



Healthy Eating Made Easy

Save time and money in the kitchen

**A Guide to Increasing Fruits and Vegetables
and Ideas for Budget Friendly Meals**

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Section 1

SHOPPING ON A BUDGET



If you're trying to save money, it can be difficult to decide whether or not to eat out, hit the drive-thru, eat at the post dining facility, or go grocery shopping and cook at home. The healthiest and most economical choices are to either: 1) Eat at the post dining facility, or 2) Buy wholesome ingredients and cook your own meal(s) at home.

However, when you are in line at the grocery store, and your grocery bill slowly begins to escalate, you may start to feel like shopping and preparing your own meals isn't really worth it.

Grocery shopping doesn't have to break the bank! Use the tips and recipes found in this guide to help you eat healthy and save some cash!



Tips for Planning Meals and Shopping on a Budget:

- **Develop and organize your meals based on the week's schedule**
Review the week ahead. Is Tuesday night wide open? Is Wednesday night booked? If this is the case, plan to cook on Tuesday, and have leftovers on Wednesday. Checking the week's schedule and coming up with a workable plan will make weeknights and weekends less hectic.
- **Plan ahead to cook what's on sale**
Check the newspaper, your local grocery store flyer, and/or view the on-line version of your favorite grocery store's weekly specials. Then, plan your meals based on what's on sale (especially useful for pre-packaged meat and fresh produce). To find out what's on sale at your local commissary, visit <http://www.commissaries.com> or <http://www.commissaryshopper.com>. Click on the ON SALE NOW tab
- **Let your phone do the coupon clipping**
Try any of the following phone apps during your next grocery trip:
 - » Ibotta
 - » Checkout 51
- **Spend less time in the grocery store**
Always make a list before you go shopping and stick to it! Try to make a list that corresponds to the aisles of your grocery store. Checkout the following apps to customize your own grocery list:
 - » AnyList – Grocery Shopping List
 - » List Ease

Save time and money by writing out your grocery list before your shopping trip.



Tips for Planning Meals and Shopping on a Budget:

- **Get the most out of what you already have on hand**
Check out the app, iFood, and use items you already have in your kitchen.
- **Double up your recipes and freeze for later**
Make double portions of casseroles, stews, or soups. Refrigerate the extras and use later in the week or freeze them for use later in the month.
- **Choose items that are located above and/or below eye level**
Products located at eye level cost more because companies pay premium slotting fees to put their products where you will notice them first. Therefore, search high and low for better prices.
- **Shop on a full stomach and chew mint gum while shopping to help avoid “retail temptations”**
Studies show that chewing peppermint gum helps to satisfy hunger and to block out enticing scents found in the grocery store like the smell of fresh baked goods.
- **Compare unit prices**
Unless you're a math whiz, it is difficult to compare prices and values for different sized packages and/or different brands. The unit price makes it easy (see to the right). You may find out that sometimes the bigger package isn't always the best bargain.



THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Check out the "Thinking Out of the Box" section of the Commissary Healthy Living Page at <http://www.commissaries.com/healthy-living/healthy-eats.cfm>



Section 2

GET YOUR EIGHT SERVINGS A DAY



Consuming at least 8 servings of fruits and vegetables everyday is a great investment in your health. Fruits and vegetables add variety, texture, flavor, and color to your meals and snacks. Whole fruits and vegetables are low in calories, and high in nutrients and fiber. They are considered **nature's first convenience foods**—very easy to pack and go!

Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables may help reduce the risk of certain diseases such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and certain cancers.

In addition, eating a diet that is high in whole fruits and vegetables is a great way to help maintain bowel regularity and control your weight (they help you feel satisfied without weighing you down).



WHAT COUNTS AS 1 SERVING?



Knowing how much a serving size is will make it easier to get your eight servings of fruits and vegetables.

Fruits



4 strawberries



$\frac{1}{8}$ melon



1 cup diced fresh fruit



$\frac{1}{2}$ cup berries



$\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried fruit



1 medium whole, fresh (size of a baseball)



1 small banana



$\frac{1}{2}$ cup 100% juice



16 grapes



$\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned fruit

Vegetables



½ cup cooked



12 baby carrots



1 cup raw



1 small baked potato
(size of computer mouse)



2 cups leafy greens
(salad greens)



1 medium pepper
(whole, fresh)



½ cup 100%
vegetable juice



**Choose mostly fresh and/or frozen fruits
and vegetables without added sugars or fat!**



HOW TO GET YOUR 8!



