



THE POVERTY COOKBOOK FOR BEGINNERS



BY EMILY WATERS



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By Emily Waters

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Special thanks to my mom and sister for their contributions, and to my mom for editing. Thanks to my husband for taste-testing during the trial-and-error of each recipe I've created.

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About Me

I've had a passion for cooking for as long as I can remember. My mom would always let us kids help in the kitchen when she would cook. I was 12 years old when I started baking cookies for the family and after a while I moved on to cheesecakes. Then my mom offered me a chore trade; she would wash the dishes and I would cook. My dad usually cooked breakfast and for lunch we would fend for ourselves eating soup, left overs, ramen noodles, and whatever else we felt like making. So that left me with dinner. I was thrilled and started pouring over cookbooks to find the next exciting thing to make. When I moved out I got a job working at Subway and learned a lot about food prep from working there. I spent a year and a half as the head baker of that subway making cookies, bread, and the giant braided subs. Now I'm 18 and a stay-at-home mom while my husband works. I've spent this unemployed time experimenting with recipes and creating my own, with a little help with taste-testing from my son, husband, and the rest of my very supportive family.

Chapter 1: Making Cuts

Before we get into the recipes I wanted to share with you some tips for how to save money and downsize your bills.

Cable/Satellite: It's great to be able to watch all your favorite TV shows and movies, however the price isn't so great. So instead I use Netflix and Hulu Plus. \$7.99 each a month and I can watch unlimited movies and TV shows. Netflix is better for movies and multiple season TV shows. For instance I started watching Desperate Housewives last year, and with netflix I was able to watch the first 7-8 seasons whenever and as often as I wanted. And with Hulu Plus I've been able to watch the final season the day after it airs on TV. The really great thing about watching TV on the internet is you can fit it in whenever you have the time or feel like it. You can watch it on your PC monitor or hook it up to a TV screen. Also Blu-ray players, Xbox 360, Wii, and PS3 all play netflix and hulu.

Gas Heat: My heating bill was up to \$150 a month in the winter. Then my husband and I both lost our jobs. So I turned the heat down to 60 and we wore sweaters and wrapped up in blankets. The next bill I got was under \$90.

Electricity: Everyone says it, and that's because it works. turn off the lights when you leave the room. Unplug the electronics and appliances when you're not using them because they will continue to draw power. Dry laundry less or throw in dry towels to make it dry faster (usually works for me anyway). You can learn plenty of ways to bring the electric bill down by doing some internet searching.

Cell phone: Okay so obviously this isn't for everyone. For me I'm already on the most basic plan in my area. But a great thing to do is really think about what you use, or would use, a cell phone for. Do you need a contract phone or do you only use it for emergencies? Depending on your needs/wants maybe a tracfone would suit you better. My sister has a Tracfone and only uses it occasionally for emergencies or if her husband needs to call from the store if they have a great sale or something. However I'm always texting and calling my brother and husband so I have a Verizon contract family plan with my husband for unlimited mobile to mobile and 700 shared land line minutes.

Phone/Internet: Most people don't need a land line if they have a cell phone. So you should decide if you need both or just the one. However, as with my provider, most Internet plans come with free phone. I have the highest internet plan available in my area because it's so important to me and I use it all the time. But I would suggest thinking about what you use it for and how important it is to you.

Gas: Another standby for making budget cuts. Try to group everything together into one trip and make a plan. If you need to go to a few different locations look on Google maps to see the shortest route between them. Also think about the gas you're using to get from point A to point B. Would it be cheaper in the long run to just get what you need at one store? If your going 3 miles out of the way because they have a sale on something you need are you really saving money? Another thing to think about is walking or riding a bicycle.

Nutrition: Obviously you don't want to cut the nutrition you're getting. But sometimes just take the extra second to think about what you're buying. If you want a cold cereal that has good fiber, obviously brands that have 'fiber' in the name are going to jump out at you and you'll probably grab that one. But if you look at the fiber content compared to a cheaper store brand version usually there's not a big enough difference to spend the extra few dollars. Same goes with most things you buy. There's nothing shameful about buying store brand and usually it's just as good for you or better.

Pride: Never feel ashamed that you don't have the money for bigger better things. I have that problem a lot. I never want to admit that I need help or that I can't afford it. But sometimes we need to see the bigger picture that money isn't what's important in life. Growing up we were as poverty as poverty gets sometimes, but my at-the-time single mother did a wonderful job of not making us kids feel like we were poor. She found ways to go out and have fun that didn't cost money like going to the park or swimming in the lake. And we never felt ashamed that we didn't have the money to go see a lot of movies or buy a lot of video games. I got a new Dad when I was eight, and he worked hard but we still had to stretch dollars.

Chapter 2: Stocking up

(Most of the products mentioned are Great Value brand, bought at Wal-mart)

Flour: Where I live it costs around \$10 for a 25lb bag of flour. You never want to keep it in the paper bag it comes in. I got a few 5 gallon buckets from wal-mart that I washed out and dried THOROUGHLY before I moved the flour to one. (A 25 pound bag will fit nicely in a 5 gallon bucket.). Make sure the flour and the bucket sit in the same room for a couple hours to equalize the temperature before you pour the flour into the bucket. Same with other foods you put in buckets to store.

Sugar: 25 pound bag for about \$13. Again the 5 gallon bucket. Even if you don't make a lot of sweets, sugar goes in things like bread and biscuits.

Rice: I haven't had to buy a bag in so long, since I bought a 50-lb bag of it last spring, that I don't know exactly what the price is, but if you get it at a place like Costco or Sams Club it'll be cheapest. Again transfer to a 5 gallon bucket and you'll be set for a VERY long time.

Beans: If you like them buy the 1 pound bags. I'm not sure why but it works out cheapest, which is a lesson to us all to look at the price per ounce before we buy. Another great thing about buying in the pound size is that you can mix and match instead of getting a huge bag of one kind of bean.

Pasta: There are so many different sizes and shapes of noodles I know it can be intimidating to think of stocking up on them, however there's really only 4 kinds you need. Wal-mart sells 3 lb packages of spaghetti noodles and elbow noodles. I buy 2 for my kitchen, which I transfer to plastic containers, and 2 for my back-stock. Another noodle to have is egg noodles. I buy 4-6 of the medium, but it's all preference. Egg noodles are a bit more expensive but some dishes need a flat noodles, and fettuccine is so much more expensive than egg. The final noodle is ramen noodles. I buy the cases from case lot sales, but individually at wal-mart they're a good price. I never use the seasoning packets that come with them because there's too many calories and sodium for a single serving. I don't throw them away though, I use them in 13X9 inch casseroles. For a one-person meal (or even more if you use more ramen packs) it's a perfect noodle that cooks quickly and you can do anything with them.

Meat: In my wal-mart they have little cans of chicken for \$.98 each. I suggest picking up at least a dozen of those. So quick and easy for last minute meals. Also things like tuna and ham are good to have on hand. Now, for frozen meat at my Wal-mart they carry 5lb bags of boneless skinless chicken breast for about \$10 which is so much cheaper than buying them fresh, plus you can use them whenever you want. Before you start thinking about thawing times let me tell you, it's not necessary. Just throw the frozen breast in water and boil for about 20 minutes and you'll have cooked chicken you can cut into pieces and add to whatever. As for beef, I don't buy it much. It doesn't keep long and it's expensive. However when I do buy it I try to buy huge packages and can it myself to use when I need it. Or if I feel like a treat I'll buy a pound here or there to make something like meatloaf or hamburgers.

Cheese: Dairy has a bad reputation for short shelf life. But look at the expiration dates of some of the things you buy. You can get a dozen 8oz blocks of cheese and it'll keep for months! So if cheese is something you eat regularly don't be scared to stock up. Also at Wal-mart they sell huge bags of cheese for about \$8. So if, like me, you use cheddar cheese a lot it's a good idea to just buy the big bag. It's cheaper than the blocks.

Misc Dairy: I keep milk in the house all the time, but if you're lactose intolerant Wal-mart sells a good variety of non-dairy alternatives that work just like milk in most recipes. Be sure to get the plain, unflavored variety, since they come in Vanilla too. Butter has a long shelf life so I buy about 6 boxes at a time when it's on sale. The same with margarine, which I use in baking. I don't buy things like sour cream or cottage cheese unless I know I'm going to use them in a recipe that week.

Misc must haves: Baking powder, baking soda, and cornstarch are all great things to have on hand and cost less than \$1, usually. Salt is a must-have, so get the big thing of it, or two or three. It's 50 cents here. Vanilla extract and brown sugar are baking needs for about \$2 each. Oil is a tough one. I use extra virgin olive for cooking meat, pure olive for cooking vegetables, and vegetable oil for baking. It's just my personal preference but I feel like I get the best results that way. If you buy store brand it's pretty cheap. I keep one open in the kitchen and two back ups of each in the back room. Oil must be kept dark and cool or it will go rancid. Also Shortening; Wal-mart brand is the cheapest I've seen anywhere at about \$3.50 for a tub of all-vegetable.

