



**Children's
Health Fund**

Microwave Chef

*Quick, easy, and healthy meals
you never thought you could
make in the microwave!*





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About This Book

Children's Health Fund has been providing health care to children and families in New York City's homeless shelter system since 1987. We learned early on that helping children and their families stay healthy takes more than the traditional doctor's visit. Helping families maintain their well-being when much has been lost, their homes and their neighborhoods, has been at the heart of Children's Health Fund's work at all its sites around the country.

One common challenge we hear from families is how difficult it is to prepare healthy and tasty food with minimal cooking supplies and little access to healthy ingredients. In fact, most families just have microwaves; the only approved cooking appliance in shelter rooms.

Children's Health Fund met this problem head-on. This cookbook started out as a couple of recipes used in a microwave cooking workshop for homeless women and children. Over time, the number of recipes grew. Like every innovative project, it took a lot of trial and error, and a huge amount of staff dedication and work led by our Nutrition Team. But most of all we relied on the families we work with—willing to cook and taste new recipes and give us the honest advice we needed to hear.

Whether you're a pro in the kitchen or have never cooked at all, this cookbook has much to offer current and future microwave chefs. It features healthy recipes using affordable, easy-to-find ingredients, in a simple-to-follow format. We hope this cookbook sheds new light on microwave cooking.

This cookbook is dedicated to the families we serve. With ingenuity and will, they have shown that delicious and nutritious meals can be made even in the most unlikely places. We hope it will be used by anyone and everyone who finds themselves with limited resources, space, or time.

Microwave Cooking DOs and DON'Ts

DOs

Microwave Safe. Always use microwave-safe containers and dishes, including: glass, ceramic, and plastic dishes labeled “microwave safe.” Plastic can melt and ruin the food. Pots, pans, aluminum foil, and other metals can cause dangerous sparks.

Get Cracking. Eggs cooked in their shell in a microwave will explode! Before cooking an egg, crack the shell and prick the yolk using the tip of a fork or knife.

Kill Germs. Cook meat until it is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear. Cook leftover food until it's steaming hot.

Hot (and Cold) Spots. Stir and rotate your food to cook food evenly.

Knowledge is Power. Check your microwave's power level settings and learn how to adjust levels when you need to.

DON'Ts

Don't Get Burned. Peel plastic wrap or open sealed containers away from you.

Baby Bottle Blues. Don't heat a bottle of formula or breast milk in the microwave. It may feel like the right temperature, but the milk inside can be very hot and burn your baby.

(In) Hot Water. Don't overheat water or other liquids. Follow recipe instructions for boiling or heating liquids to avoid scalding.

Running on Empty. Don't turn on the microwave when nothing is in it. It can start a fire.

Recipe Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Teaspoon | tsp. |
| Tablespoon | Tbsp. or T. |
| Ounce | oz. |
| Pound | lb. |
| Fluid ounce | fl. oz. |
| Pint | pt. |
| Quart | qt. |

Kitchen Measurements

A dash = less than $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon

1 tablespoon = 3 teaspoons

2 tablespoons = 1 fluid ounce

4 tablespoons = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup

5 $\frac{1}{3}$ tablespoons = $\frac{1}{3}$ cup

8 tablespoons = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

16 tablespoons = 1 cup

1 cup = 8 fluid ounces

1 pint = 2 cups

1 quart = 2 pints



Use measuring cups that can be leveled off for solid ingredients, such as butter or flour, to get a more accurate measurement.

How-To...

How To: Plan Healthy Balanced Meals

Healthy balanced meals have:

At least one fruit or vegetable, a starch or grain, and a protein

Low-fat foods

Low-sugar foods

Eating healthy, balanced meals is important because they:

Give you all the nutrients you need to be healthy and strong

Help you maintain a healthy size

Help to prevent some diseases

Steps to a healthy balanced meal:

1. Fill half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the plate with fruits and vegetables. You can always have more fruits and veggies! Make sure this part of the plate is colorful and full of variety. Potatoes and French fries don't count!
2. Fill one quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the plate with starches. Choose whole grain starches such as brown rice and whole wheat pasta.
3. Fill the other quarter ($\frac{1}{4}$) of the plate with protein, such as lean meats, eggs, and/or low-fat dairy.



How To: Read a Recipe

The **Recipe Name** lets you know what food you'll be preparing.

The **Serving Information** tells you how much food the recipe will make.

The **Ingredients List** tells you:

- What food items you need
- How much of each ingredient
- How to get your ingredients ready before you start cooking

The **Directions** tell you:

- What order to follow (steps)
- What to do with the ingredients
- Cooking times and power levels or temperature.

Spaghetti with Ground Turkey Sauce

Makes 6 servings

This hearty dish is low in fat and high in flavor. Whole wheat pasta provides fiber, and ground turkey cuts down on the fat.

What you'll need:

- 1 lb. lean ground turkey
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (28 oz.) jar or can spaghetti sauce
- 2 cups water
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- 8 oz. uncooked whole wheat spaghetti
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Crumble the ground turkey into small pieces in a large microwave-safe bowl. Mix in the onion and garlic. Microwave on HIGH for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring once to break up meat. Microwave again on HIGH for an additional 2 minutes and drain off any fat.
2. Add spaghetti sauce, water, basil, and uncooked spaghetti to the bowl with turkey. Mix gently. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 5 minutes.
3. Remove from microwave and stir well. Re-cover dish and microwave on HIGH for 8 to 10 minutes longer.
4. Remove from microwave again and stir well. Sprinkle with cheese, cover again, and microwave on HIGH for 7 to 8 minutes or until spaghetti is tender.
5. Let stand covered 5 minutes before serving.

Poultry

Most recipes have four major parts: Recipe Name, Serving Information, Ingredients, and Directions. Following a recipe correctly can make cooking easier and your meals tastier!

Remember to read the whole recipe before you start cooking to get the best results.

How To: Defrost Food

3 Ways to Safely Defrost Food:



1. Refrigerator Thawing

Place the frozen food in the fridge and wait until it's thawed. This method may take several hours so it's best to defrost the food overnight. Food that has been defrosted can also be stored in the refrigerator after thawing.

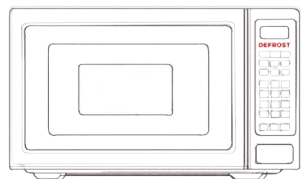
- Store 1 to 2 days for poultry, fish, and ground meat
- Store 3 to 5 days for beef, pork, lamb, or veal



2. Cold Water Thawing

Place the sealed bag of food in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes to keep it cold. Each pound of food should take approximately 30 minutes to thaw.

Cook immediately after thawing.



3. Microwave Thawing

Set the microwave to DEFROST or 50% power to ensure that the edges of the food don't get cooked while defrosting. **Cook immediately after thawing.**

Do NOT put food in hot water or set it on the counter to defrost!
This can cause bacteria to grow and make you sick.

How To: Make a Muffin Collar



Trim a paper cup with scissors. Start from the top of the cup and cut down toward the bottom. When there is only a finger's length distance from the bottom, cut sideways to trim off the top part of the cup. The remaining bottom part of the cup will be your paper muffin liner in the microwave. A 9-ounce cup is a good size for muffins.

Breakfast

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Cheese and Vegetable Frittata

Makes about 6 servings

A frittata is an Italian-style omelet with the ingredients mixed into the eggs. A frittata can be made and refrigerated. Reheat pieces in the microwave for a quick and healthy breakfast. This recipe calls for zucchini and scallions, but you can use different vegetables. We recommend using low-fat cheese and non-fat milk to cut down on calories and saturated fat.

What you'll need:

1 medium zucchini

½ cup shredded low-fat cheese

2 scallions finely sliced

4 eggs

½ cup evaporated fat-free (skim) milk

Pinch of salt and pepper

Directions:

1. Slice zucchini into thin disks. Place in a small microwave-safe baking dish. Cook on HIGH for 1 ½ to 2 minutes. Zucchini should be slightly softened and bright green.
2. Sprinkle cheese and scallions over zucchini.
3. Crack eggs into a large bowl. Add evaporated milk, salt, and pepper. Beat mixture until well blended.
4. Pour egg mixture over vegetables and cheese. Microwave on HIGH for 4 minutes. Stir.
5. Microwave again on MEDIUM for 7 to 8 minutes or until center is firm (but not dry). Let stand for a few minutes before serving.



Fried Egg

Makes 1 serving

A healthier and faster alternative to traditional stovetop fried eggs.

What you'll need:

Cooking spray

1 egg

Directions:

1. Spray microwave-safe dish with cooking spray.
2. Break one egg onto the dish. Make a small hole in the yolk with the tip of a knife.
3. Cover with plastic wrap. Cook on MEDIUM for 2 to 3 minutes.



Poached Eggs

Makes 1 serving

Poaching is another healthy and easy way to cook eggs in the microwave.

What you'll need:

2 eggs

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup water

Directions:

1. Break eggs and carefully place in microwave-safe bowl with the water.
2. Make a small hole in the yolks with tip of knife. Cover bowl with plastic wrap.
3. Cook on HIGH for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 minutes. Let stand until yolks and whites have thickened. Drain water and serve.





Omelet in a Mug

Makes 1 serving

We use low-fat cheese and fat-free milk for less fat. Try adding frozen vegetables for a nutritional boost. For a healthy and quick breakfast on-the-go, serve on a whole grain English muffin or bread.

What you'll need:

1 slice turkey or ham

1 or 2 eggs

1 to 2 Tbsp. shredded low-fat cheese

1 Tbsp. fat-free (skim) milk or water

Pinch of salt and pepper

Optional: 1 whole grain English muffin, 1 whole grain pita or 2 slices of whole grain bread

Directions:

1. Place turkey or ham in the bottom of a microwave-safe cup and break egg(s) into cup. Add cheese, milk or water, and salt and pepper.
2. Whip egg mixture with a fork. Cover cup with a paper towel or napkin and microwave on HIGH:

For ONE egg: cook 25 seconds. Stir. Cook again for about 30 seconds.

For TWO eggs: cook 30 seconds. Stir. Cook again for 25 to 35 seconds.

Fresh and Fruity Pancakes

Makes about 4 servings

Use a whole wheat pancake mix to get more fiber and whole grains!

What you'll need:

Boxed or prepared pancake mix (you'll also need egg, oil, water, and/or milk)

Fresh or frozen fruit, such as strawberries or blueberries

1 tsp. cinnamon

1 tsp. vanilla extract

½ tsp. butter

Syrup or honey

Directions:

1. Prepare the pancake mix using the instructions on the back of the box.
2. Slice fresh fruit or allow frozen fruit to thaw.
3. Add the cinnamon and vanilla to the prepared pancake mix.
4. Spread butter on a microwave-safe dish.
5. Pour half a cup of the pancake batter onto the buttered dish.
6. Microwave for 45 to 90 seconds depending on the size of your pancakes
7. Repeat steps 4 to 7 above to make more pancakes.
8. Top your pancakes with fruit and a little syrup or honey.