Breakfast

 +  = **2**

1 small banana ¼ cup raisins

Mid-morning

 = **1**

12 baby carrots

Lunch

 = **2**



2 cups of leafy greens topped with
1 cup raw vegetables

Mid-Afternoon

 = **1**

1 medium apple

Dinner

 +  = **2**

½ cup cooked
broccoli 1 small baked
potato

DAILY TOTAL = 8



HOW TO KEEP THEM FRESH AND HELP THEM LAST LONGER

Simple tricks and tips can help keep your fresh fruits and vegetables lasting longer.

Place plastic wrap tightly around the **BANANNA'S** stems to keep them from browning too quickly. Store at room temperature until ripe, and then store in refrigerator to keep them from getting over-ripe.



Store **TOMATOES** at room temperature with the stem-side down to reduce bruising.



Wash **LETTUCE** or greens. Pat dry, wrap in a paper towel, and store in a closed plastic bag in the refrigerator to keep crisp.



Do not wash until ready to eat. Line a shallow container with a few layers of paper towels. Arrange **STRAWBERRIES** in a single layer over the paper towels and cover. Store in the refrigerator.



Wrap each **CUCUMBER** in a paper-towel and place in an unsealed plastic bag in the refrigerator.



Make sure **APPLES** are NOT bruised. Keep in their original bag (with perforated holes) or make a few holes in the bag. Store in the refrigerator.



Choose **BROCCOLI** with tight, green florets (NOT YELLOW). Store unwashed in an open plastic bag in the refrigerator. Wash when ready to eat/cook.



Cut off **CARROT** tops and store them in a closed plastic bag in the refrigerator to keep them fresher, and retain more nutrients.

Knowing how to properly store fruits and vegetables will help keep them tasting fresh longer.



Prolong the Life of Your Potatoes:

Place potatoes in a paper bag and keep them in a cool, dry place in your pantry or barracks room.

Freeze an Overly Ripe Banana

Peel and freeze bananas that have overly ripened. Store them in a sealable plastic bag or airtight container.

For banana bread: Thaw overnight in the refrigerator and use as directed.

For smoothie: Remove from freezer and add directly to your smoothie.



Fresh Herbs

Short-stemmed herbs
(Thyme, Chives, Rosemary)

- Wrap them loosely in plastic wrap
- Place in the warmest part of the refrigerator (the door work well)
- Do not rinse the herbs until just before using

Long-stemmed herbs
(Basil, Parsley, Cilantro)

- Trim off ~ 1/4 inch off the ends
- Place them loosely (stem side down) in ~ 1 inch of water
- Place on the counter at room temperature

Wilted Greens?

Give Wilted Salad Greens a Cold Bath!

- Fill a large bowl or container with ice-water
- Separate the lettuce leaves
- Place the leaves in the ice-water for 15 – 20 minutes (flip over the leaves half-way through the soaking cycle)
- Remove them from the ice-water and pat dry with a paper towel
- Chop off any wilted areas or any leaves that didn't get restored



Stock up on your favorite frozen vegetables when they are on sale!



Why buy frozen fruits and vegetables?

- Harvested at peak freshness so they are loaded with nutrients
- Lower chance of spoilage (keep the bag closed tightly with a clip or twisty tie)
- They are pre-prepped and ready to add to your favorite recipes:
 - » Add 1-2 handfuls of frozen veggies to your favorite canned soup and boil for 3-5 minutes
 - » Heat frozen veggies in the microwave according to package directions and use in place of fresh vegetables in cooking or serve as a side-dish
 - » After cooking your oatmeal, throw in a handful of thawed berries, stir, and enjoy!
 - » Add thawed berries directly to pancake batter, cook, and enjoy!
 - » Blend into a delicious fruit and/or vegetable smoothie!

THAW FROZEN BERRIES IN MICROWAVE



Place 1 cup frozen berries in a single layer on a microwave-safe plate. Put them in the microwave on DEFROST or 50% power.

- » Raspberries or Blueberries: 30 seconds.
- » Blackberries: 1 minute.
- » Strawberries: 1-2 minutes.

Check the berries and add more time until they are defrosted (they should look lightly frosted and have retained their shape).





USING SMOOTHIES TO GET YOUR 8

Blenders

Blenders come in a variety of watts, prices, and warranty periods (see below):

300 watts (\$30 - \$50) ≈1 year full warranty	700 watts (\$80 - \$160) ≈1 year full warranty	1100-1560 watts (\$350.00-\$700.00) ≈ 5 - 7 year full warranty
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Upgrading to a powerful (1100-1560 watts), high quality blender will yield the smoothest and creamiest results. Higher quality blenders require very little prep-time, and are an investment thanks to the steeper price tag.