Sauces: I suggest buying a few dozen each of the wal-mart brand jars of Alfredo sauce and pasta sauce. It's a great quick meal maker. Also cans of tomato sauce and tomato paste are standby ingredients. Whole, peeled tomatoes are great if there's a case lot sale going on. Chicken and beef stock/broth are nice to have on hand, but bouillon cubes work in most cases. Brown gravy packets, for quick easy meals.

Vegetables: For canned vegetables I wait until the case lot sale at Kroger. They have the cheapest corn, peas, and green beans. Otherwise Wal-mart brand has good prices on individual cans. Just pick up a couple dozen of each kind you like. I also suggest the mixed vegetables from Wal-mart. Soups and pot pies are so simple with these. Otherwise for potatoes I keep a couple boxes of instant mashed potatoes for last minute meals. I also buy a couple big bags of fresh potatoes; peel, slice, and home-can them. Then I can use them for mashed potatoes anytime. But of course for other things you need whole raw potatoes, so I buy a bag every now and then when I know without a doubt I'll be using them in the next week. Onions, celery, carrots, and garlic are things I keep a pretty steady supply of in my house. Those are my standby ingredients for cooking. Sometimes I dehydrate or can them if there's a good sale. Then I have them on hand all the time. Small cans of green chilies are nice to have in the cupboard for Mexican dishes or any dish you want to give a subtle boost of heat.

Spices: Onion powder, garlic powder, and celery powder are things I always have just in case I don't have the real thing. Then I can still have the flavor. Curry powder and cumin are optional but I love having them. Cinnamon is a must-have for baking. Oregano, basil, parsley, rosemary, thyme, and marjoram are essential but you can also buy mixed Italian spice, which has some of the same things. Red chili flakes are a great way to wake up any plain dish. Buying a cheap spice rack is a good idea

because. For about \$20 you get the rack and a good assortment of basic herbs and spices.

Tea: I buy both the big boxes of iced tea bags and the big Lipton tea powder. I don't drink soda because it's expensive and bad for you. But if you don't like just drinking water, tea is a great choice. Obviously with sugar and stuff it's not great, but I feel it's better than soda. So I brew tea for meals and I keep a pitcher of the powdered tea made up in the fridge.

Juice: The concentrate is cheaper than buying the bottles for apple and other basics like grape. Orange juice is cheaper that way but if you prefer the jug the small white cardboard one is cheapest at my Wal-mart. So just make sure you look at the price per ounce before you buy.

Treats: depending on where you're budget stands it's nice to have a treat now and then. Instant pudding mix, ice cream, candy, chips, pop tarts, granola bars, trail mix. Wal-mart has good prices on all that stuff, so by all means, reward yourself now and then. We don't have cheap stores like Aldi's in our area, so Wal-mart is where the bargains are.

Condiments: If you have the money now, don't wait for the bottle to run empty, because you might not have the money then. I love catsup so when the case lot sales are going on at the store I pick up a case of it. One case will last a long time. If it's something you don't use often enough to eat it before it goes bad just pick up a few if you see a good price when you're out shopping. I try to keep 3-4 on hand of each thing I don't use as often, like mayo, mustard, ranch, salsa (okay not a condiment but its in the same aisle usually), and honey mustard.

Chapter 3: Kitchen Must Haves

If you're new to home cooking you might feel overwhelmed looking at the kitchen aisle at the store, so I've put together a list of things I feel are important.

Disclaimer: I realize there's a lot of things listed here, and that's not really 'poverty' but it's taken me 3 years of building to get all this. So don't feel like you have to get it all at once. And I never buy anything that isn't the absolute cheapest. When I go shopping with my budget I end up checking out with all store brand items. The fastest way to start building is every month when you go shopping pick up 1 more product. Read about them and what they do and decide what is the most important for what you're going to make soonest.

Two sets of measuring cups: 1/4 to 1 cup, usually come in a pack with a plastic ring connecting them (I take off the ring for my sets). I say two because if you don't end up washing them before you need them again it can be a real pain to use the 1/3 cup over and over to get, say, 4 cups of something.

Two sets of measuring spoons: 1/4 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon usually come the same way as cups. And two again, for the same reason. I took off the clip for one set that I use for wet ingredients so I can wash them separately. I kept the other one together and I use it for dry ingredients. A lot of the dishes I make have several teaspoon amounts of seasonings and salt which don't leave a residue that requires washing. I keep them together because most recipes have a 1/2 teaspoon of this and a 1/4 of that and 1 teaspoon of something else.

Two whisks: Whisks are, in my opinion, one of the greatest inventions in kitchen utensils. I use them at one point or another in almost everything I make. I suggest two because they're used to often in my recipes, but if you don't mind a lot of washing just get one.

Wooden spoons: Wal-mart (and probably other places) sell them in a pack of 4. I only have 1 pack but I've considered buying more because I use them so much that I'm always having to wash one at the last minute. I like the wooden ones on the stove because I don't have to worry about it melting in my food like my plastic ones. They also don't scratch non-stick surfaces in my pans.

Plastic spoons: These are sold at wal-mart (again probably other places) in a pack of 4. I use these for mixing off the stove. Things like cookies and biscuits or anything else that requires mixing in a bowl.

Can opener: Obviously can openers are a no-brainer, but I think that's the problem. It's such a simple thing I feel it's overlooked. And I don't mean a fancy expensive electric one. I'm talking about a manual one.

The basics: Usually come in a pack like the spoons. 1 serving spoon, 1 slotted spoon, 1 fryer scoop, 1 spatula. Others probably have other things but that's what mine came with. I actually got mine on sale at shopko but I know wal-mart has them. Regardless of whether you find a pack with those in it, you need the two spoons and the spatula. I usually just use the fryer scoop as another slotted spoon. But there are a few things I fry occasionally.

Rubber scrapers: They probably have another name but that's what I've always called them. I don't remember where I got mine but it was probably wal-mart. Mine came in a 2-pack of a rounded one and a flat-edged one. Whether you get them in a pack or separate make sure you can easily bend the rubber part (actually I don't think they make them out of rubber, at least not anymore). I've gotten some before that were hard plastic, which doesn't work and kind of defeats the point. You want these because you never want to waste (plus it cuts down on clogged drains). Use these to scrape out as much as you can when transferring from one dish to another.

Tongs: Wonderful inventions for meat handling. I got mine from wal-mart in a 2-pack of a longer one and shorter one. I honestly would only buy 1 if it's cheaper. I don't ever use both before I wash dishes.

Large glass measuring cups: Or plastic, I guess, but I'm always paranoid about hot liquids in plastic. Either way I get a 2-cup and a 1-cup. When you need to measure 2 cups of milk that you need to whisk into something, it's easier to have it all right there in one big measuring cup, instead of refilling a smaller one. And really, who wants more dishes? This also helps for, say, 1 1/2 cups. 1 dish and you're done. You could just get the 2-cup one but I like having the 1-cup one for yeast baking.

Skillet set: I got mine as a present from my mom so I don't know how much or where but most places have them (including wal-mart). They come with the flat square skillet, the large round skillet, and the small round skillet. Use the flat one for pancakes and whole cuts of meat (like chicken breast, steak, pork chops, or even hamburgers). The large one (more like medium) I use for everything else that requires a skillet. And the small one I use for, obviously, small things. Things I'd feel resentful washing the big one for.

Pan set: I got this at wal-mart for about \$18 where I live. It comes with a tall large pot with two handles on either side, a large tall-edged skillet, a medium sauce pan, and a small sauce pan. It also comes with a large lid that fits the first 2 pans (and ironically my large skillet from the other set) and a lid for each the two sauce pans.

Mixing bowls: I have a set of Anchor brand glass bowls I got as a present and a set of plastic (wal-mart brand) that came with lids for each size. I use both just as much. Sometimes I use the plastic ones (with the lids) to store things like cookies or marinating meat. I don't think it really matters too much which you use so if you don't want to spend extra on glass, then by all means get plastic.

Pastry blender: Not really a 'must have' but I sure love mine. Another present, but I know wal-mart type stores sell them. Basically its a sideways solid whisk you use to make pastries. Things like biscuits and pie crust need you to 'cut' in the shortening or butter, you can do this with a fork but a pastry blender is so much faster and easier. (and there's no bashing your knuckles on the edge of the bowl trying to find that one good angle for the fork to work...)

Potato masher: I think mine came in a set somewhere along the line. Mine sucks so I wouldn't suggest it anyway. Mine is a round one with tiny holes that virtually no potatoes go through. Get the old fashioned metal one if you can swing it. Otherwise just make sure it's got big enough holes to do what it's supposed to do.