Soups & Salads

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Country Vegetable Soup

Makes 4 to 6 servings

All the vegetables make this soup a nutritional powerhouse. You can toss in whatever vegetables you have on hand. Add ground turkey or lean ground beef for an extra hearty meal. Use low-sodium bouillon and broth to cut down on the salt.

What you'll need:

1 medium onion, chopped

1 Tbsp. or cube bouillon (low-sodium beef or vegetable), mixed into $\frac{1}{4}$ cup warm water

1 lb. ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef (optional)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped celery (1 to 2 stalks)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen peas

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped carrots (about 1 medium carrot)

1 cup shredded cabbage

1 cup peeled and cubed potato (about 1 medium potato)

1 (15 oz.) can diced tomatoes

1 cup uncooked noodles

3 cups broth, tomato juice, or water

Pinch of herbs (parsley, mixed Italian Seasoning)

Directions:

1. Combine onion, bouillon mixture, and meat (if desired) in large microwave-safe dish. Microwave on HIGH for 3 to 4 minutes. Meat will be slightly pink in center. Do not cook meat all the way or it will be tough and rubbery.
2. Add celery, peas, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, tomatoes (with juice), and noodles. Add broth, tomato juice, or water (or some of each). Sprinkle pinch of herbs. Stir. Microwave on HIGH for 15 to 18 minutes. Check that potatoes and noodles are soft. If not, cook for 5 minutes more. Allow to stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Chicken Noodle Soup

Makes 4 servings

Just like grandma used to make! Try using whole wheat noodles to add extra fiber. The celery, carrots, and onion provide a healthy dose of vitamins A and C.

What you'll need:

- ½ chicken breast, chopped**
- 2 stalks celery, trimmed and cut into ¼-inch slices**
- 1 medium onion, diced**
- ½ tsp. minced fresh parsley or mixed herbs**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- ½ tsp. black pepper**
- 5 cups water**
- ½ lb. frozen peas and carrots**
- ½ lb. uncooked egg noodles**

Directions:

1. Place chicken, celery, onion, parsley (or mixed herbs), salt, pepper, and water in a large microwave-safe bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on **HIGH** for 30 minutes or until vegetables are cooked but not soft.
2. Add peas, carrots, and noodles, cover again, and microwave on **HIGH** for 15 minutes, or until noodles are tender. Remove and let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

French Onion Soup

Makes 4 servings

You're sure to enjoy this delicious version of a classic comfort food. To cut back on the salt and fat and to increase the fiber, use low-sodium broth, low-fat cheese, and whole wheat bread.

What you'll need:

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 1½ lb. yellow onions, cut lengthwise and thinly sliced**
- 1 tsp. sugar**
- 2½ cups chicken or beef broth**
- 1 cup water**
- 4 (1-inch thick) slices crusty French bread**
- 2 cups grated Gruyère or other Swiss-style cheese**

Directions:

1. Place 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large bowl and add onions. Toss to coat onions with oil. Microwave uncovered on **HIGH** for 10 minutes, or until onions become clear in color.
2. Stir in sugar and microwave uncovered on **HIGH** for 10 minutes, or until onions are nicely browned. Add broth and water. Cover and microwave on **HIGH** for 10 minutes, or until onions are very soft and broth is boiling.
3. To serve, pour soup into 4 individual microwave-safe bowls. Place 1 slice of bread in each bowl and sprinkle cheese over the top. Microwave each bowl, uncovered, on **HIGH** for 1 minute, or until cheese melts. Serve right away.

Beany Salad

Makes about 6 servings

Beans are affordable and filling and can be used instead of meat. Here we use a mix of chickpeas (garbanzo beans), black beans, and kidney beans, but you can use any beans you have on hand. Beans are high in protein and fiber—remember to rinse them before mixing with other ingredients to cut down on salt.

What you'll need:

- ½ cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed**
- 1 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed**
- 1 cup canned kidney beans, drained and rinsed**
- ½ cup green olives, drained and rinsed**
- 1 cup canned corn, drained and rinsed**
- 6 chopped scallions**
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro**
- ½ cup olive oil**
- ¼ cup vinegar (white wine, red wine, or balsamic)**
- 1 garlic clove, minced**
- 1 tsp. chili powder**
- ½ tsp. salt**
- ¼ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes**
- ¼ tsp. ground black pepper**

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine beans, olives, corn, scallions, bell pepper, and cilantro. Mix well.
2. In a small bowl, beat together olive oil, vinegar, garlic, chili powder, salt, red pepper flakes, and black pepper.
3. Pour oil mixture over bean salad and stir.



Italian-Style Salad

Makes about 6 servings

This fresh, crunchy salad is made with any low-fat cheese. You can use shredded part-skim mozzarella or Parmesan cheese instead of goat or feta cheese. The chickpeas and vegetables are full of fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

What you'll need:

- 1 garlic clove**
- ½ cup olive oil**
- 1 large head romaine lettuce**
- 1 red bell pepper**
- 1 medium red onion**
- 1 fresh fennel bulb**
- 1 (16 oz.) can garbanzo beans (chickpeas)**
- ¼ cup sliced pitted black olives**
- ¼ cup white wine vinegar**
- 1½ tsp. dried oregano (or mixed Italian Seasoning)**
- ½ cup crumbled goat cheese or feta**

Directions:

- 1.** Mince garlic and mix with oil in a small bowl. Set aside while you prepare the salad to allow the garlic to flavor the oil.
- 2.** Chop lettuce and red pepper. Place in large bowl. Thinly slice onion and fennel. Add to lettuce and red pepper mixture.
- 3.** Drain and rinse garbanzo beans under cold water. Add beans and olives to salad.
- 4.** Combine garlic-oil mixture, vinegar, and oregano to make dressing. Mix well.
- 5.** Pour dressing over salad and toss to coat. Sprinkle with cheese before serving.



Poultry

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BBQ Chicken and Sauce

Makes 6 servings

Who doesn't like BBQ chicken? Serve with brown rice (see Tasty Rice recipe on pg. 108) and a big salad for a quick, easy, and healthy meal. You can make a large batch of sauce and store it.

What you'll need:

- 1 medium onion, minced**
- 1 large clove garlic, minced**
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard**
- 1½ cups ketchup**
- 1 Tbsp. cider vinegar**
- 2 Tbsp. packed brown sugar**
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 1 tsp. ground chili pepper**
- Pinch of cayenne**
- 6 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves**

Directions:

1. Make the BBQ Sauce: Place all ingredients, **except the chicken**, in a large microwave-safe bowl and mix together.
2. Microwave uncovered on HIGH for 8 minutes, or until it is bubbling.
3. Stir and use right away, or cool and refrigerate for up to 1 week or freeze for 1 month. Makes about 2 cups.
4. Place chicken in a dish large enough to hold the pieces in one layer. Make sure to leave a little space between pieces.

Adapted from *The Well-Filled Microwave Cookbook* by Victoria Wise and Susanna Hoffman.

5. Measure 1 cup of sauce and spread over chicken to coat pieces. Microwave uncovered on HIGH for 17 to 19 minutes, depending on the chicken's thickness.
6. Check if chicken is ready by cutting with a knife. Chicken is well cooked when it is no longer pink in the center and the juice runs clear. Serve right away with remaining sauce.



Chicken Nuggets

Makes 4 to 6 servings

A healthier version of kids' favorite. Save money by purchasing split chicken breasts and removing the skin and bones. Choose a low-sugar, high-fiber cereal for the coating. Choose low-sugar, high-fiber cereals by looking at the food label. Sugars should be less than 10 g and fiber should be more than 3 g. Use your favorite salad dressing, but make sure it's low-fat.

What you'll need:

2 large (about 1 lb.) skinless, boneless chicken breasts

1 cup all-purpose flour

1 cup low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk

1 Tbsp. low-fat salad dressing (such as low-fat Ranch or Thousand Island)

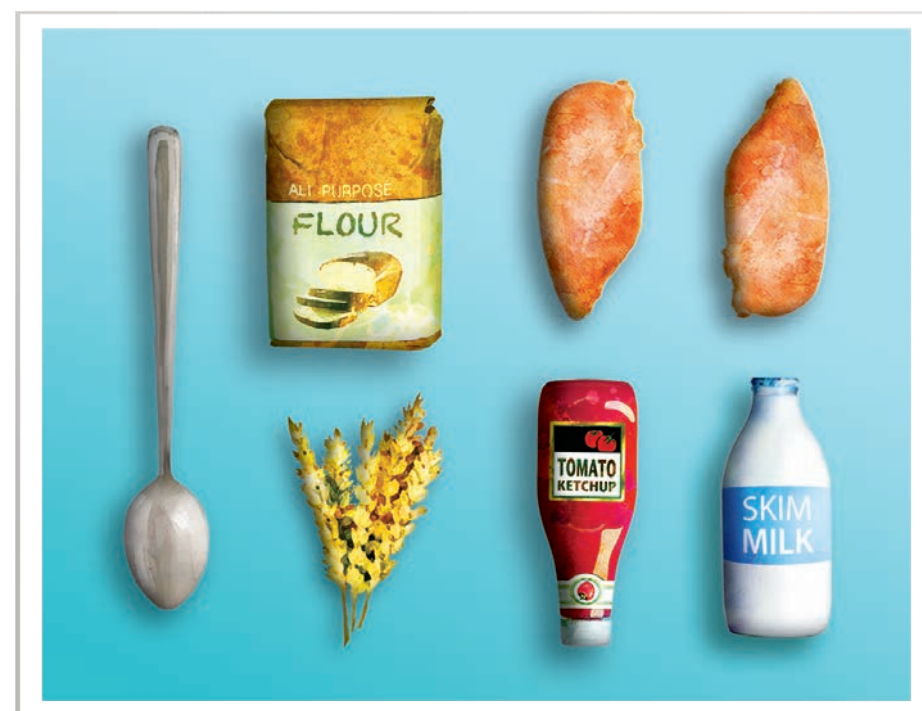
Breakfast cereal flakes, such as bran or corn flakes

Optional: Use ketchup, BBQ sauce (see BBQ sauce recipe on pg. 36), or honey mustard as dipping sauce

Directions:

1. Cut chicken into bite-size chunks and place in a bowl. Sprinkle with flour and toss to coat.
2. In a separate bowl, combine milk and salad dressing, then add chicken pieces and let them soak.
3. While chicken pieces are soaking, place cereal in a plastic bag. Crush cereal with your hands, the bottom of a bowl, or a can. Be careful not to crush too much. You want the nuggets to have the crunch of the cereal. Empty bag of crumbs onto a flat dish.

4. Remove chicken pieces from bowl one at a time, letting extra liquid drip off. Place on cereal crumbs. Turn chicken and pat to coat with crumbs on both sides. Place coated chicken nuggets on a microwave-safe plate. Do not allow them to touch if possible. Cover with a paper towel.
5. Cook on **MEDIUM** for about 3 minutes. Turn pieces over and cook for 1 to 2 minutes on **MEDIUM HIGH**. Cut into one nugget to check if chicken is cooked. The meat should be white all the way through. If not, cook for 1 to 2 minutes more.
6. Serve right away with your favorite dipping sauce.