If you are in the market for a new blender, choose a blender that: *1) fits your budget, 2) fits your lifestyle, and 3) is appropriately sized for the number of people you plan to serve.*

Do some research and always follow the manufacturer's directions for use and care.



Not in the market to purchase a high quality blender just yet?

Follow these 7 tips to help your blender last longer and still produce a smooth and nutritious beverage!

- 1) Cut whole fresh fruits (i.e., apples, pears, peaches, etc.) into smaller pieces – ½ to 1 inch – and discard seeds, core, stems, and/or pits.
- 2) Tear over-sized pieces of leafy greens into smaller pieces (~ 2 inches) when necessary. Spinach leaves are usually softer than Kale leaves. If using whole, large Kale leaves, be sure to cut out the hard stem before prepping.
- 3) Defrost your bigger frozen fruits (strawberries, mangoes, cherries) in the refrigerator the night before to make them easier to blend.
- 4) Always blend your leafy greens and liquid base FIRST, and then add the rest of your ingredients.*
- 5) If you have a pulse button, hit the pulse button a few times to break up the ingredients and then gradually move your blender from a lower to higher speed.
- 6) Add a little more of whatever liquid (water, almond milk, etc.) you are using to your blender if the motor seems stuck. If your blender ingredients get stuck or the blades get jammed, turn off the machine and unplug it immediately. Call the manufacturer or refer to the manufacturer's directions for the best guidance.
- 7) Like it really cold? Pour your smoothie directly over ice rather than using your blender to crush the ice.

*If the above steps are still too hard on your low wattage blender (300 watts), blend your liquid and fruit first (pulse the ingredients first, and then go from low to high speed). After your fruit is sufficiently blended, add your greens in small batches

Build the Perfect Smoothie

Step 1

Blend leafy greens and liquid base together

Step 2

Add fruits and blend again

Makes 32 oz. (4 cups). Freeze or refrigerate leftovers. Cut recipe in 1/2 if desired.

3 CUPS FRUIT

(MIX AND/OR MATCH IF DESIRED AND USE FROZEN OR FRESH)

- Banana
- Mango
- Berries
- Orange
- Avocado
- Peach
- Pear
- Apple
- Grapes
- Pineapple

2 CUPS LIQUID BASE

- Water
- Coconut Water
- Low-fat Milk
- Coconut Milk
- Almond Milk
- Diluted 100% juice*

2 CUPS LEAFY GREENS

- Spinach
- Kale
- Romaine
- Swiss Chard
- Collards



STORE IT RIGHT!



Store your left-over smoothie in a glass container with an airtight lid. The 24 – 32 oz. glass mason jars work very well.

For the Refrigerator: Fill the container to the very top to prevent nutrient loss. If you don't have enough leftovers to fill the jar, use plastic wrap and push it down until you make contact with the top of the smoothie. Store in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours.

For the Freezer: Leave about an inch of room at the top. Store in the freezer for up to 3 months. Allow a frozen smoothie to thaw in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours.

Is that the right color?

Some smoothies are darker in color – almost brown-like. The color of a smoothie depends on the combination of fruits and vegetables used. The cranberry kale and strawberry fields smoothie on the following page comes out a brownish color. A smoothie with blue berries as an ingredient will turn a purple color. Be creative with your fruits and vegetables. See what different colors you can create.



* Diluted 100% juice (equal parts water + equal parts juice)

PIÑA COLADA GREEN SMOOTHIE*

Ingredients:

2 cups of fresh spinach (pre-packaged)
1 cup coconut milk
1 cup water
3 cups pineapple (fresh or frozen)
2 Tbsp. coconut flakes (optional)

Directions:

Blend spinach, coconut milk, water until smooth. Turn off the blender and then add the pineapple. Blend again until smooth. Garnish with coconut flakes (optional).

MUST HAVE MANGO SMOOTHIE

Ingredients:

2 cups of fresh spinach (pre-packaged)
1 cup water
1 cup 100% orange juice
2 cups of mango chunks (fresh or frozen)
1 banana (peeled)

Directions:

Blend spinach, water, and 100% orange juice until smooth. Turn off the blender, and then add the mango and the banana. Blend again until smooth.



