

Summer Session

Easy Cooking for One or Two

During this session you will:

- ◆ *Develop ways to handle your eating alone challenges*
- ◆ *Identify easy ways to cook for one or two people*
- ◆ *Identify creative ways to use leftovers*



Review of Progress

- ◆ What progress have you made over the past three months?
- ◆ What situations or foods are still challenging for you?
- ◆ When you think about these challenges, what skills could help you handle these situations more effectively?

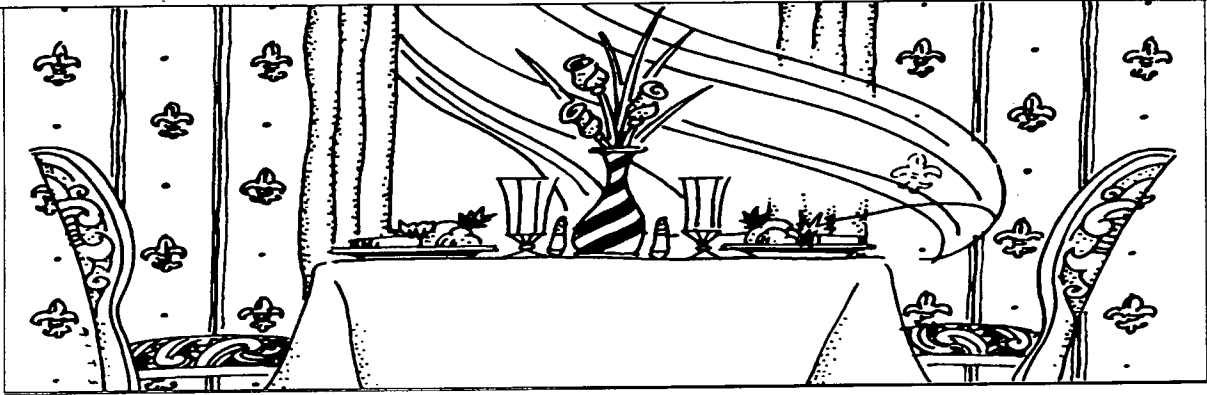
Eating Alone and Meal Patterns

You may eat alone for many reasons. It may be part of your daily routine or something that happens less frequently. When you eat alone, the foods you choose may be different than when you eat with others. Your thoughts and interest in preparing meals may also change. Think about how often you eat alone, the foods you select and the way you eat (nibble or prepare a meal).

Use the questions on Worksheet Summer-1 (pg. 9) to help you think about your own experiences. Look at what you like and dislike about eating alone. Write down some of the things that make it easier or more difficult for you to prepare healthier meals when you eat alone.

After you have identified your eating alone challenges, place a check next to the ones you want to work on.

- ◆ Which eating alone challenges are the biggest for you?
- ◆ What are you currently doing to handle these challenges?



Ideas to Handle Your Eating Alone Challenges

Cooking for one or two people can be a simple process once you identify your challenges. Take heart! Whatever your lifestyle or situation, you can meet your challenges with success. Here are some ways to make cooking for one or two easy and fun.

Create Positive Messages

Sometimes making dinner for yourself may seem like a big effort. However, it is important that eating alone does not become an excuse for eating poorly.

Your thoughts may influence the actions you take, or don't take. Begin by taking a look at how you feel about eating alone. Try to focus on the things you enjoy.

◆ What positive thoughts do you have about eating alone?

Positive thoughts (self-talk) are important for your success. They help you start looking for solutions. In Session 11 you learned how to stop your negative thoughts and reword your negative messages into positive self-talk messages that help you change.

Make Mealtimes Special

At times eating alone can be a welcome time of privacy and quiet; at other times it may seem lonely.

◆ What steps do you use to make your meals alone more enjoyable?

If you would like to have company at mealtimes, look around for other people in the same situation. Find one or two people (friends, neighbors, other group members, etc.) and invite each other to dinner once a week. Sometimes it's more fun cooking for someone else. The added cost and work will balance out when it's your turn to be the "guest."

