



MARCH 2021

LET'S GET COOKING

Monthly meal plan
Fast, delicious, affordable recipes

Feb 28 – Mar 6



DINNER MENU

Sunday, February 28

Crock Pot Italian Beef (or Chicken) Sandwiches

Monday, March 1

Crock Pot Sweet Potato and Black Bean Chili

Tuesday, March 2

Savory Peach Chicken + Steamed Broccoli

Wednesday, March 3

Leftovers or Flatbread Pizza

Thursday, March 4

Crock Pot Chicken & Rice Soup

Friday, March 5

Fish Tostadas

Saturday, March 6

Leftovers or Whole Meal Salad

March 7–13

DINNER MENU

Sunday, March 7

Crock Pot Cran-Apple Pork Chops + Roasted Vegetables

Monday, March 8

Avocado Tuna Melts + Oven Baked Fries

Tuesday, March 9

Smoked Sausage & Peppers in a Skillet

Wednesday, March 10

Leftovers or Baked Chicken Tenders + Roasted Corn

Thursday, March 11

Lasagna Skillet

Friday, March 12

Easy Tomato Soup + Grilled Fruit and Cheese Sandwiches

Saturday, March 13

Leftovers or Ramen Noodle Skillet



March 14–20



DINNER MENU

Sunday, March 14

Crock Pot Mongolian Beef

Monday, March 15

Black Bean Quesadillas

Tuesday, March 16

Supreme Sloppy Joes

Wednesday, March 17

Leftovers or Crock Pot Spaghetti Chicken

Thursday, March 18

Crock Pot Chicken Pot Pie

Friday, March 19

Citrus Glazed Fish + Roasted Vegetables

Saturday, March 20

Leftovers or Egg Roll in a Bowl

March 21–27



DINNER MENU

Sunday, March 21

Spinach Pasta Bake

Monday, March 22

Sweet Potato and Kale Bowl

Tuesday, March 23

Tamale Pie

Wednesday, March 24

Leftovers or Fruit & Chicken Salad Sandwiches and Sweet Potato Fries

Thursday, March 25

Pasta Fagioli Soup

Friday, March 26

Honey Garlic Shrimp and Broccoli

Saturday, March 27

Leftovers or Vegetable Frittata and Apple Cinnamon Muffins



APPLE CINNAMON MUFFINS

INGREDIENTS

Apple Mixture:

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups apple, diced small (1 large apple or 2 small apples)
- 2 Tbsp flour (sub whole wheat flour or Bob's Red Mill Gluten-Free 1:1 baking flour)
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Batter Mixture:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mashed banana (1 large banana)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup white sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup warm, unsweetened almond milk (or cow's milk, soy, coconut, etc.)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup warmed coconut oil (or vegetable oil, melted margarine or melted butter)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground flax seed
- 1 cup all-purpose flour (sub whole wheat flour or 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups Bob's Red Mill Gluten-Free 1:1 baking flour)
- 2 tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

SERVES: 12 MUFFINS

COST PER MUFFIN: \$0.30

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray muffin tin with non-stick cooking spray or line cups with papers.**
- 2. In a medium bowl, combine diced apples, 2 Tbsp flour, and 1 tsp cinnamon. Toss to coat. Reserve $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of apples for the topping.**
- 3. In a large bowl, mash the banana with a fork. Add the brown sugar, white sugar, warm milk, melted coconut oil, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, and flax. Stir or whisk until combined. Now add the flour, baking powder, and salt. Stir until just combined. Do not overstir. Batter should be thick. Fold in the apples (all except the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup for topping). Fill each muffin cup $\frac{3}{4}$ full and top with a few of the reserved apple chunks.**
- 4. Bake for 18-20 minutes until tops are domed and puffed. Do not underbake since these are very moist and chewy anyway.**
- 5. Allow muffins to cool in pan for at least 10 minutes to completely set before removing them.**
- 6. Store leftovers in the refrigerator or freezer.**



AVOCADO TUNA MELTS

INGREDIENTS

- 1, 6 oz pouch (not can) of chunk light tuna
- 1 avocado
- Juice of ½ lime
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 whole English muffins
- 1 vine-ripe tomato, sliced
- 1 ½ cups shredded mozzarella cheese

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$1.80

DIRECTIONS

1. Split English muffins. Toast under broiler for 1-2 minutes or in toaster. Set aside. Keep oven set to broiler setting.

2. Peel avocado and mash with fork. Combine the mashed avocado, tuna, lime juice, salt and pepper. Stir until combined.

3. Place English muffins on baking sheet lined with foil. Evenly portion the tuna mixture onto each muffin half. Top with a tomato slice. Sprinkle with cheese.

4. Place the baking sheet of tuna melts on the middle rack of oven. Broil for 5 minutes until tuna is warm and cheese is lightly browned and bubbly.

Serve with carrot and celery sticks or oven-baked fries.