STRAWBERRY FIELDS SMOOTHIE

Ingredients:

2 cups of fresh spinach (pre-packaged)
1 cup soy milk
1 cup water
1 cup strawberries (fresh or frozen)
2 bananas (peeled)

Directions:

Blend spinach, soy milk, and water until smooth. Turn off the blender and then add the strawberries and bananas. Blend again until smooth.

CRANBERRY KALE COOLER*

Ingredients:

2 cups of fresh kale (pre-packaged)
1 ½ cups 100% cranberry juice (unsweetened)
½ cup water
2 oranges (peeled and separated into wedges)
2 bananas (peeled)
½ lime (for squeezing juice)

Directions:

Blend the kale, cranberry juice, and water until smooth. Turn off the blender, and then add the oranges, bananas, and the lime juice (squeeze the lime directly over the above ingredients). Blend again until smooth.

Banana and mango mask green flavors and add creaminess.



* Recipe courtesy of <http://simplegreensmoothies.com>

Section 3

MAKE YOUR VEGGIES TASTE BETTER



Don't like vegetables? It can be pretty hard to, "eat your vegetables", if they just don't taste good to you. Follow these tips and tricks to get the best flavor out of your veggies!

- **Cook vegetables just until tender crisp.** When overcooked, their texture suffers and they can lose a lot of their fresh flavor.
- **Add a little healthy fat.** Sauté your veggies in a teaspoon of olive oil or drizzle some sesame or walnut oil over your steamed veggies. Add a sprinkle of nuts or seeds to add more crunch and flavor to your salad.
- **Try them roasted.** The dry heat of the oven caramelizes the natural sugars in the vegetables which enhances their flavor.
- **Take them from drab to fab with the right seasoning!** Add fresh or dried herbs, spices, garlic, onion, lemon, spray butter, or vinegar. Or, take them for a dip (try dipping fresh veggies in low-fat dressing or hummus).
- **Dress them up with a store-bought sauce or make your own (see next page):** Try any one of the following store-bought sauces:

- Satay (Asian)
- Ponzu (Asian)
- Teriyaki (Japanese)
- Hoisin (Chinese)
- Tom Tom
- Tabasco
- BBQ
- Asian Style BBQ
- Chili Paste
- Sriracha (Asian)
- Soy or Tamari (Asian)



Try Making Your Own Sauce



Lemon-Garlic Mustard Sauce

- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 clove garlic (minced) or use jar variety
- ½ tsp. sugar
- Dash of salt and pepper to taste

Mix together. Great on steamed green beans

Lemon Dill Sauce

- 1 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- ½ tsp. dried dill weed
- Dash of salt and pepper to taste

Mix together. Great for steamed carrots or asparagus.

Spicy Hoisin Sauce

- 2 Tbsp. Hoisin sauce
- 1 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. rice wine (Mirin)
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1 garlic clove, minced or use jar variety
- ½ tsp. chili paste

Mix together. Great on cooked broccoli or snow-peas.

KEEP YOUR VEGETABLES WITHIN REACH

Store pre-cut and sliced raw veggies in sealable plastic bags or plastic/glass containers and keep them at eye-level in your refrigerator for quick and convenient snacking.



Eat your vegetables raw

- **Try dipping them in:**
 - » Hummus
 - » Low-fat veggie dip
 - » Lite/Low-fat dressing
 - » Nut butter
- **Sprinkle with fresh herbs and a drizzle of olive oil**
- **Make your own veggie dip with Greek yogurt:**
 - » 2 cups fat-free Greek yogurt
 - » 1 envelope ranch dip mix
 - » ½ cup skim milk

Mix all ingredients together in a storage container. Cover and refrigerate. Cut recipe in half if desired.



Organic vs Non-organic Produce. Spend or Save?

While organic foods are pesticide-free and all natural, they are usually more expensive. Instead of busting your budget when purchasing organic produce, choose organic fresh fruits and vegetables that you eat the most often. For instance, if you eat apples by the bushel, then purchase organically grown to help reduce your intake of unwanted pesticides. To save money on organic produce:

- Purchase organic produce that is in-season and on-sale.
- Check the frozen and canned section for organic fruits and veggies
- Use the handy chart below from the United States Department of Agriculture to help you decide:

"DIRTY" DOZEN:* MAY be Worth It to Buy Organic	"CLEAN" FIFTEEN:** NOT NECESSARY to Buy Organic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celery • Peaches • Strawberries • Apples • Domestic blueberries • Nectarines • Sweet bell peppers • Spinach, kale, collard greens • Cherries • Potatoes • Imported grapes • Lettuce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onions • Avocados • Sweet corn • Pineapples • Mango • Sweet peas • Asparagus • Kiwi fruit • Cabbage • Eggplant • Cantaloupe • Watermelon • Grapefruit • Sweet potatoes • Sweet onions

* More likely to contain pesticide residue even after washing.