Electric mixer: Not a 'must have' but it sure is nice to not have to whisk for a very long time. And it sometimes is pretty essential for a smooth mixture.

Cheese grater: Self explanatory. You can also shred potatoes for hash browns.

Rolling pin: Use this when rolling out dough such as pie crust, classic sugar cookies, biscuits, anything that needs to be rolled out flat. Also works as a meat tenderizer in a pinch.

Garlic press: Definitely not a necessity but it is nice to have if you have the money. Otherwise you can just chop the garlic into really tiny pieces.

Scale: Again not a necessity but it's nice to have. especially if you buy the block cheese and shred it yourself. I don't even shred the block cheese. I just cut chunks off until I have the oz I'm looking for, then I cut it into smaller pieces so it's easy to melt. The scales can be found in either the kitchen aisle or the aisle where they have shipping supplies and envelopes. Look in both places to find the best deal.

Vegetable peeler: I've always called them potato peelers because that's all I ever use mine for, but I'm pretty sure they're actually called 'vegetable' peelers. You can make mashed potatoes with the skins on but it's nice to have peel-less potatoes now and then. That and I think there's recipes that really do call for no skins.

Knife set: Nothing fancy, just the cheapest one they carry. I'm pretty sure I got mine at Target so I don't know what the prices and selections are like at wal-mart, but the kitchen aid brand one I own was only about \$20 for 5 steak knives 3 big long ones, 2 small ones, and 1 small bread knife type knife. It also came with a pair of good kitchen scissors and a knife sharpener.

Dishes: I don't think I need to tell you this but make sure you have plates, bowls, and cups. I got my 16 piece (8 16oz and 8 8oz) cup set at Shopko on sale, but I also got my brother the same cup set at Target for close to the same price, not on sale. My plates and bowls came from my grandma, however I've been watching prices for a new set of my own and wal-mart has the best prices in my area.

French press: For those of you who don't know, a french press is a non-electric coffee maker. It's a glass jar of sorts (holds 8 cups usually) that you put the coffee grounds in, then you cover with hot water and put the lid on and let it steep like tea. Then you use the plunger part in the lib to press the coffee grounds to the bottom and out of the coffee. I feel like you get more coffee for your money because water isn't dripping over it and just picking up a little flavor, the coffee is in the water for a few minutes and the water really absorbs the flavor so you can use less coffee grounds per 'pot'.

Tea kettle: Speaking of using hot water. A tea kettle is a must have for sure. You can use it for your coffee in the french press, and tea if you like it. But you can also use it for meals to speed things up. if you need to bring water to a boil then add noodles it's more efficient to first heat the water in the kettle and then pour it into the pan and use that same burner to finish the dish. Since the tea kettle is enclosed it will heat faster. I think I got mine at Target.

Chapter 4: Substitutions By Barbara

To make 1 tsp baking powder: use 1/4 teaspoon baking soda plus 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar.

For 1 cup buttermilk: 1 tablespoon lemon juice or vinegar and 3/4 cup, 3 tablespoons of milk.

1 cup half and half: is 1 tablespoon of butter and 3/4 cup, 3 tablespoons milk.

1 cup heavy cream: is 3/4 cup milk and 1/3 cup butter.

1 cup light cream: is 3/4 cup milk and 3 tablespoons of butter.

1 cup evaporated: milk is 1 cup of light cream.

1 cup sour cream: is 1 tablespoon lemon juice vinegar and 3/4 cup, 3 tablespoons of light cream.

14oz of sweetened condensed milk: is 3/4 cup white sugar, 1/2 cup water, and 1 1/8 cups dry powdered milk: Bring to a boil and cook, stirring frequently, until thickened, about 20 minutes.

Or 1 cup of evaporated milk, and 1 1/4 cups of sugar, heat and stir until the sugar is completely dissolved, and let cool.

Chapter 5: Methods

Rice

1 cup rice
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon salt
3 cups water

Combine the rice, oil, and salt then add the water and stir once. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Let the pan just sit there undisturbed until the rice absorbs all the water. You can tell because the top will be somewhat dry looking and there will be small holes where bubbles came up while it was boiling. These should be visible on the top.

This is obviously for those of you who don't already know how to make rice, or just haven't perfected it yet.

Noodles

2 cups noodles
½ teaspoon salt

Fill the pan 2/3 full with water, cover, and bring to a boil. Sprinkle in salt, then noodles. Stir occasionally to keep noodles from sticking together. Cooking times will vary depending on the noodle and how the heat and lid are. I usually start with the lid on to bring it back to a boil but then the starch will build up in the bubbles and it'll overflow. So at some point I turn it down and/or leave the lid crooked so that it has an air hole but it's still keeping in a lot of the heat.

You'll know their done by fishing one out with whatever (non-meltable) utensil you're using, and tasting it. Wait a few seconds after it comes out of the pan, then bite into it. You'll know.

Once the noodles are done strain them and return to pan.

Homemade Noodles

1 cup flour

1 egg

1 pinch salt

water as needed

Mix together flour, egg, and salt. If needed add a few drops of water until the dough comes together. Leave in sheets for lasagna or cut in strips for soup or casserole.

If you're using them for soup just dump them in and let them cook there. For casserole cook ahead of time by boiling until noodles start to float.

White Sauce (Bechamel)

The first thing I decide when I go to make dinner is whether I want white sauce or tomato based. After that I decide between noodles, rice, and dough.

White sauce recipes are made with a roux (pronounced rue). When making these dishes you have a bit of wiggle room for adding things. If you have vegetables such as half an onion in the fridge and you need to eat up, then chop it up and add it with the butter and wait to add the flour until the vegetable is tender.

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons flour

1 cup milk

This is the basic ratio of the roux ingredients. To make it: Melt butter then add flour. Mix together thoroughly until a paste forms. Then pour in the milk slowly while constantly whisking. Once all the milk is in the pan you don't have to whisk so religiously. Take a few seconds to add any seasonings then resume whisking frequently. The roux is done when it thickens and bubbles. Remove from heat once done because it won't get any thicker, it'll only burn the bottom.

Potatoes

Potatoes are usually cooked in the same way no matter what you're making with them.

Wash, peel, and chop potatoes into desired shape and size. Place in pan and fill with water to just cover the potatoes. Sprinkle with a little salt then cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and let boil for 15-20 minutes or until tender. To test if the potatoes are tender simply fish one out with a fork or other utensil and wait for it to cool enough to eat. You're the judge.

Once potatoes are cooked, drain and return to pan.

Chicken

There are many ways to cook chicken depending on what you have on hand. Either way you cook it, chicken is a meat you NEED to cook completely (temperature of 165) before serving. Without a meat thermometer you can test the chicken by cutting it in the thickest part. If the meat is white then it should be done, if it's pink and overly juicy then give it a little more time.

If you're making a soup or casserole you can also simply open a can of chicken chunks and add it to the dish instead of cooking fresh. This saves time and, usually, money.

Frozen

If you have frozen chicken breasts you can either thaw them by placing the chicken in a bowl and setting it under a dripping faucet with cold water. Or you could place them in a crock-pot or slow cooker with a little water and let them cook in the steam for quite a while until the chicken is so juicy and tender it just falls apart. Or if you're in a hurry and you're not a critic you could throw the chicken in a pot and bring it to a boil and let it boil until the chicken is cooked, then cut it into pieces.

Thawed

If you have thawed chicken, then the slow cooker or pot of boiling water will work just fine for cooking the meat for a casserole, but the fastest way is to cut the raw meat into small cubes then place them in a hot oiled pan, stirring occasionally to brown all sides.

If you want whole breast patties then I suggest placing the raw meat in an open zip lock bag and pounding it into a uniform thickness with either a meat tenderizer or a rolling pin. Then you can place meat in a hot oiled pan and let it cook for a few minutes before flipping. Or you could bake it in the oven, either breaded or just after searing it in the pan.

Whole

If you have whole chicken then I would suggest carving off the breasts and using them in a separate meal such as oven baked chicken. Then for a separate meal put the rest of the chicken in a slow cooker or large kettle with a little water and let it steam/cook until it falls off the bone, then use it for soup or casserole.

Beef

Beef isn't something you need to be too careful about under cooking unless the person eating it is pregnant. In which case cut the meat open to check that none of the meat is pink.

Ground

You can brown thawed or frozen ground beef. For thawed beef all you need to do is place it in the pan, maybe break it up with your fingers as you put it in the pan, then stir it around with a wooden spoon to break it up as it cooks. Once it's all brown, it's done.

For frozen, it's best to put a splash of water in the pan as well. You need either two forks or a fork and a wooden spoon. Let the frozen meat sit for half minute then flip it with you're utensils. Use a fork to hold onto the beef and the other utensil to scrape the brown meat off the surface. Then flip and repeat until there's just a tiny, easily breakable, bit left. At which point simply use your wooden spoon to break up the last bit. Once all the ground beef is brown it's done.

