

# Sub It In

Tempted to skip over a recipe because of one ingredient? Just use something else!

If your recipe calls for a food that is too pricey, hard to find, or that you simply don't care for, try subbing in another. Substitutions may be different for raw or cooked foods, so figure out how it's used in your recipe. Then try the tips in the charts below.

Foods within a category can be used in place of each other. For instance, a dark leafy green such as kale can be replaced with any other dark leafy green like chard or collards, whether raw or cooked.

Instead of...	If using raw, sub in...	If using cooked, sub in...
<b>Fruit</b>		
Berries (blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, and raspberries)	Cherries, bananas, grapes, stone fruit	Cherries, grapes, stone fruit
Grapes	Cherries, berries, bananas	Cherries, berries
Stone fruit (peaches, plums, nectarines, and apricots)	Bananas, berries	Grapes, apples, pears
<b>Veggies</b>		
Broccoli	Cauliflower	Cauliflower, spinach, dark leafy greens
Carrots	Beets, celery root, summer squash, celery	Root vegetables, summer squash, celery
Dark leafy greens (kale, chard, collards, turnip, beet, and mustard greens)	Spinach, lettuce, cabbage	Spinach, broccoli, cabbage
Eggplant	—	Zucchini, yellow squash, sweet peppers
Mushrooms	Summer squash	Snow peas, sugar snap peas, summer squash
Potatoes	—	Sweet potato, root vegetables, carrots
Root vegetables (turnips, beets, rutabaga, celery root)	Sweet potatoes, carrots	Sweet potatoes, winter squash, carrots, parsnips
Spinach	Lettuce	Dark leafy greens, broccoli, cabbage
Summer squash (zucchini, yellow squash)	Sweet peppers, carrots	Eggplant, sweet peppers
Sweet potatoes	Cabbage, root vegetables, carrots	Root vegetables, carrots, winter squash, parsnips
Winter squash	—	Sweet potatoes, root vegetables, parsnips, carrots

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Sub It In continued >

The following substitutions will work whether using raw or cooked foods.

Instead of...	Try this instead!
<b>Fruit</b>	
Apples	Stone fruit, pears
Bananas	Berries
Grapefruit	Oranges
Lemons	Limes, oranges, grapefruit
Limes	Lemons, oranges, grapefruit
Oranges	Grapefruit
Pears	Stone fruit, apples
<b>Veggies</b>	
Celery	Carrots, celery root
Edamame (soy beans)	Peas, cooked beans
Green Onions	Onions, sweet peppers
Hot peppers	Sweet peppers, crushed red chili peppers (to taste)
Onions	Sweet peppers, green onions
Sweet peppers	Tomatoes
Tomatoes	Sweet peppers



# Vary Your Fruits and Veggies

Choose fresh, frozen, and canned produce to meet your daily goals.

Choose from all the color groups. Check out what each color can do for you.

## Red

- Improved memory
- A healthy heart
- Lower risk for some cancers



## White

- A healthy heart



## Green

- Sharp vision
- Strong bones and teeth
- Lower risk for some cancers



## Orange/Yellow

- Sharp vision
- A healthy heart
- Strength to fight off colds and illness
- Lower risk for some cancers



## Blue/Purple

- Good memory
- Healthy aging
- Lower risk for some cancers



Eat different parts of the plant that appeal to your tastes.

## Seeds

Lima beans, pinto beans, pumpkin seeds, black beans, peas, dry split peas, corn



## Leaves

Brussels sprouts, parsley, cabbage, spinach, collards, turnip greens, kale, chard, lettuce, endive, watercress



## Roots

Beets, onions, carrots, parsnips, potatoes, radishes, rutabaga, sweet potatoes, jicama



## Flowers

Broccoli, cauliflower



## Stems

Asparagus, bamboo shoots, bok choy, broccoli, celery, rhubarb



## Fruit

Apples, avocados, grapes, cucumbers, bananas, pumpkins, bell peppers, dates, grapefruit, berries, eggplant, plums, melons, oranges, strawberries, tomatoes



# Making Recipes Work for You

Learn to adjust recipes to meet your needs.

