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EC63-930 Do-Ahead Meals

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DO-AHEAD
MEALS

DO-AHEAD MEALS....

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SAVE TIME AND ENERGY

If you are a working homemaker or take part in community activities, you will appreciate meals that require very little last minute preparation. These do-ahead meals can be nutritious, attractive and appetizing. At the same time they conserve your time and energy.

Planning is the key, not only to do-ahead meals, but to economy, nutrition, and the calm assurance that you are ready for unexpected company or unexpected demands on your time.

The best planning begins with menus, market list and work schedules. Try to plan menus for a week and buy as much as you can at one time. By shopping from an organized list, you will save time at the supermarket and avoid extra trips to pick up forgotten items. A work schedule will help make good use of time.

Efficient organization of your kitchen equipment, work areas and supplies saves time in meal preparation. Other time-savers include using mixes, dove-tailing work in the kitchen and preparing part of tomorrow's food while cleaning up after today's dinner. Effective tools, comfortable-height work table and an up-to-date recipe file make the work easier. By referring to past records, your planning becomes easier and you need less time each successive week.

OTHER ADVANTAGES

Other advantages besides the saving of time and energy are evident when meal planning is done.

1. Careful planning makes it easier to control the amount of money spent for food. Expensive choices can be balanced with less expensive choices. You don't buy unneeded foods. Previous planning serves as a check against impulse buying that can overload a close food budget.

2. Adequate nutrition is easier to achieve when you consider three meals for the day as one unit. In this way the essential foods: milk, meat, fruits and vegetables, can be included daily.

3. Planned meals usually include a wider variety of foods. Children and adults profit from knowing and eating many kinds of food.

4. Practice in deciding what to serve, how much money to spend and how much time and energy to invest helps you develop good judgement. Planning keeps you free from the annoyance and strain of making last-minute decisions.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF TIME IN MEAL PREPARATION

Use spare time or weekends for planning ahead.

Make good use of temperature-controlled burners, time regulated ovens or other automatic equipment.

Use place mats which can be easily cleaned instead of table cloths. Set table and get as many breakfast things ready the night before as possible.

Double a favorite recipe. Serve part and freeze the rest for another meal.

Freeze parsley, chopped celery and green pepper in amounts needed for soups, casseroles and stews.

Wash and trim salad greens and store in vegetable crisper or plastic bags.

Fill a good-sized shaker with a mixture of cinnamon and sugar for making cinnamon rolls or cinnamon toast.

Have supply of hard-cooked eggs on hand for salads, casserole dishes or garnish.

Slice left-over baked ham from Sunday dinner for sandwiches or cold cuts.

Cut left-over meat into bite-size pieces and freeze. Heat with a can of cream soup for casserole dish. Or season with package of powdered soup and braise. Serve with brown rice, noodles or biscuits.

Prepare one-dish meals or casserole dishes and store in refrigerator or freezer until needed.

Plan whole meals that can be prepared in the oven, the broiler or pressure sauce pan.

Make ground beef or ground pork mixtures that you can freeze and use in a variety of ways.

Write out two or three menus using foods from your emergency shelf plus anything you regularly have in the refrigerator or freezer.

Freeze your own plate dinners. Arrange cooked foods on sectional aluminum plates; then cover with foil.

COMBINATIONS FOR PLATE DINNERS

1. Baked ham, candied sweet potatoes, buttered peas.
2. Roast pork, green lima beans, applesauce.
3. Roast beef, whole kernel corn, creole green beans.

4. Fried chicken, mashed potatoes, orange glazed carrots.
5. Swiss steak, stuffed baked potatoes, asparagus.
6. Barbequed ribs, hash browned potatoes, mixed vegetables.
7. Stuffed green pepper, baked squash, sauerkraut.
8. Roast turkey, dressing, Brussel sprouts.
9. Fish sticks, Duchess potatoes, peas with mushrooms.
10. Individual meat loaf, scalloped potatoes, French fried parsnips.

PREPARATION OF PLATE DINNERS

Plan to package a plate dinner or two when preparing a large meal anyway. Take the food just before it is ready to serve. Overcooking may make the food too soft or give it a warmed-over flavor. Avoid excessive stirring which breaks up or mashes food.

Cooked foods should be cooled quickly. This preserves the quality of the food and retards the growth of bacteria. Cooling can be done easily by setting the pan of hot food in a pan of ice water.