Either way you cook it use a paper towel held with tongs to wipe out the grease.

Steak Cuts

For steaks, marinade is optional but suggested. If you don't marinade, then a dry rub is a quick alternative. Whether you marinade or rub, place steaks in a hot oiled skillet. Leave until sides start to brown then flip and cook for about half the time it took for the other side.

You can buy cubed beef but it's sometimes cheaper and easier to simply buy steak cuts and cut them into cubes yourself. Once cubed simply place them in a hot oiled pan and stir occasionally to brown all sides.

Pork

Pork is somewhat in the middle of chicken and beef. It needs to be cooked through to avoid getting sick, but the temperature varies. Depending who you ask you'll hear anywhere between 145-185 but the main thing is that it is no longer red inside. A small bit of pink in the middle is fine, but you want it cooked through.

Pork Chops

By 'pork chops' I mean steak-like pork. They come in varying shapes and sizes. You can buy thin and small, or thick and large, and everything in between. Like chicken, they can be cooked in the oven, or like beef, cooked in the pan.

Ham cuts

Pieces like the shoulder are great thrown in a slow cooker/large kettle and steamed/simmered until it's moist and falling apart. Larger cuts like half hams and whole hams are usually done in the oven with a rub or glaze.

Vegetables

Canned

We all need to eat vegetables but obviously fresh is expensive. So we buy canned vegetables. Now of course the easiest way to eat them is to just open the can, throw it in a small pan and heat it up. Or even a bowl in the microwave. But if you just want something a little different here's a few ideas you can use with all canned vegetables.

Open, drain, and pour into small saucepan. Add 1 teaspoon of oil or butter and a pinch of salt and pepper. Stir and heat on medium.

1/4 cup onion chopped into really small pieces and 1 clove of minced garlic. Saute both in small pan with 1 teaspoon of oil or butter. When onion is tender add drained vegetable and a pinch of salt and pepper. Stir and heat on medium.

Mix it up. Don't have the same vegetable too often. And maybe don't have a canned vegetable with a meal here or there. If the meal you're making already has vegetables in it then it's not as important to serve one on the side.

Open a can of yams, drain, and pour into baking dish. Sprinkle with brown sugar and mini marshmallows. Bake in preheated 350 oven until marshmallow browns.

Fresh

There's no shortage of ways to prepare fresh vegetables.

Wilt spinach by piling a whole bunch of it in a large pot or saucepan with a little water in the bottom. Cover and heat on medium, stirring occasionally. Add wilted spinach to a casserole.

Pretty much any dish is better with vegetables in it. Just cut whichever vegetables you chose into small pieces and add them. Good casserole vegetables are:

- onion
- garlic
- celery
- broccoli
- spinach
- green and red peppers
- hot chili peppers
- carrots

Most of the recipes I've written have a mix of some of those when I make them. As for picky eaters: When my brother was young he wouldn't eat anything green, so my mom would put things like broccoli in the blender. He never noticed and ate the casserole happily. If it's an actual allergy though avoid it or make a portion without it if the rest of the family likes it.

Saute

To saute you first cut the vegetable(s) into roughly the same sized pieces. Then place a skillet on the burner and add some butter or oil. Wait until the pan is hot then add the vegetable(s) and stir the pieces around the pan a bit to cover them in the oil or butter completely. Sauteing can take several minutes so just continue to stir occasionally until done.

Onions will usually become translucent when cooked but other vegetables can be harder to tell. Simply try to break one of the vegetable pieces with the wooden spoon. If the vegetable breaks easily then they're done. If not then give them a few more minutes and try again with another piece.

Marinade

salt
pepper
garlic powder
onion powder
Webber Kick'N Chicken
1 teaspoon oil
1 teaspoon vinegar
water

Measure about a 1/2 teaspoon of each of the spices into a mixing bowl. Stir in the oil and vinegar then, one by one, place the meat in the bowl and rubbing the spices on the meat. Once each piece of meat has had a turn in the spice bowl place them all back in the bowl then add water enough to just cover. Stir the meat around slightly then let sit for 20-45 minutes. Works great for 2-4 pieces of chicken, pork, or beef.

Dry Rub

salt

pepper

garlic powder

onion powder

Webber Kick'N Chicken

Mix together equal amounts of the seasonings in a small bowl. Take a little in your finger tips or sprinkle a little on the meat. Use your finger tips to massage and rub the seasonings into the meat. Flip and do the same with the other side. This works well for chicken, beef, and pork.

Spices

Sometimes just adding the spices aren't enough to give you the full flavor potential of the herb, especially if you're using fresh. If you want to give it a boost then try crushing or bruising the herb. When you crush it you're basically cutting it violently. You can shred it with your fingers, put it in a blender, a coffee bean grinder, a mortar and pestle, or simply place it between two hard objects and smash it. This works to break the plant fiber and release oils and other flavor/aromatic properties. As for seeds (such as coriander, fennel, black pepper) crushing is pretty much the only option.

To bruise the herb you're doing basically the same thing, just don't break it. If you abuse a plant it turns slightly darker in the hurt areas. This also releases the oils and flavor/aromatic properties, but it's mostly just helpful for fresh herbs.

Chapter 6: Meat

Moms Meat Pot Pie

pie crust dough

2 cups chopped or shredded meat

2 cups mixed vegetables (canned, fresh, or frozen in any assortment)

1 can cream of soup (chicken or celery if using chicken meat, mushroom for beef or similar)

salt, pepper, and seasoning salt to taste

Make a standard pie crust.

In a separate bowl stir together meat, vegetables, cream soup, and seasonings. Mix well, then pour in pie crust. Put a few pats of butter around on top of the filling, then place top crust on pie. Crimp edges, cut air holes, and bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 45 minutes to an hour. Allow to cool 15 minutes before cutting pie.

Chicken Noodle Soup

2 thawed chicken breasts
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped carrots
2 cloves garlic, minced
salt and pepper to taste
2 cups uncooked egg noodles

1/4 cup milk
2 tablespoons cornstarch

This recipe is best done with a slow cooker but you can use a large kettle instead.

Place chicken, vegetables, and seasoning in cooker/kettle and fill 1/2 to 2/3 full of water. Cover and bring to a boil then reduce to a simmer and let set. When meat is cooked to the point of falling apart raise heat back to a boil and add noodles. Once noodles are tender you're pretty much done. If you feel like it's too thin then mix together milk and cornstarch in a small bowl and whisk into cooker/kettle.

Chicken Fingers

2 thawed chicken breasts
1/4 cup flour
1 egg
1/2 cup bread crumbs
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon parsley
1/2 teaspoon salt

Place flour in a small bowl, egg in another and beat, and breadcrumbs in another. Stir seasonings into bread crumbs and let the bowls sit.

Place one chicken breast in plastic zip lock bag and don't seal it. Pound chicken to uniform thickness then do the same to the other. Cut into 1 inch strips and dip in flour, then egg, then bread crumb/seasoning mix. Place on greased baking sheet and bake in preheated 350 oven until 165 degrees (meat thermometer) or cuts white in center.

Chicken Parmesan

2 breaded chicken patties
2 cups uncooked noodles
1 jar Alfredo sauce
¼-½ cup pasta sauce
¼ cup Parmesan
¼ cup onions
1-2 cloves garlic
¼ cup green peppers

Breaded chicken patties can be store-bought for the fastest preparation. If you'd prefer completely homemade, then pound thawed chicken breast into a uniform thickness. Prepare a bowl with flour, a bowl with beaten egg, and a bowl with breadcrumbs. Dip the chicken breast in the bowls in that order then either bake in oven or in a hot oiled pan.

If you use store bought simply follow the oven instructions.

Cook noodles, drain, and return to pan. Add Alfredo sauce in small amounts until desired creaminess.

Saute vegetables in a little butter or oil then add pasta sauce and bring to a simmer.

Dish noodles onto plate, place chicken breast on noodles, and top with pasta sauce.

Moms Chicken and Dumplings

2 cups chicken (You can use canned chunk chicken, cooked chicken breast, or cook and de-bone a whole chicken)

2 cups mixed vegetables (can be any assortment you want)

1 can chicken broth

1 can cream of chicken soup

salt, pepper, and seasoning salt to taste

biscuit dough

Throw chicken chunks in a kettle and add vegetables. This can be fresh, canned, or frozen mixed vegetables. Or you can add just your favorites, such as peas and carrots. A chopped onion and celery go well in this too.

Add chicken broth and cream of chicken soup, and a little milk if you want. Sprinkle in seasonings to taste, and stir. Bring to a boil.

Mix up biscuits, a little on the dry side, and scoop small blobs of them into the chicken mixture, then dump the bits of dough and flour from the bottom of the bowl into the kettle.

