.

*Microwave Directions:* Place tortilla on paper plate, sprinkle with cheese, and cook 20 to 35 seconds until cheese melts.





## Menu #2

**Cheesy Macaroni and Beef**  
**Green Beans**  
**Crisp Salad**

### Cheesy Macaroni and Beef

1 pound ground beef	1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
2 tablespoons chopped onion	1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
1 teaspoon salt	1 16-ounce can tomatoes
1/4 teaspoon pepper	2 cups elbow macaroni
1/2 teaspoon oregano	1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Brown ground beef and onion, stirring as it cooks. Drain if necessary. Stir in salt, pepper, oregano, garlic powder, tomato sauce, and tomatoes. Simmer uncovered 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cook macaroni as directed on package; drain. Add macaroni to skillet; mix with meat mixture. Sprinkle cheese on top. Cover and heat until cheese melts. *Serves 4 to 6.*



## Menu #3

**Quick Tuna Skillet**  
**Buttered Carrots**  
**Green Bean Salad**  
**Skillet Biscuits**

This is a good emergency-shelf meal. The carrots can be frozen or canned if you don't keep fresh ones for snacking. Most of the chopped vegetables in the main dish can be bought already chopped. You can grate cheese ahead and keep it frozen or refrigerated.



### Quick Tuna Skillet

1 7/4-ounce box macaroni and cheese, prepared	1/4 cup chopped pimiento
2 6 1/2-ounce cans tuna (or 2 cups cooked diced ham)	1/4 cup chopped celery (optional)
1/4 cup sliced stuffed olives	1/4 cup chopped nuts
1/4 cup sliced mushrooms	1 teaspoon worcestershire sauce
	1/2 cup grated cheese

Gently combine all ingredients in a lightly greased skillet. Place over low heat, cover, and cook until hot. Stir occasionally until mixture is hot and bubbly. Sprinkle with cheese, cover, and allow cheese to melt. *Serve hot. Serves 6.*

Cooking time may be reduced by cooking at moderate heat, but mixture will need to be closely watched. This may also be placed in a greased casserole, topped with grated cheese, and baked in a moderate oven (350 degrees F) for 20 to 30 minutes or until mixture is bubbly.



### Green Bean Salad

3 cups canned green beans, drained (save liquid)	3 radishes, sliced (optional)
4 1/2 tablespoons vinegar	2 tablespoons chopped onion
4 1/2 teaspoons sugar	2 tablespoons chopped green pepper
1 1/2 teaspoons salt	2 tablespoons chopped pimiento
1/2 teaspoon pepper	2 tablespoons salad oil

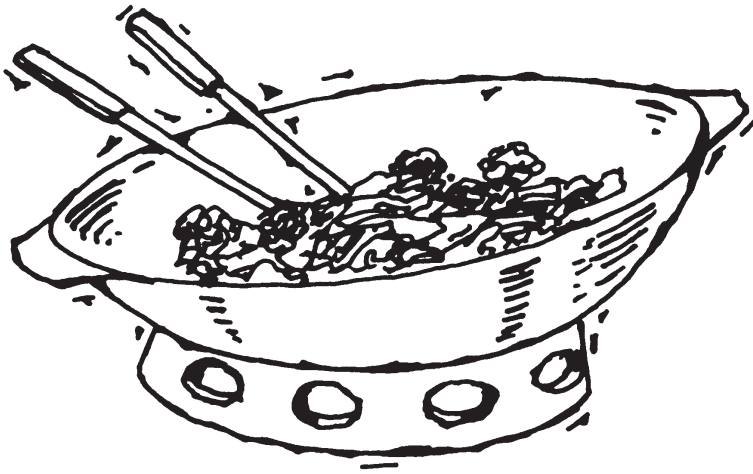
Combine liquid drained from beans with vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper. Toss beans with radishes, onion, green pepper, and pimiento. Pour seasoned bean liquid over bean mixture and marinate overnight or for at least 3 hours in the refrigerator. Drain bean liquid from vegetables. Add salad oil and toss lightly until vegetables glisten. *Serve plain or on lettuce. Serves 6.*



### Skillet Biscuits

Place refrigerated biscuits in a lightly buttered electric skillet preheated to 380 degrees F. Don't allow the biscuits to touch each other. Cover and bake 3 minutes; turn and bake 3 minutes longer. If you have a toaster oven, use that rather than the electric skillet.





## Menu #4

### Oriental Beef with Rice Steamed Broccoli Spears Lettuce Wedge with Salad Dressing

Stir-frying is a quick way to cook. Most of the time invested in these meals is in the preparation, which can be done ahead. Other vegetables may be substituted or added as your family prefers. Beef will be easier to slice thinly if it is partially frozen.