At other times when you are happy to eat alone, create a pleasant setting for yourself. Set your table with a nice tablecloth or placement. Add flowers or other table decorations and play some soft music. Take time to enjoy your meal.

Shop Wisely

One of the greatest challenges in cooking for one or two is in food shopping. Consider shopping twice a week for fresh fruits and vegetables. This helps reduce waste and saves you money.

Look at the foods you have available in your kitchen. A well-stocked kitchen makes it easier to prepare meals quickly.

Keep small cans of fish, beans, vegetables, and fruit on hand. Stock your kitchen with quick low-fat mixes, dehydrated or canned soups, and frozen fruits and vegetables. Look for large packages that you can open and reseal such as frozen vegetables or grain foods.

- ◆ What foods do you currently buy in small quantities or in re-sealable packages?
- ◆ What methods do you use to keep fresh foods longer (for example, fruits, vegetables, bread, etc.)?
- ◆ What have you done when your favorite foods only come in family-sized packages?

Dress-Up Leftovers

Another common challenge is dealing with leftover foods.

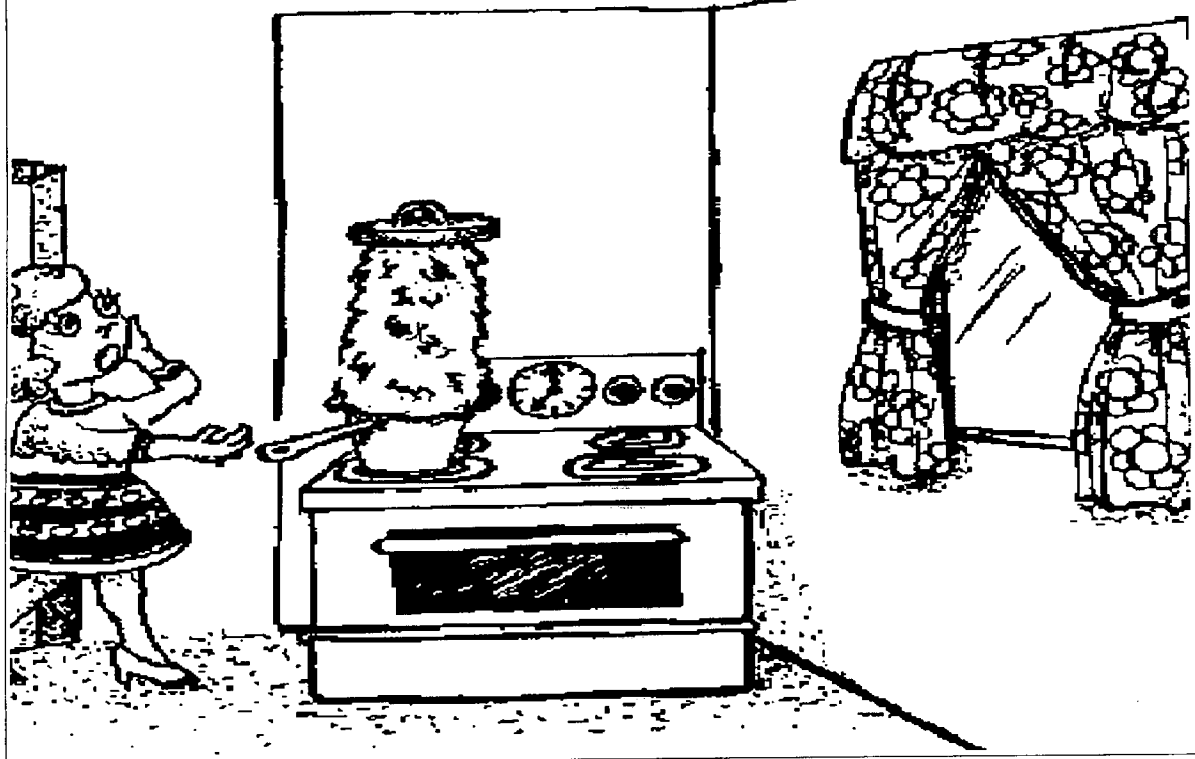
- ◆ What thoughts do you have when you hear the word “leftovers”?