Cover and cook on low heat for 10 minutes, then uncover for another 10 minutes. Gently stir the dumplings down into the broth. Remove from heat and let sit 10 minutes to cool.

Variation: you can make the soup part from scratch by using the broth from cooking a whole chicken and adding flour to make it into a gravy. This can replace the can of cream of chicken soup.

Moms Chicken Stir Fry

2 tablespoons oil
1-2 thawed chicken breast cut into small pieces
1/2 medium onion
2 celery sticks chopped small
1-2 cloves garlic
1/2 cup mini corn (usually found in the Asian aisle)
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 cup uncooked rice
3 cups water
salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup soy sauce
1 tablespoon cornstarch

Cook chicken, vegetables, and ginger in oil in large pan. Stir in rice and let cook 1-2 minutes then add water and seasonings and stir. Cover and bring to boil then reduce heat to low.

When rice has absorbed most of the water, mix together soy sauce and cornstarch in small bowl and stir into rice. Cover and let sit until rice is tender.

Quick Meat Loaf

1 lb ground beef
1/2 box of stuffing mix
1 egg
1/4 cup ketchup
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

Glaze

1/4 cup ketchup
2 spoonfuls brown sugar
1 teaspoon dry mustard

Mix everything together in a bowl then scoop mixture into loaf pan. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 45 minutes. Mix together glaze and spread over meat loaf. Return to oven for 10 minutes.

Italian Inspired Pork Chops

Pork chops

Pasta sauce

shredded mozzarella cheese

Prepare pork chops by cutting off extra fat. Place on greased baking sheet and spoon over pasta sauce and cover with cheese.

Cover loosely with foil and bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 35 minutes or to desired temperature.

BBQ Pulled Pork

Slow-cook a large piece of pork shoulder or any other cut you want to use. Cut pork into fist sized pieces and place in slow cooker with a can of chicken broth, salt, and pepper.

Cover and slow cook for 8-10 hours depending on size of pork. You can find exact times online or just go by feel. Once done remove from slow cooker and let cool until you can touch it easily.

Shred and shred and shred some more until the whole thing is beautiful pulled pork. Drain chicken broth from slow cooker and place pulled pork in slow cooker. Add BBQ sauce to preference and stir well. Slow cook for another hour.

Cranberry Stuffed Pork Chops

2 regular sized pork chops
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/4 teaspoon rosemary
1/4 teaspoon crushed mint
1/4 teaspoon parsley
1/3 cup bread crumbs
1 egg
hot chili oil
1/4 teaspoon lemon juice
1/4 cup dried cranberries

Measure seasonings into bowl and add bread crumbs, egg, and lemon juice. Take a regular sized spoon and dip it into the hot chili oil jar, stir the oil to get flakes to the surface then pull spoon out straight. Use that spoon with whatever oil and flakes are on it to stir mixture. Measure out cranberries and rough chop with knife, then stir into mixture and set aside.

Place each pork chop in an open zip lock bag one at a time. Use a meat tenderizer or rolling pin to pound the meat until it's a uniform half inch. Set each pork piece aside once done and cut off any excess fat. Lay meat flat and spread half of the stuffing mixture over meat except one inch or so on one side. Roll meat toward that end and fold over, placing seam on bottom.

Secure with cooking twine or tooth pick if needed. Place pork rolls in hot oiled pan and brown, rotating occasionally to cook all sides.

Place meat rolls in baking pan, cover loosely with foil, and bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 35 minutes or until meat is cooked through. Top with brown sugar glaze if desired.

Chapter 7: Vegetables

Mashed Potatoes

8 medium-sized russet potatoes
water to cover
1/2 teaspoon salt
2-4 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup milk
Optional: 1/4 cup cream cheese

Wash, peel, and chop potatoes into same sized pieces and place in large pan, cover with water. Cover with lid and bring to a boil, reduce heat and let boil for 15-20 minutes depending on the size of potatoes.

When potatoes are tender turn off heat and drain. Return to pan and add the rest of the ingredients. Mash and test for flavor, adding more to preference. Makes 4-6 good-sized portions. When making mashed potatoes I figure 2 medium potatoes per adult. If more or less people are eating adjust amounts.

Potato Soup

12 medium russet potatoes
water
milk
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup chopped carrots
2 cloves garlic, minced
salt and pepper to taste

Wash, peel, and chop potatoes then place in large pan and fill halfway with water. Pour in milk till just barely covering potatoes then add butter and flour. Stir, cover, and bring to boil.

Chop vegetables and add with seasonings once potatoes boil. Stir and reduce heat to medium low. Let boil 25 minutes then turn off heat. Roughly mash potatoes leaving some in chunks.

Potato Salad

3 medium potatoes
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon vinegar
1/2 cup chopped celery
1/3 cup chopped onion
1/2 teaspoon cayenne
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon paprika
3/4 cup mayo
1/4 cup mustard
2 chopped hard boiled eggs

Wash, and peel potatoes. Boil whole in salted water for 25 minutes. Drain well and cut into 1/2-1 inch pieces depending on preference. In mixing bowl combine potatoes and all other ingredients. Mix thoroughly but carefully not to mash potatoes.

Vegetable Stir Fry

1 cup uncooked rice
1/2 tablespoon oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 cups water
1/2 cup onion
1/2 cup green pepper
1/2 cup broccoli
1/2 cup carrot
1-2 cloves garlic
1/2 cup celery
2 tablespoons butter or oil
sweet and sour sauce

Cook rice then set aside.

Chop and saute vegetables in skillet with butter or oil till tender. Add sweet and sour sauce then stir into rice or spoon over rice after plated.

Quiche

6 eggs
2 tablespoons milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
4 strips of bacon
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup chopped green peppers
1/4 cup chopped broccoli
cheddar cheese

Beat together eggs, milk, and seasonings in mixing bowl.

Cut bacon into small pieces and cook in skillet, remove to paper towel.

Saute vegetables in bacon grease till tender and remove to paper towel.

Pour egg mixture into baking dish. Sprinkle with bacon, vegetables, and cheese. Bake in preheated 350degree oven until toothpick comes out clean.

Moms Beans and Dumplings

Pinto Beans (1 cup dried yields 3 cups cooked)

water

salt

pepper

seasoning salt

biscuit dough

If using dried, then cook pinto beans in water until they're soft and mushy, making sure the water level ends up just even with the top of the beans when done cooking. If using canned then just dump into pan and heat. Don't drain.

Add seasonings to taste. Lower the heat to about a simmer.

Mix up biscuits, cutting the liquid just a bit, and leaving the dough somewhat crumbly and floury.

Scoop small blobs of dough into the kettle and stir into the beans. Pour the remaining crumbs and flour into the kettle and stir. This will help to thicken the sauce.

Cover the pan for the first 10 minutes, then remove lid. It'll take about another 10 minutes to cook them all the way through. Remove from heat and let sit another 10 minutes to cool and thicken.

Chapter 8: Fruits

Fruits are overlooked but important. If you buy a case or two of different canned fruits at case lot sales, you can open one with dinner each day and get some in you even if it's not a lot. Buy fresh and make pies, that's something everyone will eat. Get berries and put them in pancakes. If you're eating out try to get something fruit instead of fries or something else deep fried.

There's a lot of ways to sneak in fruits without spending too much.

Moms Fruit Salad

Fruit salad is great because it gives you a lot of options. You can put in as much or as little of whatever you want to, or none at all of some things. A list of things you can add:

Fruits:

- apples
- bananas
- strawberries
- oranges
- canned pineapple

Extras:

- shredded coconut
- raisins
- soft nuts

Base:

- whipped cream OR mayo
- fruit juice

Cut the fruits into equal sized pieces and add the same amount of each or if you like one a lot add more of it. If you want more flavors add some of the extras. And then add the base, which is going to make it creamy and mix the flavors together. Again, as much or as little as you want. If you do add a juice don't add too much and only add it if you add the whipped cream or mayo, otherwise it'll be a soup.

Moms Jello Salad

Okay we all know jello isn't really a fruit even though it's fruit flavored. But it's a great carrier for fruits. Start the jello as usual with the hot water and the jello powder. but for the cold water here's a few suggestions:

- orange juice
- apple juice
- grape juice
- pineapple juice
- cranberry juice

Any juice will work just as well but try to get ones that are 100% juice and don't have a whole lot of sugar. Decide depending on what kind of jello you're making. Then while jello is still liquid add canned or fresh cut fruit.

- canned pears
- canned peaches
- canned mandarin oranges
- canned fruit cocktail
- canned pineapple
- fresh apples
- fresh strawberries
- fresh oranges
- fresh bananas

You can add one or a mix of any of those or another fruit not mentioned. There's no specific amount. Just whatever you want. Another yummy thing to do is cover the top with mini marshmallows. After jello is firm and ready to serve add whipped cream and/or cottage cheese. No amount there either. Just add a bit and stir it in, if you feel it needs more then add more.