** Less likely to contain pesticide residue

The dry heat of the oven caramelizes the natural sugars in the vegetables which enhances their flavor.



Roast your vegetable

Wash and prep your favorite vegetables:

- If using fresh broccoli or cauliflower, cut them into florets.
- If using Brussels sprouts, remove the outermost layer of each sprout, and then cut each sprout in half.

Pre-heat oven to 425°F.

Season them: While the oven is heating, toss the vegetables with a drizzle of olive oil and sprinkle lightly with salt, pepper, and/or other herbs/spices of your choice. Spread them out in a single layer on a lightly oiled baking sheet. You can also line the baking sheet with aluminum foil and then spray it with cooking spray for easier clean-up.

Roast: Roast for approximately 30 minutes, turning once halfway through, until they're browned and tender. Try this method with other vegetables like roasted beets, asparagus, or green beans.



Steam your favorite fresh vegetable

All vegetables will have different steaming times depending on their size and thickness.

Below you will find some of the more commonly steamed vegetables and their cooking times for both stove-top and microwave:

Vegetable	Stove-top	Microwave
Asparagus	4 minutes for thin spears	4 – 6 minutes
	5-6 minutes for thick spears	
Broccoli Florets	5 minutes	3 – 5 minutes
Brussels Sprouts	10 minutes	7 minutes
Carrots (baby)	6 – 8 minutes	5 minutes
Cauliflower	6 minutes	3 – 4 minutes
Peas	3 minutes	1 – 2 minutes
Zucchini	6 – 7 minutes	6 – 8 minutes

Stove-top Method

1. Use a medium-large sized pot and a vegetable steamer basket or metal colander that fits inside the pot.
2. Fill the pot with enough water to reach the bottom of the colander or steamer basket.
3. Once the water comes to a boil, add your vegetables to the colander or steamer basket.
4. Place a loose fitting lid to cover and cook. Position the lid so that one side hangs over the colander (just enough to let the steam escape).

Microwave Method

1. Place vegetables in a microwave-safe bowl.
2. Add just a little cold water.
3. Cover with a lid or use microwave-safe plastic wrap (leaving one corner of the wrap open to vent) and cook on HIGH as directed above.

Section 4

SAVE MONEY WITH YOUR SLOW-COOKER/CROCKPOT

Slow-cookers can help you turn nearly any combination of ingredients into a delicious, comforting, and low-cost dish with plenty of leftovers. Follow the below tips and the recipes found on pgs. 25-33, so you can come home to a healthy and budget-friendly meal.

1. **Purchase cheaper cuts of meat.** The slightly tougher, and therefore, cheaper cuts forms of meat are perfect for the slow-cooker. The long hours and low temperature of the slow-cooker will soften even the toughest of meats.
2. **Cook meals in bulk.** Keep an eye out for ingredients that are on sale and double up on soup, stew, and casserole recipes. Put the extras in plastic/glass sealable containers or storage bags, and store them in the freezer or fridge. You'll have heat-n-eat meals at your fingertips!
3. **Break out the beans.** Vegetarian protein sources (like beans) tend to be cheaper and more environmentally friendly than meat or fish. You can use canned or dried beans. Dried beans tend to be less expensive than canned beans and are often lower in sodium. When using dried beans, soak them overnight in water and drain them in the morning before using.



Tips to save time when prepping meals for your slow cooker

- **Pre-prepare your ingredients the night before.** Refrigerate them in a covered bowl. Wake up, pour them into the slow cooker, turn it on, and get on with your day.
- **Need to chop an onion?** Try using a mini-food chopper, a bag of pre-prepped fresh/frozen onions, or check out the fast, convenient method for chopping onions at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDjNI5gs4nM>
- **Use frozen vegetables in place of fresh veggies.**
- **Look for a crock-pot with a non-stick surface, or consider purchasing disposable crock-pot liners for faster clean-up.**
- **Consider a slow-cooker with a removable, stove-top safe insert for browning meat.** This feature allows you to brown/sear meat or sauté ingredients directly on the stove-top before placing the pot back in the slow-cooker to finish cooking. (Reduces the amount of pans required to pre-prepare ingredients for recipes that call for browning/searing meat ahead of time.)