Chicken Parmesan

Makes 6 servings

This chicken parmesan is both tasty and nutritious. Tomatoes are a great source of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Chicken breast is high in protein and mozzarella is high in calcium, phosphorous, and vitamin B12. Try using bran flakes in place of corn flakes for more fiber and low-fat mozzarella for less fat.

What you'll need:

1 small (8 oz.) can tomato sauce

1 tsp. Italian Seasoning

¼ tsp. garlic powder

½ cup bran or corn flakes

¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1 tsp. dried basil (or other herb)

6 (about 1 ½ to 2 lb.) skinless, boneless chicken breasts

1 egg, beaten

⅔ cup shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese

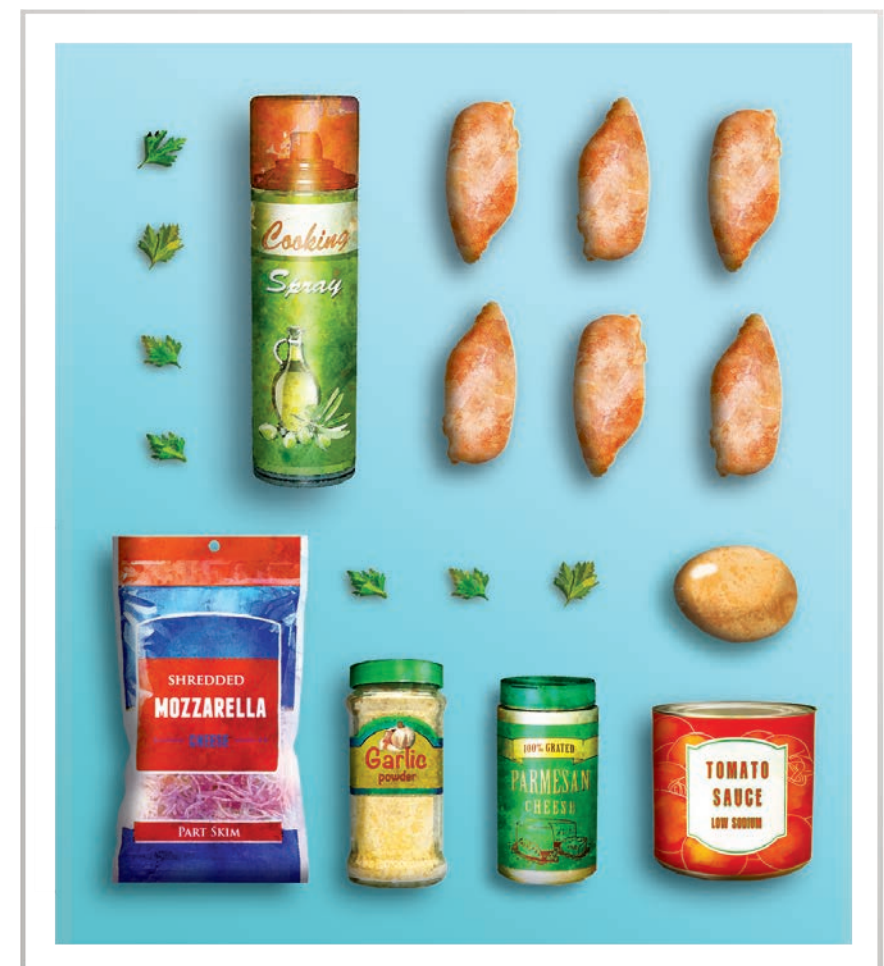
Cooking spray

Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

Directions:

1. In a microwave-safe bowl, mix tomato sauce, Italian Seasoning, and garlic powder. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 2 minutes.
2. Remove from microwave and stir. Cook again on MEDIUM for 3 to 5 minutes, or until mixture simmers.
3. Remove again, stir once more, and set aside.
4. Meanwhile, place cereal in a plastic bag. Crush cereal with your hands, the bottom of a bowl, or a can. Mix crumbs, Parmesan cheese, and basil. Dip chicken into egg, and then roll in crumb mixture.

5. Spray a shallow microwave-safe dish lightly with cooking spray. Place chicken on the dish. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 5 to 6 minutes. Turn the dish a half turn and cook on HIGH for another 5 minutes.
6. Pour tomato mixture over chicken and sprinkle with mozzarella. Cook uncovered on MEDIUM for 3 to 5 minutes, or until chicken is done. Check by cutting into a piece. Chicken is well cooked when it is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear. Sprinkle with red pepper flakes if desired and serve warm.



Salsa Verde Burrito with Chicken

Makes 4 servings

Here's a flavorful and fun version of the burrito. Use low-fat sour cream to cut down on fat, whole wheat tortillas for added whole grains, and chopped tomatoes for vitamin A.

What you'll need:

- 1 small onion, finely chopped**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup tomatillo sauce or salsa verde**
- $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into thin strips**
- 4 regular-size whole wheat tortillas**
- 4 cups chopped tomatoes (4 large tomatoes or one 28-oz. can of chopped tomatoes)**
- 1 large bell pepper, thinly sliced**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-fat sour cream or plain yogurt**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh cilantro leaves, chopped**

Directions:

- 1.** Stir onion, garlic, and tomatillo sauce or salsa together in a medium-size, microwave-safe bowl. Microwave uncovered on HIGH for 2 minutes, or until onion becomes clear in color.
- 2.** Remove sauce from microwave. Add chicken strips and stir. Microwave again uncovered on HIGH for 5 minutes. Chicken is well cooked when it is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear.
- 3.** Divide chicken mixture, chopped tomatoes, and peppers among the tortillas, and spread over the centers. Fold sides of tortilla towards the center. Then take the bottom flap and wrap it around, tucking the loose end under the mixture. Roll it over, seam side down. Repeat for each tortilla.

- 4.** Microwave uncovered on HIGH for 1 minute, or until tortillas are warm to the touch. Top with sour cream or yogurt and cilantro. Serve right away.



Curry Chicken with Vegetables

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Short on time? Here's a quick and easy one-pot meal. The vegetables provide vitamins, minerals, and fiber. The skinless chicken breast is high in protein and low in fat.

What you'll need:

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into 2-inch pieces**
- 1 medium onion, coarsely chopped**
- 2 medium (1 lb.) potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes**
- 1 large red pepper, chopped**
- 2 cups green beans, chopped**
- 2½ Tbsp. curry powder**
- ¾ tsp. salt**
- ½ cup water**

Directions:

1. Place olive oil in a large microwave-safe bowl.
2. Add remaining ingredients to the oil and stir to mix. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and microwave on **HIGH** for 10 minutes, or until bubbling.
3. Take out of the microwave, mix well, cover again; then microwave on **HIGH** for another 12 minutes, or until the potatoes are soft (check with a fork). Check to see if chicken is done by cutting into a piece. Chicken is well cooked when it is no longer pink in the center and the juices run clear.
4. Serve right away.

Saucy Mushroom Chicken

Makes 2 servings

Skinless, boneless chicken breasts are a great source of lean protein and mushrooms pack a powerful antioxidant punch.

What you'll need:

- 2 Tbsp. dried parsley**
- 2 Tbsp. chives**
- 8 oz. fresh (or canned) mushrooms, sliced thin**
- 2 small skinless, boneless chicken breasts (5 to 6 oz. each)**
- ⅓ cup lemon juice**
- ½ tsp. poultry seasoning**
- ½ tsp. onion powder**
- 1 tsp. paprika**
- Pinch of salt**
- 1 packet unflavored gelatin**

Directions:

1. Combine parsley, chives, and mushrooms in a microwave-safe dish. Place chicken on top of mushroom-mixture. Pour lemon juice over chicken, and sprinkle with poultry seasoning, onion powder, paprika, and salt. Using your hands, rub the spices into the chicken.
2. Add gelatin. Cover dish with lid or plastic wrap. Microwave on **HIGH** for 11 to 14 minutes. Check to see if chicken is done by cutting into the thickest piece. Chicken is well cooked when it is no longer be pink in the center and the juices run clear.
3. If chicken requires additional cooking time, replace cover and cook for 2 to 3 minutes more. Serve warm.

Turkey Cutlets with Pears and Tarragon

Makes 4 servings

Cooking with fruit adds a whole new dimension to your meal!

The pears and cherries add a sweet flavor and are good sources of vitamins. Here we use low-sodium or no-salt-added chicken broth.

If you can't find one of these, remove the salt from the recipe.

Turkey is high in protein and lower in fat than red meat. Make sure that the turkey has not been processed with added salt (sometimes called sodium chloride).

What you'll need:

4 turkey (or chicken) cutlets (about 1 lb.)

2 Tbsp. olive or canola oil

Pinch of salt and pepper

2 large firm pears

1 cup chicken broth (low-sodium or no-salt-added)

2 tsp. Dijon mustard

½ tsp. dried tarragon

¼ cup dried cherries or cranberries (optional)

Directions:

1. Rinse turkey and pat dry. Place on cutting board. If cutlets are very thick, split them in half lengthwise.
2. Pour 2 Tbsp. oil into a microwave-safe dish. Heat on HIGH for about 1 minute. While oil is heating, lightly sprinkle both sides of turkey with salt and pepper.
3. Remove dish from microwave and add turkey. Do not cover. Cook on MEDIUM HIGH for 1 to 2 minutes. Turn cutlets over and cook 1 to 2 minutes on the other side. **Cutlets will NOT be fully cooked at this point.** Transfer turkey to a microwave-safe plate to rest.

4. Meanwhile, slice pears in half, remove cores and seeds, and then cut into medium-thin slices. Place pears in dish. Cook pears on HIGH 4 to 7 minutes, pausing to stir a couple of times during cooking.
5. While pears are cooking, pour chicken broth into a small bowl. Add mustard, tarragon, and cherries or cranberries, and stir well. Remove pears from microwave and place on top of turkey cutlets. Pour broth mixture over turkey and pears. Cook on HIGH for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring occasionally until sauce thickens slightly and pears are soft. Turkey is well cooked when it is no longer pink in the center and juices run clear. Serve hot.



Festive Fajitas

Makes 4 servings

Fajitas don't have to be high in fat and calories. In this low-fat fajita recipe, whole wheat tortillas add vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Corn tortillas are a good option too, because they add calcium and iron. This balanced dish will give you protein (from the chicken), calcium (from the cheese), and vitamin C (from the green peppers, onions, and tomatoes).