Moms Pie Filling

4 cups chopped fruit, drained if necessary (can be fresh, canned, or frozen fruit)

1/2 cup sugar

1/4 cup flour

1/2 tsp. cinnamon, if appropriate to the fruit being used (such as apple)

Butter (a few dabs of butter on top of the filling before you put the top crust on the pie.

Stir sugar and flour (and cinnamon if used) into the fruit, then place in pie shell. Add dabs of butter then place top crust over filling and cut air holes.

Most fruit pies take 30 to 45 minutes to bake in a preheated 375 degree oven. Check it often after half an hour and remove it from oven when the crust is the shade of brown that you like.

Chapter 9: White Sauce Recipes

Macaroni and Cheese

2 cups uncooked elbow noodles

4 tablespoons butter

4 tablespoons flour

2 cups milk

salt and pepper to taste

Optional red chili flakes, garlic powder, onion powder

2 cups (8 oz by weight) shredded cheddar cheese

(optional)

2 tablespoons butter

1/2 teaspoon paprika

1/4-1/2 cup crushed saltine crackers

Cook noodles then set aside.

In same saucepan make a roux with the butter/flour/milk then add seasonings and shredded cheese. Add elbow noodles and transfer to chosen baking dish.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 20-25 minutes.

Optional: melt butter in small skillet or saucepan. Add paprika and crushed crackers. stir till browned. Sprinkle over macaroni before baking.

Cheesy Chicken and Rice

1 cup uncooked rice
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon salt
3 cups water
1 cup chopped/shredded chicken
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
Salt and pepper to taste
Optional: garlic and onion powder
1 cup (4 oz by weight) shredded cheddar cheese

Cook rice and set aside.

Prepare chicken in whichever method you choose just so long as you have chopped or shredded chicken in the end.

Make a roux then add seasonings and shredded cheese. Add chicken and cooked rice then stir till combined.

Pour into chosen baking dish and bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 20-25 minutes.

Scalloped Potatoes

4 cups sliced potatoes
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
salt and pepper to taste
optional garlic and onion powder
1/2 cup chopped onion

Cook potatoes until somewhat under done but don't drain.

Make a roux with the butter/flour/milk then add seasonings.

Place chopped onion in chosen baking dish, scoop potatoes out of water with slotted spoon and place on top of onions. Pour sauce over potatoes and stir gently. Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 25-30 minutes.

Tuna Casserole

2 cups uncooked egg noodles
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
salt and pepper to taste
optional garlic and onion powder
1 can tuna

(optional)

2 tablespoon butter
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/4 cup crushed saltine crackers

Cook noodles, drain, and let sit.

Make a roux with the butter/flour/milk and add seasonings and can of tuna (not drained) then whisk till combined. Add noodles and stir.

Pour into chosen baking dish then bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 20-25 minutes.

Optional: Melt butter, add paprika and crushed crackers. heat till browned and sprinkle over casserole before baking.

Chicken and Rice

1 cup uncooked rice
1 tablespoon oil
1 teaspoon salt
3 cups water
2 cups chopped/shredded chicken
1 1/2 cup chicken broth
4 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup chopped celery
1 medium onion, chopped
4 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
1 can green chilies
salt and pepper to taste
Optional garlic powder and red chili flakes

Cook rice then set aside.

Prepare/cook chicken in whichever method you want, just make sure you end up with chopped or shredded chicken.

Melt butter then saute celery and onions till tender. Add flour and mix to form paste then whisk in milk.

Mix in broth, seasonings, and green chili then continue whisking until thick and bubbly.

Add chicken and rice, stir until combined, then transfer to chosen baking dish.

Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 30 minutes.

Macaroni Casserole

1 cup chopped/shredded chicken
2 cups uncooked elbow noodles
1 can whole kernel corn
4 tablespoons butter
4 tablespoons flour
2 cups milk
1 chicken flavor packet from ramen noodles
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder

Cook noodles, drain, then set aside.

Prepare/cook chicken in whichever method you want, just make sure you end up with chopped or shredded chicken.

Open can of corn, drain, and pour into chosen baking dish.

Make a roux with the butter/flour/milk then add seasonings.

Mix together noodles, sauce, and chicken then pour over corn.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 20-25 minutes.

Chicken Enchiladas

1 cup chopped/shredded chicken
½ cup uncooked rice
½ tablespoon oil
½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ cups water
1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon flour
½ cup milk
1 small can green chili enchilada sauce
1 can green chilies
¼ cup onions
salt and pepper to taste
Optional garlic powder
8 fresh tortillas
¼-½ cup cheddar cheese

Prepare/cook chicken in whichever way you want, just make sure you end up with chopped or shredded chicken.

Cook rice and set aside.

Make a roux using the butter/flour/milk. Add half the can of enchilada sauce, green chilies, and onions. Add chicken and seasonings then pour into rice and mix.

Divide into 8 portions and fill tortillas. Roll filled tortilla and place in greased 13X9 baking dish. Drizzle with remaining enchilada sauce over tortilla rolls and sprinkle with cheese.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 15-20 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Bean and Cheese Dip

1 can refried beans
1/4-1/2 cup salsa
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
1 cup (4oz) cheddar cheese
salt, pepper, garlic powder, and onion powder to taste
more cheese

Make a roux using the butter/flour/milk then add cheese and seasonings.

In another pan heat refried beans and salsa together until hot.

Spread beans over baking sheet and pour over cheese sauce, sprinkle with more cheese if desired.

Bake in preheated 350degree oven for 15- 20 minutes. Use with tortilla chips.

Stuffing Casserole

1-2 cups chopped/shredded chicken
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup milk
salt and pepper to taste
1 can corn or green beans
1 box stuffing mix
1 1/2 cup water
4 tablespoons butter

Prepare/cook chicken in whichever way you want, just make sure you have chopped or shredded chicken in the end.

Make a roux using the butter/flour/milk then add seasonings.

Prepare stuffing according to box instructions (melt butter in water, remove from heat, stir in stuffing mix, cover and let sit 5 minutes).

Open can of vegetable, drain, and pour into chosen baking dish. Add chicken on top of vegetable. Pour in sauce then scoop stuffing over sauce.

Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 15-20 minutes.

Chapter 10: Tomato Based Recipes

Baked Spaghetti

8 oz by weight uncooked spaghetti noodles
½ lb ground beef
1 ½-2 cups spaghetti sauce
1 cup sour cream
1 egg
2 cups mozzarella cheese
¼ cup Parmesan
½ teaspoon salt

Cook noodles, drain, and let sit.

Brown beef in medium skillet and add spaghetti sauce. Bring to simmer, cover, and reduce heat to low.

In a medium to large bowl mix together sour cream, egg, Parmesan, 1 ½ cups mozzarella cheese, and salt. Dump noodles into mixing bowl and mix quickly so you don't scramble the egg.

Move mixture to chosen baking dish and pat into a pie type shape, with the center being hallowed a bit and the sides higher. Pour meat mixture in hallow and smooth out. Sprinkle reserved cheese on top.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 25 minutes, or until cheese is browned.

Chili

½ lb ground beef
½ cup onion
½ cup green pepper
2 cloves garlic
1 can beef broth
1 can kidney beans
1 can tomato paste
1 tablespoon chili powder
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

In large pot brown beef then add onions and green peppers, saute until tender.

Add beef broth, beans, tomato paste, and seasonings. Stir and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and let simmer covered for 30-90 minutes depending on how you like your chili.

Mexican Rice

¼-½ lb ground beef (depending on how beefy you want it)

¼ cup onions

1 can green chilies

1 cup uncooked rice

1 can tomato sauce

salt, pepper, and garlic powder to taste

1-2 tablespoons McCormick Taco Seasoning (big bottle available at Costco)

Brown beef and onions together in medium sauce pan.

Add the rest of the ingredients, stir, cover, and bring to boil. Reduce heat to low and let boil/simmer till rice has absorbed all the water.

Top with sour cream and shredded cheese if desired.

Taco Casserole

1 lb ground beef
2 cans kidney beans
1 jar of salsa
1 small onion
1 can tomato sauce
2 cups sour cream (softened)
2 ½ cups shredded cheese
12 oz crushed tortilla chips

Brown hamburger and onion together. Stir in beans, salsa, and tomato sauce.

Pour into chosen baking dish then spread sour cream over top and sprinkle with cheese then chips.

Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 45 minutes.

Pizza Pasta

2 cups egg noodles

1 jar pasta sauce

pepperoni (as much as you want cut into 4-6 pieces each)

¼ cup onion, chopped

1-2 cloves garlic, minced

mozzarella cheese

Cook noodles, drain, and let sit.

Saute onion and garlic then pour in noodles. Add pasta sauce to preference then add pepperoni. Sprinkle with cheese after its on plates.