Often the word “leftovers” makes people think of the same food served again in the same way. However, leftovers do not have to be boring. Some people may even plan ahead and make extra so that they can create another meal. This saves them time and money. Try some of these ideas to help you handle the challenge of leftover foods:

- ◆ Plan to use the leftovers. Make extra and freeze it for another meal.
- ◆ Use the leftover foods in another meal, but make them look or taste different.
- ◆ Look for new low-fat recipes that use the foods that are usually leftover at your house.
- ◆ Reduce leftovers by finding low-fat recipes for one or two people. (See recipe ideas on pgs. 14-16.)

Take a look at the three rice recipes at the end of this session (pgs. 21-23). They use leftover cooked rice. Each of these recipes looks and tastes different.

- ◆ What makes each of these recipes look and taste different from the others?
- ◆ How could you change your leftover foods to make them look or taste different?



To make foods look and taste different, try some of the following ideas:

- ◆ **Change the flavorings.**
- ◆ **Change the serving temperature of the food.**
- ◆ **Change how the food is used at the meal (e.g., salad, main dish, dessert, etc.).**
- ◆ **Change the foods served with the "leftover" food.**

For more ideas on how to creatively use leftover foods, look at Resource Summer-1: *Creative Ways to Use Leftovers* (pg. 13). Additional ideas for quick meal preparation were presented earlier (Sessions 13 and 15).

Some quick meal ideas include:

- ◆ **Having time-saving recipes and foods on hand.**
- ◆ **Using quick cooking methods.**
- ◆ **Having quick meals in the freezer.**

Summary

Eating alone can cause you to change some of the foods you eat. Today you had a chance to look at some of

the things you and other group members like and dislike about eating alone. You also had an opportunity to share solutions and

strategies of how to handle some of these eating alone challenges.

Questions for Thought:

- ◆ After today's discussion, what do you now see as some of the benefits of eating alone?
- ◆ What ideas do you think will be most helpful for you to handle your eating alone challenges?

Home Activity

Areas to work on during the next three months:

- ◆ **Keep a Fat Scan (or other self-monitoring tool) for at least 3 days every month.**
- ◆ **Use at least one of the ideas listed on Worksheet Summer -2 and/or the other Summer Resources (pgs. 10-16) to add interest to your meals.**

Evaluation:

- ◆ **What ideas do I use to handle my meal preparation challenges when I cook for one or two people?**

- ◆ **What ideas helped me make creative meals out of my leftovers?**

Identifying My Eating Alone Experiences

Think about how eating alone influences the foods you eat and your feelings about preparing meals. Use the questions below to help you describe your own experiences.

1. What do I enjoy about eating alone?

2. What don't I like about eating alone?

3. What might get in the way of preparing healthy meals when I eat alone?

Ways to Handle My Eating Alone Challenges

Review the challenges listed below. Identify the ones that make meal preparation for one or two people more difficult for you. Check the ideas that you could use to help improve your eating patterns.

☐ Challenge: Eating alone is not enjoyable.

- ☐ Create positive self-talk messages, such as:
 - ___ “I can choose simple meals to make.”
 - ___ “I can make one of the quick low-fat recipes available in my materials.”
 - ___ “I enjoy being able to eat what I want without worrying about other people.”
- ☐ Identify other people who would be willing to share meals.
 - ___ Ask someone to dinner once a week.
 - ___ Go out to dinner or lunch with friends.
- ☐ Make the place you eat more friendly and inviting.
 - ___ Set the table with a pretty tablecloth or place mat.
 - ___ Add a flower, photo of a favorite person or vacation or other table decoration.
 - ___ Play soft, soothing music or watch TV while you eat.
- ☐ Other _____

☐ Challenge: It takes too much time to prepare a meal.