Make changes to recipes based on:

- Foods you have on hand, including leftovers
- What’s in season
- Your family’s tastes
- Ingredients on sale
- The amount of time you have free to cook
- Healthier cooking methods



Use the following ideas to combine foods and flavors in a way that appeals to your family.

Type of Recipe	What It Is	Example from Your Book	Make It Work For You
<b>Soup/stew</b>	Meat and/or vegetables cooked slowly in a broth with seasonings	Barley and Lentil Soup – or – Turkey Chili With Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mix it up with different meats, vegetables, or beans.</li> <li>• Season to your tastes with different herbs or spices.</li> <li>• Go meatless.</li> </ul>
<b>Casserole</b>	One-pot dish cooked slowly in the oven. Often contains rice or pasta, vegetables, beans, and/or meats.	Salmon Pasta Bake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use different types of cheese or different shapes of pasta.</li> <li>• Add chopped vegetables, meat, or tuna.</li> <li>• Season with different spices.</li> </ul>
<b>Salad</b>	Mix of grains, fruits, and/or cold veggies with a dressing	Southwestern Black-Eyed Pea and Corn Salad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use different grains, veggies, nuts, or dried fruits.</li> </ul>
<b>Wrap</b>	Mix of hot or cold foods inside a sandwich wrap	Hearty Egg Burrito – or – Veggie Wraps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use different beans, vegetables, cheeses, or herbs.</li> <li>• Replace the eggs with tofu.</li> <li>• Make heartier by adding leftover rice or cooked meats.</li> </ul>

# Veggies Three Ways

Try these simple ways to cook your veggies. Decide which ways work best for you!

Start with 1 pound of veggies (unless otherwise noted). Wash before cooking. Peel if needed. Cut into bite-size pieces, all roughly the same size so they cook evenly. Then, follow the directions below.

- **Stove Top:** Fill a pot with 1½ inches of water. Add veggies. Simmer until tender, using cook times below.
- **Oven:** Preheat oven to 450°F. Toss veggies with 1 Tablespoon canola oil. Coat a baking sheet with non-stick cooking spray. Spread veggies evenly on the baking sheet so they are not touching. Bake, using cook times below.
- **Microwave:** Place veggies in a microwave-safe dish with a lid. Or, cover with plastic wrap. Vent by poking a few holes in the plastic or folding back a small corner. Add 2 Tablespoons water. Microwave on high, using cook times below. Drain well after cooking.



Vegetable	Approximate Cooking Times		
	Stove Top	Oven	Microwave*
Asparagus, zucchini, yellow squash	4–6 minutes	15–20 minutes	3–5 minutes
Beets, turnips	10–15 minutes	20–25 minutes	10–12 minutes
Broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage	5–8 minutes	15–20 minutes	5–7 minutes
Carrots, parsnips (1 ½ pounds)	10–15 minutes	20–25 minutes	6–10 minutes
Celery root	10–15 minutes	20–25 minutes	4–6 minutes
Chard, collards, kale, mustard, turnip, or beet greens (1 ½ pounds)	3–5 minutes	—	8–10 minutes
Corn (4 ears)	5 minutes (on the cob)	15–20 minutes (off the cob)	7–9 minutes (on the cob)
Green beans	4–6 minutes	15–20 minutes	8–12 minutes
Snow peas, sugar snap peas	2–4 minutes	8–10 minutes	3–5 minutes
Spinach (1 ½ pounds)	2 minutes	—	2–4 minutes
Sweet potatoes, potatoes, rutabaga**	10–15 minutes	20–25 minutes	8–12 minutes
Winter squash (2 pounds)	15–25 minutes	25–35 minutes	8–12 minutes

\*Microwave temperatures can vary. Check your veggies often. Note what times work best for your microwave.