ONLY HAVE CANNED VEGETABLES?

Only have canned vegetables? Using low sodium canned vegetables is a great time saver for your slow cooked meal. Canned vegetables only need to be heated. Put your canned vegetables in during the final 45 minutes of your cooking time so they retain their shape and texture.

**Please Note: The above recommendation does not apply to canned beans like pinto beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, etc. You can put these in at the start of the cooking time and their texture will not be diminished.*





5 WAYS TO USE LEFTOVER CHICKEN

- **Chicken Quesadilla:** Soften chopped onion and bell pepper on the stove until tender. Top a tortilla with chopped leftover chicken and a small handful of cheese. Fold in half and toast on a griddle or large skillet until cheese melts.
- **Chicken Soup/Chili:** Use leftover chicken to make soup or chili. Check out the following recipes:
 - » White Chicken Chili Recipe: http://www.bushbeans.com/en_US/recipe/easy-white-chicken-chili
 - » Chicken and Vegetable Soup: <https://recipes.sparkpeople.com/recipe-detail.asp?recipe=1216997>
- **Chicken Thai Pasta with Peanut Sauce:** Combine peanut butter, soy sauce, sugar, chopped garlic and a dash of hot sauce in a saucepan with enough coconut milk or water to thin. Warm over the stove, then toss with cooked pasta, chopped leftover chicken, chopped roasted peanuts, and fresh cilantro.
- **Barbecue chicken sandwich:** Combine shredded or chopped leftover chicken with barbecue sauce. Serve, topped with coleslaw on a toasted bun.
- **Chicken Macaroni Salad:** Toss cooked macaroni with chopped leftover chicken, celery, red onion; toss with a dressing made of light mayonnaise, a tsp of mustard, and a touch of lemon juice.

For more recipes and ideas on ways to use leftover chicken, check out: <http://www.moneycrashers.com/leftover-rotisserie-chicken-recipes/>

WHOLE-ROASTED (ROTISSERIE STYLE CHICKEN)

Ingredients:

1 whole roasting chicken (4-5 lbs.)
1-2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. paprika
1 tsp. onion powder
½ tsp. dried thyme
1 tsp. Italian seasoning
½ tsp. cayenne pepper (optional)
½ tsp. black pepper (optional)
4 whole garlic cloves
1 yellow onion, peeled and quartered
Non-stick cooking spray

Directions:

Spray a 5 – 6 quart slow-cooker with nonstick cooking spray. Combine all dry ingredients (the cayenne pepper and black pepper are optional). Rub the dry ingredients all over the chicken (inside and out), and place in crockpot – breast side down.

Place the onion and garlic inside the chicken cavity. Cover with lid.

Cook 4-5 hours on **HIGH** heat setting or cook 8 hours on **LOW** heat setting. Makes 4-6 servings.

Serve with: Cooked rice and a cooked vegetable of your choice.

Store and Save for Later: Remove the meat from the bone and place leftovers into sealable plastic bag(s) or container(s), and refrigerate for up to 3 days OR freeze for up to 3 months.





SUPER EASY ITALIAN CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 4 frozen chicken-breast halves
- 1 pkg. dry Italian dressing mix
- 1 cup warm water or chicken stock

Directions:

Place chicken in slow-cooker. Sprinkle with dressing mix. Pour water over chicken.

Cover with lid. Cook on **LOW** heat setting for 8 – 10 hours. Makes 4 servings.

Serve with/on top of: Whole grain pasta (cooked) or salad greens.

SLOW-COOKER SHREDDED CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 6 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts (thawed or frozen)
- 2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. black pepper
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- ½ cup water or chicken broth*

Directions:

Place chicken breasts in slow cooker, and sprinkle with seasonings and add water. Cover with lid. Cook on **LOW** heat setting for 8 hours, or until the chicken shreds easily with a fork. Makes 6-10 servings.

If making a smaller batch, keep an eye on your slow cooker as the chicken will likely need less cooking time.

Remove the chicken with tongs, and shred using two forks.

Serve with: Cooked rice and a vegetable of your choice.

Store and Save for Later: Freeze leftovers for up to 3 months or refrigerate leftovers for up to 3 days in sealable plastic bag(s) or glass/plastic container(s).

* If using frozen chicken breasts, add ¼ cup of water.