- ☐ Identify time-saving foods and recipes.
 - ___ Have time-saving foods and ingredients on hand.
 - ___ Have quick low-fat recipes for one or two people identified.
 - ___ Have some low-fat frozen dinners available for a quick meal.
 - ___ Collect recipe ideas for quick low-fat grain and vegetable dishes.
- ☐ Prepare foods ahead of time.
 - ___ Make double and freeze what you don't eat for another meal or use as planned-overs.
 - ___ Cook soups and casseroles ahead of time and freeze in single servings.
- ☐ Other _____

Worksheet Summer-2 (continued)

☐ Challenge: Foods are left over.

- ☐ Buy smaller portions.
 - ___ Ask butcher to cut fresh fish or meat in the portion you want.
 - ___ Look for bulk containers (e.g., bins of grains or beans) where you can serve yourself.
 - ___ Buy larger portions and freeze in single-serving amounts.
 - ___ Keep small individual serving items on hand for variety (e.g., small cans of tuna, vegetables, fruits, and pudding).
- ☐ Use foods and containers that keep longer and store easily.
 - ___ Store up on pasta, dried fruits, canned or dried beans, and grains, such as rice or barley.
 - ___ Use bags of frozen vegetables or fruits that you can pour out one serving and reseal the bag.
- ☐ Plan creative ways to use leftovers in another meal.
 - ___ Freeze leftover raw vegetables, such as peppers, onions and celery to use in casseroles and soups.
 - ___ Look for new low-fat recipes that use the foods you tend to have left over.
 - ___ Modify the taste or presentation of leftover foods. (For ideas see **Resource Summer-1: Creative Ways to Use Leftovers**, page 13).
- ☐ Share leftovers with family member or friend who lives alone and doesn't enjoy cooking.
- ☐ Other _____

☐ Challenge: Fresh fruits and vegetables go to waste.

- ☐ Choose fresh fruits and vegetables that keep well or are quickly eaten.
 - ___ Fruits: apples, bananas, citrus fruits, grapes, melons, pears, peaches, etc.
 - ___ Vegetables: cabbage, carrots, celery, potatoes, etc.
- ☐ Use methods to help keep fruits and vegetables longer:
 - ___ Avoid storing moist vegetables or fruits in plastic.
 - ___ Keep fruit that doesn't need refrigeration where you can see it--on the table.
 - ___ Wash vegetables when ready to use; they will last longer.
- ☐ Shop with a friend and try sharing.
- ☐ Other _____

Creative Ways to Use Leftovers Worksheet

Imagine that you are preparing a meal for yourself. Choose one of the meals listed below and use the leftover foods. Think of the foods that you normally have available in your kitchen. Plan at least two meals that you could easily prepare and serve. Look at Resource Summer-1 (pg. 13 for ideas). Be creative!

Leftover Foods:Meal A:

Baked chicken
Cold rice, plain

Meal B:

Roasted meat (beef pork, lamb)
Cold potatoes, plain

Meal C:

Small amount of meat or chicken
Ripe banana, pineapple or other fresh fruit

Meal D:

Cooked pasta without sauce

Other:

My Creative Meal Ideas:

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Creative Ways to Use Leftovers

☐ Be creative with grains, pasta and potatoes.

