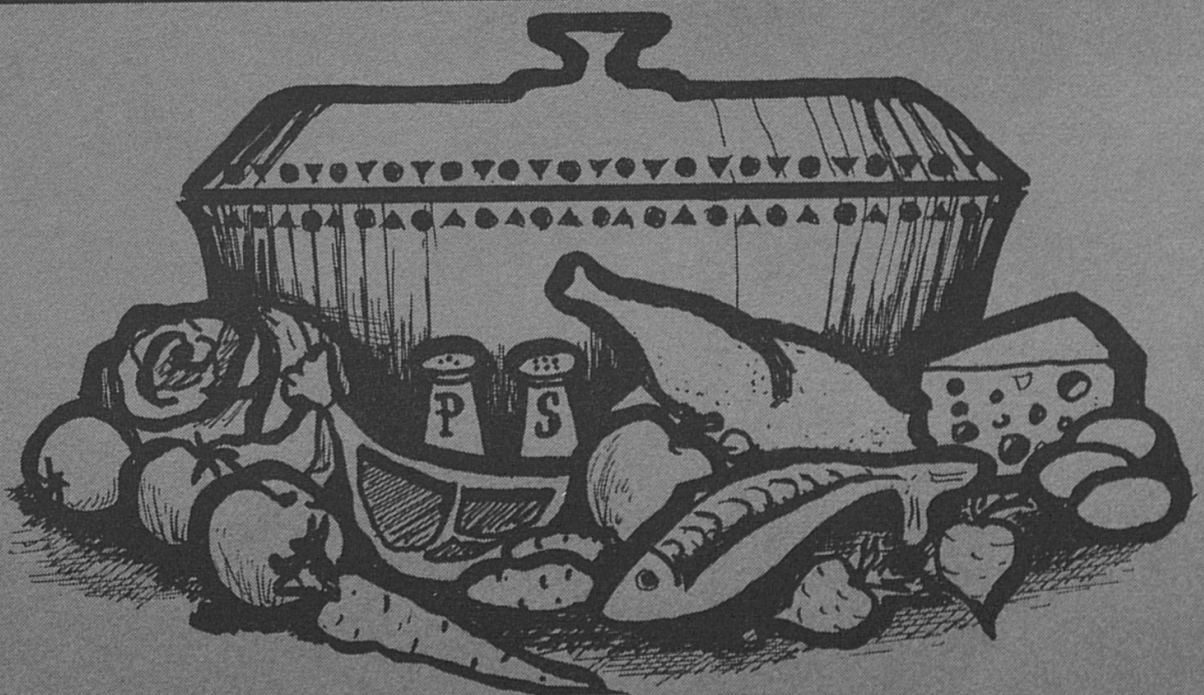


Circular 625

COOKING for One or Two



UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY · COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE agriculture · home economics · 4-H · development

CONTENTS

- 3 Tools to Help You
- 4 Plan Ahead
- 5 Shop Wisely
- 6 Store Food Properly
- 7 Be a Smart Cook
- 8 Menu Suggestions
 - 8 for breakfast
 - 8 for lunch or supper
 - 9 for dinner
 - 9 for snacks
- 10 Recipes
 - 10 meat in your meals
 - 13 poultry in your meals
 - 14 fish in your meals
 - 15 egg and cheese dishes
 - 16 vegetables
 - 17 a bowl of hot soup
 - 18 desserts
- 19 More Tips



This publication is adapted from H.E. Circular 243, "Cooking for One or Two in Leisure Years," Clemson University, Clemson, S.C. Additions and revisions are by Mrs. Sue Burrier, UK Extension specialist in food and nutrition.

Cooking for One or Two

Cooking for one or two can be just as challenging (and a lot less work!) as preparing meals for a family. So if you're living alone or with your spouse after your children are grown and gone, this booklet is for you.

Make yourself a promise to put more thought and creativity into your meals. It will pay off in better health, a prettier table, and added mealtime enjoyment, morning, noon and night. If you'd like a handy 1-2-3-4-5 guide to more nutritious and delicious meals, here it is:

1. Select good tools for the job.
2. Plan your meals ahead, being sure to include each day the right foods for good health.
3. Shop wisely for the best buys, the best size, and the very best use of your time.
4. Use good food-storage techniques.
5. Be a smart cook.

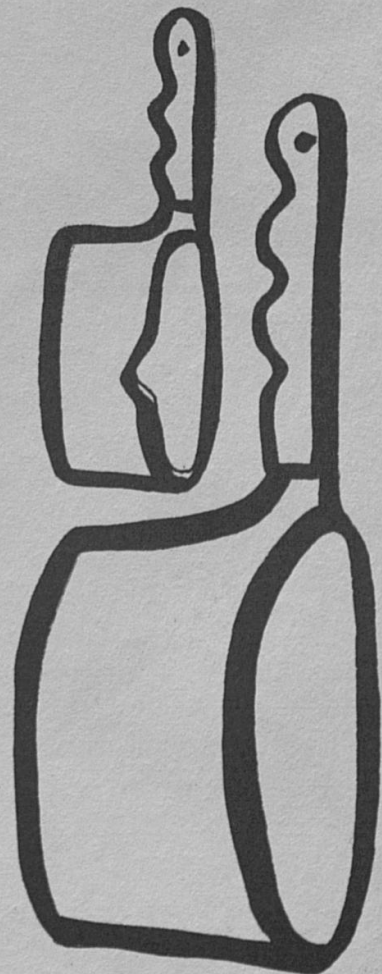
Tools to Help You

Good kitchen tools and equipment will make meal preparation and clean-up chores more pleasant.

A good can opener is essential. You'll especially appreciate an electric one if arthritis or another problem makes using a standard can opener difficult.

A dutch oven is great for pot roasts, one-dish meals, making applesauce.

Choose carefully the size pans you need. A saucepan should be balanced, have a flat bottom and straight sides. Iron cookware has many advantages, but if your wrists are weakened, you might want to consider giving it up in favor of a lighter-weight variety.