Place cooled foods on divided plates and pack solidly to keep out air. Gravy or sauce can be used over slices of meat to fill the air spaces. Wrap with freezer foil and freeze.

For serving, place covered package in 400° oven for 30 minutes or until food is hot. Foods that are to remain crisp should be uncovered while heating.

Storage time for plate dinners is about one month.

BASIC FOOD SUPPLY

You will always want to keep in stock certain foods which you use regularly. These will vary according to your individual needs and will provide tasty casseroles and main-dish meals. Emergency items for extra busy days or unexpected company should also be kept. A suggested list of basic supplies might include the following:

On the Shelf:

Baking powder
Baking soda
Bread or crackers
Catsup or chili sauce
Cereals, assorted
Macaroni or noodles
Cornstarch
Cocoa or chocolate
Coffee and tea
Flavoring extracts
Flour
Gelatin
Mustard, prepared
Peanut butter
Pickles
Raisins
Rice
Mixes, your favorite
Salt and pepper
Sirup
Shortening
Spices
Sugar: granulated,
brown, powdered
Vinegar

In the Refrigerator:

Butter or margarine
Cheese: Cottage, American
Eggs
Fruits and fruit juices
Ice cream or sherbets
Lard
Milk: Whole, skim or
buttermilk
Mayonnaise or salad
dressing
Meat
Vegetables: Fresh or
frozen

Other Staples:

Fruits, canned
Fruit juice
Tomato sauce, puree or
juice
Meat, canned
Soups: Canned or
dehydrated
Vegetables: Canned or
dried
Onions
Potatoes

RECIPES

Ground beef is a favorite meat for quick meals. It is used in a variety of dishes as pizza, spaghetti sauce, chili and barbeque buns. A time-saver in preparing these dishes is to season and cook a quantity of ground meat for use later in various recipes. Pack in amounts needed and freeze. The basic barbeque sauce and chili recipes are:

Barbeque Sauce

1/4 cup salad oil	1/2 teaspoon pepper
4 medium onions, chopped	3 tablespoons Wor-
3 cloves garlic, minced	cestershire sauce
2 cups chopped celery tops	2 (14 oz.) bottles
4 pounds ground beef	catsup
4 teaspoons salt	Few drops Tabas-
	co sauce

Place oil in large kettle; add onion, garlic and celery tops and cook until tender. Brown the ground beef with this mixture; then add seasonings. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Cool quickly by setting kettle in ice water. Skim off excess fat. Spoon mixture into four 1-pint ice cube trays. Wrap with foil and freeze. Sauce cubes may be removed from trays after freezing and stored in plastic bags or boxes until needed.

Quickie Chili

1 tray Sauce cubes	2 teaspoons chili powder
1 can red kidney beans	1 tomato, cut in pieces

Thaw Sauce cubes in sauce pan over low heat. Stir in kidney beans, chili powder and tomato. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until tomato is cooked. Serve hot with French bread. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Chicken Corn Casserole

Can be prepared in a hurry with cut-up chicken on hand.

1/3 cup butter	2 cups cooked chicken,
1/3 cup flour	cut-up
3/4 teaspoon salt	1 (1 lb.) can cream-
1/4 teaspoon pepper	style corn
1/2 teaspoon celery salt	1/4 cup cracker crumbs
2 cups milk	1 tablespoon butter

Melt butter; stir in flour, salt, pepper and celery salt and cook until smooth. Remove from heat. Add milk and boil for 1 minute. Combine sauce, chicken and corn. Pour into greased 1 1/2 quart casserole. Top with crumbs and dot with butter. Bake in 350° oven for 25 or 30 minutes until browned on top. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Ham-Noodle Casserole

May be refrigerated in baking dish and cooked later.

1 (8 oz.) package noodles	1/2 cup milk
1 1/2 cups chopped cooked ham	1/2 teaspoon curry
1 cup grated processed cheese	powder (may be omitted)
1 (10 oz.) can condensed cream of chicken soup	2 tablespoons butter

Cook noodles as directed on package; drain. Combine ham and 3/4 cup cheese; alternate layers of noodles and ham-cheese mixture in greased 1-quart baking dish. Mix soup, milk and curry; pour over ingredients in casserole. Sprinkle top with remaining cheese; dot with butter. Bake at 375° for 20 to 30 minutes. Makes 6 servings.