- ◆ Mix 1 cup leftover rice or pasta with vegetables, toss with your favorite low-fat salad dressing, or for variety, toss rice or pasta with:
 - fruit, such as pineapple, bananas or raisins, or
 - non-fat mayonnaise, and curry powder for a cold curried main dish.
- ◆ Mix 2 cups of leftover rice, pasta or potatoes with 1/4 cup egg substitute, green onions, chives and herbs of choice. Brown the mixture in a non-stick pan or use non-stick spray. Serve with salsa, tomato sauce or catsup.
- ◆ Mix 2 cups of leftover rice or pasta with 1/4 cup egg substitute, cinnamon and raisins. Press into patties and cook in non-stick pan. Top with fruit sauce or serve with sliced fresh fruit and low-fat yogurt for a breakfast treat.
- ◆ Reheat 1 cup of steamed rice or other grains with 1/2 cup low-fat milk, cinammon and 2 tablespoons of raisins for a quick breakfast dish.

☐ Have fun with fruits and vegetables.

- ◆ Puree or blend leftover fruits that need to be used quickly and use them as a dessert sauce over angel food cake or low-fat frozen yogurt. You can also use fruits or fruit puree as a low-fat substitute for oil in some bread, muffin and cake recipes (see Worksheet 12-1, Session 12).
- ◆ Make soups with leftover vegetables. They can be stored several days in the refrigerator and up to several months in the freezer.

☐ Recycle your meats, chicken or turkey.

- ◆ Use in sandwich spreads, stir-fry dishes, and pasta or rice salads.
- ◆ Stew or cook a whole chicken, take it off the bone and freeze small servings of meat (2 ounces) with one cup of broth. When ready for a quick meal, defrost and add fresh vegetables and leftover grains for a fast meal.
- ◆ Add vegetables to stir-fried meats. For example, try the Chicken-Cabbage Stir-Fry on pg. 20.
- ◆ Use leftover pasta, rice, vegetables, and meat bits in a soup or stew (see recipe for Hearty Vegetable Beef Soup on pg. 19).

Easy Cooking for One or Two

☐ **Stir up a quick vegetable dish or main dish meal.**

- ◆ Heat a non-stick pan and use 1-2 teaspoons broth or oil for each 1 to 1-1/2 cups of raw vegetables. Add your favorite seasonings (ginger, garlic, etc.) and stir-fry for 15 seconds. Add vegetables and soy sauce. Stir-fry 3-5 minutes until vegetables become tender-crisp.
- ◆ Combine 3-4 of your favorite fresh vegetables. Good choices include broccoli, cauliflower, celery, green beans, onions, peppers, mushrooms, carrots, pea pods, asparagus, zucchini and yellow squash.
- ◆ For a main dish, add bits of leftover chicken, turkey, shellfish or meat during the last 3-5 minutes of cooking.

☐ **Microwave a meal in minutes.**

- ◆ Add your favorite herbs and a little lemon juice or white wine. Place the fish in a microwave-proof dish and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Microwave on medium for 30 seconds, then turn dish and microwave another 30 seconds to 1 minute. Drain off the juices and let the fish stand for 2-3 minutes before serving.
- ◆ Add broccoli flowerets, mushrooms, and a bit of grated low-fat cheese to a microwave baked potato.

☐ **Fix a meal-in-one dinner in foil.**

- ◆ Place lean beef or chicken breast in the center of a piece of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Sprinkle soup mix over the top of the meat or poultry. Cut up vegetables and place them on top of the meat or poultry. Close the foil over the meat and vegetables and set on a cookie sheet. Bake at 450° for 1 hour or until done. (Example: for two people: 1/2 pound lean beef round steak, 1/2 packet onion soup mix, 2 medium carrots, 1 stalk celery and 2 medium new potatoes.) Try the *Relax-While-It-Cooks Foil Chicken* recipe on pg. 18.

Resource Summer-2 (continued)

☐ Cook a chicken breast for a fast, low-fat meal.