What you'll need:

- 1 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut in thin strips**
- 2 to 3 tsp. fajita seasoning mix (for homemade version, see recipe on pg. 50)**
- 1 green bell pepper, thinly sliced**
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced**
- 4 oz. shredded low-fat Mexican or cheddar cheese**
- 4 (8-inch) whole wheat tortillas**
- 1 tomato, chopped (optional)**
- Low-fat plain yogurt**

Directions:

1. Place chicken strips in a microwave-safe dish and sprinkle with fajita seasoning. Cover with plastic wrap and cook on **MEDIUM HIGH** for 3 to 5 minutes.
2. Add the sliced green bell pepper and onion to chicken strips. Cook for 3 minutes on **MEDIUM HIGH**. Check to see if food is done. Vegetables should be cooked, but not soggy, and juices from meat should run clear. If not done, cook for 2 minutes at a time (checking after each 2 minutes) until cooked.

3. Sprinkle shredded cheese on top of chicken, peppers, and onions. Return the dish to the microwave. Cook on **MEDIUM HIGH** for 1 to 2 minutes, or until cheese is melted.
4. Fill each tortilla with one quarter of the chicken and vegetable mixture and fold over. Top with chopped tomatoes or spoonful of low-fat plain yogurt and serve.



Fajita Seasoning Mix

Why buy seasoning mix when it's full of salt, artificial flavors, and artificial colors? Here's how to make your own. Using all the ingredients makes the most flavorful seasoning. If you don't have one of them, use another one of your favorite spices or just leave it out.

What you'll need:

- 2 tsp. chili powder**
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1 tsp. paprika**
- 1 tsp. sugar**
- 1 tsp. onion powder**
- 1 tsp. garlic powder**
- ½ tsp. cumin**
- Pinch of cayenne pepper**

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a small plastic bag. Keep the bag in the refrigerator. Use to make fajitas and to flavor other dishes.



Spaghetti with Ground Turkey Sauce

Makes 6 servings

This hearty dish is low in fat and high in flavor. Whole wheat pasta provides fiber, and ground turkey cuts down on the fat.

What you'll need:

- 1 lb. lean ground turkey**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1 (28 oz.) jar or can spaghetti sauce**
- 2 cups water**
- ½ tsp. dried basil**
- 8 oz. uncooked whole wheat spaghetti**
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese**

Directions:

1. Crumble the ground turkey into small pieces in a large microwave-safe bowl. Mix in the onion and garlic. Microwave on HIGH for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring once to break up meat. Microwave again on HIGH for an additional 2 minutes and drain off any fat.
2. Add spaghetti sauce, water, basil, and uncooked spaghetti to the bowl with turkey. Mix gently. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 5 minutes.
3. Remove from microwave and stir well. Re-cover dish and microwave on HIGH for 8 to 10 minutes longer.
4. Remove from microwave again and stir well. Sprinkle with cheese, cover again, and microwave on HIGH for 7 to 8 minutes or until spaghetti is tender.
5. Let stand covered 5 minutes before serving.

Turkey Meatballs in Zucchini-Tomato Sauce

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Try using ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef as a healthier alternative to regular ground beef. Look for no-salt-added tomato sauce. Zucchini is low in calories and high in folate, potassium, and vitamins A and C.

What you'll need:

1 lb. ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef

½ cup breadcrumbs

1 egg, beaten

1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce (optional)

**Pinch of seasonings (such as mixed Italian Seasoning,
oregano, basil, garlic powder)**

1 (28 oz.) can low-sodium tomato sauce

1 medium zucchini, shredded

Directions:

1. Mix turkey, breadcrumbs, egg, Worcestershire sauce, and seasonings in a large bowl. Using your hands, fold over gently to mix. Do not over-mix! Meat gets tougher the more you handle it.
2. Divide and shape mixture into small balls and place on a microwave-safe plate. Meatballs should not touch each other in the dish. Cover with plastic wrap and cook on **HIGH** for 3 to 4 minutes.
3. While meatballs are cooking, shred zucchini with a grater.
4. Turn meatballs over, cover again, and cook on **HIGH** for another 3 to 4 minutes. Meatballs may not be fully cooked.
5. Pour tomato sauce over meatballs. Add shredded zucchini. Add a bit more seasoning and stir gently. Cover and finish cooking on **MEDIUM HIGH** for 5 to 6 minutes. Serve warm alone or over pasta.



Meat

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Basic Meatloaf

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Meatloaf is a comfort food. Here we use ground turkey in place of beef as a healthier alternative. You can also try extra-lean ground beef or ground chicken. The meat and egg are both good sources of lean protein. Garlic, onion, celery, and whole wheat bread add fiber, vitamins, and minerals. This is a dish you will love and can feel good about eating.

What you'll need:

1 slice whole wheat bread, torn into small pieces

¼ cup chopped celery (about ½ stalk)

1 egg, lightly beaten

1 garlic clove, minced

1 small onion, chopped

½ tsp. salt

⅛ tsp. pepper

1 ½ lb. ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, mix bread, celery, egg, garlic, onion, salt, and pepper.
2. Crumble meat into the mixture and mix with your hands.
3. Press meat mixture into a small microwave-safe dish. Meat should be shaped like a loaf of bread. Microwave on HIGH for 7 minutes or until meat is no longer pink.
4. Remove and rotate dish to cook meat evenly, and cook on HIGH for another 7 minutes.
5. Let stand 3 to 5 minutes before slicing.

Chili Tomato Meatballs and Sauce

Makes 20 small meatballs

Use ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef and brown rice to cut down on the fat and add fiber. Tomatoes are rich in vitamins A and C, and the powerful antioxidant lycopene. Onion, garlic, and chipotle chilies add flavor, and they are full of vitamins and minerals.

What you'll need:

1 Tbsp. olive oil

6 to 8 (¾ lb.) plum tomatoes, chopped

**2 dried or canned chipotle chilies, stemmed
and chopped (if using dried, soften with hot water)**

2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped

½ cup low-sodium chicken or beef broth

1 tsp. salt

½ lb. ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef

2 Tbsp. minced onion

**¼ cup cooked brown rice (see Tasty Rice recipe
on pg. 108)**

1 egg, lightly beaten

½ tsp. chopped fresh or ¼ tsp. dried oregano leaves

¼ tsp. chili powder

⅓ cup fresh cilantro, chopped

Adapted from *The Well-Filled Microwave Cookbook* by Victoria Wise and Susanna Hoffman.

Directions:

1. Mix oil, tomatoes, chilies, garlic, broth, and half the salt in a medium-size microwave-safe dish. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on **HIGH** for 5 minutes, or until tomatoes are cooked through. Remove and mix well. Set aside.
2. Mix ground turkey, onion, rice, egg, oregano, chili powder, and the remaining salt. With your hands, make small meatballs.
3. Arrange meatballs in a deep microwave-safe dish, large enough to hold meatballs in one layer and deep enough to hold the sauce. Meatballs should not be touching. Microwave uncovered on **HIGH** for 2 minutes, or until meatballs are firm.
4. Pour sauce into dish and stir to coat meatballs. Cover and microwave on **HIGH** for 5 minutes, or until sauce is bubbling and meatballs are no longer pink in the center. Sprinkle cilantro on each serving. Serve right away.



Chinese Beef and Peapods

Makes 4 to 6 servings

This tasty dish is packed with vitamins and minerals, thanks to all of the vegetables. Top round or sirloin steak is low in fat and high in protein and iron. You can serve this over cooked brown rice (see Tasty Rice recipe on pg. 108).

What you'll need:

1 to 1½ lb. top round or sirloin steak

Asian seasoning mix

¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce

1 Tbsp. water

1 Tbsp. brown sugar

¼ tsp. ground ginger

2 Tbsp. cornstarch, dissolved in 2 Tbsp. cold water

1 (6 oz.) can drained or 1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced

1 (6 oz.) package frozen peapods, thawed

¼ cup sliced scallions

Directions:

1. Trim fat from beef. Cut into 2-inch long strips (¼-inch thick) against the grain. Place in microwave-safe dish and sprinkle with Asian seasoning. Mix soy sauce, water, brown sugar, and ginger, and pour over steak. Cover and microwave on MEDIUM HIGH for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring once, or until meat is no longer pink.
2. Drain soy sauce mixture into a small microwave-safe bowl and add cornstarch-water mixture. Stir until smooth. Microwave on HIGH for 1 to 2 minutes, until boiling and thickened.
3. Stir soy sauce mixture into meat. Add mushrooms, peapods, and scallions.
4. Microwave on MEDIUM HIGH for 7 to 8 minutes. Pause and stir once after 3 minutes. Continue until steaming hot and meat is tender (check with fork). Serve right away.



Meat Lasagna

Makes 6 to 8 servings

This lasagna is quick to make and full of flavor. Instead of boiling the lasagna noodles, we use uncooked noodles. The steam made by the sauce and other ingredients cooks the noodles. Lasagna can be a healthy, all-in-one meal! To make this recipe super healthy, choose low-fat cheese and low-sodium tomato sauce. Also, pick whole wheat lasagna noodles for more fiber, and add a fresh green salad on the side.

What you'll need:

1 medium onion, diced

2 Tbsp. canola oil

½ lb. ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef

1 (28 oz.) can or jar tomato sauce

1 Tbsp. oregano

1 (6 oz.) package frozen spinach, thawed

**1 small container part-skim ricotta or low-fat (1%)
cottage cheese**

1 egg, lightly beaten

1 Tbsp. chopped parsley

1 (9 oz.) package uncooked lasagna noodles

1 (6 oz.) package frozen chopped broccoli, thawed

1 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

Parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Place onion in a microwave-safe dish with canola oil. Cook on HIGH for 2 minutes until onions are soft and clear in color.

2. Add ground turkey and cook on HIGH for 3 minutes. Stir to break into small pieces. Cook again on HIGH for 1 to 2 minutes. When the meat is brown, place in a colander to drain off the fat.
3. Place drained turkey and onions into a mixing bowl. Add tomato sauce and oregano. If mixture seems very thick, add a little water. Stir well and set aside.
4. Empty spinach into a colander or strainer. Squeeze out as much water as you can. In a separate dish, place spinach, ricotta, egg, and parsley. Mix well and set aside.
5. Add a large spoonful of meat sauce to the bottom of a medium-size microwave-safe dish, and spread evenly. Place 3 to 4 uncooked noodles evenly over sauce. If the noodles are too long, break them. Make them a little shorter than the dish because they will expand as they cook.
6. Cover noodles with about half of the meat sauce. Spread half of the spinach mixture on top of sauce. Sprinkle half of the broccoli over spinach mixture. Sprinkle half of the shredded mozzarella cheese over broccoli.
7. Place more uncooked noodles on top of mozzarella cheese and press down lightly. Repeat step 6. After you add last set of noodles, cover with the rest of the meat sauce.
8. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 8 minutes. Rotate dish a half turn and cook on HIGH for 7 minutes more.
9. Reset your microwave for MEDIUM and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, until noodles are tender. Poke with a knife to test for tenderness. Remove plastic wrap, sprinkle lightly with Parmesan, and microwave uncovered on HIGH for 1 to 2 minutes, until cheese melts. Serve hot.



Stuffed Zucchini Boats

Makes 8 servings

We use turkey instead of ground beef to make this recipe healthier, but you can use extra-lean beef. Look for no-salt-added tomato sauce to cut down on sodium. Zucchini is low in calories and high in vitamins A, B, and C as well as potassium.