BAKED CHICKEN TENDERS

INGREDIENTS

- Spray butter (brand I Can't Believe It's Not Butter)
- 1 egg beaten (may substitute ½ cup buttermilk)
- 1 ½ cups panko bread crumbs or gluten-free crumbs if desired*
- 2 tsp granulated garlic
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 lb chicken tenders or boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into strips

SERVES: 3-4

COST PER SERVING: \$1.20

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Line baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking spray.**
- 2. Place egg or buttermilk in a shallow dish. Set aside.**
- 3. Combine bread crumbs and seasonings in gallon-size zip-top plastic bag. Dip 2 chicken tenders in egg (or buttermilk) at a time and then place into crumb mix. Shake to coat. Place the coated chicken on the prepared baking sheet. Repeat with remaining chicken pieces. Spray each chicken piece a few times with the spray butter.**
- 4. Bake in oven for 7-8 minutes on the second to lowest rack and then flip. Bake 7-8 minutes more. Thick pieces will take longer, but overbaking will make dry chicken.**

***NOTE: Toasting the bread crumbs before coating the chicken makes them extra yummy but adds an extra step. If you have time, place the crumbs under the broiler for 2 minutes. Remove and cool. then combine the toasted crumbs and seasonings. Follow remaining steps above.**



BLACK BEAN QUESADILLAS

INGREDIENTS

- 1, 15 oz can of black beans, drained
 - 1, 15 oz jar of chunky salsa
 - 2 cups of Monterey Jack Cheese (or other favorite cheese)
 - ½ tsp garlic
 - ½ tsp chili powder
 - ¼ tsp cumin
- 8-10 fajita-size tortilla shells, whole wheat or corn

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Drain liquid from black beans. Mix beans, salsa, cheese, and seasonings together.**
 - 2. Spray pan with cooking spray. Lay tortilla in pan. Spread a thin layer of the bean mixture on tortilla. Cover pan and cook over low heat until cheese is melted. Use spatula to fold in half.**
 - 3. Garnish with sour cream, fresh cilantro, and lime juice if desired.**
- Serve with a side of rice and lettuce if desired.**

SERVES: 8-10

COST/QUESADILLA: \$0.80



CITRUS GLAZED FISH

INGREDIENTS

Sauce:

- ½ cup orange juice (juice from 1 large orange)
- 1 Tbsp honey
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tsp cornstarch

Fish:

- 4 thin, white fish fillets, thawed (like Tilapia or Swai)
- ¼ cup flour (may sub gluten-free flour)
- 1 ½ tsp granulated garlic
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 Tbsp olive oil or sunflower oil
- Marjoram or Rosemary to taste

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$1.75

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Whisk together orange juice, honey, soy sauce, and cornstarch in a small bowl. Microwave for 30-45 seconds until bubbly. Set aside.**
- 2. Put flour, garlic, pepper, and salt in zip-top plastic bag. Place fillets in flour mixture one at a time and shake to coat.**
- 3. Heat 2 Tbsp oil in large skillet over medium heat until hot. Add fish. Fry for 2 minutes until lightly brown and flip. Fry for 2 more minutes until fish is lightly brown and flakes easily.**
- 4. Sprinkle lightly with marjoram or rosemary. Pour orange glaze over fish before serving.**

Serve with roasted vegetables or rice.



CROCK POT CHICKEN AND RICE SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup diced carrots
- ½ cup diced celery
- ½ cup diced onion
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp thyme
- 1 Tbsp dried parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ cup brown rice
- 2 Tbsp butter
- 6 cups chicken broth or stock (I prefer bone broth)
- 1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

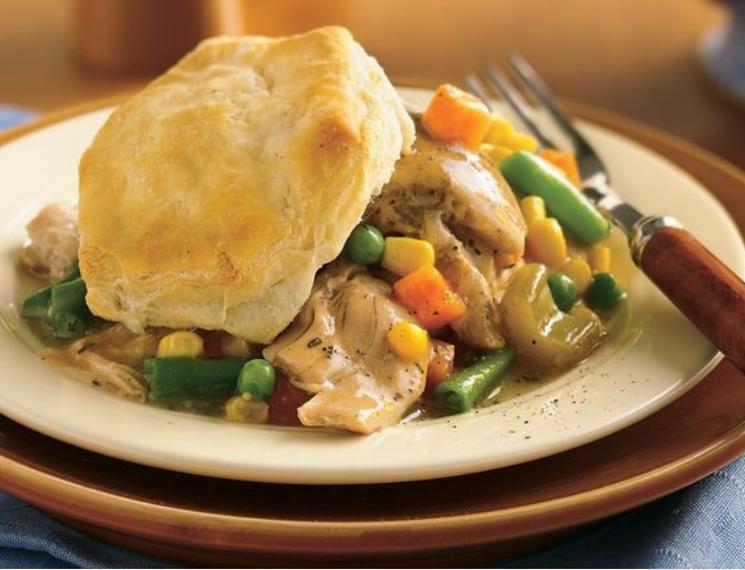
SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$0.80

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Add all ingredients to crock pot. Stir. Cook on low 7-9 hours or high 3-4 hours.**
- 2. Pull chicken apart with fork. Remove bay leaf. Add salt and pepper to taste.**

Serve with a whole grain roll or French bread if desired and a green salad.