BEEF VEGETABLE CHILI:

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ lbs. beef round (boneless) steak
- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped (1 cup)
- 1 bag (12 oz.) frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
- 2 cans (14.5 ounces each) diced tomatoes with green chilies, undrained
- 2 can (15 oz.) black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 can (15 oz.) dark red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 envelope (1.25 ounces) chili seasoning mix
- 2 cups water
- ½ cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

Directions:

Spray 12-inch nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Cut beef into ½ -inch cubes. Cook beef and onion in skillet over medium-high heat for 7 to 9 minutes, stirring occasionally, until beef is brown; drain.

Mix beef mixture and remaining ingredients except cheese and cilantro into the slow cooker.

Cover with lid. Cook on **LOW** heat setting for 7 to 9 hours. Makes 6 servings.

Serve with: Fresh orange slices and a whole grain dinner roll or cornbread. Top individual servings with cheese and cilantro.



SLOW COOKER CHICKEN TORTILLA SOUP

Ingredients:

2 boneless skinless chicken breasts (about 1 pound)
4 cups good-quality chicken stock
2 (14-ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
1 (14-ounce) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes, with juice
1 (15-ounce) can whole-kernel corn, drained
1 (4-ounce) can diced green chiles
4 cloves garlic, minced or 2 tsp chopped garlic (jar variety)
2 tsp. chili powder
1 white onion, peeled and diced
2 tsp. ground cumin
1 tsp. salt, or more/less to taste
Fresh lime wedges

Optional garnishes: Chopped fresh cilantro, diced avocado, diced red onion, shredded cheese, sour cream, tortilla strips/tortilla chips (crumbled)

Directions:

Add all of the ingredients to the slow cooker except for the chicken, and stir to combine. Place chicken in slow cooker. Cover with lid. Cook on **HIGH** heat setting for 3-4 hours, or **LOW** heat setting for 6-8 hours. Use two forks to carefully shred the chicken (watch, so you don't scrape the crock-pot).

Serve: Warm; with a squeeze of fresh lime juice. Top with optional garnishes if desired. Or, refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 3 days; or, freeze in a sealed container for up to 3 months.



SLOW COOKER BLACK BEAN SOUP



Ingredients:

1 large white or yellow onion, chopped
2 red bell peppers, cored and chopped
2 carrots, chopped
5 cloves garlic, minced or 2 ½ tsp. chopped garlic (jar variety)
1-2 jalapeño peppers, seeded and diced
4 cups vegetable stock
4 (15-ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained
1 bay leaf
2 tsp. ground cumin
2 tsp. chili powder
2 tsp. kosher salt
½ tsp. cayenne

Optional garnishes: Chopped fresh cilantro, crumbled corn tortilla chips, diced avocados, low-fat sour cream and/or shredded cheese (dairy-free, if making this soup vegan)

Directions:

Add all ingredients to a slow cooker, and stir to combine. Cover with lid. Cook on **HIGH** heat setting for 3 – 4 hours OR on **LOW** heat setting 6-8 hours. Makes 8 – 10 servings.

Serve: Warm; garnished with your desired topping(s). Or, refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 3 days; or, freeze in a sealed container for up to 3 months.



BRISKET WITH MUSTARD BBQ SAUCE

Ingredients:

1 large onion, chopped (1 cup)
1 medium green bell pepper, chopped (1 cup)
1 medium stalk celery, thinly sliced (½ cup)
1 cup barbecue (bottled) sauce
1 Tbsp. packed brown sugar
1 tsp. ground mustard
Fresh beef brisket - 3 lbs. (not corned beef)
Cooking spray

Directions:

Spray a 5 – 6 quart slow-cooker with cooking spray. Mix all ingredients (except for the beef) and pour mixture into the slow-cooker. Add beef (if necessary, cut beef in half to fit in cooker). Spoon sauce mixture over and around beef.

Cover with lid. Cook on **LOW** heat setting for 10 – 12 hours. Makes 8 Servings.

Serve with: Cooked egg noodles (cook according to package directions) and steamed broccoli.

WANT PERFECTLY COOKED NOODLES?



- Use a pot that is bigger than you think you need. The noodles need room to move around while they are cooking.
- Bring the water to a full rolling boil. Drop in the noodles and stir. Make sure the water stays at a full boil. Stir every few minutes throughout the cooking process.
- Once it is done, drain pasta into a colander immediately to stop the cooking process. If left in the water too long, the noodles will become mushy.

PORK BARBECUE

Ingredients:

2-3 lb. pork roast
2 onions, chopped
12 oz. bottle barbecue sauce
¼ cup honey
1 package of cabbage slaw or broccoli slaw
6-8 slider buns

Directions:

Place pork roast in the slow cooker. Add onions, barbecue sauce, and honey.