What you'll need:

½ cup chopped onion

½ cup chopped green pepper

1 lb. ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef

4 medium zucchini

1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce (no-salt-added preferred)

8 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese

1½ tsp. garlic powder

1 tsp. salt (optional)

Directions:

1. Combine onion, green pepper, and turkey or beef in a microwave-safe baking dish. Microwave on **HIGH** for 2 minutes. Stir and microwave for another 2 minutes or until meat is cooked (no longer pink).
2. Transfer to a colander and break up any large chunks with a wooden spoon.
3. Cut each zucchini in half lengthwise. Scoop out insides and chop them coarsely. Set aside zucchini shells. Place chopped zucchini in a medium bowl and mix with turkey, tomato sauce, 6 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese, garlic powder and salt. Spread mixture evenly inside of the zucchini shells.
4. Sprinkle remaining 2 Tbsp. of Parmesan cheese evenly on top of stuffed zucchini shells. Place on a plate and cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on **HIGH** about 5 minutes, or until zucchini is cooked through. Shells should be soft but slightly crisp.

Sloppy Joes

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Sloppy Joes are an all-American favorite. We use ground turkey to lower the fat and whole wheat hamburger buns to increase the vitamins, minerals, and fiber. You can also use extra-lean ground beef or ground chicken.

What you'll need:

- ½ lb. ground turkey or extra-lean ground beef**
- ½ onion, chopped**
- 1 tsp. chili powder**
- 2 Tbsp. ketchup**
- Dash of salt and pepper**
- 1 small can condensed tomato soup**
- 6 to 8 whole wheat hamburger buns**

Directions:

1. Place ground turkey and onion in a microwave-safe dish and cover with plastic wrap.
2. Microwave on HIGH for 5 to 6 minutes, until meat is no longer pink.
3. Drain to remove fat. Add salt, pepper, chili powder, and ketchup, and mix well.
4. Stir in tomato soup. Cover with a paper towel and microwave on HIGH for 5 to 6 minutes. Pause and stir twice. Let stand for 5 minutes.
5. Serve on hamburger buns.

Pepper Steak

Makes about 6 servings

Flank steak is one of the leanest cuts of red meat available. Look for no-salt-added tomatoes and tomato sauce and low-sodium soy sauce to cut down on sodium.

What you'll need:

- 1 ½ lb. beef flank steak**
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour**
- 1 Tbsp. onion powder**
- 1 Tbsp. dehydrated onion**
- Salt and pepper to taste**
- 1 green, red, or yellow bell pepper, sliced in thin strips**
- 1 (16 oz.) can whole tomatoes (no-salt-added)**
- 1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce (no-salt-added)**
- 2 tsp. chopped chives or parsley**
- 2 tsp. soy sauce (optional)**

Directions:

1. Slice steak into thin strips. Make sure to cut across the grain, not with it. Place strips into a microwave-safe dish.
2. Combine flour, onion powder, dehydrated onion, and a pinch of salt and pepper. Sprinkle flour mixture over steak. Stir to coat each piece.
3. Mix peppers, tomatoes, tomato sauce, chives (or parsley), and soy sauce, and pour on top of steak. Cover tightly with plastic wrap, leaving a small vent in one corner of the dish.
4. Microwave for 15 to 20 minutes on MEDIUM HIGH, or until beef strips are cooked and tender (check with a fork). Let stand 10 minutes before eating to allow sauce to thicken.

Seafood

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Baked Halibut

Makes 4 servings

Halibut is a lean white fish. If you can't find halibut, use fluke, flounder, or cod.

What you'll need:

1 tsp. minced parsley

¼ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. grated lemon or lime zest (also known as peel)

⅛ tsp. pepper

1 lb. fresh or frozen halibut steaks, thawed

Cooking spray

2 Tbsp. lemon or lime juice

Directions:

1. Combine parsley, salt, lemon zest, and pepper. Sprinkle over fish.
2. Spray a shallow, microwave-safe dish with cooking spray. Place the fish in one layer in the baking dish.
3. Spray the fish with cooking spray. Pour lemon juice over the fish evenly.
4. Cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on **HIGH** for 2 minutes, or until fish flakes easily. The inside should be completely white and not see-through.

Cajun Baked Fish

Makes 4 servings

Like most fish, catfish is low in fat and high in protein. Its mild flavor makes it a popular choice with kids. This recipe is adapted from a Cajun favorite. By microwaving instead of pan-frying the fish, you get the same Creole flavor without the extra calories and fat.

What you'll need:

¼ cup low-fat mayonnaise

¼ tsp. crushed red pepper

½ tsp. ground cumin

¼ tsp. onion powder

¼ tsp. garlic powder

1 lb. catfish fillets (or another mild white fish)

½ cup crushed crackers

Directions:

1. Mix mayonnaise, red pepper, ground cumin, onion powder, and garlic powder. Roll both sides of fish in spice mixture, then roll the fish in cracker crumbs.
2. Place the fish fillets in a microwave-safe dish and cover with plastic wrap. Be sure that the thicker pieces of fish are closer to the outside of the dish. Microwave on **HIGH** for 3 to 4 minutes. Let stand a few seconds. When done, the fish fillets will flake easily. Serve hot.





Shrimp Creole

Makes 6 servings

Shrimp Creole is a popular Southern standard. Thanks to lots of vegetables (onions, celery, green bell pepper, tomatoes) and lean protein (shrimp), it also makes for a healthy one-dish dinner. Pair with brown rice for a well-balanced meal (see Tasty Rice recipe on pg. 108).

What you'll need:

- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil**
- 1 small onion, chopped**
- ½ cup chopped celery (1 to 2 stalks)**
- ½ green bell pepper, chopped**
- 1½ Tbsp. cornstarch, mixed well in ½ Tbsp. of cold water**
- 1 tsp. sugar**
- 1 (15 oz.) can stewed tomatoes**
- 1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce (no salt added)**
- ½ tsp. chili powder**
- ½ tsp. garlic salt**
- 1 (12 to 16 oz.) package frozen shrimp, peeled and deveined**

Directions:

- 1.** In a microwave-safe dish, combine oil, onion, celery, and green bell pepper. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on **HIGH** for 3 to 4 minutes, until vegetables are tender.
- 2.** Stir in cornstarch and sugar. Add stewed tomatoes, tomato sauce, chili powder, garlic salt, and shrimp. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on **HIGH** for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring once or twice during cooking, until shrimp are pink, no longer see-through and tender. Do not let the shrimp overcook, or they will become tough.
- 3.** Let stand 2 minutes. Serve over brown rice.

Garlic Shrimp

Makes 4 servings

This simple shrimp dish is popular with kids, and ready in minutes. Shrimp are low in calories and high in protein and many minerals. Cut out the butter to lower the calories and fat even more! Serve with brown rice and mixed vegetables for a quick and healthy meal (see Tasty Rice recipe on pg. 108).

What you'll need:

1 Tbsp. butter

½ tsp. garlic powder

2 tsp. parsley flakes

1 (12 oz.) package frozen shrimp, peeled and deveined

Pinch of salt and pepper

Directions:

1. Place butter in a microwave-safe dish. Microwave on HIGH for 30 to 45 seconds, or until melted. Stir in garlic powder, parsley flakes, salt, and pepper.
2. Separate shrimp and layer in the dish. Stir to coat shrimp with butter mixture.
3. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 5 to 8 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes, until shrimp are pink and are no longer see-through.
4. Let stand, covered, for about 2 minutes before serving.

Vegetarian

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Falafel Pita Sandwiches

Makes 6 servings

Chickpeas are inexpensive, healthy, and delicious. Falafel, a chickpea patty, is often fried, but here we make it with just a little oil for a healthier dish. The vegetables add vitamins, minerals, and fiber, and the cucumber-yogurt sauce provides calcium. Look for whole wheat pita bread and low-fat or fat-free plain yogurt.

What you'll need:

1 (15 oz.) can chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed

1 large egg

½ tsp. ground cumin

½ tsp. salt

2 tsp. olive oil

Pinch of cayenne pepper

¼ medium onion, chopped

1 garlic clove, minced

2 Tbsp. chopped fresh parsley or pinch of dried parsley

3 whole wheat pitas (cut each in half to make 2 pockets)

2 cups shredded lettuce

2 sliced tomatoes

½ red onion, sliced

Directions:

1. Place chickpeas in a large microwave-safe bowl and microwave on HIGH for 4 to 6 minutes, until they are soft and easy to mash.

2. Mash chickpeas with a fork.
3. Break egg into small bowl and beat lightly. Add cumin, salt, oil, and cayenne pepper.
4. Add onion, garlic, and parsley to the chick peas. Then add the egg mixture. Stir until well combined.
5. Use a tablespoon to drop small patties onto a microwave-safe dish. Try not to let the patties touch. Microwave each batch of patties on HIGH for 2 minutes and 30 seconds, or until slightly dry or golden around the edges.
6. Place 3 patties in each pita half and microwave on HIGH 30 to 60 seconds, until soft and warm. Add lettuce, tomatoes, onion slices, and cucumber-yogurt sauce (recipe on the following page), and serve.



Cucumber-Yogurt Sauce

This low-fat sauce is high in nutrients and is a great alternative to less healthy dips and spreads.

What you'll need:

- 1 cucumber, peeled and shredded**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- 1 or 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- 1 cup low-fat or fat-free plain yogurt**
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar**

Directions:

1. Place cucumber in a bowl and sprinkle with salt. Let sit for 5 minutes.
2. Add garlic, yogurt, and vinegar to cucumber. Stir well.
3. Serve right away and refrigerate leftover sauce to use later as a dip. The flavor of this sauce will actually get better overnight in the refrigerator.



Lemony Lentils with Feta

Makes about 4 servings

This dish is low in fat and high in protein and calcium. You can also add diced vegetables, like celery and peppers, for some crunch.

What you'll need:

- 5 cups water**
- 1 ½ cups lentils**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- ¼ cup lemon juice**
- ½ small red onion, finely chopped**
- 2 Tbsp. parsley, finely chopped**
- ¼ cup part-skim crumbled feta cheese**
- 1 ½ tsp. salt**
- ½ tsp. pepper**

Directions:

1. Place water in a large microwave-safe bowl and add lentils. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 25 minutes, or until lentils are soft but not mushy.
2. Use a strainer to drain water from lentils. Toss lentils with oil, lemon juice, onion, parsley, cheese, salt, and pepper and serve.





Macaroni and Cheese

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Mac and cheese gets a healthy makeover by using low-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt. It's so rich and creamy you won't be able to tell the difference! To make it even healthier, add frozen broccoli and use whole wheat pasta.