CROCK POT CHICKEN POT PIE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ¼ pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 small, 5 oz can of evaporated milk (DON'T USE sweetened condensed milk!)
- 1 cup onion diced (1 medium onion)
- 1 cup celery diced (3 ribs)
- 3 cups frozen mixed vegetables (1, 16 oz bag frozen mixed vegetables)
- 2 cups diced red potatoes (3-4 red potatoes, leave peel on)
- 1, 4 oz can sliced mushrooms
- ½ tsp poultry seasoning
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp granulated garlic
- 1, 32 oz container chicken broth
- Chicken flavoring bouillon to taste (cubes, dry powder, or paste)
- Biscuits (premade, refrigerator, or Bisquick) or toast

SERVES: 5-6

COST PER SERVING: \$1.58

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Add all ingredients to slow cooker. Stir. Cook on low heat 8-9 hours or high heat 4-5 hours.**
- 2. At the end of cooking, pull apart chicken. Taste. Add chicken flavoring bouillon as needed to bump flavor.**
- 3. Serve over biscuits or toast.**



CROCK POT CRAN-APPLE PORK

INGREDIENTS

- 4 center-cut pork chops, about 1 inch thick, 1 ½-2 lbs (or 2 lb lean pork roast)
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground red cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup dried cranberries
- 2 medium apples, peeled and chopped into bite size pieces (use up the not-so-fresh apples)

SERVES: 4-6

COST PER SERVING: \$1.25

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Spray crock pot with cooking spray. Sprinkle pork with salt and pepper. Place in crock pot.**
- 2. In a small bowl, mix remaining ingredients. Spoon over pork in the crock pot and cover. Cook on low heat for 4-6 hours.**
- 3. Spoon cran-apple mixture over pork prior to serving.**

Serving suggestion: Serve with roasted vegetables like carrots, Brussels sprouts, or sweet potatoes.



CROCK POT ITALIAN BEEF (OR CHICKEN) SANDWICHES

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 lbs lean beef roast, like rump, or 2-3 lbs chicken breasts
- 1 medium onion, sliced
- 1 green pepper, sliced
- 16 oz jar Pepperoncini peppers or pickled red pepper slices (like Mezzetta brand)
- 2 cups beef broth or chicken broth
- 2 tsp dry, Italian seasoning spice
- 1 tsp granulated garlic
- 1 tsp granulated onion
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp parsley
- ¼ tsp pepper
- ½ tsp thyme
- Loaf of crusty French bread, preferably whole grain
- Provolone cheese slices or favorite cheese
- Spicy Giardiniera or pickled vegetables for serving, optional

SERVES: 6-8

**COST PER SERVING: \$2.50
FOR BEEF, \$1.70 FOR
CHICKEN**

DIRECTIONS

1. Trim fat from roast. Place sliced onion and green pepper on the bottom of the crock pot. Lay roast (or chicken) on top of vegetables. Pour beef (or chicken) broth and the jar of peppers on the roast. Now sprinkle with seasonings.

2. Cook for 8-10 hours on low or 5-6 hours on high.

3. Pull meat apart with fork. Meat should be fall-apart tender at this point.

4. Preheat broiler on oven to 500 degrees. Cut French bread. (If bread is super soft, lightly toast the slices under the broiler in the oven to avoid them from becoming gooey with the meat mixture.) Place shredded meat and cooked vegetables on the crusty bread slices. Top with cheese. Place under broiler for 2 minutes until cheese is melted and lightly brown. Watch carefully to avoid scorching.

Add additional pickled vegetables like Giardiniera for serving if desired.

Note: For leftovers, try the meat and vegetable mixture on a baked potato or sweet potato. Yum!



CROCK POT MONGOLIAN BEEF

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 1 ½ pounds beef flank steak, cut into strips
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- 2/3 cup soy sauce
- ¾ cup water
- ½ cup honey
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1 cup diced bell pepper, about 1 pepper
- 1, 4 oz can sliced mushrooms (optional)
- 1, 8 oz can sliced water chestnuts (optional)
- Diced green onions to garnish (optional)

SERVES: 6

COST PER SERVING: \$1.83

DIRECTIONS

1. Place cornstarch in gallon size zip-top plastic bag. Add steak strips and shake to coat. Set aside.

2. In crock pot, whisk together garlic, soy sauce, water, honey, and brown sugar. Now add steak strips. Top with vegetables. Cover. Cook for 2-3 hours on high or 5-6 hours on low until meat is tender. Stir occasionally to avoid sticking.

Serve with brown rice, quinoa, whole grain pasta, or cauliflower rice.



CROCK POT SPAGHETTI CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ to 2 pounds of boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 3 large halves)
- Salt and pepper
- 1, 15 oz can Italian style diced tomatoes
- 1, 24 oz jar marinara or favorite pasta sauce
- 1, 14 oz quartered artichoke hearts
- 1, 4 oz can sliced mushrooms or 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms (optional)
- 1 tsp Italian Seasoning
- 1 tsp garlic
- 16 oz package of spaghetti noodles
- Parmesan cheese to garnish

SERVES: 8

COST PER SERVING: \$1.70

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut chicken breast in half to make 8 pieces of chicken. Place in bottom of crock pot. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Add diced tomatoes, sauce, and artichoke hearts. Sprinkle Italian seasoning and garlic over the top. Cook on high for 2-3 hours or low 4-6 hours.