Chapter 11: Pizza Recipes

One of the great things about making pizza is you have a lot of options to play with. You can put as much or as little of things as you want. Like with the 'Taco Pizza' you have the option to throw whatever vegetables you want on it.

Sausage and Pepperoni Pizza

pizza dough

pizza sauce

mozzarella cheese

sausage (you can get the kind in the tube, or on the flat foam dish, or you can even get the sausage links and cut them up)

¼ cup chopped onion

¼ cup chopped green pepper

1-2 cloves of garlic, minced

pepperoni

Prepare pizza dough and place on baking sheet and spread with pizza sauce and cheese.

Brown (or heat) desired amount of sausage in skillet with vegetables.

Spoon meat/vegetable mixture over pizza. Spread desired amount of pepperoni over pizza.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 15-20 minutes or until crust is golden brown and cheese is melted.

Ham and Pineapple Pizza

pizza dough

pizza sauce

mozzarella cheese

1 can of ham

1 can of crushed or chunk pineapple

Prepare dough and spread on baking sheet. Spread sauce and sprinkle with desired amount of cheese.

Open can of ham and shred with fingers, then sprinkle desired amount on pizza.

Open pineapple, drain, then spread desired amount over pizza.

Optional sprinkle a little more cheese over toppings.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 15-20 minutes or until crust is golden brown and cheese is melted.

Chicken Alfredo Pizza

1 cup chopped/shredded chicken
pizza dough
¼ cup Alfredo sauce
garlic powder
½ cup mozzarella cheese

Prepare/cook chicken in whatever way you want, just so long as you end up with chopped or shredded chicken.

Roll out pizza dough to desired size and place on greased pan.

Pour and spread Alfredo sauce over dough then sprinkle lightly with garlic powder.

Sprinkle with chicken then cover with cheese.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 15-20 minutes or until crust is golden brown and cheese is melted.

Taco Pizza

Pizza dough

1 can refried beans (heated in pan or microwave)

1/2 cup salsa

1/2 cup sour cream

chosen taco toppings

shredded cheddar cheese

1/2 cup crushed tortilla chips

Prepare pizza dough and spread on baking sheet then spread refried beans over dough.

In small bowl mix together salsa and sour cream then spread over refried beans.

Top with whatever taco toppings you like (onion, green chilies, jalapenos, olives, tomatoes, anything you would normally put on a deluxe taco).

Sprinkle desired amount of cheese over toppings then sprinkle with crushed chips.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 15-20 minutes until crust is browned and cheese is melted.

Calzones

pizza dough
pizza sauce
mozzarella cheese
chosen toppings
melted butter

Prepare dough as usual but divide into 4 equal portions.

Roll out flat in roughly equal shapes/sizes then place two on greased baking sheet. Top with sauce, cheese, and chosen toppings (pepperoni, ham and pineapple, anything you want).

Place other two dough circles on top of toppings and pinch top and bottom dough together with fingers or fork.

Brush with melted butter then bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 15-20 minutes or until golden brown.

Chapter 12: Gravy

You can make gravy essentially three different ways.

Pan gravy

Drippings gravy

Scratch gravy

Pan Gravy

If you've just cooked steak, chicken breasts, or pork chops in a skillet you usually have a brown sludge at the bottom of caramelized oil, flavor, and seasonings from the meat. Use that to make a great tasting gravy that will match the good flavors on your meat.

- caramelized skillet
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 cup water

Melt butter in skillet and add flour. Whisk in water and heat until thick.

Drippings Gravy

If you've just cooked meat in the oven and have a lot of 'drippings' you can make gravy with it.

If you make meatloaf usually there's liquid to be drained before you put the glaze on. If you've baked a whole chicken, turkey, or ham in the oven there's liquid at the bottom of the pan.

- meat drippings
- cold water or milk
- flour
- salt and pepper to taste

Measure how much drippings you have and then put twice that amount of water in pan. If you have 1/2 cup drippings then measure out 1 cup of water. Whisk in 2 tablespoons of flour for every cup of water then add drippings and seasonings.

Turn the heat on and whisk occasionally until thick.

Scratch gravy

Making gravy from scratch, meaning no meat drippings or broth to help with the flavors.

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups water
- 1 ramen noodle flavor packet (or bouillon cube)
- salt and pepper to taste

Melt butter and flour together to form a paste. Whisk in water and add seasoning packet. Whisk and taste for seasoning. Add salt and pepper if needed. Heat until thick.

Chapter 13: Sauces

Brown Sugar Glaze

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 tablespoon water

1 teaspoon lemon juice

Place all ingredients in small pan and heat till sugar is dissolved. Spread over cooked meat.

Creamy Alfredo Sauce

2 tablespoons butter
½ block cream cheese
1 cup milk
¼ cup parmesan

Combine cream cheese, milk, and butter. Heat and stir until smooth. Add Parmesan and stir. Will cover 2 cups uncooked noodles (cooked of course before you add the sauce)

Pizza Sauce

8 oz tomato sauce
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon basil
1/4 teaspoon thyme
pinch marjoram
pinch rosemary
pinch crushed fennel seed

Mix together ingredients and let sit covered in fridge for 20 minutes. Will cover two large sized pizzas thinly. For more flavor double seasonings or half sauce.

Variation: If you don't have all those herbs then just use Italian seasoning in place of everything except the oregano.

Sweet and Sour Sauce

1/2 cup pineapple juice

1/4 cup vinegar

2 tablespoons catsup

2 tablespoons brown sugar

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon onion powder

hot chili oil (dip regular sized spoon in jar, stir to bring flakes to top, and remove spoon straight. Use the spoon to stir ingredients with whatever oil and flakes are on it.)

Mix together all ingredients and Heat to a boil in a small sauce pan. Use in Asian dishes or as a dipping sauce for chicken fingers.

Chapter 14: Dough

Bread

2 1/2 teaspoons yeast
1 tablespoon sugar
1/4 cup warm water (110)
2 cups milk
2 tablespoons sugar
1 tablespoon shortening
2 teaspoons salt
flour (approx 6 cups)

Heat water and pour into 1 cup glass measuring cup. Water should feel like hot bathwater. Add yeast and 1 tablespoon sugar, stir with wooden spoon and let sit.

In saucepan combine milk, 2 tablespoons sugar, shortening, and salt. Heat until shortening is melted and sugar is dissolved. Pour into large mixing bowl and cool to bathwater temperature.

Add 2 cups of flour and stir. Switch to electric mixer and mix on low until smooth and no lumps.

Add yeast and stir with wooden spoon. Continue adding flour until hard to stir with spoon.

Turn oven on to the lowest setting possible.

Dump out dough onto clean floured surface and knead in flour for 6-8 minutes until dough is smooth and no longer sticking to your hands.

Grease bowl and place dough ball in it then turn over so that both sides of the dough are greased.

Turn off oven and get a dish towel wet, wring out until just damp and cover bowl with it. Place in oven and let sit about 45 minutes to an hour.

Dough should be twice its original size when you take it out. Punch down and remove from bowl and cut in half. Roll each half into a ball and cover with towel while you grease bread pans.

Stretch and reshape dough into rectangles and place in bread pans. Return to oven and cover with towel. Let sit for 45 minutes to an hour. Dough should be twice the size it was when you put it in pans.

Remove from oven and heat oven to 375 leaving bread covered while you wait. Place pans in oven (without towel) and bake for 25 minutes, Cover loosely with foil and bake another 10.

Remove from oven and let sit until just cool enough to touch, then remove bread from pans and set on cooling rack and cover with dry towel to cool completely.

Remember, homemade bread will not last as long as store bought.

Moms Biscuits

2 cups flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup shortening
3/4 cup water

Mix together first 3 ingredients in mixing bowl.

Cut in shortening with pastry blender or fork. Stir in water and work into smooth ball.

Cut into equal portioned balls or roll out on clean floured surface and cut into circles using a round hollow tool such as the rim of a cup.

Bake on ungreased pan in preheated 400 degree oven for 10-15 minutes or until shade of brown you prefer.

Moms Pancakes & Waffles

2 cups flour
¼ cup sugar
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups water
2 eggs
1/3 cup vegetable oil

Stir together first 4 ingredients in mixing bowl. Add the last 3 ingredients and mix together.

Use batter for either pancakes or waffles.

My variation: Add 1 teaspoon each of vanilla extract and lemon juice.

Moms Pie Crust

2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup shortening or butter
½ cup water

Mix flour and salt in mixing bowl. Cut in shortening or butter with pastry blender or fork.

Add water and stir just until it forms a dough ball. Gently pack together like making a snowball (DO NOT KNEAD). Abandon any small crumbs that come loose.

Divide ball into 1/3 and 2/3 Using the larger ball first.

On clean floured surface flatten with hands to make the basic shape. Then roll with rolling pin until it's flat and slightly bigger than your pie pan.

Gently fold crust in half and move to center of pie pan. Unfold and adjust placement so the dough is centered.