Individual casseroles and small foilware pans are handy.

A colander is good for washing vegetables and fruits, as well as for draining spaghetti.

Kitchen tongs are the perfect tool for turning meats and for holding and dipping many foods.

A rubber spatula is great for stirring, and for coaxing that last bit of food out of mixing bowl, pan, or jar. These spatulas come in several helpful sizes.

A 4- to 8-cup measuring-and-mixing bowl can save time and extra dishwashing.

other helpers that come in handy

thick potholders

rubber gripper to help open tight screw tops

small, see-through glass or plastic

storage containers for leftovers

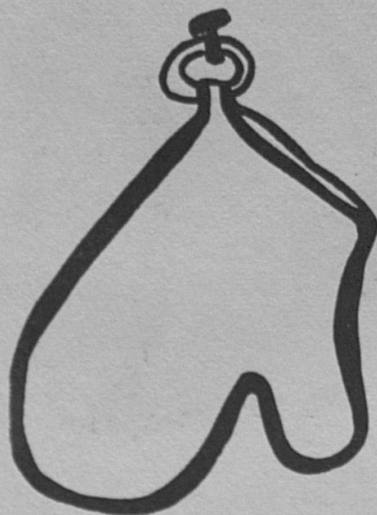
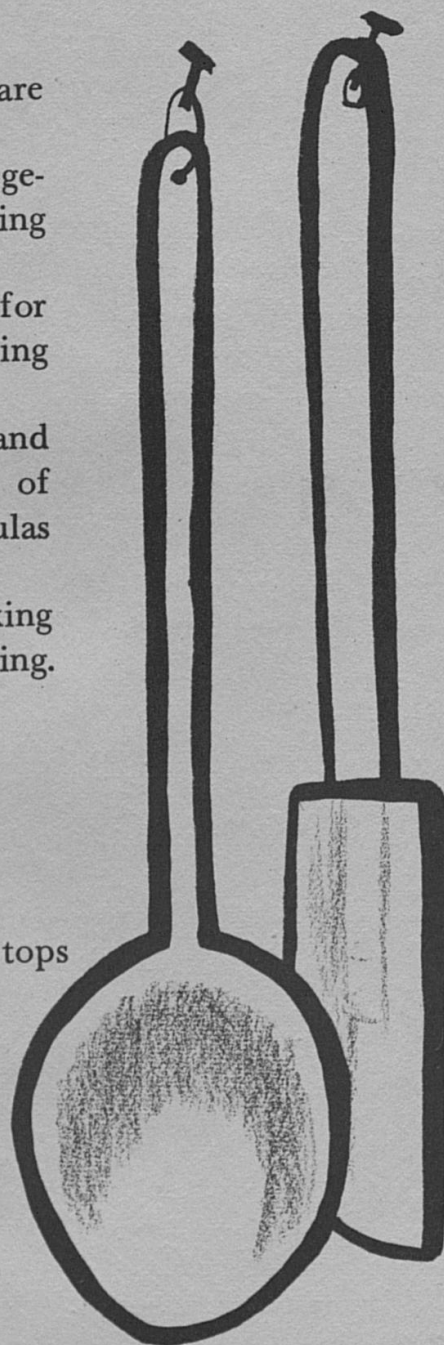
plastic bags in all sizes

clear plastic wrap

sharp knives

slotted metal mixing spoon

wooden mixing spoon



Plan Ahead

Count on simple meals with a few foods that go well together. Plan them on paper for 2 or 3 days, or for a whole week. Each day, be sure to include:

Protein -- 2 servings. One serving should be meat, fish, eggs or cheese. The other may be peanut butter, beans or peas.

Milk -- at least 2 cups. You never outgrow your need for milk. The calcium it contains is especially important for healthy bones. If you don't like to drink milk, eat ice cream, and cook milk dishes like custards and puddings. Hot cocoa is a good breakfast drink.

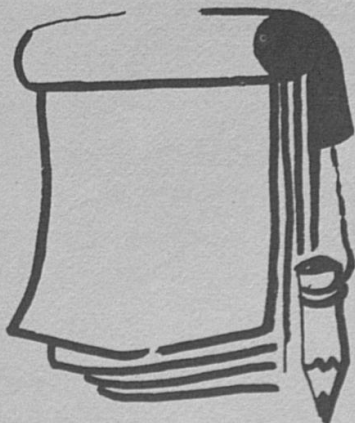
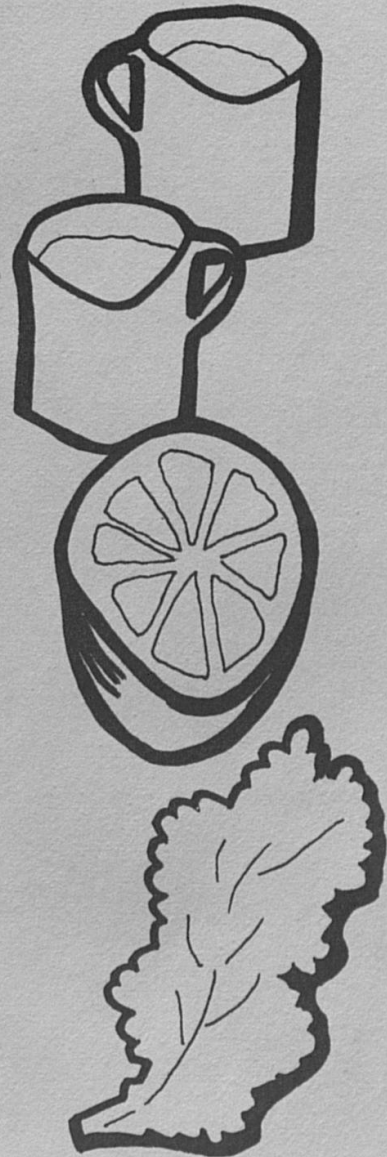
Fruits and vegetables. Eat citrus fruit or a tomato, plus another fruit. Eat a leafy green or yellow vegetable, plus another vegetable.