2. When chicken is almost ready, prepare spaghetti noodles according to package directions. Drain.

3. Place a chicken breast on a serving of spaghetti, and ladle sauce over the top. Garnish with fresh parmesan cheese.

Serve with a side salad or favorite cooked vegetable.



CROCK POT SWEET POTATO & BLACK BEAN CHILI

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup diced onion
- 1/4 tsp granulated garlic or 1 tsp fresh minced garlic
- 2 cups sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 2 Tbsp chili powder
- 2 tsp cumin
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 28 oz canned diced tomatoes or Rotel tomatoes with green chilies
- 2-15 oz cans black beans
- 2 cups vegetable stock or 2 cups water (add more if it becomes too thick)
- Optional toppings, like avocado, chopped cilantro, chopped green onions, or tortilla chips

SERVES: 6

COST PER SERVING: \$1.33

DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients to a crock pot. Cook on high for 2-3 hours or low for 5-6 hours. The chili will thicken the longer you cook it as the sweet potato softens and breaks apart.

Quick Stove Top Method:

1. Add 1 Tbsp oil to stock pot. Saute onions and fresh garlic for 2-3 minutes over medium heat until onions are translucent.

2. Don't add the tomatoes, but add the sweet potatoes, chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, salt, black beans, and the vegetable stock. Bring to a boil and then reduce to a simmer. Continue to cook until sweet potatoes are tender but not mushy, about 8 minutes. Add additional stock or water if needed.

3. Once the sweet potatoes are tender, add the tomatoes. Simmer for 5 minutes to flavor throughout.



EASY TOMATO SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter or vegan margarine
- 1/2 large onion, cut into wedges
- 1, 28 oz jar or can organic tomatoes, whole peeled or crushed
- 1 ½ cups low sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
- ½ tsp salt
- Garnish with fresh basil if desired

SERVES: 4-6

COST PER SERVING: \$1.12

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Add onions and tomatoes to blender. Blend until smooth.**
- 2. Melt butter in large saucepan. Add onion-tomato mixture, broth, and salt to sauce pan. Bring to a simmer for 20-30 minutes to allow it to flavor through. Add additional salt to taste.**

Note: The quality matters when using canned or jarred tomatoes. Great brands of Italian tomatoes for this soup are: Muir Glen, Jovial, Bionaturae, Yellow Barn, and Eden.



EGG ROLL IN A BOWL

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound lean ground pork, beef, or turkey (may sub 2 cups meatless crumbles)
- 14 oz bag fresh, shredded coleslaw mix (cabbage and carrots)
- ¼ cup low sodium soy sauce
- 1 tsp granulated garlic
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 egg
- Sriracha sauce
- Green onions
- Sesame oil

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$1.30

DIRECTIONS

1. Brown ground meat in pan. Drain excess grease if needed.

2. Add the cabbage, soy sauce, ginger, and garlic. Sauté until cabbage is tender, and add a little water if needed.

3. At the end of cooking time, make a well in the center of skillet and add the egg. Scramble until done over low heat.

Serve with sriracha sauce and few green onions if desired. Drizzle with sesame oil if desired.

This is a low carb meal. You can serve it over rice to stretch the meal for a family.



FISH TOSTADAS

INGREDIENTS

Fish Taco:

- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 ½ lbs tilapia or other white fish
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 20 corn tostadas or corn tortillas

Taco Sauce:

- 1 cup sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
- 2/3 cup mayo
- 4 Tbsp lime juice
- 2 tsp granulated garlic
- 2 tsp Sriracha sauce or to taste
- Taco Toppings:
 - ½ small cabbage, shredded (or 1 small bag coleslaw mix)
 - 2 avocados, sliced
 - 2 tomatoes diced
 - ½ cup diced red onion (yellow or white ok too)
 - ½ bunch Cilantro, most stems removed
 - 1 ½ cup Monterrey Jack or Cotija cheese
 - 1 lime cut into wedges

**SERVES: 5-7 (2-3
TOSTADAS PER PERSON)
COST PER SERVING: \$1.03**

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Lay fish on baking sheet. Lightly drizzle with olive oil.**
- 2. Combine dry seasonings of cumin, cayenne, salt, and pepper in a small bowl. Sprinkle seasonings over fish. Bake at 375 degrees for 20-25 minutes.**
- 3. While fish is baking, whisk together taco sauce ingredients until well blended.**
- 4. Have taco toppings ready to go for when fish is fully cooked. Warm the tostada shells (or tortilla shells) on a baking sheet in the oven for 3-4 minutes right before the fish is ready.**
- 5. Once the fish is ready, remove from oven. Assemble the tostadas: shell first, fish, cabbage, onion, tomato, avocado, cilantro, cheese, and squeeze of lime wedge. Drizzle with taco sauce and enjoy.**



FLATBREAD PIZZA

INGREDIENTS

- 4, 6-inch whole grain flatbread or wraps (like Flat-Out brand)
- 1, 15 oz can or jar pizza sauce (or 1, 15 oz jar light Alfredo sauce or 6 oz jar pesto sauce)
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, shredded

Favorite toppings:

- 1 cup cut-up vegetables or fruit, like mushrooms, onions, peppers, broccoli, artichokes, spinach, fresh tomatoes, pineapple, etc...
- 1 cup meatless crumbles, ham, pepperoni, leftover chicken, beef, pork, etc. (use leftovers)
- 1 cup or more Mozzarella cheese, shredded
- Pizza seasoning, optional

SERVES: 4

**COST PER SERVING: \$1.75
OR LESS WITHOUT MEAT**

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Lay 1 or 2 flatbread on the baking sheet. Spread sauce over flatbread. (Use about ¼ cup for the tomato based sauce or the Alfredo sauce. Use only 2 Tbsp for the pesto sauce.) Sprinkle 2 Tbsp Parmesan cheese over sauce. Add favorite toppings. Top with ¼ cup mozzarella cheese or more to taste. Lightly sprinkle with pizza seasoning if desired.

3. Bake in oven for 8-10 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is slightly crispy.

Serve with a salad.



FRUIT AND CHICKEN SALAD SANDWICHES

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup light mayonnaise
- 2 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp vinegar
- ¼ cup finely diced onion
- ¼ cup finely diced celery
- ¼ cup dried cranberries or raisins
(may substitute ½ cup fresh fruit like grapes or apples, cut small)
- 2 Tbsp sliced almonds or chopped pecans, optional
- 2, 10 oz cans chunk chicken breast, drained (reserve liquid for use in a soup or freeze for later use)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 12 slices multi-grain bread, 6 wraps, or lettuce leaves

SERVES: 6

COST PER SERVING: \$1.16

DIRECTIONS

1. Make dressing for chicken salad: in a small bowl, combine mayonnaise, vinegar, and sugar. Stir well. Add onion, celery, dried cranberries, and optional nuts. Stir. Lastly, stir in drained chicken. Mix well. Add salt and pepper to taste.

2. Spoon mixture onto bread and top with another slice, or roll into a wrap or lettuce leaf. Flavored breads like cranberry, onion, and poppy seed are also tasty.

Serve with sweet potato fries or soup in the winter and a fresh fruit salad in the summer.

Note: The chicken salad is actually better the next day, which allows the different flavors to enhance each other.



GRILLED FRUIT AND CHEESE SANDWICHES

INGREDIENTS

- 8 slices raisin bread or whole wheat bread
- Softened butter or vegan butter
- 4 slices cheddar cheese or other favorite cheese
- 4 slices Muenster cheese or other favorite cheese
- 2 small, thinly sliced, apples or pears (canned pear halves can also work)

DIRECTIONS

1. Spread one side of bread slice lightly with butter. Place the bread slice, butter side down, on a non-stick griddle or skillet. Top with 1 slice of cheese. Arrange fruit slices over the cheese. Top with another slice of cheese. Lastly, top with a slice of bread, butter side up.

2. Cook on low to medium-low heat for 2-3 minutes or until lightly brown, then flip. Watch closely to avoid scorching the bread.

Note: Use other bread, fruit, and vegetables combinations. Try rye bread with Swiss, avocado and tomato or sourdough with peaches and Gouda cheese. Be creative.

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$0.75



HONEY GARLIC SHRIMP AND BROCCOLI

INGREDIENTS

- 1, 12 oz bag frozen, precooked shrimp
- 1, 12 oz bag frozen broccoli florets
- 1 Tbsp oil
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- ½ tsp dried ginger
- ¼ cup honey
- 3 Tbsp soy sauce

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Thaw broccoli in microwave for 2 minutes. Drain excess water. Set aside.**
- 2. Whisk together garlic, ginger, honey, and soy sauce in a small bowl. Set aside.**
- 3. In a large skillet, add oil. Heat pan to medium high heat. Add shrimp, and sear for 1 minute. Add sauce. Add broccoli. Stir. Continue to cook until broccoli and shrimp are heated through and sauce is thickened, about 4-5 minutes.**

This is a low carb meal. Serve over rice for a family, budget-friendly meal.

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$2.05



LASAGNA SKILLET

INGREDIENTS

- ½ pound lean ground beef or turkey (may substitute with 1 cup of meatless crumbles)
- ½ cup diced onion
- ½ cup diced bell pepper
- 1, 4 oz can mushrooms
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 cup water
- 24 oz jar pasta or marinara sauce
- 3 cups uncooked whole wheat egg noodles or mini lasagna noodles called Mafalda
- 1 ½ cups cottage cheese (12 oz container)
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ½ cup parmesan cheese to garnish
- 1 tsp dried parsley

SERVES: 6

COST PER SERVING: \$2.04

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Brown ground meat and onion in a large skillet over medium heat. Drain grease if needed.**
- 2. Add bell pepper, mushrooms, garlic, basil, water, and pasta sauce. Stir. Bring to a boil and then add noodles. Cover with lid and turn heat to low. Cook for 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. (Add a little extra water if needed to prevent sticking since all pasta absorbs water differently.)**
- 3. While pasta is cooking, combine the cottage cheese, mozzarella cheese, parmesan cheese, and dried parsley in a separate bowl. Set aside.**
- 4. Once the pasta in the skillet is softened, but still a little chewy, you are ready to add the cheese. Drop the cheese mixture by spoonfuls on top of the pasta in the skillet. Do not stir. Cover with lid until cheese is melted, about another 5 minutes.**

Serve with a side salad if desired.