### Oriental Beef\*

1/4 cup soy sauce	3 tablespoons vegetable oil (separated)
2 teaspoons cornstarch	1 cup (1 medium) green pepper, cut into thin strips
1 teaspoon sugar	1 20-ounce can pineapple chunks, drained
1/2 teaspoon ginger powder	3 cups cooked (1 cup uncooked) rice
1 pound flank steak or top round, trimmed, cut in 2- x 1/8-inch strips	

Mix soy sauce, cornstarch, sugar, and ginger. Coat meat with soy sauce mixture. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large frypan or wok. Add green pepper strips. Cook for 2 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove green pepper from pan.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in the frypan or wok. Add meat. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, stirring constantly, until beef is lightly browned. Add green pepper and pineapple. Heat through. Serve over rice. *Serves 6.*

\*You can make Oriental poultry or pork by substituting thinly sliced chicken, turkey, or pork.



## Menu #5

### Chicken Fried Rice Fresh Fruit No-Crust Fudge Pie

This is an easy, stir-fried meal with everything in one pan. Plan this on a day after you cook rice for another meal.



### Chicken Fried Rice\*

1/4 cup vegetable oil	2 cups cold cooked rice
1/2 cup thinly sliced onion	1 cup cooked chicken*
1/2 cup diced celery (optional)	1/4 cup dry roasted, salted peanuts
1 10-ounce package frozen mixed vegetables, unthawed	2 tablespoons soy sauce

Put oil in wok or skillet and heat until bubbly but not smoking. Add onions and stir-fry 1 minute; then push aside. Add celery and stir-fry 1 minute; then push aside. Add mixed vegetables. Stir and toss for 5 minutes. Push this aside. Add rice and stir-fry 5 minutes. Add chicken, peanuts, and soy sauce. Stir all food together and stir-fry for 3 to 4 minutes or until hot. Serve in warm serving dish with additional soy sauce. *Serves 4.*

\*You can use a 6-ounce can of tuna or crabmeat in place of the cooked chicken.



### No-Crust Fudge Pie

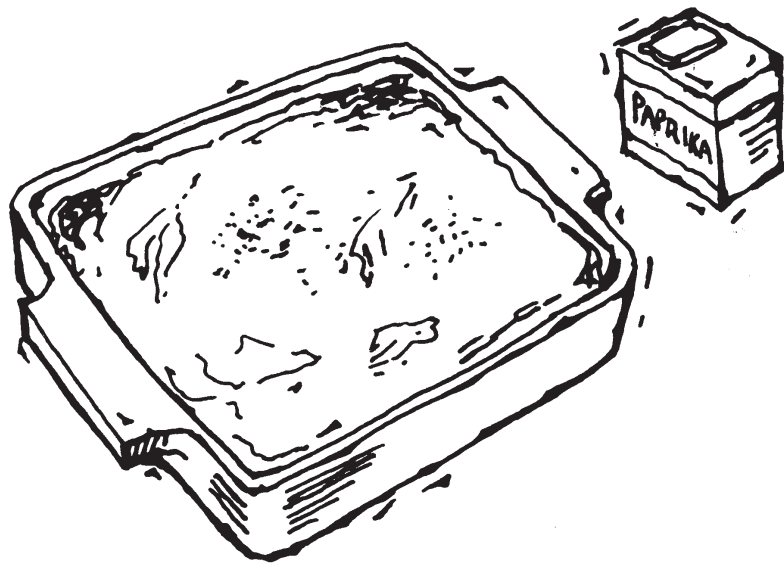
2 eggs	4 tablespoons cocoa
1 cup sugar	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup melted margarine or butter	1 teaspoon vanilla
3/4 cup flour	1 1/2 cups chopped pecans

Mix all ingredients except nuts with an electric mixer on low or by hand until well mixed. Stir in nuts and spread in an oiled 9- or 10-inch glass pie plate. Cook at 350 degrees F for 25 to 30 minutes. Do not overcook.

Serve alone or with whipped cream or ice cream.

*Microwave Directions:* Microwave on half power for 5 to 6 minutes. Turn pie plate and microwave on high for 2 to 4 more minutes. Top will be moist and look undercooked. Let stand 10 minutes before cutting.