What you'll need:

8 oz. (½ box) uncooked elbow macaroni or other small pasta

½ cup low-fat (1%) milk

1 cup low-fat (1%) cottage cheese

½ cup low-fat plain yogurt

½ tsp. salt

Pinch of cayenne pepper

1½ cups grated low-fat cheddar cheese

Directions:

1. Place macaroni in a microwave-safe bowl. Fill with enough water to cover the pasta completely.
2. Microwave on HIGH for 8 to 10 minutes. Pause and stir every 2 minutes. Pasta is done when it is soft but not mushy.
3. Drain the macaroni in a strainer. In a large microwave-safe dish, stir together the cooked macaroni, milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, salt, cayenne, and 1 cup of the cheddar cheese. Spread remaining cheddar over top. Cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on HIGH for 5 minutes, or until steaming.
4. Remove the cover. Continue to microwave uncovered on HIGH for 15 minutes, or until golden around the edges. Serve right away.

Adapted from *The Well-Filled Microwave Cookbook* by Victoria Wise and Susanna Hoffman.

Mixed Vegetable Casserole

Makes 4 to 6 servings

We like to try different vegetables every time we make this dish. We use low-fat cheese to cut down on fat. We promise no one will notice!

What you'll need:

- 1 (16 oz.) package frozen spinach**
- 1 (16 oz.) package frozen mixed vegetables (corn, peas, carrots)**
- 1 (10 oz.) can cream of mushroom soup (low-fat, low-sodium)**
- ½ cup shredded low-fat cheese (mozzarella or cheddar)**
- ⅛ tsp. pepper**
- ½ tsp. garlic or onion powder**

Directions:

- 1.** Mix together all vegetables and the soup in a microwave-safe dish. Cover and cook on HIGH for 9 to 10 minutes, or until tender.
- 2.** Mix together cheese, pepper, and garlic or onion powder. Sprinkle this mixture over the vegetables.
- 3.** Cover and cook on HIGH for 3 minutes, then uncover and cook for another 2 minutes. Serve right away.



Quinoa with Cucumber and Tomato

Makes 4 servings

Quinoa is an ancient South American grain with a slightly nutty flavor. It's a complete protein and a great source of iron, magnesium, and fiber. The avocado has healthy fats and vitamin C. The cucumber, tomatoes, onion, cilantro, and lime add even more vitamins and minerals.

What you'll need:

- 1 cup uncooked quinoa**
- 2 cups vegetable broth**
- 2 cups diced cucumber (1 to 2 cucumbers)**
- 1 small red onion, finely minced**
- 2 cups diced tomatoes (1 to 2 large tomatoes)**
- ½ cup cilantro leaves, chopped**
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar**
- 2 Tbsp. lime juice**
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil**
- Pinch of pepper**
- 1 avocado, peeled and sliced**

Directions:

1. Rinse quinoa in cold water, using a strainer. Place quinoa and broth in a microwave-safe bowl, cover loosely with a microwave-safe plate. Microwave on HIGH for 8 minutes.
2. Remove, uncover and stir, then cover and let sit for 10 minutes. Microwave for 2 more minutes and set aside.

3. Place minced onion in a bowl, cover with cold water, and let sit for 5 minutes. Drain, rinse, and drain again on paper towels
4. Combine all ingredients, except avocado. Stir to mix well. Serve with sliced avocado.



Vegetable Couscous

Makes 4 servings

With lots of vegetables and high-fiber chickpeas, this recipe makes a great one-dish dinner. It's so good your kids won't even notice the meat is missing!

What you'll need:

1 medium onion, chopped

1 medium zucchini or yellow squash, chopped

1 Tbsp. olive oil

**1 (6 to 8 oz.) can or jar red peppers, drained
and chopped**

1 cup sliced mushrooms

2 cups low-sodium chicken broth

2 cups couscous

1 (16 oz.) can chickpeas (garbanzo beans)

1 (15 oz.) can diced tomatoes

2 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar

Pinch of salt and pepper

Directions:

1. Coarsely chop onion and zucchini or squash into medium pieces and place in a microwave-safe bowl. Add olive oil to the bowl, mix thoroughly and microwave on HIGH for 3 to 6 minutes, or until vegetables are slightly soft.
2. Add peppers and mushrooms to onion and zucchini mixture. Microwave on HIGH for 3 to 6 minutes, until the vegetables are cooked but still firm.

3. In a large microwave-safe bowl, heat chicken broth for 5 to 7 minutes on HIGH. Keep an eye on the broth and stop the microwave as soon as it begins to boil.
4. **Without removing the bowl from the microwave**, add couscous to the boiled broth and allow the mixture to rest for about 5 minutes in the microwave. Couscous cooks by absorbing the liquid.
5. Place chickpeas in a strainer and rinse with water. Allow to drain. Set aside.
6. Remove couscous from microwave and fluff gently with a fork. Add tomatoes, chickpeas, vinegar, and cooked vegetables (with their juices) to couscous. Season with salt and pepper and serve.



Vegetable Lasagna

Makes 4 to 6 servings

This lasagna will help you get your daily serving of vegetables in one tasty, well-balanced dish. Tomatoes are a good source of lycopene, spinach is high in vitamin C and iron, and low-fat cheese gives you calcium and protein. Use whole wheat lasagna noodles for added fiber if you can find them.

What you'll need:

1 medium onion, diced

2 Tbsp. canola oil

1 (28 oz.) can or jar low-sodium tomato sauce

1 (8 oz.) can diced tomatoes

**Pinch of mixed Italian Seasoning, garlic powder, salt,
black pepper (to taste)**

1 (10 oz.) package frozen spinach

**1 (15 oz.) container part-skim ricotta cheese (or 1%
cottage cheese)**

1 (10 oz.) box lasagna noodles, uncooked

1 cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

Grated Parmesan cheese

Directions:

1. Place onion in a microwave-safe dish with the canola oil. Cook on HIGH for 2 to 4 minutes, until soft and slightly see-through. Add tomato sauce and tomatoes. Sprinkle with Italian Seasoning, garlic powder, salt, and black pepper. Set aside.

2. Remove any foil or wrapping from frozen spinach box, and thaw in the microwave for 4 minutes. Once the spinach is defrosted, place it in a colander or strainer and squeeze out the water. Place in a large mixing bowl and add ricotta cheese. Mix well and set aside.
3. Spread a thin layer of sauce on the bottom of a microwave-safe dish. Place a layer of 3 to 4 uncooked noodles over sauce. If the noodles are too long, break them because they expand as they cook.
4. Cover noodles with sauce again. Spoon a layer of the spinach and cheese mixture onto the noodles. Then sprinkle a layer of mozzarella cheese. Top with another layer of noodles and repeat until you use all the ingredients. Make sure to leave enough sauce and mozzarella cheese to cover the top.
5. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 5 to 7 minutes. Rotate dish half a turn and cook again for 5 to 8 minutes until noodles are soft (check with a fork).
6. Remove plastic wrap and cook on HIGH for 5 to 10 more minutes until noodles are very tender and sauce has thickened.
7. Sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese and cook on HIGH for 1 to 2 minutes, until cheese melts. Serve warm.

Quesadillas with Tomato Salsa

Makes 4 servings

Who doesn't love a quesadilla? In this recipe, we use whole wheat tortillas, salsa, and low-fat cheese to up the fiber and calcium and cut down on the fat.

What you'll need:

1 Tbsp. tomato paste

1 cup water

¼ tsp. salt

⅓ cup frozen corn, thawed

3 garlic cloves, minced

½ medium onion, chopped

2 medium tomatoes, chopped

⅓ cup cucumber, peeled and diced

1 cup cilantro leaves, chopped

2 Tbsp. lime juice (juice from 1 lime)

6 small, fresh chilies, stemmed and chopped (optional)

2 cups low-fat cheese, grated

4 (8- to 10-inch) whole wheat or corn tortillas

Directions:

1. To make salsa, combine all ingredients, except cheese and tortillas, in a medium-size bowl and stir gently with a fork to mix.
2. To make quesadilla, place tortilla on a microwave-safe plate and spread ½ cup of the cheese over the tortilla. Cover with another tortilla, like making a sandwich. Microwave uncovered on HIGH for 1 minute, or until cheese melts. Repeat with remaining tortillas.
3. Cut each quesadilla into 4 pieces. Serve with the salsa.

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Broccoli and Peppers

Makes 4 to 6 servings

This is a healthy take on a Chinese restaurant favorite. Our version uses only a touch of oil, plus orange juice for a citrusy punch.

What you'll need:

- 1 head fresh broccoli**
- 1 Tbsp. canola or olive oil**
- 1 Tbsp. frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed**
- ½ Tbsp. vinegar (apple cider vinegar or rice vinegar)**
- 1 garlic clove, minced**
- 1½ tsp. parsley flakes**
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce**
- Pinch of cayenne pepper**
- ½ small red onion, diced**
- 1 yellow, red, or orange bell pepper, diced**

Directions:

1. Chop broccoli, including stems, into small pieces.
2. Heat ½ inch of water in medium microwave-safe bowl on HIGH for 1 to 2 minutes. Add broccoli to heated water and cover tightly with plastic wrap. Cook broccoli for 2 to 3 minutes, or until bright green and tender but still crisp when pierced with a fork.
3. Meanwhile, in a bowl, whisk together oil, orange juice, vinegar, garlic, parsley, soy sauce, and cayenne pepper to make a dressing.
4. Drain broccoli in a strainer. Add onion and bell pepper to the bowl and toss with dressing to coat. Serve warm or cold.

Brown Rice with Cranberries, Almonds, and Parsley

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Here's a healthy and flavorful side dish full of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Use water or vegetable broth for a vegetarian dish!

What you'll need:

- 1 cup brown rice**
- 3 cups water or low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth**
- ½ tsp. salt**
- ⅓ cup dried cranberries or raisins**
- ¼ cup chopped or crushed almonds**
- 2 Tbsp. chopped parsley (1 Tbsp. if using dried parsley)**

Directions:

1. Combine rice, water (or broth), and salt in a large microwave-safe bowl.
2. Cover and cook on HIGH for 5 minutes, or until boiling. Reduce microwave setting to MEDIUM and cook 30 to 35 minutes, or until water is gone and rice is tender. Fluff with fork, cover, and set aside for 4 minutes.
3. Mix in the dried cranberries, almonds, and parsley, and serve.



Cauliflower in Dijon Sauce

Makes 4 servings

For a healthier version, we use light mayonnaise instead of regular mayonnaise.

What you'll need:

1 head cauliflower, separated into florets

½ cup light mayonnaise

¼ cup Dijon mustard

Directions:

1. Place cauliflower florets in a large microwave-safe dish and cover with plastic wrap. Poke a few holes in plastic wrap. Microwave on HIGH for 5 to 7 minutes, or until tender.
2. In a cup or small bowl, stir together mayonnaise and mustard. Mix with cauliflower and serve.



Lemon Dijon Green Beans

Makes 8 servings

Green beans are an excellent source of vitamins A, C, and K, fiber, potassium, folate, and iron. This simple side dish is tasty, low in calories and easy to prepare.