OVEN-BAKED FRIES

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large white, yellow or Russet potatoes, cut into ½ inch wedges or strips
- 2 Tbsp olive oil or sunflower oil
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$0.33

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.**
- 2. In a large bowl or zip-top plastic bag, toss together potatoes and oil.**
- 3. Pour potatoes and oil onto baking sheet. Arrange the potatoes so they don't overlap. Sprinkle with seasonings.**
- 4. Bake in oven for 20 minutes, remove from oven, and stir. Bake another 10-15 minutes until the fries are just slightly crispy.**



PASTA FAGIOLI SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound lean turkey sausage or Italian pork sausage
- 1 cup diced onion
- 1 cup diced celery
- ½ cup diced carrots
- 1 cup fresh spinach, stems removed and cut into bite size pieces
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1, 15 oz can diced tomatoes
- 1, 15 oz can white beans, like cannellini or northern
- 1 tsp granulate garlic
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ¾ tsp dried thyme
- 1 cup whole wheat pasta shapes, like rotini, ditalini, mini shells, elbow, or whatever you have available
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Parmesan cheese to garnish (optional)

SERVES: 6-8

COST PER SERVING: \$1.26

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Brown sausage in large saucepan with onions, celery, carrots, and spinach.**
 - 2. Add chicken broth, diced tomatoes, white beans, garlic, basil, oregano, and thyme. Stir. Bring to a boil. Once gently boiling, add pasta shapes. Continue to boil for 8-10 or until pasta is just tender.**
 - 3. Garnish with parmesan cheese if desired.**
- Serve with a green salad and a whole grain roll or breadstick.**



RAMEN NOODLE SKILLET

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb lean ground beef, pork or turkey (may sub 2 cups cooked meat, chicken or meatless crumbles)*
- 1 cup diced onion
- ½ cup diced celery
- ½ cup diced carrots
- ½ tsp garlic
- ½ tsp ginger
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1, 16 oz bag frozen stir-fry vegetables
- 1 cup water or broth
- 1, 3 oz package beef or chicken ramen noodles with seasoning packet
- Low sodium soy sauce to taste
- Sriracha sauce to taste

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$1.44

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Brown meat, onion, celery, and carrots together in non-stick pan.**
- 2. Add garlic, ginger, cayenne, stir-fry vegetables, ramen seasoning packet, and water. Stir. Bring to a boil.**
- 3. Break up noodles and add to skillet. Cover. Cook 2 minutes until noodles are done. Serve immediately. Add soy sauce and sriracha for extra flavor.**

***Note: Use up leftover meat or poultry for cost savings. Add another package of noodles to stretch meal.**



ROASTED CORN

INGREDIENTS

- 1, 16 oz bag frozen corn
- Spray butter (like I Can't believe It's not Butter) or 2 Tbsp melted butter
- 1 tsp dried parsley flakes
- ¼ tsp granulated garlic
- ¼ tsp paprika
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 Tbsp parmesan cheese (optional)

SERVES: 4-5

COST PER SERVING: \$0.42

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.**
- 2. Thaw corn in microwave for 2-3 minutes. Drain excess water.**
- 3. Spray baking sheet with cooking spray. Spread corn on baking sheet. Generously spray with liquid butter or drizzle melted butter over the top. Sprinkle seasonings over corn, but not the cheese. Stir to coat. Place in oven and bake for 5-6 minutes.**
- 4. Remove and stir. Place in oven again for 2 minutes or until just lightly brown.**
- 5. Place into serving bowl and garnish with the Parmesan cheese.**



ROASTED VEGETABLES

INGREDIENTS

- 1-2 pounds of fresh vegetables (broccoli, Brussels sprouts, asparagus, or others), cut into bite size pieces
- 2-3 Tbsp olive oil, sunflower oil, or canola oil
- Salt and pepper to taste or other seasonings like Mrs. Dash, Garden, Nature's, garlic, Lawry's, etc.

SERVES: 4-6

COST PER SERVING: \$0.50

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place parchment paper on a large, rimmed baking sheet.**
- 2. Place cut vegetables on baking sheet. Vegetables should flat and not layered on each other to roast evenly. Drizzle with oil and toss gently. Sprinkle with salt and pepper or your favorite seasoning. Toss again. Bake for 20-30 minutes in oven until lightly brown and tender, stirring once.**

Note: Green vegetables, like asparagus and Brussels sprouts, benefit from a squeeze of lemon juice to keep their color vibrant and cut the bitterness in the vegetable.



SAVORY PEACH CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

- 4 flattened, boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 1 ¼ pounds)
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1, 15 oz can of sliced peaches packed in juice
- 2 Tbsp brown sugar
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- ½ tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- ½ cup chicken broth, low sodium or other

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$0.90

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Lightly sprinkle chicken breasts with salt and pepper.**
- 2. Coat non-stick pan with cooking spray. Heat pan on medium to medium-high heat. Once a drop of water splatters in the pan, add chicken breasts. Brown for 2-3 minutes on each side. Chicken may not be fully cooked at this time but needs to be lightly brown on each side.**
- 3. Remove chicken breasts from pan and let set. Now add remaining ingredients to pan. Whisk and bring to a boil. Once the peach sauce is bubbling, add chicken breasts. Turn to medium-low heat and continue to cook, stirring occasionally with lid off. Turn chicken breasts every 3 minutes to soak in sauce. At 7-10 minutes, sauce should be thickened and chicken cooked through.**

Serve with a side of rice or quinoa and steamed broccoli or other vegetables if desired.