Bread or cereal at each meal.

Plan on at least three meals a day, and don't let that tea-and-toast or cookie break take the place of a regular meal. Be sure not to skip breakfast. If you do, it's mighty hard to catch up with all those nourishing foods you need by the end of the day. Besides, you'll feel better all day with a good breakfast under your belt.

Eat for health as well as for pleasure. If financial considerations make you keep a tight food budget, reconsider some of those economical old-time favorites like corn meal mush, oatmeal and other hot cereals.

Plan for variety in flavor, temperature and texture. Plan only one "difficult" dish in each meal. Consider calorie needs.



Shop Wisely

Keep a memo pad handy in the kitchen. When you use the last of a food, or when it's in low supply, jot it down.

Study food advertisements in the newspaper and list the best buys.

Buy foods in season. In-season plentifuls are better for the budget than out-of-season temptations.

Buy the size most economical for you. Don't be led astray by "bargains" in large-size packages.

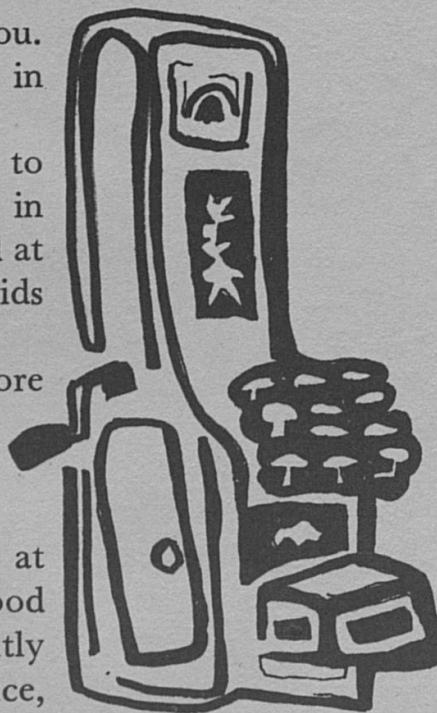
Go over the list when you're ready to shop, and group foods and other items in the same order in which they are shelved at the store. This saves time and avoids backtracking at the store.

Buy just what you have space to store and can use without waste.

Read labels.

Compare prices.

Compare fresh fruits and vegetables at local produce stands with those at the food store. Decide which place consistently offers the best buy in terms of price, quality and selection.



Store Food Properly

Food is alive. It is perishable. It is delicate. Treat it tenderly and store it properly. There are two very good reasons for proper food storage. One is a matter of convenience, and the other is to preserve the quality and flavor of the food.

Think about your food storage. Are the foods you use most often within easy reach?

Use all your storage areas—refrigerator, pantry, cupboards, etc.—as a "checking account," not as a "savings account." Take a tip from the markets, and store newly-purchased food towards the back of shelves.

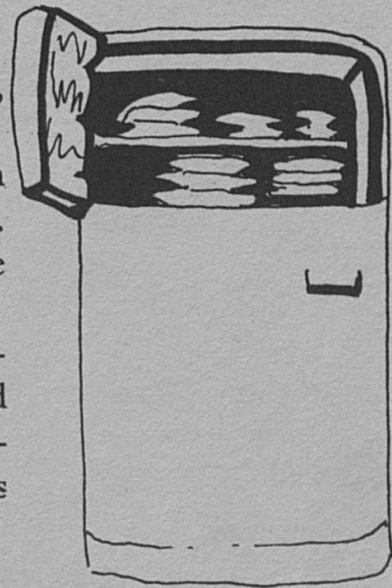
Unpack groceries promptly and put

them away.

Fresh vegetables should be washed, drained and dry before refrigeration.

Fresh fruits should be allowed to ripen at room temperature, and then refrigerated. Berries, grapes and cherries should not be washed until ready to be eaten.

Store prepackaged meat in the refrigerator, or re-wrap them loosely in waxed paper first. Rewrap meats for freezer storage in the appropriate wrap to protect its quality.



Be a Smart Cook!

a smart cook -

Knows how to plan and prepare balanced meals.

Realizes that many kinds and combinations of foods can lead to a well-balanced diet.

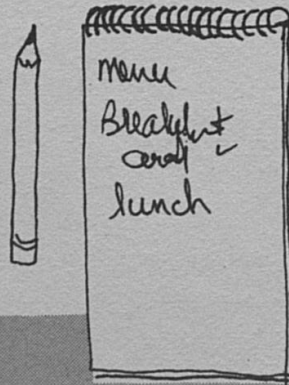
Knows the best way to store, cook and serve foods to save their nutrients.

Knows that no matter what your age, you never lose your need for a well-balanced diet.

seasoning foods

Many smart cooks use herbs and spices in their cooking and some like their own fresh-from-the-garden herbs. If you've never tried your talents with herbs and spices, chances are you'll find it a rewarding venture. Use these seasonings cautiously, mostly with the idea of bringing out the

natural flavors of food, instead of hiding them. And if you or your spouse are on a salt-free diet, you'll find that herbs can put additional flavor into some foods that might otherwise be rather tasteless.

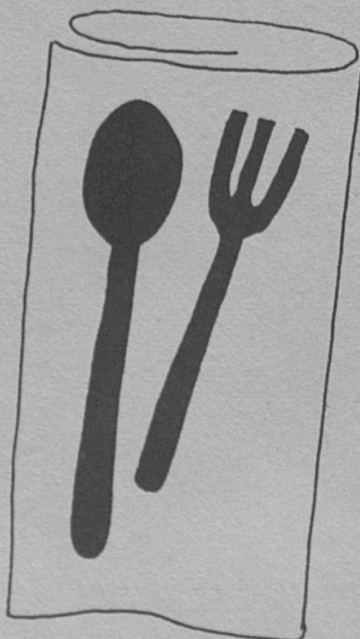
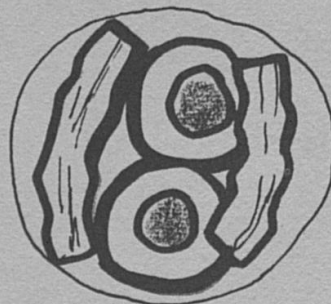


Menu Suggestions

The following are some suggestions to get you started on a list of your own. Think back to your growing-up years, to some of the favorite meals your mother served, some of the special treats you looked forward to when you visited your grandmother. Jot them down, and pick up some more ideas from newspapers and magazines.

