

## Planning Healthy Meals for One or Two — a Checklist

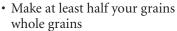
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Sometimes, it can be hard to get motivated when cooking a meal for just one or two people. Here is a checklist to help you get the most value for your time and money if you are cooking for two, or just you!

#### General Tips

Maximize your nutrition!

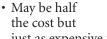




- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
- Cook once, eat twice
  - Plan two meals from the same entrée
  - Separate out extra food BEFORE serving
  - Eat extras in 3–4 days or freeze

# **Shopping Tips**

Should you buy in bulk?



just as expensive if you toss half!

- Smaller portions help avoid eating the same food over and over
- Repackage meat in freezer bags for smaller servings and freeze



Consider individually packaged servings of items if you frequently have leftovers

- String cheese, wrapped cheese slices
- Single containers of tuna, soup, or fruit
- · Individual cartons of yogurt
- Buy a smaller number of servings from meat counter
  - Enjoy one pork chop
  - Purchase a single salmon filet
  - Explore a different cut of beef
- Buy fruit at varying stages of ripeness
  - Buy some fruit to eat immediately and some to ripen for later
  - Apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, pears, and plums continue to ripen after purchase
  - Refrigerate fruit after it has ripened for longer storage
- Buy frozen vegetables in bags
  - · Pour what you need
    - Use in 8 months or per package guidelines
  - Toss into soups, casseroles, salads

- Thaw corn or peas in strainer under cool running water for salads
- Taste and nutrition
  - Comparable to fresh
  - Often lower in salt than canned veggies
- Can-do canned foods
  - Nutrition is comparable to fresh/ frozen
  - No refrigerator space needed
  - Helpful in emergency; have manual can opener handy
  - Remove from can when storing unused portions
  - Check the "use by date" on cans for best safety/quality; after can is opened, use within 3–4 days
  - Low sodium versions available
  - Canned Food Alliance offers recipes at www.mealtime.org
- Shop at supermarket salad bars
  - Purchase small amounts of fruits/ vegetables
  - Buy individual salads
  - Use foods within 1–2 days of purchase for best quality

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#### Restaurant **Tips**

- Benefit from large restaurant portions
  - Two meals for price of one
  - Divide meal in half BEFORE eating!
  - · Refrigerate perishables in shallow containers within 2 hours of service

#### Storage Tips



- Refrigerate in a shallow pan — food should be no more
  - than 2 inches deep
- Eat perishable foods in 3–4 days; heat until steaming hot (165°F)
- Thaw packages on a plate in refrigerator near bottom so they don't drip on other foods

### **Reducing Recipe Size**

- Recipes can frequently be successfully reduced by 1/2 to 1/3. Some helpful equivalents include:
  - 1 cup = 16 tablespoons
  - 1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons
  - 1 cup = 8 **fluid** ounces (*Note: measuring cups measure volume, not weight*)
  - 1 fluid ounce = 2 tablespoons
  - 1 pound = 16 ounces (weight)
  - 1 pint = 2 cups
  - 1 quart = 2 pints

#### To change pan sizes:

- 9 x 2 x 13-inch pan holds 14 to 15 cups; for half, use:
  - Square 8 x 2-inch
  - Round 9 x 2-inch
  - Reduce oven temperature by 25°F if substituting glass for metal pan



- Store it, don't ignore it food is "safe" indefinitely at 0°F but "quality" lowers over time
- Use freezer quality containers for freezer storage
- Safest to thaw in fridge; it takes about 24 hours to thaw 5 pounds of food
- Foods that don't freeze well include: waterv foods such as cabbage, celery, lettuce, etc.;

cream or custard fillings; milk sauces; sour cream; cheese or crumb toppings, mayonnaise; gelatin; and fried foods

Store bread in freezer; remove a slice at a time and toast as needed.

### Turkey or Chicken Soup

Yield: 2 servings

Note: Prepare an extra chicken breast one night and use it in the soup the next night.

1 cup chopped, cooked turkey or chicken dash of pepper

1/4 chopped onion

1/4 cup chopped celery

2 thinly chopped carrots

1/4 teaspoon thyme

2 cups low sodium chicken broth

1 cup cooked pasta (such as bowtie, shells, macaroni, etc.) OR 1 cup cooked rice



Add all ingredients, except pasta or rice to pan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cook covered until vegetables are tender crisp, about 10 to 15 minutes.

Add cooked pasta or cooked rice and cook a few more minutes until pasta or rice is heated.