SMOKED SAUSAGE AND PEPPERS IN A SKILLET

INGREDIENTS

- 1, 13 oz package rope smoked sausage, turkey or lite (Hillshire Farms brand)
- 1 red pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 green pepper, cut into thin strips
- 1 medium onion, cut into rings
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- ¼ tsp ground paprika
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp ground cayenne red pepper (optional)

SERVES: 3-4

COST PER SERVING: \$1.25

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Cut smoked sausage into ¼" slices.**
- 2. Spray non-stick cooking skillet with pan spray. Turn to medium heat. Add sausage slices.**
- 3. Brown sausage for 2 minutes, stir, and then add sliced peppers, onion, and spices. Cover. Stir occasionally. Cook for 7-8 minutes until peppers and onion are tender.**

Serve as is, or portion it over rice or baked potatoes for a more filling meal.



SPINACH PASTA BAKE

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups baby spinach, stems removed
- 4 cups dry pasta, like penne or bowtie**
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch
- 2 cups milk
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- ½ tsp granulated onion
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 cup Monterrey Jack cheese, shredded
- 1 cup Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded (not the kind in the green bottle)
- ½ pound diced ham (optional)
- ½ cup Cheddar cheese for topping

SERVES: 6-8

COST PER SERVING: \$1.30

DIRECTIONS

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. While waiting for water to boil, measure out 2 cups of packed spinach. Remove stems and tear into pieces 2 inches or smaller. Put spinach in the colander that you plan to drain the pasta.
2. Once water comes to a boil, add pasta and cook until pasta is just Al Dente (still a little chewy), about 7 minutes.
3. Drain pasta by pouring the hot water over the spinach in the colander to cook it. Once drained, put pasta and spinach back in pot.
4. Add the olive oil. Toss to coat and set aside.
5. Preheat broiler on oven to 500 degrees.
6. Make the sauce: whisk milk, cornstarch, garlic, onion, and pepper in a sauce pan. Bring to a boil, stirring continually. Boil 1 minute, and remove from heat.
7. Stir in 1 cup each of the cheeses until melted. Add ham.
8. Pour cheese mixture over noodles and spinach, and stir together.
9. Transfer to a casserole dish and top with the remaining ½ cup cheddar cheese.
10. Place on middle rack in oven under the broil to brown the cheese on top. Broil until cheese is lightly brown and bubbly, about 10 minutes.



SUPREME SLOPPY JOES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound lean ground beef or turkey (may sub 2 cups meatless crumbles)
- ½ cup diced onion
- ½ cup diced celery
- ½ cup diced carrots
- ½ cup diced bell pepper
- ½ cup instant or rolled oats
- ½ cup beef broth or water
- 1, 8 oz can tomato sauce (1 cup)
- 2 Tbsp honey or brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp vinegar
- 1 Tbsp prepared mustard
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 large whole wheat buns or 12 slider size buns

SERVES: 6

COST PER SERVING: \$1.16

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Brown ground meat with onion, celery, carrots, and bell peppers in non-stick pan. Drain excess grease if needed.**
- 2. Add oats, broth, tomato sauce, honey, vinegar, mustard, chili powder, and garlic. Stir well. Cover pan and simmer 5 minutes. Stir occasionally to avoid sticking.**
- 3. Taste. Add salt and pepper if needed. Cook uncovered 5 more minutes until sauce is thickened and flavorful.**
- 4. Serve on toasted whole wheat buns.**

Recipe Note: The vegetables help boost the nutrition, and the oatmeal helps stretch this meal for more servings.



SWEET POTATO AND KALE BOWL

INGREDIENTS

- 4 sweet potatoes, peeled or not, cut into bite size pieces
- Salt and pepper
- 6 slices bacon, cut into ½ inch pieces (or sub 2 Tbsp olive oil to make it meatless)
- 1 cup diced onion
- 1 large bunch kale, stems removed
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- 2 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 4 eggs
- Shredded cheese
- Avocados
- Plain Greek yogurt or sour cream

SERVES: 4-6

**COST PER SERVING: \$1.28
DEPENDING ON TOPPINGS**

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Spray baking sheet. Put sweet potatoes on sheet, not overlapping. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast in oven for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and stir. Roast 10-15 more minutes until tender.**
- 2. While sweet potatoes are roasting, saute bacon pieces (or oil) and onion together in a large skillet over medium heat. Once onion is translucent, add kale. Stir until kale is coated. Add the chicken broth and garlic. Reduce heat to low. Cover with lid and cook for 4-5 minutes until kale is tender. Remove lid and cook until broth has been reduced.**
- 3. While potatoes and kale are cooking, prepare soft cooked eggs. Spray skillet with non-stick spray. Heat to medium and add eggs. Cook for 3 minutes until white is completely set. Cover with lid. Set in a warm place but turn off heat.**
- 4. Assemble bowls. Place roasted sweet potatoes on bottom of bowl, add kale. Add soft cooked eggs. If desired, add shredded cheese, avocado slices, and a dollop of plain Greek yogurt. Garnish with cracked black pepper.**