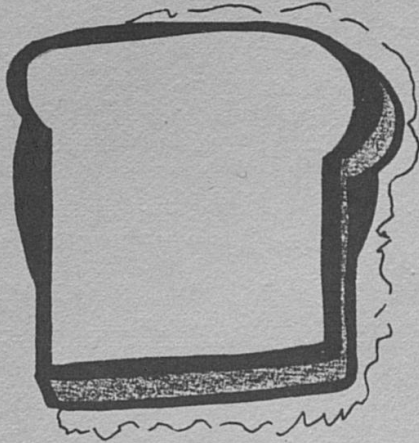
for breakfast

Fruit, hot cereal, toast and coffee
Orange or tomato juice, eggs, bacon or sausage, toast, milk
Fruit, French toast, milk or coffee
Juice, creamed egg on toast, coffee



for lunch or supper

Homemade navy bean or potato soup, crackers, carrot sticks, fruit, milk
Cheese souffle, green bean salad, milk
Poached egg, tossed green salad, oatmeal cookie and milk
Creamed tuna, egg or meat on toast; mixed vegetable salad, milk
Soup and crackers, molded fruit or vegetable salad, ice cream, cookie



Doubledecker sandwich, apple sauce, milk

Oyster stew, crackers, pineapple and cream cheese salad, milk

Liverwurst and lettuce sandwich, celery and apple salad, milk

Cheese, crackers, fresh fruit, milk

Broiled cheese, tomato and bacon on toast, milk

for dinner

Sausage, apple rings or stewed apple or apple sauce, green beans

Lamb chops, slaw, apple Betty

Broiled chicken, buttered rice, tossed vegetable salad, gelatin salad

Ham slice, glazed carrots, lemon pudding

Tuna casserole, fruit, cookies

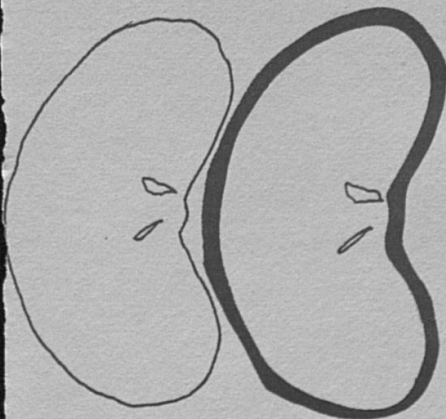
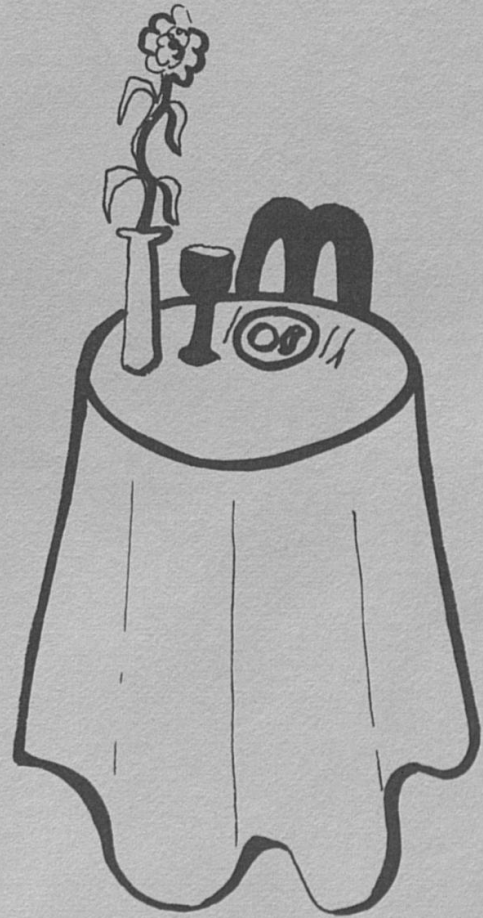
Rice sausage casserole, buttered cabbage, fresh fruit

Meat loaf, turnip greens, creamed potatoes, baked custard

Beef stew with vegetables, cookies and ice cream

Broiled cheeseburger with tomato slice

Liver and bacon, carrot sticks, baked apple



for snacks

Fresh fruit and crackers

Raw vegetables in sour cream dip

Cottage cheese and crackers

Oatmeal or peanut butter cookies and milk

Hot milk toast

Recipes

Here are some recipes for one or two to start you rolling in the right direction. You might like to keep a notebook for recipes you collect from magazines, newspapers and friends. You could use a large notebook with blank sheets for pasting up recipes, with notebook dividers to section it for easy reference.

meat in your meals

Meat is often considered the hardest menu problem, and also the most expensive part of the meal. But if you make good use of pot roasts and other of the less expensive cuts, use ground beef in a variety of tasty dishes, and match the cookery to the cut, you should be able to keep the budget in line. For both variety and economy in your meals, alternate meat with fish, poultry, egg and cheese main dishes.

storing ground beef

If a pound of ground beef or ground chuck is too much for you at one time, divide it into four patties of about 4 ounces each. Wrap each separately for freezing, or stack them with moisture-proof paper between each patty for easy separation. If your recipe calls for 1/2 pound ground beef, remove two patties or two packages from the freezer and you will have enough for your recipe.





swiss steak for one

- 1/3 lb. round steak cut
1 inch thick
- 2 tsp flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- dash of pepper
- 2 tsp shortening
- 1 cup tomato juice
- a small onion, peeled and sliced