- ◆ Skinless chicken breasts are a perfect quick food. Here are some quick-to-fix choices for one person using 1/2 of a chicken breast.
 - Honey-Mustard Chicken: Marinate in 1 tsp. honey and 1 tsp. Dijon mustard. A dash of curry powder or soy sauce may be added (optional). Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or until done. Note: Boneless breasts take only 15 minutes to cook.
 - Easy Broiled Chicken: Marinate in a mixture of 2 TB fat-free Italian salad dressing, 2 TB tomato juice, and a dash of chili powder or pepper sauce. Broil, basting the chicken frequently, until it is done.
 - Italian Chicken: Pound chicken breast to 1/2-inch thick and roll in 2 TB of Italian-seasoned bread crumbs. Saute in 1 tsp. vegetable oil until done.
 - Chicken Fajitas: Marinate in soy sauce, lime juice, and minced garlic. Grill or broil until done. Slice the chicken and roll up in a tortilla with your favorite Mexican fillings such as cooked onions, chopped tomatoes and a touch of low-fat or fat-free sour cream.

☐ Prepare fast and easy meals with fish.

- ◆ When buying fish, make sure it's fresh (no strong fishy odor). Here are a couple of quick-to-fix choices for one person using a 1/2-inch thick fish fillet (4-ounces raw). The secret for great fish dishes is: don't overcook.
 - Crispy Oven-Fried Fish: Dip fish in milk, yogurt or water and then flour that has been seasoned with salt and pepper. Place in a baking dish. Sprinkle with small amount of paprika.
 - Broiled Fish with Herbs: Place fish in a baking dish and top with 1 tsp. melted margarine, 1 tsp. chopped fresh parsley, 1 tsp. chives, and 1/4 tsp. tarragon. Add paprika, garlic powder, thyme, salt and pepper to taste (optional spices). Broil for 5 minutes.
 - Barbecued Fish in Foil: Place fish on sheet of aluminum foil (sprayed with non-stick spray). Smear 1 TB barbecue sauce over fish and bake at 350° for 15 minutes.
 - Grilled Salmon Fillet: Marinate salmon in lemon juice and soy sauce for 1 hour. Broil or grill for 5 to 10 minutes.

Resource Summer-2 (continued)

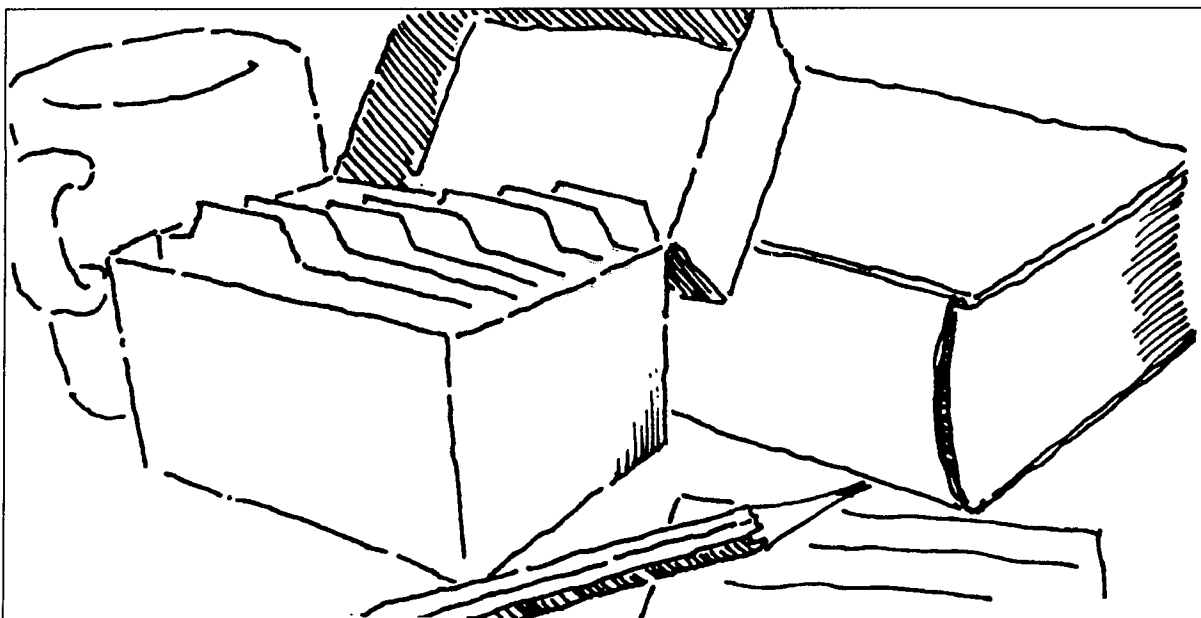
☐ Spice up convenience foods.