Do the same with smaller portion and let sit until your filling is in the pie pan. Gently place dough over filling and center it. Cut off excess around edges but make sure you leave enough to crimp the two dough pieces together with your fingers on the edge of pie pan.

Do this all the way around to make a wavy pattern. Use a knife to cut vent holes in the top. You can make pattern if you wish. Bake according to recipe for filling.

Pizza Dough

1 cup water
2 teaspoons yeast
1 tablespoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon oil
flour (approx 4 cups)

Heat water to 110 degrees (basically slightly hot bath water).

Pour 1/4 cup of the hot water into medium/large bowl and add salt, oil, and 1 cup flour. Add yeast and sugar to measuring cup (with 1/4 cup water) and stir to dissolve the sugar.

While you wait for the yeast to rise in the measuring cup use an electric mixer in the bowl to make sure there's no lumps.

Once yeast has started, dump into bowl and add flour in 1/2 cup amounts, stirring in between.

Keep stirring in flour in 1/2 cup amounts until too hard to stir with spoon. Lightly flour surface of clean counter or cutting board, move dough to surface and knead in flour until dough is still slightly sticky but keeps shape.

Optional: Cover dough with bowl and let sit for 5-20 minutes to give the dough a little bit to let the yeast work. If you don't have time or don't feel like waiting just flour the surface and roll dough out to size of pan. To make it easier to move gently fold in half. Move to greased pan and unfold to proper size. Optional: Brush dough with oil before adding sauce.

Makes roughly 1 large sized pizza. For larger or two pizzas just double recipe. If you roll the dough too big for your pan simply tuck and fold overhang under and have thick crusts, or cut off the excess and toss.

Tortillas

1 3/4 cups flour (more as needed)

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 cup shortening

1/2 cup 105-110 degrees water

In mixing bowl combine dry ingredients and cut in shortening with pastry blender or fork. Add water and mix together with fork.

When a sticky ball forms, move mixture to floured surface like counter or cutting board. Knead into smooth ball sprinkling with flour when dough becomes too sticky to work with.

With knife cut into 8 equal portions. Roll into balls and flatten with palms of hands on floured surface. With rolling pin roll as flat as possible without tearing dough.

Place dough circles in ungreased skillet and let sit 1-2 minutes. Flip and cook another 1-2 minutes. brown spots should appear and dough should fill with air pockets.

Remove from pan and place on plate, cover with towel to keep moist and warm as you continue cooking the rest.

Chapter 15: Ramen Noodles

Ramen noodles are one thing I always have in my house because of all the things you can do with them. They're the perfect size for lunch so when my husband is at work I make myself some ramen noodles and dress it up.

- Cook noodles to packet directions and drain. In pan melt 1/2 tablespoon butter and add 2 tablespoons water. Sprinkle in about a tablespoon of cheese mix from mac-n-cheese box. Stir until bubbly and return noodles to pan. Stir to cover noodles with cheese sauce.

- Cook noodles to packet directions, drain, and return to pan. Add a couple spoonfuls of Alfredo sauce, stir, and add more as needed.

- Cook noodles to packet directions and drain. In pan melt 1/2 tablespoon butter and stir in a small bit each of salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and Italian seasoning. Return noodles to pan and stir to cover noodles with sauce.

- Chop onions, garlic, green pepper, celery, carrots, and broccoli. Cook noodles to package directions and drain. Pour about a teaspoon of oil in pan and saute vegetables until tender. Add a spoonful or two of sweet and sour sauce to vegetables. Return noodles to pan and stir.

- Cook noodles to packet directions, drain, and return to pan. Add a couple spoonfuls of pasta sauce and stir to cover noodles. Add more sauce as needed.

Chapter 16: Desserts

Chocolate Chip Cookies

½ cup margarine
½ cup shortening
1 cup brown sugar
½ cup sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 ½ cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
½-1 cup chocolate chips depending on preference

Cream together first 4 ingredients, add eggs and vanilla then blend.

In separate bowl mix together remaining ingredients and add to creamed mixture. Mix together and form into a ball.

Cover with plastic and refrigerate for an hour.

Scoop onto baking sheets and bake 1 pan at a time (do not over crowd) in preheated 375 degree oven for 8-10 minutes.

Cookies may look undone in center at first but they will finish cooking on the pan after you take it out.

Variations: Use any type of chips, white, butterscotch, peanut butter. Any type of chips will create a wonderful cookie. For a plain sugar cookie omit the chocolate chips and flatten with bottom of cup before baking.

Peanut Butter Cookies

½ cup margarine

¼ cup shortening

¾ cup peanut butter

1 cup brown sugar

½ cup sugar

2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 ½ cup flour

1 teaspoon baking soda

½ teaspoon salt

Optional: ½-1 cup chocolate or peanut butter chips

Cream together first 5 ingredients. Add eggs and vanilla and mix in thoroughly.

In separate bowl mix together remaining ingredients and add to creamed mixture. Mix together, cover, and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Scoop onto baking sheets and flatten with signature crisscrossed fork pattern.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 8-10 minutes.

Rich Chocolate Cookies

1 ½ cups sugar
¾ cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons vanilla
3 eggs
2 cups flour
1 cup baking cocoa
2 teaspoons baking powder
powdered sugar

Cream together first 4 ingredients.

In separate bowl mix together next 3 ingredients. Add to wet ingredients and mix.

Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Scoop into 1 inch balls and roll smooth between clean hands and place on baking sheet.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 10-12 minutes. While still warm roll tops gently in powdered sugar.

Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

½ cup margarine
½ cup shortening
1 tablespoons molasses
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cup flour
1 cup quick-cooking rolled oats
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½-1 cup raisins depending on preference

Cream together first 4 ingredients and add eggs and vanilla.

In separate bowl mix together remaining ingredients and add to creamed mixture.

Mix together and scoop onto baking sheets. Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 10-12 minutes.

Berry Cheesecake

1 cup crushed graham cracker crumbs
3 tablespoons melted butter
3 tablespoons sugar
1 envelope unflavored gelatin
¼ cup cold water
2 packages cream cheese (softened)
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 7oz jar marshmallow cream
2 cups whip cream
2 cups berries (any kind you like)

Mix together first three ingredients and press onto bottom of spring form cheesecake pan.

Mix together gelatin and water in small pan then heat till dissolved.

Combine gelatin mixture and cream cheese in mixing bowl and mix with electric mixer till smooth.

Add lemon juice and marshmallow cream and mix. Gently stir in whip cream and berries. Pour over graham cracker crust and chill till firm.

Substitute unflavored gelatin with half a pack of berry flavored jello mix and omit lemon juice.

Brownie Cheesecake

1 box of brownie mix
2 packages cream cheese (softened)
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 egg

Prepare brownie as directed on back and pour into spring form cheesecake pan.

Bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 15 minutes.

Mix together remaining ingredients. Gently pour over brownie mix and bake for 35 minutes. Good warm or chilled.

Bread Pudding

4 eggs
½ cup milk
1 ½ cup water
½ cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt
4 cups dry bread cubes

Beat eggs in mixing bowl then add all but bread cubes and stir.

To make bread cubes Cut bread in uniform small pieces and bake in 350 degree oven until dry, leave oven on.

Add bread cubes to mixture and stir. Move to 13X9 baking pan and bake for 65 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.

Rice Pudding

1 cup uncooked rice
½ teaspoon salt
½ tablespoon oil
¾ cup sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
2 cups milk
1 egg
2 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon vanilla

Cook rice then set aside.

In separate saucepan combine sugar, cornstarch, and salt. Stir in the milk then turn on heat to medium. Stir **CONSTANTLY** with whisk until mixture is thick and bubbly.

Let bubble for 1-2 minutes then remove from heat. In small bowl beat egg and add a couple large spoonfuls of the hot mixture. Stir quickly so as not to cook the egg.

Pour into pan and return to heat. Stir for 2-3 minutes then remove from heat again. Stir in butter, vanilla, and cooked rice. Good warm and cold.

Moms Pumpkin Cake

2 cups flour
½ cup sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon baking soda
4 eggs
1 16 oz can of pumpkin
1 cup vegetable oil

Mix together first 5 ingredients in mixing bowl. Add last 3 ingredients and stir till well blended.

Pour into greased 13X9 baking dish and bake in preheated 350 degree oven for 30 minutes.

Best topped with cream cheese frosting or other frosting of your choice.

Chocolate Cake

2 cups sugar
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cocoa powder
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon hazel nut coffee creamer (powder)
2 eggs
1 cup milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable oil
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 cup boiling water

Mix together all the dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl then add the wet ingredients except the water. Mix together thoroughly then add hot water.

Mix and pour into greased 13X9 baking pan.

Bake in preheated 375 degree oven for 30-35 minutes or until tooth pick comes out clean.

Mixture will look thin when you add the water so don't worry.

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