## Menu #6

### Ground Beef Stroganoff Special Peas Spinach Salad



#### Ground Beef Stroganoff

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|--|---|
| 1 pound ground beef  | 1 teaspoon salt                                     |
| 1/2 cup finely chopped onion or 2 teaspoons instant minced onion | 1 10 1/2-ounce can cream of chicken soup, undiluted |
| 2 tablespoons flour  | 1 cup sour cream                                    |
| 1 8-ounce can mushroom stems and pieces, drained                 | Chopped parsley for garnish                         |
|  | 2 1/2 cups cooked noodles (4 ounces uncooked)       |

In a large skillet, saute beef and onion until the meat loses its red color. Stir in flour, mushrooms, and salt. Cook 5 minutes. Add soup and simmer another 5 minutes. Stir in sour cream and heat to desired serving temperature. Do not boil. Serve over buttered noodles. Garnish with parsley. *Serves 4.*



#### Noodle Hint

*Save Energy*—Some noodle and spaghetti packages now give alternative directions to save energy. Add the noodles to boiling water and cook only a few minutes before allowing to stand. Or, simply add the pasta to boiling water, turn off the heat, and allow to stand covered. Check your package for specific directions and times.



#### Special Peas

- |                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 10-ounce package frozen green peas | 2 tablespoons butter or margarine |
| 1/4 cup chopped celery               | 1/2 teaspoon salt                 |
| 1 teaspoon finely chopped onions     | 1/4 cup chopped pimientos         |
|                                      | 1/4 cup sliced water chestnuts    |

Cook peas according to the directions on package. Drain peas and save liquid. Combine liquid, chopped celery, and chopped onions in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat until celery and onions are tender. Return cooked peas to liquid. Add butter and salt. Heat until butter melts and peas are hot. Add pimientos and water chestnuts and toss lightly. Serve hot. *Serves 4.*



#### Spinach Salad

##### Salad:

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|---|---|
| 10 ounces fresh spinach, washed, drained, and stems removed | 1 bunch spring onions, chopped  |
| 1/2 pound fresh mushrooms, quartered                        | 3 tablespoons crumbled bacon (bought or made from crisp cooked bacon) |

##### Oil and Vinegar Dressing:

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|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1/4 teaspoon salt         | 4 tablespoons vinegar or lemon juice |
| 1/4 teaspoon black pepper | 4 tablespoons vegetable oil          |

Toss salad ingredients lightly with a fork or whisk. Mix all dressing ingredients and beat until well blended. Other seasonings may be added, if desired, such as mustard, paprika, cayenne, garlic, onion juice, or tarragon vinegar. Combine just before serving. *Serves 6.*



## Menu #7

### Chicken Broccoli Casserole

### Twice-Baked Potatoes

### Vegetable Marinade

One way to speed up a meal is to have the meat already cooked and frozen. Thaw it before you add it to a dish to be heated. Ground beef or leftover roast, turkey, or chicken freeze well. Canned meats are available and may be substituted but are often fairly expensive.

Remove the prepared potatoes from the freezer and start baking as you are preparing the casserole. When the casserole is ready for the oven, decrease the oven temperature. Everything should be ready about the same time. Rolls or bread can also be baked or heated at this time.



### Chicken Broccoli Casserole

2 10-ounce packages frozen broccoli spears	6 servings sliced, cooked chicken (meat from 1 chicken, 3 or 4 whole breasts, or 12 to 16 ounces of cooked chicken)
1 10 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> -ounce can cream of chicken or mushroom soup	
1 cup sour cream	Paprika

Cook broccoli according to directions on package and drain. Arrange broccoli in a shallow 2-quart casserole dish. Blend soup and sour cream and spread half of the mixture over the broccoli. Top with chicken slices and spread remaining soup mixture over chicken. Sprinkle paprika over top for garnish. Bake at 375 degrees F until top is lightly browned and sauce is bubbly, about 20 minutes. *Serves 6.*

*Microwave Directions:* Pierce broccoli packages with a knife. Place on paper plates and microwave on high for 6 minutes. Place broccoli in dish, top with chicken, and pour on soup and sour cream mixture. Cover with waxed paper. Microwave at 50-percent power 10 to 15 minutes.



### Twice-Baked Potatoes

1 medium potato per person

*For each potato use:*

Oil or fat

1/4 teaspoon salt

Dash of pepper

1 tablespoon butter

or margarine

2 tablespoons milk

*Toppings:*

Chopped nuts

Green onions

Paprika

Cheese

Scrub potatoes thoroughly. Rub with fat. Bake at 350 degrees to 425 degrees F until soft. (Use whatever temperature you need for other foods you are baking.) At 425 degrees F, medium potatoes will bake in 40 to 50 minutes. Test for doneness by pressing on potato through several thicknesses of dry towel.