- ◆ Add fresh onions, mushrooms, and peppers to bottled or canned spaghetti sauce. Serve over cooked pasta.
- ◆ Mix sliced yellow squash or green peas with Rice-A-Roni® (made without adding fat).
- ◆ Mix chili beans, tomato soup, chopped carrots, peppers, onions, and your favorite seasonings with Spanish-flavored Rice-A-Roni® (made without adding fat) for a hearty Mexican goulash.
- ◆ Add fresh onions, peppers, beans, and tomato sauce to quick-cooking rice.
- ◆ Add diced onion, celery, carrots, a touch of garlic powder, and a hint of lemon juice to spice up canned tomato soup.
- ◆ Add fresh onions, peppers, tomatoes and a small amount of cooked chicken or turkey to bottled Mexican salsa. Serve over hot rice or pasta.

Summer Session

Recipes

- ◆ *Relax-While-It-Cooks Foil Chicken*
- ◆ *Hearty Vegetable Beef Soup*
- ◆ *Chicken-Cabbage Stir-Fry*
- ◆ *Mexican Stir-fry*
- ◆ *Summer Fruit Salad*
- ◆ *Lemon Rice Dessert*



Relax-While-It-Cooks Foil Chicken

1/2 cup barbecue sauce (use commercial or your own favorite homemade choice)
2 skinless chicken breasts* (boneless, optional)
1/2 green pepper, sliced
1 large carrot, cut into strips
1 small potato, thinly sliced

*Creative Tip: Buy skinless chicken breasts and cook additional breasts for a next-day barbecue chicken sandwich.

Preheat oven to 350°F.
Line a small baking pan (8-inch square) with aluminum foil. Place chicken breasts in the pan and pour 1/4 cup barbecue sauce on top. Add the cut vegetables. Add another layer of aluminum foil, and join with bottom foil to fold sides together. Bake about 35 minutes (until pink tinge is gone inside the chicken).

Makes 2 servings

Fat: 5 grams per serving

Servings of Fruit/Vegetables: 2 per serving

Recipe from Eating on the Run

Hearty Vegetable Beef Soup

1 can (10-1/2 ounces) chicken or vegetable broth (regular or unsalted)
1/2 cup water
2 cups frozen mixed vegetables
1 can (16 ounces) tomatoes, broken up
1 cup beef, cooked and diced (top round, or chuck roast)
1 teaspoon thyme leaves, crushed
dash of pepper
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 bay leaf
2 ounces (about 1-1/4 cups) narrow-width noodles, uncooked

Heat the broth and water. Add the vegetables, meat and seasonings. Bring this mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat and gently boil for about 15 minutes, uncovered. Add the noodles and cook until they are tender (about 10 minutes). Remove the bay leaf and serve.

Makes 4 servings

Fat: 3 grams per serving if trimmed beef top round used

Fat: 7 grams of serving if trimmed beef chuck roast used

Servings of Fruit/Vegetables: 1 per serving

Servings of Grains: 1 per serving

Recipe from Home and Garden Bulletin 232-10, "Shopping for Food and Making Meals in Minutes Using the Dietary Guidelines"

Chicken-Cabbage Stir-Fry

1 medium boneless chicken breast, cut into strips
1/2 teaspoon oil
1-1/2 cups green cabbage, cut in 1/2-inch slices
1/2 tablespoon cornstarch
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 cup water
1/2 tablespoon soy sauce

Cut the chicken breast halves into strips. (Note: This is easier to do if the chicken is still partially frozen.) Heat the oil in a skillet and add the chicken strips. Stir-fry over moderately high heat, turning the pieces constantly, until lightly browned (about 2-3 minutes, a little longer if chicken was frozen).