Lay meat on a board. Sprinkle it with half of the flour and the salt and pepper. Pound in the flour, using the rim of a sturdy saucer or a meat pounder. Turn meat, and pound the rest of the flour into the other side. Heat the shortening in a skillet with a tight-fitting cover. Brown meat well on both sides. Turn heat low, and add tomato juice and onion. Cover and simmer for 1 hour, adding a little water from time to time if necessary, to keep meat from sticking.

a three-part roast

A roast may seem to be a problem when you are cooking for one or two, but it is actually a good buy. You can buy a roast and divide it into three parts for three different meals. This keeps you from getting tired of the roast. For instance, buy a 4- or 5-pound arm roast. Use the third from the rounded end to cut in cubes for stew. Use the center portion as a pot roast. The remaining portion can be cut to make two delicious Swiss steaks. You may cook one portion, and freeze the two remaining ones to use at a later date.

quick tomato burger

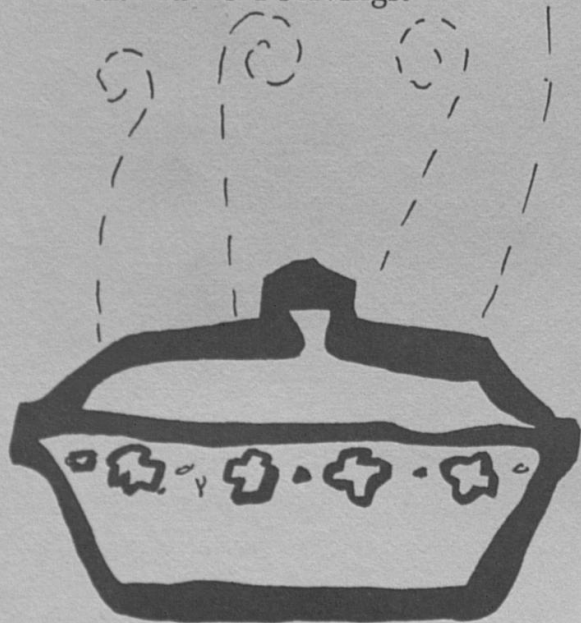
- 1/4 lb. ground beef
- 1 small tomato, cubed
- 1 tbsp mustard-style
hot dog relish
- 1 tbsp mayonnaise
- dash of salt
- dash of pepper
- 1 hamburger bun, split and
toasted

Brown meat in skillet, stirring frequently. Add remaining ingredients except bun. Heat through. Serve over bun.

meatballs in tomato sauce

1 lb. lean ground beef
3/4 tsp salt
1/4 tsp pepper
1 tbsp chopped parsley or
1 tsp dry parsley flakes
1 3/4 cups tomato juice or
vegetable juice cocktail
fluffy steamed rice for two

In a bowl, blend well the beef, salt, pepper and parsley. Make mixture into little balls about the size of walnuts. In a large skillet, heat the tomato juice to boiling. Add meatballs. Turn heat low and cook 12 to 15 minutes, basting meatballs occasionally with the sauce in the pan. The sauce will thicken until it is about the consistency of cream gravy. Serve half over the rice for dinner. Cool the rest, and freeze for another meal. Makes 4 servings.



rice sausage casserole

1/8 lb. country sausage
1 tbsp onion, minced
1/3 cup condensed tomato soup
1/3 cup water
1/2 cup cooked rice
grated cheese

Brown sausage and onion. Drain off excess fat. Thoroughly mix together the tomato soup, water, and rice. Arrange alternate layers of sausage and rice in a greased individual casserole. Sprinkle the grated cheese over the top. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.



ground beef casserole

1/2 lb. ground beef
1 onion, grated or chopped fine
1 white potato (medium size)
1 can cheddar cheese soup (celery, tomato, or cream of chicken soup can be substituted)

In small casserole, mix ground beef and onion. Peel potato and cube or slice thinly over meat mixture. Pour soup over potato. Bake uncovered 50 minutes to 1 hour at 350°. (Vary by using 1 cup cooked noodles or 1 cup cooked rice instead of potato.)

pork bits with zucchini

1 lb lean pork cubed
salt and pepper to taste
1 tbsp butter
2 tbsp ginger
1 tbsp soy sauce
1/2 tsp oregano
1 medium zucchini squash,
sliced thick diagonally
1 8-oz can tomato sauce

Sprinkle the pork bits with salt and pepper. Brown in the butter, heated in skillet or heavy saucepan. Add ginger and soy sauce; cover and simmer 10 minutes. Add oregano, squash, and tomato sauce. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Great served with a green salad and baked potato. Makes 2 servings.



poultry in your meals

Individual chicken parts are available packaged separately at most markets. However, a whole fryer will usually be a more economical buy.



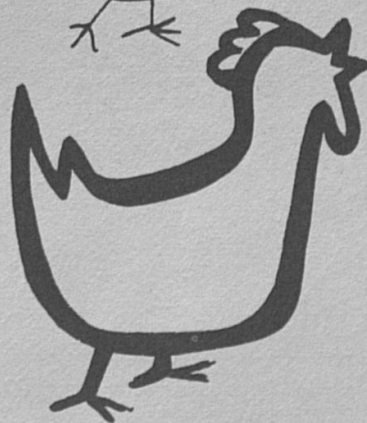
roasted or baked chicken

Place chicken on small rack (or cut holes in a small aluminum pie pan and turn it upside down in baking dish). Bake at 300° for 1 hour for 2-pound chicken. Meat is done when

skillet gumbo

1 cup diced cooked ham (canned luncheon meat may be substituted)
1/2 cup chopped green pepper
1/2 cup chopped onion
1/4 pound okra, cut in 1-inch pieces
1 cup canned tomatoes
1/2 cup water
3/4 tsp salt
dash of pepper
1/2 cup uncooked rice

Combine all ingredients except rice in a heavy skillet. Heat to boiling. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in rice. Cover, return to boiling, and simmer 20 minutes. Makes 2 servings.