What you'll need:

**1 to 1½ lb. green beans (fresh or frozen),
stems removed**

2 Tbsp. Dijon mustard

4 tsp. lemon juice

½ tsp. salt

¼ tsp. black pepper

Directions:

1. Rinse green beans well under cool running water. Place them in a microwave-safe dish.
2. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 6 to 8 minutes, or until tender. Do not overcook! Green beans will turn mushy and light green if cooked too long.
3. While beans are cooking, mix mustard, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in a bowl.
4. Remove beans from microwave, uncover, and stir in mustard mixture. Toss well to coat. Cover again and microwave on HIGH for 2 more minutes before serving. Serve warm.



Tangy Sweet Potatoes

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Sweet potatoes are full of fiber, potassium, and vitamins A and C. Cranberries are rich in antioxidants (nutrients that protect against certain diseases). Both are delicious.

What you'll need:

6 medium sweet potatoes (about 3 lb.)

¼ cup brown sugar

2 Tbsp. orange juice (juice from about ½ orange)

1 cup whole-berry cranberry sauce

½ tsp. cinnamon or allspice

½ tsp. salt

Olive oil or canola oil spray

Directions:

1. Scrub potatoes very well under cool running water. Cut potatoes into 1-inch pieces. Make them all about the same size so that they'll cook at the same rate.
2. Place cut potatoes in a microwave-safe dish and cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on HIGH for 10 minutes, or until tender. Stir.
3. Combine sugar, orange juice, cranberry sauce, cinnamon or allspice, and salt in a small bowl. Spray the mix with oil spray. Microwave on HIGH for 1 minute, stir, and microwave for 1 minute more.
4. Remove sauce and stir well. Pour over potatoes and stir gently. Microwave mixture on HIGH for 10 minutes, or until heated through. Stir potatoes and sauce twice during cooking (about every 3 minutes). Serve warm.

Eggplant and Spinach in Zesty Sauce

Makes 6 to 8 servings

If eggplant is new to your kids, let them help you by peeling the strange looking veggie! Look for low-sodium soy sauce to cut down on the salt. Chopped chile gives the sauce a kick.

What you'll need:

- 1 ½ lb. eggplant (1 large or 3 to 4 small eggplants)**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- ¼ tsp. black pepper**
- ¼ cup lemon juice**
- ¼ cup soy sauce (low-sodium preferred)**
- 1 tsp. chopped red or green chili**
- ½ lb. tender spinach leaves, well rinsed and drained (about 1 bunch or package)**
- ¼ cup crushed peanuts**

Directions:

1. Peel eggplant and slice off green top. Cut the eggplant into 1-inch cubes and place in a large microwave-safe bowl. Add oil and pepper and toss to coat. Microwave uncovered on **HIGH** for 10 minutes, or until soft.
2. In a small bowl, mix together lemon juice, soy sauce, and chili.
3. Spread spinach leaves over eggplant and drizzle with lemon mixture. Microwave uncovered on **HIGH** for 2 minutes, stir, and microwave for 2 minutes more, or until spinach is soft.
4. Sprinkle with crushed peanuts. Serve hot, warm, or chilled.

Adapted from *The Well-Filled Microwave Cookbook* by Victoria Wise and Susanna Hoffman.

Glazed Carrots and Apples

Makes 4 to 6 servings

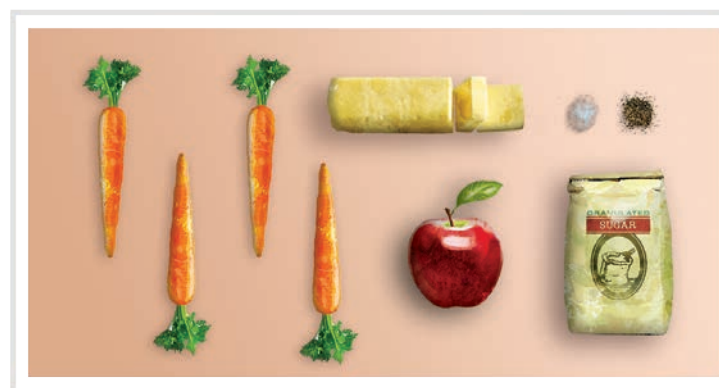
A tasty way to get your family to eat their vegetables. Apples and a touch of brown sugar add a sweet finish.

What you'll need:

- 2 tsp. water**
- 1 Tbsp. butter**
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar**
- 4 large carrots, peeled and sliced into thin rounds**
- 1 apple, cored and chopped**
- Pinch of salt and pepper**

Directions:

1. Place water, butter, and sugar in a microwave-safe bowl and cook on **MEDIUM** for about 10 to 15 seconds. Stir melted butter and sugar together.
2. Add carrots and apples and stir to coat. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on **HIGH** for 4 to 5 minutes. Stir again.
3. Microwave for 4 to 5 minutes more on **HIGH**. Carrots should be tender. If still hard, microwave for another 2 minutes.
4. Keep the carrots covered for a few minutes before serving. Season with salt and pepper to taste and serve hot.



Potatoes au Gratin

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Rich and creamy potatoes are always a hit with kids. We lower the calories and fat by using low-fat milk and cheese.

What you'll need:

4 medium potatoes, peeled

½ cup low-fat milk

Pinch of salt and pepper

½ cup low-fat shredded cheddar or Swiss cheese

Directions:

1. Wash potatoes and cut into very thin slices. Thinly sliced potatoes will cook faster.
2. Cover the bottom layer of a microwave-safe dish with about ¼ cup milk. Place one layer of potato slices in dish. Add salt, pepper, and ¼ cup cheese.
3. Add another layer of milk, potatoes, and cheese. Continue until all ingredients have been used.
4. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 10 minutes, or until potatoes are soft. Serve warm.



Tasty Rice

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Try making this dish with brown rice for added fiber. Brown rice will have a longer cooking time.

What you'll need:

1 Tbsp. olive oil or canola oil

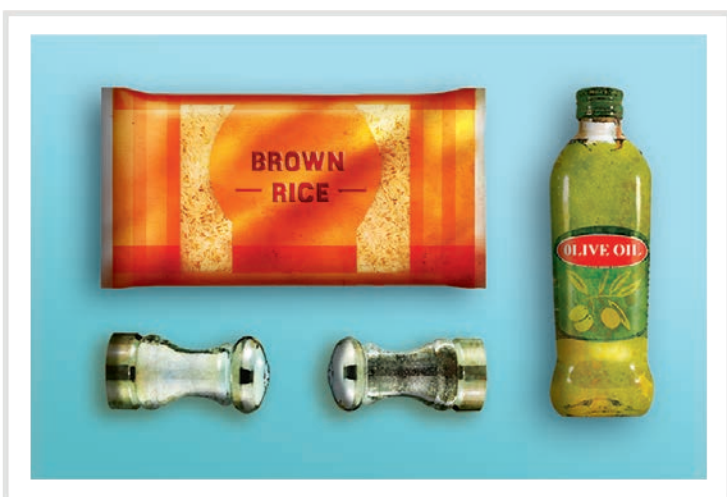
1 cup rice (white or brown)

1½ cups chicken or vegetable broth (low-fat, low-sodium) for white rice; 2½ cups broth for brown rice

Pinch of salt and pepper

Directions:

1. Stir oil into rice in a microwave-safe dish. Cook on **HIGH** for 2 minutes.
2. Add broth and stir well. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and cook on **HIGH** for 10 minutes if using white rice. If rice is still too firm, cook for another 2 to 3 minutes. Cook for 25 to 30 minutes if using brown rice.
3. Season with salt and pepper before serving.



Steamed Broccoli and Carrots

Makes about 4 to 6 servings

Broccoli and carrots are nutrition all-stars! Steamed vegetables are slightly crunchy and colorful. You can use your favorite vegetables or whatever you have on hand.

What you'll need:

4 to 5 large carrots, rinsed, peeled, and cut into bite-size pieces

1 large head broccoli, rinsed and cut into florets

Pinch of salt and pepper or other seasoning

Directions:

1. Place carrots in a large, shallow microwave-safe dish. Add enough water just to cover the bottom of the dish.
2. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on **HIGH** for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from microwave and add broccoli florets. Cover again and microwave for 2 to 3 minutes more, until broccoli is tender but still bright green and crunchy.
3. Drain water, and add salt and pepper or your favorite seasoning to taste.





Asian Green Beans

Makes 4 servings

Green beans are veggie superstars! They are a great source of vitamins A, C, and K, fiber, potassium, folate, and iron.

What you'll need:

- 6 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped**
- 2 quarter-size slices fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped**
- 2 scallions, trimmed and chopped**
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil**
- 1 tsp. hot red pepper flakes**
- 2 Tbsp. soy sauce (low-sodium preferred)**
- 1 Tbsp. red wine vinegar**
- 1 Tbsp. orange juice**
- 1 lb. green beans, tips and stems removed**
- ¼ cup slivered almonds (optional)**

Directions:

1. Place garlic, ginger, and scallions in a large microwave-safe dish; add oil and pepper flakes. Cook, uncovered, on HIGH for 3 minutes.
2. Remove from microwave and stir in soy sauce, vinegar, orange juice, and green beans. Cook uncovered on HIGH for 8 minutes, stirring every 2 minutes. Sprinkle with almonds, stir and serve hot or cold.

Spanish Rice

Makes 4 to 6 servings

Adding vegetables to rice is a great way to get even the pickiest kids to eat them. Try using brown rice for added fiber.

What you'll need:

- 1 medium onion, coarsely chopped**
- 4 medium (1 lb.) tomatoes, coarsely chopped**
- 1 medium green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and coarsely chopped**
- 1 jalapeño, stemmed, seeded, and coarsely chopped**
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 1 cup white or brown rice**
- 1 Tbsp. tomato paste**
- 4 cups water**
- 1 large bay leaf**
- 2 Tbsp. chopped parsley**
- ½ tsp. salt**
- ¼ cup sliced olives (pitted)**
- ½ tsp. paprika**

Directions:

- 1.** Place onion, tomatoes, bell pepper, jalapeño, and oil in a large microwave-safe bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and cook on HIGH for 3 minutes, or until vegetables begin to soften.
- 2.** Add rice, tomato paste, water, bay leaf, parsley, and salt. Stir to mix. Cover and microwave on HIGH for 15 minutes, or until simmering. Remove cover and stir.
- 3.** Continue to microwave uncovered on HIGH for 12 minutes or until rice is cooked and almost all water is gone. Mix in olives and sprinkle with paprika. Serve hot.



Stewed Okra

Makes 4 servings

Okra contains vitamins A and C and is a good source of calcium and iron. Serve with rice for a delicious and filling meal.

What you'll need:

- 1 small yellow onion, sliced (about ½ cup)**
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped**
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes**
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- ½ lb. okra, stems removed and cut into discs**
- 2 cups (14 oz. can) crushed tomatoes with juice**
- 1 tsp. salt**
- Pinch of black pepper**
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice**

Directions:

1. Combine onion, garlic, red pepper flakes, and oil in a large microwave-safe dish. Cook uncovered on HIGH for 3 minutes.
2. Add okra, stir, and cook uncovered on HIGH for 3 minutes.
3. Remove from microwave and stir in tomatoes. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and cook on HIGH for 6 minutes.
4. Remove from microwave, uncover, and stir in salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Serve hot.