Add cabbage, stir-fry 2 minutes until cabbage is tender-crisp. Mix the cornstarch, ginger, and garlic powder together and add them to the water and soy sauce, mixing until smooth. Stir the liquid into the chicken mixture. Cook until thickened and pieces are coated, about 1 minute.

Serve with thin pasta noodles, such as vermicelli.

Makes 2 servings

Fat: 3 grams per serving

Servings of Fruits/Vegetables: 1 per serving

Recipe from Home and Garden Bulletin 232-10, "Shopping For Food and Making Meals in Minutes Using the Dietary Guidelines"

Mexican Stir-Fry

Staples from the pantry and leftover chicken and rice join to make this spicy dish.

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| 1/2 tablespoon vegetable oil | 4 ounces canned pinto or red kidney beans, drained |
| 1/2 cup chopped onion | 4 ounces white meat of chicken, cooked (boned and skinned), diced |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced | 1 cup long-grain rice, cooked |
| 1/2 cup diced red pepper | 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon shredded low-fat Cheddar cheese |
| 1/2 cup diced green pepper | |
| 2 tablespoons canned chili peppers, drained and chopped | |
| 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce | |
| 1 packet instant chicken broth and seasoning mix | |
| 1/2 teaspoon chili powder | |
| 1/8 teaspoon ground red pepper | |

In a 10-inch non-stick skillet heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and sauté for 3 minutes. Add the red, green and chili peppers and sauté until the vegetables are tender-crisp (about 2 minutes longer). Then stir in tomato sauce, broth mix, chili powder, and ground red pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil and reduce heat to low. Cook for about 5 minutes to blend flavors. Add the beans, chicken, and rice and cook until the mixture is thoroughly heated. Serve sprinkled with cheese.

Makes 2 servings

Fat: 7 grams per serving

Servings of Fruit/Vegetables: 2 1/2 per serving

Servings of Grains: 2 per serving

Recipe from Weight Watchers Fast & Fabulous Cookbook

Summer Fruit Salad

2 cups cooked rice, cooled to room temperature
1/2 cup quartered strawberries
1/2 cup grape halves
2 kiwi fruit, sliced into quarters
1/2 cup pineapple tidbits
1/2 cup banana slices
1/4 cup pineapple juice
2 tablespoons plain non-fat yogurt
1 tablespoon honey
4 lettuce leaves, washed and patted dry

Combine the rice and fruit in a large bowl. Blend the pineapple juice, yogurt, and honey in a small bowl. Pour over the rice mixture; toss lightly and serve on lettuce leaves.

Makes 4 servings.

Fat: 1 gram per serving

Servings of Fruit/Vegetables: 1 per serving

Servings of Grains: 1 per serving

Recipe from Light, Lean & Low-Fat Recipes from the Rice Council

Lemon Rice Dessert

1 package (3 ounces) lemon-flavored gelatin dessert
1 cup boiling water
1/2 cup cold water
1 cup cooked rice, chilled
1-1/2 cups frozen low-fat whipped topping, thawed
1/4 cup chopped maraschino cherries
1/4 cup sliced almonds
1 tablespoon grated lemon peel

Dissolve the gelatin in boiling water, then add cold water. Place the bowl in ice water and stir until the gelatin is the consistency of unbeaten egg whites, then stir in the rice. Fold in the whipped topping until smooth. Lightly fold in almonds, cherries and lemon peel. Continue to stir gently the mixture (over ice) until thickened. Pour into dessert dishes. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

Makes 8 servings.

Fat: 3 grams per serving

Recipe from Light, Lean & Low-Fat Recipes from the Rice Council