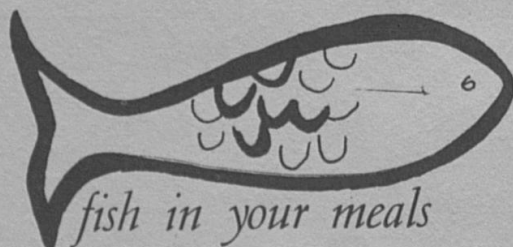
leg moves freely at joint. You may wish to baste occasionally or place a tent of aluminum over chicken during the first part of baking time.

broiled chicken

Place chicken on broiler pan (no rack). Season. Brush with melted fat. Broil 6 to 7 inches from heat with skin side down. Regulate heat so chicken begins to brown in 10 minutes. Turn and brush with fat. Broil 40 to 50 minutes, or until tender. For barbecued chicken, baste with barbecue sauce during broiling.

chicken baked in soup

Pour 1 can condensed cream of chicken or cream of mushroom soup over two large chicken breasts in greased casserole. Cover. Bake 1 hour in 350° oven.



Fish is a good choice for delicious, thrifty meals. You can buy it fresh, frozen or canned. You can broil it, bake it, fry it, use it in casseroles, sandwiches or stews. Here are a few points worth remembering: When you buy frozen fish, store it in your freezer immediately unless you are ready to thaw and cook it. Do not thaw fish sticks or fish portions before cooking. Cook thawed frozen fish soon after thawing, and do not refreeze thawed fish. Try different kinds of fish available at your local market and experiment with ways of fixing it. You'll soon find some favorites.

chicken and noodle bake

- 1 1/2 qts water
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 cups packaged noodles
- 1 tsp dried parsley flakes
- 1 tsp instant minced onion
- 1/2 cup canned condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 5 1/2-oz can boned chicken
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tsp margarine

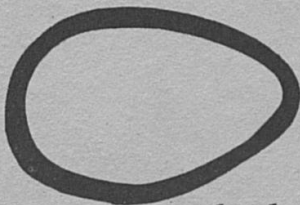
In a saucepan, bring water and salt to a rapid boil. Sprinkle in noodles. Cook over medium heat, uncovered, for 8 minutes. Drain well. In a 1-quart casserole, combine noodles, parsley flakes, onion, soup and water. Gently stir in chicken. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Dot with margarine. Bake in preheated 375° oven for 15 minutes, or until mixture is hot and just beginning to brown on top.



creamed tuna and vegetables on toast

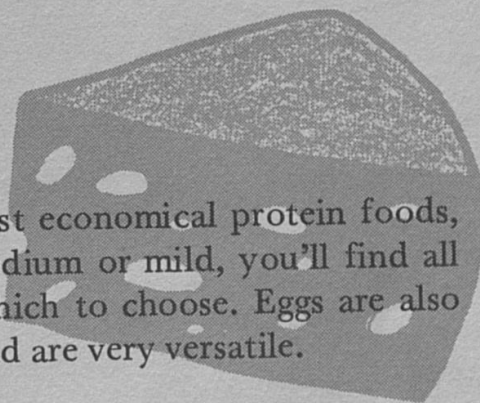
- 1 tbsp butter or margarine
- 1 tbsp flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup grated Cheddar cheese
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 3½-oz can tuna
- 1/2 cup cooked mixed vegetables, drained
- 2 to 3 slices buttered toast

Melt butter in a saucepan. Add flour and blend. Stir in milk and cook over low heat, stirring constantly until thick. Add cheese and salt. Stir until cheese is melted, about 1 minute. Stir in tuna and vegetables. Serve hot over buttered toast. Makes 2 large servings.



egg and cheese dishes

Cheese is one of our finest, most economical protein foods, and it's low in calories. Sharp, medium or mild, you'll find all different kinds of cheeses from which to choose. Eggs are also an economical source of protein and are very versatile.



cottage cheese scrambled eggs

- 1/4 cup cottage cheese
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbs milk
- dash of salt, pepper

Add cottage cheese to eggs beaten with milk. Season with salt and pepper. Cook and stir in greased skillet over low heat.

Variations: (1) Add a slice of bread (broken in small pieces) to the uncooked egg mixture. (2) Add 1/4 cup cheddar cheese to the uncooked egg mixture. (3) Add 1/4 cup chopped meat (ham, bacon, roast, chicken) to the uncooked egg mixture.

cheese souffle

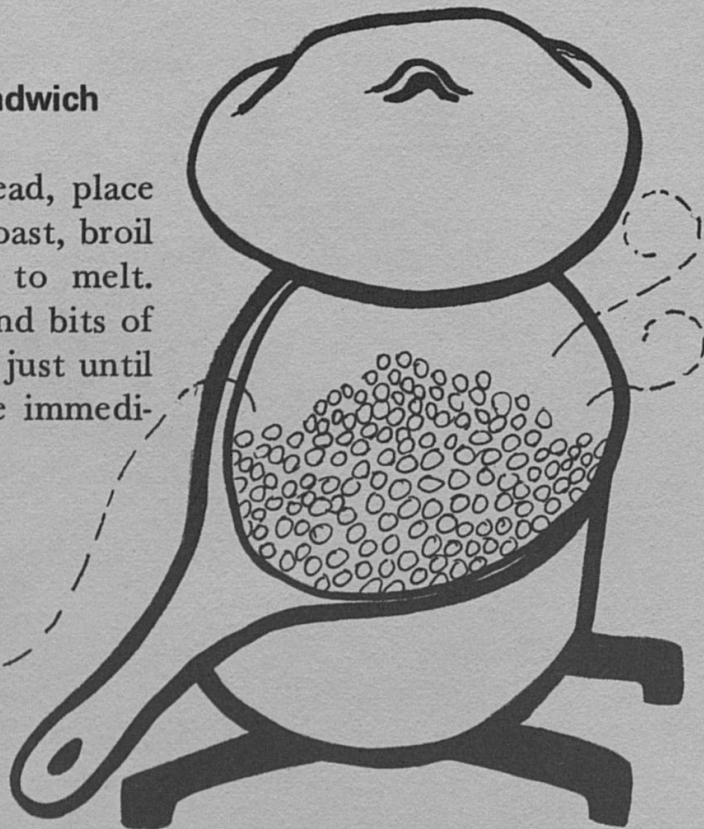
- 3 oz (3/4 cup) sharp process American cheese, shredded
- 2 slightly beaten egg yolks
- 1 cup soft bread crumbs
- 1 cup milk, scalded
- 2 stiffly-beaten egg whites