Cover with lid. Cook on **LOW** heat setting for 6 – 8 hours. Makes 6-8 servings.

Serve on roll.

Serve with: Pre-packaged, ready-made cabbage slaw and freshly sliced apples



EASY SWEET AND SOUR PORK CHOPS

Ingredients:

16 oz. bag frozen Oriental vegetables (partially thawed*)
6 pork chops
12 oz. bottle sweet and sour sauce
½ cup water
1 cup frozen pea pods

Directions:

Place partially thawed Oriental vegetables in slow cooker. Arrange chops on top.

Combine sauce and water and pour over chops. Hold off on adding the pea pods until almost finished cooking (see directions below).

Cover with lid. Cook on **LOW** heat setting for 7 – 8 hours. When finished cooking on low heat setting (7-8 hours), turn to **HIGH** heat setting and add pea pods. Cover, and cook an additional 5 minutes on **HIGH** heat setting. Makes 6 – 8 servings.

Serve over: Cooked brown rice or quinoa and add a green salad and/or canned pineapple (packed in its own juice).

** Partially thaw vegetables in the microwave for a few minutes until they just start to soften.*



SLOW COOKER VEGETABLE LASAGNA



Ingredients:

1 large egg
1 15- to 16-ounce container part-skim ricotta cheese
1 5-ounce package baby spinach, chopped
1 small zucchini, quartered lengthwise and cubed
1 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes (undrained)
1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes (undrained)
1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes with green chilies (e.g. Rotel)
3 cloves garlic, minced or 1 ½ tsp. of jar-variety
15 whole-wheat lasagna noodles (about 12 ounces), uncooked
2 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella, divided

Directions: (Be sure to read all of the directions before starting)

Combine egg, 2 cups ricotta, spinach, and zucchini in a large bowl.

Combine crushed and diced tomatoes (with their juice), and garlic in a medium bowl.

Spread 1 ½ cups of the tomato mixture in the slow cooker. Arrange 5 noodles over the mixture, overlapping them slightly and breaking into pieces to cover as much of the mixture as possible. Spread half of the ricotta-vegetable mixture over the noodles. Cover as much of the noodles as possible. On top of the ricotta-vegetable mixture, spoon on 1 ½ cups tomato mixture and sprinkle with 1 cup mozzarella. Repeat this layering process one more time, starting with the noodles, but save the other 1 cup of mozzarella cheese for the last 10 minutes of the cooking time (see directions below).

Top with a third layer of noodles. Evenly spread the remaining tomato sauce over the noodles.

Cover with lid. Cook on **HIGH** heat setting for 2 hours or **LOW** for 4 hours. Turn off the slow cooker, sprinkle the reserved mozzarella on the lasagna, cover and let stand for 10 minutes to melt the cheese.

Serve with: Steamed broccoli, a whole-grain dinner roll, and a fruit salad.

Section 5

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



NOTES

Additional Resources:

Cookbooks:

- The Smoothie Recipe Book for Beginners: Essential Smoothies to Get Healthy, Lose Weight, and Feel Great (Mendocino Press)
- Healthy Slow Cooker Cookbook: 150 Fix-And-Forget Recipes Using Delicious, Whole Food Ingredients (Rockbridge Press)
- Taste of Home Slow Cooker: 431 Hot & Hearty Classics (Taste of Home)

Web-Sites:

- Smoothies: <http://simplegreensmoothies.com/recipes>
- Slow Cooker Freezer-Bag Meals: <http://www.bettycrocker.com/menus-holidays-parties/mhplibrary/everyday-meals/4-genius-slow-cooker-freezer-bag-meals>
- Slow Cooker Cooking For 2: <http://www.bettycrocker.com/search/searchresults?term=Slow%20Cooker%20Cooking%20For%202&termDataSource=d6fb75f5-d19a-49cd-9ba0-c10a6e45afb2>
- 25 Ideas for Leftover Chicken: <http://www.latimes.com/food/la-fo-roisserie-chicken-dinner-20130928-story.html>

Phone Apps:

- Smoothie Recipes Pro
- Healthy Slow-Cooker Recipes from SparkPeople
- 100+ Slow Cooker Meat Recipes

For more information:

E-mail all questions and comments regarding this Cooking Guide for Soldiers to: usarmy.apg.medcom-phc.mbx.hpw-web-contacts@mail.mil. Please put "Cooking Made Easy" in the subject line.



Performance Triad