When done, cut baked potatoes in half lengthwise and scoop out centers. Mash the centers and season each with salt, pepper, butter, and milk. Sour cream or cheese may be added for more flavor. Beat the mixture until smooth and spoon back into potato shells. You can then bake them to use immediately, refrigerate, or freeze for later use.

*To use immediately:* Bake at 450 degrees F until light brown.

*To bake from the refrigerator:* Bake at 450 degrees F for 10 to 15 minutes until brown.

*To bake from freezer:* Bake at 425 degrees F for 20 minutes.

*Microwave Directions:* Cook stuffed potato halves on high for 30 seconds per potato; rotate a half turn and cook again 30 seconds per potato.

*To cook from the refrigerator:* Cook 1 1/2 minutes per potato. *To cook frozen stuffed potato halves:* Cook 2 to 2 1/2 minutes per potato; let stand 3 to 4 minutes before serving.





### Vegetable Marinade

*This can be made the day before.*

Cut into bite-sized pieces and mix any three or more of the following:

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|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 3 tomatoes      | 1 zucchini              |
| 2 green peppers | ½ pound fresh mushrooms |
| 1 cucumber      | 1 yellow squash         |
| 1 onion         |                         |

Toss with ½ cup Oil and Vinegar Dressing (below) or commercial Italian dressing. Low-calorie dressings are a good way to reduce calories. Let marinate in refrigerator ½ hour or more. Serve as is or on lettuce.



### Oil and Vinegar Dressing

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|------------------|-----------------------------|
| ¼ teaspoon salt  | 4 tablespoons vinegar or    |
| ¼ teaspoon black | lemon juice                 |
| pepper           | 4 tablespoons vegetable oil |

Mix all ingredients and beat until well blended. Other seasonings may be added, if desired, such as mustard, paprika, cayenne, garlic, onion juice, or tarragon vinegar.



### Menu #8

- Seasoned Chicken**
- Parslied Potatoes**
- Turnip Greens**
- Fruit Salad**

This is a meal of simple fare. The chicken will be seasoned on the outside and moist on the inside. If you decide to oven-fry your chicken, baked potatoes would be a good substitute. They can share the oven with the chicken. Start baking the potatoes when you start preparing the chicken. Then they should be done at the same time.



### Seasoned Chicken

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 pounds fryer parts       | 2 to 4 tablespoons butter |
| Seasoned salt or           | or margarine              |
| ½ cup flour mixed with     |                           |
| 1½ teaspoons seasoned salt |                           |

Remove skin from chicken to reduce fat. Sprinkle seasoned salt or seasoned flour over the chicken parts.

Melt margarine in a heavy skillet or nonstick frypan on medium heat. Add chicken and brown 3 to 5 minutes. Cover, reduce heat to low, and continue cooking about 20 minutes, depending on the size of the chicken. Turn frequently until done. Cook only until tender; continued cooking will toughen the meat. *Serves 4 to 6.*

*Microwave Directions:* Arrange floured and seasoned chicken in a glass baking dish so that the meatiest portions are on the outside edges. Cover with waxed paper. Microwave on high for 12 to 18 minutes, rotating dish a half turn after the first 6 minutes. Let chicken stand, covered, about 5 minutes before serving.

*Pressure Saucepan Directions:* Roll chicken in seasoned flour. Brown in fat in bottom of saucepan. Add ½ cup boiling water and seal the saucepan. Cook at 15-pounds pressure 10 to 15 minutes. Check your pressure saucepan directions for more specifics.

*Oven-fried Directions:* Coat chicken with seasoned flour and melted butter. Bake uncovered at 375 degrees F for 25 minutes. Turn chicken and continue baking for 20 to 25 minutes until done. Oven-fried chicken takes a longer cooking time but shorter preparation time.



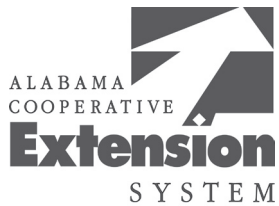
## **Parslied Potatoes**

2 to 3 small potatoes per person (new potatoes if in season)	Salt 1 to 2 tablespoons chopped parsley
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Scrub potatoes well with a vegetable brush. Cook covered in a small amount of water until tender, about 20 minutes. Remove the skins after cooking if you wish; season with salt and serve with chopped parsley. You can also season the potatoes with chopped mint or chives. If you don't have small potatoes, quarter medium or large potatoes to cook faster. Allow one medium potato per person.

*Pressure Saucepan Directions:* Cook small new potatoes at 15 pounds pressure for about 2½ minutes.





*Your Experts for Life*

**HE-253**

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**For more information**, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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