Reserve 2 tablespoons cheese. Mix remaining cheese, egg yolks, crumbs, and milk. Fold in egg whites. Turn into two 1½-cup casseroles. Top with reserved cheese. Bake at 325° for 35 to 40 minutes or till knife inserted off center comes out clean. Serve immediately. Serves 2.

broiled supper sandwich

Toast slice of bread, place slice of cheese on toast, broil until cheese begins to melt. Add sliced tomato and bits of cooked bacon. Broil just until tomato is hot. Serve immediately.

vegetables



Cook vegetables in a small amount of water until they're just crispy tender. Greens like spinach need only the water left on the leaves after rinsing them. Most other vegetables need about 1/4 cup or a little more water for 2 servings. There should be just a little moisture in the pan when vegetables are done. Use your kitchen timer to help you remember to check them so they don't overcook or boil dry.

saucy beets

1 8¼-oz can sliced beets
1 tbsp sugar
dash cinnamon
dash ground cloves
2 tbsp vinegar
2 tsp vegetable oil or
melted margarine
dash of salt
1 tsp cornstarch or
2½ tsp flour

Drain beets, reserving liquid. In a small saucepan combine sugar, cinnamon, cloves, vinegar, oil or margarine, salt and cornstarch. Gradually blend in liquid from beets. Bring mixture to a boil over low heat, stirring constantly. Add beets and heat 1 minute. Serve hot. Makes 2 servings.

honey glazed carrots

3 or 4 carrots
1/2 tsp salt
2 tbsp butter or margarine
2 tbsp honey
dash of nutmeg

Scrape carrots, cut into sticks and cook in small amount of boiling salted water. In a small pan, melt butter and honey together. Spoon over drained carrots. Continue heating until carrots are well glazed. Add a dash of nutmeg. Serve hot. Makes 2 or 3 servings.

baked acorn squash

1 acorn squash
2 tbsp honey
dash of salt
1/4 lb sausage

Wash and cut squash in halves. Remove fiber and seeds. Place honey (or sirup, if you prefer) and salt in halves of squash. Set the squash on a pan. Bake in 375° oven for 15 minutes. Place sausage in the cavity of the squash halves. Continue baking for 30 minutes or until tender. Makes 2 servings.

a bowl of hot soup

Soup and crackers is almost a meal in itself. There are lots of canned soups from which to choose. But once in a while your own home-made soup will give you a boost. Save leftover vegetables, broth and bits of meat and have them ready in your freezer to add to your home-made soups. If you don't have broth or bits of meat, chicken or beef boullion cubes may be used to flavor soup. A can of condensed soup is too much for one serving. Use one half, and freeze the other half (condensed) for another day.

cream of vegetable soup

cooked vegetables (about 1/2 cup)
2 tsp butter or margarine
1 tbsp flour
1 cup milk (whole or skim)
salt to taste

Melt fat in saucepan; blend in flour. Stir in milk slowly. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly until thickened. Stir in vegetables and salt to taste. Heat just to boiling.

potato soup

2 medium-size potatoes, chopped fine
1 tbsp chopped onions
1 tbsp chopped celery
2 cups milk
2 tbsp butter
salt and pepper

Barely cover potatoes, onion, and celery with water and cook until tender. Mash with potato masher. Add milk and butter; salt and pepper to taste. Serve with chopped parsley on top. Yield: 2 servings.

desserts

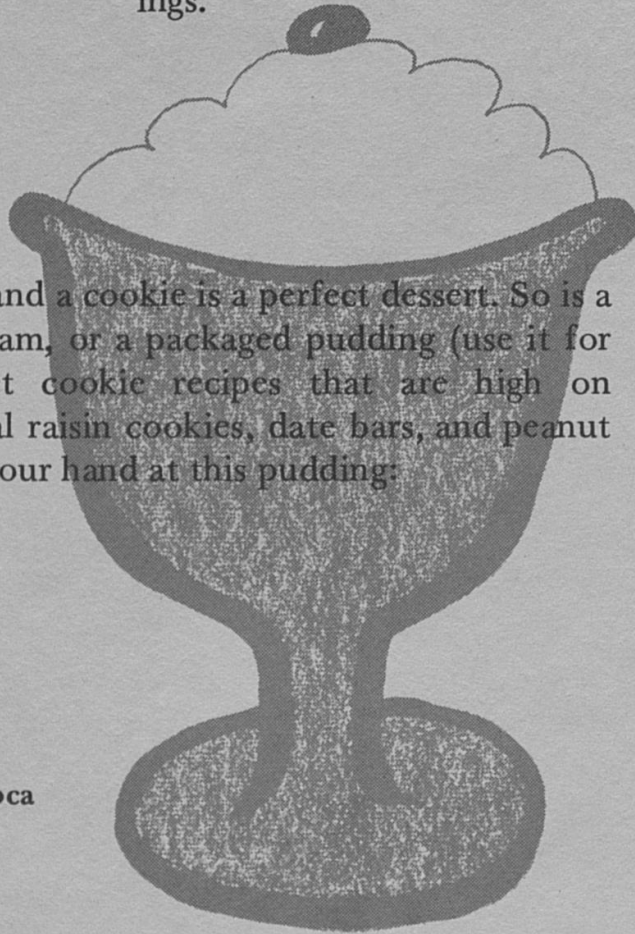
Fresh or canned fruit and a cookie is a perfect dessert. So is a refreshing dish of ice cream, or a packaged pudding (use it for pie filling, too). Collect cookie recipes that are high on nutrition, such as oatmeal raisin cookies, date bars, and peanut butter cookies. And try your hand at this pudding:

raspberry tapioca cream

1 egg, separated
1 cup milk
2 1/2 tbsp sugar
dash salt
1 1/2 tbsp quick-cooking tapioca
1/4 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp raspberry jam