SWEET POTATO FRIES

INGREDIENTS

- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled or unpeeled, cut into thin strips
- 2 Tbsp olive oil, canola oil, or sunflower oil
- 2 Tbsp cornstarch
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- ¼ tsp paprika or cayenne pepper
- ¼ tsp granulated garlic or onion

SERVES: 3-4

COST PER SERVING: \$0.42

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. In a medium size bowl, toss together sweet potato and oil.**
- 2. In a large zip-top bag, combine cornstarch and seasonings.**
- 3. Add sweet potatoes to bag and shake to coat.**
- 4. Spray baking sheet with cooking spray and arrange sweet potatoes on it so they are not overlapping.**
- 5. Bake for 15 minutes, remove and stir. Bake 10-15 minutes more until slightly crispy and brown.**

Serve with sweet mustard, honey, or ketchup for dipping.



TAMALE PIE

INGREDIENTS

- ½ lb lean ground beef or turkey (may sub 1 cup meatless crumbles)
- ½ cup diced onion
- 1, 15 oz can black beans
- 1, 10 oz can diced tomatoes and green chilies, like Rotel
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp dried cumin
- ½ tsp granulated garlic
- 1 ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese, optional
- 1, 8.5 oz package corn muffin mix (like Jiffy)
- 1 cup frozen corn, thawed or 1 cup canned corn, drained

SERVES: 6

COST PER SERVING: \$1.33

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.**
- 2. Brown ground meat and diced onion in 10-inch, oven-ready skillet. (If you don't have an oven-ready skillet, you can transfer the meat mixture to a 10-inch casserole dish or 9-inch deep pie plate once prepared.) Drain off excess grease if needed.**
- 3. Add black beans, diced tomatoes and chiles, chili powder, cumin, and garlic. Simmer on stove until sauce is thickened. (Transfer now to the casserole dish or pie plate if you are not using the oven-ready skillet). Sprinkle just 1 cup of shredded cheese over the top.**
- 4. Prepare corn muffin mix according to package directions.**
- 5. Stir in corn and the remaining ½ cup of cheese. Spread the batter over top of the meat mixture.**
- 6. Bake for about 30 minutes until muffin mix is set. Cut into 6 slices.**
- 7. Serve with a dollop of plain Greek yogurt or sour cream and jalapenos if desired.**

Recipe Note: This recipe can easily be doubled for leftovers. If doubling the recipe, you can use the larger box of 15.5 oz corn muffin mix. Bake the doubled recipe in a 9 x 13 cake pan or glass baking dish.



VEGETABLE FRITTATA

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups vegetables, chopped
(mushrooms, onions, peppers, broccoli, tomatoes, etc.)*
- 1 cup hashbrown potato cubes or 1 baked potato cut into bite size pieces
- ½ cup chopped ham, optional*
- 6 eggs
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 cup shredded cheese*

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Spray a medium skillet with cooking spray. Over medium heat, saute vegetables 3-5 minutes until tender and cooked through.
3. Spray a deep, 9-inch pie plate. Once vegetables are cooked, pour vegetables into the pie plate.
4. In a medium sized bowl, beat eggs and milk together. Stir in cheese. Pour egg mixture over vegetables.
5. Bake for 10-15 minutes until center is set.

***Recipe note: Be creative with the vegetables. Spinach and asparagus are great in the recipe as well as salsa and black beans. Use different cheeses. Add leftover meats. This is very versatile recipe.**

SERVES: 4

COST PER SERVING: \$0.75



WHOLE MEAL SALAD

INGREDIENTS

- 8 cups greens: iceberg, cabbage, romaine, spinach, mixed, etc.
- 4 cups chopped vegetables: cucumbers, peas, onion, tomatoes, carrots, fresh mushrooms, avocado, bell peppers, corn, etc. (clean out the fridge)
- 4 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- 4 oz chicken, beef, pork (use leftovers when possible), canned tuna, or 1 cup drained, canned beans
- 2 cups of cooked grains: rice, quinoa, farro, etc.
- ½ cup shredded cheese or Feta crumbles
- Nuts and seeds, optional
- Dried Fruit, optional
- ½ cup favorite salad dressing or sauce: Ranch, French, Cilantro-lime, Balsamic vinegar and oil, Tzatziki, salsa

SERVES: 4

**COST PER SERVING: \$2.06,
USE LEFTOVERS TO
DECREASE COST TO LESS
THAN \$1.00**

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Layer each salad with 2 cups greens on the bottom, then ½ cup cooked grains, 1 cup vegetables, 1 sliced egg, 1 oz protein or ¼ cup beans, and top with 2 Tbsp shredded cheese or Feta crumbles.**
- 2. Add favorite dressing or sauce.**
- 3. Top with nuts or seed for crunch. Add dried fruit for some sweetness.**