Pineapple Peppers

Makes 6 to 8 servings

A light sweet and sour sauce makes eating fruits and vegetables fun! You can use any color peppers you like.

What you'll need:

- ½ cup sliced almonds**
- ⅓ cup raisins**
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil**
- 2 large (about 1 lb.) green bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½-inch strips**
- 2 large (about 1 lb.) red bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½-inch strips**
- 3 Tbsp. red wine or balsamic vinegar**
- 2 Tbsp. sugar**
- ¼ tsp. salt**
- ½ cup crushed pineapple (packed in juice), drained**

Directions:

1. Place almonds, raisins, and oil in a large microwave-safe dish. Microwave uncovered on HIGH for 2 minutes, or until raisins are plump.
2. Add peppers, vinegar, sugar, and salt and mix well. Cover and microwave on HIGH for 5 minutes, or until peppers begin to wilt.
3. Remove cover, stir, and continue to microwave uncovered on HIGH for 4 minutes more. Add pineapple and mix well. Microwave uncovered for 1 minute. Serve right away or at room temperature.

Stuffed Mushroom Caps

Makes 4 servings

These bite-size treats can be served as a side dish or appetizer. Mushrooms are high in potassium and antioxidants. Use whole wheat bread crumbs for added fiber.

What you'll need:

½ lb. medium-size mushrooms (about 2½ cups)

3 Tbsp. olive oil

½ cup scallions, finely chopped

3 Tbsp. bread crumbs

1 Tbsp. dried parsley

Directions:

1. Clean mushrooms and separate caps from stems. Arrange caps hollow side up in a single layer in a microwave-safe dish. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside.
2. Dice mushroom stems finely. In another microwave-safe dish, combine stems with oil and scallions. Microwave uncovered on **HIGH** for 3 to 4 minutes, or until scallions are tender, stirring twice while cooking.
3. Add bread crumbs and parsley flakes to scallion mixture and set aside.
4. Microwave mushroom caps on **HIGH** for 2 to 3 minutes, or until nearly cooked. Pause and rotate the dish one half turn after the first minute.
5. Stuff each cap with the bread crumb mixture. Re-cover with plastic wrap and microwave for 2 minutes. Serve warm.



Desserts

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Apple Pear Tart

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Apples and pears provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Graham cracker crusts are lower in fat and calories than traditional pie crusts.

What you'll need:

20 graham crackers

1½ Tbsp. butter

1 tsp. vanilla extract

¾ Tbsp. cinnamon

¾ Tbsp. brown sugar

4 to 6 apples or pears, cored and diced

2 Tbsp. lemon juice

Directions:

1. To make the crust, place graham crackers in a zip lock bag and crush finely. Set aside ¼ cup crumbs for topping.
2. In a microwave-safe dish, microwave butter for 20 seconds, or until melted. Add crushed graham crackers, using your fingers or a spatula to press crumbs into the bottom. Place in refrigerator to chill.
3. Combine vanilla, cinnamon, and brown sugar in a large microwave-safe bowl. Add fruit and lemon juice. Mix well to coat fruit.
4. Microwave on HIGH for 15 to 18 minutes, checking after 10 minutes and again every 3 minutes, until fruit is soft.
5. Remove crust from refrigerator. Pour fruit filling into crust and smooth with a spoon. Sprinkle remaining crumbs on top, and serve.

Homemade Applesauce

Makes 6 servings

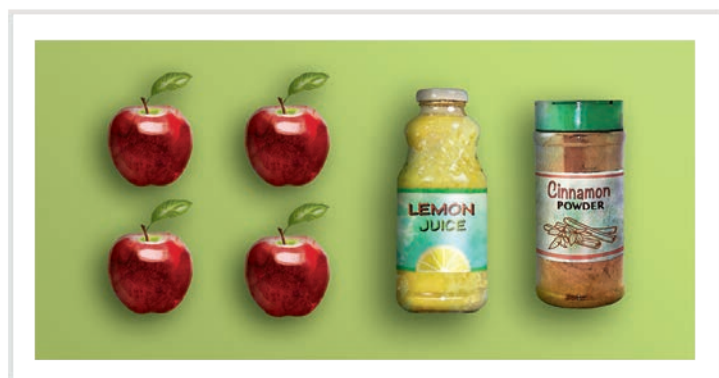
This applesauce is less expensive than the store-bought kind, and it makes a delicious dessert. Mix it with low-fat vanilla yogurt for a healthy afternoon treat.

What you'll need:

- 2 lb. apples (try Granny Smith or Gala), peeled, cored, and cut into ½-inch chunks**
- ¼ cup sugar**
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice**
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon**

Directions:

1. Place apples, sugar, lemon juice, and ½ tsp. cinnamon in a large microwave-safe bowl and toss to mix.
2. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave on HIGH for 9 to 11 minutes, or until the apples are soft but not mushy. Remove and let stand for 3 minutes.
3. Place half the cooked apples in another bowl and mash with a fork or whisk. Add remaining chunked apples to mashed apples and mix. Sprinkle ½ tsp. cinnamon on top. Serve warm as a side dish or dessert, or chilled as a snack.



Pear Crunch

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Pears and oatmeal add a healthy dose of fiber to this easy, crowd-pleasing dessert. Look for pears canned in their own juice to cut down on added sugar.

What you'll need:

- 1 (15 oz.) can halved pears**
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract**
- ½ tsp. cinnamon**
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar**
- 1 Tbsp. butter, softened**
- 1 cup regular oats**
- Low-fat vanilla yogurt**

Directions:

1. Cut pears into cubes and combine with vanilla extract in a bowl.
2. Mix cinnamon, sugar, butter, and oats in a microwave-safe dish. Microwave on HIGH for 2 minutes.
3. Add pears to the oat mixture and stir to combine.
4. Top each serving with ¼ cup low-fat yogurt. Serve at room temperature.



Pumpkin Muffins

Makes 18 muffins

Pumpkin is one of the healthiest and easiest vegetables to use. In this recipe, cut down on the butter by using canned pumpkin, which adds moisture and texture without adding a lot of calories or fat. When made at home, muffins are the perfect portion for a treat.

What you'll need:

5 Tbsp. butter, soft

1/3 cup brown sugar, packed

2 eggs

1/3 cup low-fat milk

1/3 cup honey

1 cup canned pumpkin

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tsp. baking powder

1 1/2 tsp. allspice

1/2 tsp. salt

1/3 cup raisins

Directions:

1. Place butter and brown sugar in a small bowl. Mix until creamy. Mixture should look a little bit like peanut butter.
2. Crack eggs into another small bowl. Add milk, honey, and pumpkin. Mix well with a fork. Add the egg mixture to creamed butter and sugar and mix thoroughly.
3. In a separate medium-size bowl, combine flour, baking powder, allspice, and salt. Stir with a fork to evenly distribute spices.

4. Add flour mixture to creamed butter. Add raisins and stir gently, just until combined. Never overmix muffin batter! It makes muffins dry and tough.
5. Place cupcake liners into baking collars (see instructions for making baking collars on pg. 13). Fill about 2/3 full with batter. Microwave on MEDIUM HIGH for 3 minutes. Stick a toothpick or fork into one of the muffins to check if it's done (toothpick should come out clean). If middle is still raw, microwave on MEDIUM HIGH for another 10 to 20 seconds at a time until cooked through. It's okay if tops are a little moist. They'll dry while the muffins cool. Let cool before serving.



Peach Crumble

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Peaches and oats are high in fiber and low in fat. Use canned or frozen peaches if fresh peaches are expensive or not in season.

What you'll need:

4 to 6 medium to large peaches, sliced

½ cup quick-cooking oats

½ cup brown sugar, packed

3 Tbsp. butter, softened

¾ tsp. allspice

Low-fat vanilla yogurt

6-8 graham crackers, crushed

Directions:

1. Cover bottom of a square microwave-safe dish with peaches.
2. In a separate bowl, mix oats, brown sugar, butter, and allspice. Sprinkle oat mixture over peaches.
3. Microwave uncovered on **HIGH** for 10 to 12 minutes, until peaches are tender. If your microwave does not automatically rotate the dish, then microwave for 6 minutes, rotate dish one half turn, and microwave for another 4 to 6 minutes.
4. Top with low-fat vanilla yogurt and sprinkle with graham crackers. Serve warm or at room temperature.

1-Minute 2-Bite Brownie

This recipe makes one little brownie just for you!

What you'll need:

Cooking spray

2 Tbsp. flour

1 Tbsp. and 1 tsp. sugar

¼ tsp. baking powder

2 tsp. cocoa powder

Pinch of salt

2 Tbsp. milk

¼ tsp. vanilla extract

¾ tsp. vegetable oil

Directions:

1. Spray a small microwave-safe cup or mug lightly with cooking spray.
2. In a small bowl, mix flour, sugar, baking powder, cocoa powder, and salt. Add milk, vanilla extract, and oil. Mix well and pour into cup.
3. Microwave on **HIGH** for 1 minute. Stick a fork gently in the brownie to check if it's done (fork should come out clean). If not, microwave 15 seconds more. Enjoy with an ice cold glass of fat-free milk.

Common Cooking Terms

Beat: Mix ingredients quickly with a fork, spoon, or hand beater until smooth.

Boil/Boiling: Liquid is heated until bubbles rise continuously and break on the surface.

Chop: Cut into small pieces.

Coarse/Coarsely: Cut food into a few big pieces.

Coat: Cover food evenly with crumbs, dressing, or sauce.

Deveined Shrimp: Dark vein on the top of shrimp is removed.

Dice: Cut into small cubes.

Drain: Pour out any liquid.

Drizzle: Slowly pour a small amount of liquid on food.

Fluff: Using a fork, separate the cooked grains, as in rice and quinoa.

Grater: A metal device with sharp-edged holes, used to cut food into tiny pieces.

Mince: Cut into very tiny pieces.

Power Levels: The power settings on a microwave used to cook on high, medium, or low.

Rotate: Turn the dish in the microwave to cook food evenly on all sides. Used when microwave does not rotate.

Strainer: A bowl with holes in it that allows liquid to drain from solid food.

Toss: Tumble ingredients lightly using lifting motion.

Vent: Leave an opening or puncture the plastic wrap covering a microwave-safe dish to allow some hot air to escape.

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Children's Health Fund is a not-for-profit organization committed to the health and wellbeing of children and families who face great health disparities rooted in racial, social and economic inequities and live in some of the most marginalized communities across the United States. The programs we support bring high-quality healthcare directly to children and families where they live, learn and play; we partner with schools to address health barriers to learning, chronic absenteeism, and trauma-related behavioral issues; and we drive policy and advocacy changes that improve the quality of life for the communities we serve.

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