Combine the egg yolk and 1/2 cup of the milk in a saucepan. Stir in the remaining milk, 1-1/2 tablespoons of the sugar, salt and tapioca. Cook over medium heat until the mixture comes to a boil, stirring constantly. (Do not overcook. The mixture thickens as it cools.) Remove from heat. Beat egg white until soft

peaks form. Gradually beat in remaining tablespoons of sugar, continuing to beat until the egg white is very stiff. Fold the hot tapioca and vanilla into the egg white, blending well. Cool. Stir once after 10 minutes. Chill. Serve topped with jam. Makes 2 servings - one for dinner and one for lunch tomorrow.



More Tips on Cooking for One or Two

The local market has many economical, nutritious foods that can be easily prepared for one or two.

Fish and chops may be bought in single servings.

Canned meats offer wonderful variety. Use half a can now, freeze the rest for another meal.

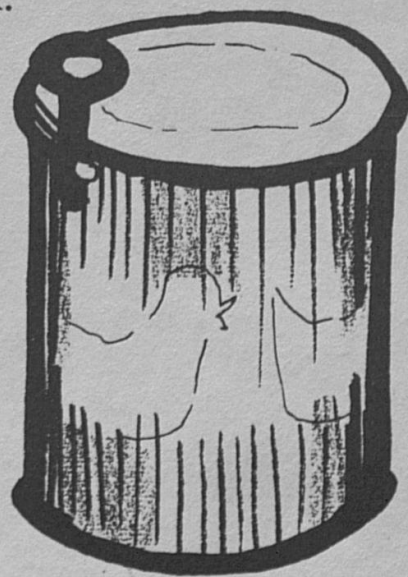
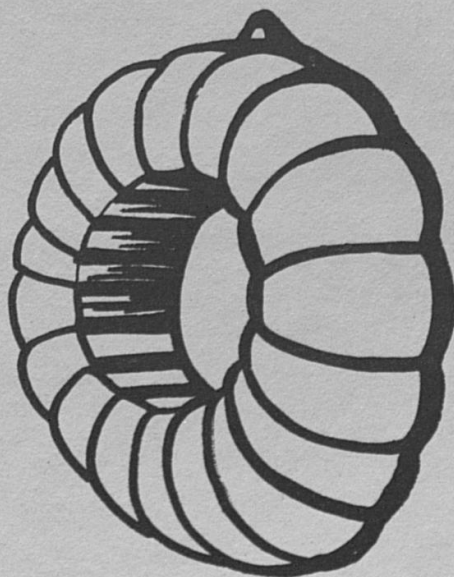
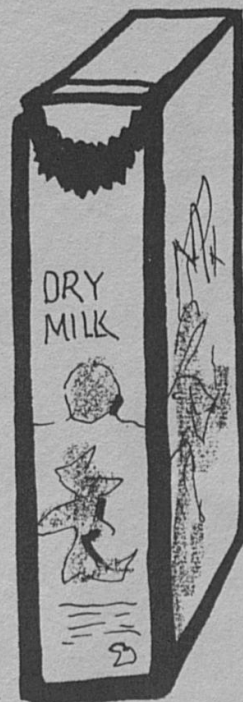
Nonfat dry milk is economical and versatile. Have it on hand for cooking and drinking. Either reconstituted milk dry or canned evaporated milk can be used in any recipe calling for milk.

Potato flakes may be as economical as whole potatoes, and they're wonderfully convenient.

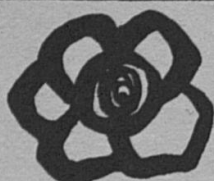
Applesauce (homemade or canned) can be used many ways.

Gelatin for salads and desserts come in many flavors. You can divide packages in half before using.

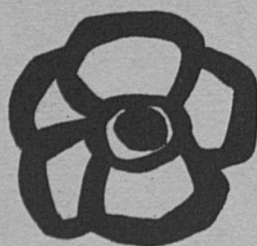
Many mixes come in small sizes. Or you can stir up your own handy master mix.



Enjoy Your Meals!

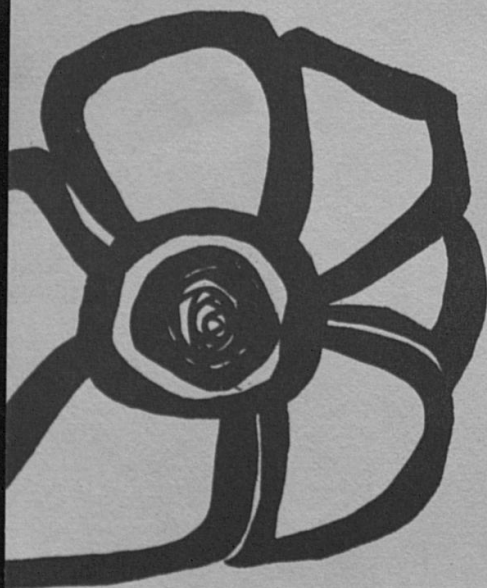


Plan for other kinds of company when you eat alone—a book, a magazine, a radio or television program, a favorite record.



Eat in another room sometimes. It might be in the living room near a window with a nice view, or on a screened-in porch.

Cook a little extra, and invite a friend to share it with you—perhaps a child in the neighborhood.



Try to get out of the house a little while each day. A short walk will perk up your appetite, and your attitude towards life.

Pay attention to how food looks, and the way you put it on the table. Food tastes better if it looks good.

Cooking for one or two can be a chore or a challenge. Make it one more way of enjoying so many of those good things in life worth your special creative touch.

Agricultural and Home Economics Extension Service of the University of Kentucky, the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Charles E. Barnhart, Director. Issued in furtherance of the Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

6M-10-71