\*\*Sweet potatoes or white potatoes can also be cooked whole. Poke them with a fork in several places. Microwave on medium, turning once or twice, about 20 minutes for white potatoes and 12–15 minutes for sweet potatoes. Or, bake in the oven at 400°F for 45–60 minutes.

# Chill Out

Use these tips for freezing, thawing, and refrigerating foods.

**Freeze foods safely.** Freeze foods for later in the month. Pull them out when you don't have time to cook.

1. Cool all foods safely in the fridge first. This speeds up freezing and helps retain the natural color, flavor, and texture of food.
2. Freeze food in portions you will use at one time.
3. Seal the food to keep moisture out. Use plastic wrap, freezer bags, or plastic containers.
4. Label your package. Write the type of food and date it was made.
5. Keep freezer at 0°F or lower so food stays safe.

**Thaw foods safely.** Never thaw foods on the counter at room temperature.

- **Refrigerator.** Place food on the lowest shelf until it is no longer frozen. It will then keep for 2 to 5 days.
- **Cold water.** Submerge the food, packed in an airtight container or a leak-proof bag, in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes to keep thawing. Cook foods defrosted in cold water right after thawing.
- **Microwave.** Cook microwave-defrosted foods right after thawing. Some parts of the food may have started to cook while defrosting.

**Store foods safely.** Keep food from spoiling or becoming unsafe to eat. Use within the time listed or freeze right away. The timelines below are for best quality.



Product	Refrigerator (40°F)	Freezer (0°F)
Fresh eggs, in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Do not freeze
Hot dogs and luncheon meats, unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Hot dogs and luncheon meats, opened	3 to 7 days	1 to 2 months
Ground meat and stew meat	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Beef, lamb, veal, and pork chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
Cooked meat and poultry and casseroles	3 to 4 days	2 to 4 months
Cooked meat and poultry pieces in sauce	1 to 2 days	2 to 4 months
Whole poultry or poultry pieces	1 to 2 days	9 to 12 months
Pizza, leftover	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
Cheese, hard or grated	6 to 12 weeks	6 to 12 months
Milk	1 week	3 months
Yogurt	1 to 2 weeks	1 to 2 months

# Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables



Don't let produce go bad. Keep it fresh longer using these tips.

Fresh Fruit or Vegetable	How to Purchase	How to Store
<b>Apples</b>	Buy firm apples without any bruises or soft spots.	Store at room temperature for 3–5 days. Or, refrigerate for up to 3 months.
<b>Bananas</b>	If you will not eat right away, buy bananas when they are green so they will last longer. Allow them to ripen (lose any green color) before eating. Only buy bananas with many brown spots when you need overripe bananas for baking.	Ripen at room temperature. To prevent over-ripening, store in refrigerator up to 1 week. The skin will turn black, but the fruit will still be good. Peel and freeze overripe bananas to use in smoothies and muffins.
<b>Beets</b>	Buy brightly colored, firm beets. If greens are still attached, they should look fresh and not wilted.	If greens are still attached, remove and store separately (see Cooking Greens below). Refrigerate beets for 2–3 weeks.
<b>Berries</b>	Buy firm, plump berries with no mold spots.	Refrigerate unwashed, in a single layer if you can. Will last 3–5 days.
<b>Broccoli</b>	Buy sturdy, dark green spears without yellow spots.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days.
<b>Carrots</b>	Buy brightly colored, firm carrots without shriveled or soft spots.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days.
<b>Cabbage</b>	Buy fresh-looking heads without yellowing or brown spots.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 1–2 weeks.
<b>Cauliflower</b>	Buy heads with bright white florets without any browning. The attached greens should look fresh and not wilted.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days.
<b>Celery</b>	Buy crisp stalks without any blemishes.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 1–2 weeks.

When purchasing fresh bananas, mangoes, pears, plums, peaches, or nectarines: If you will eat right away, buy ripe. If you won't, buy before they are ripe and let ripen at home. Or, buy a mix — a few that are ripe to eat right away and a few that aren't for later in the week.



Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables continued >

Fresh Fruit or Vegetable	How to Purchase	How to Store
<b>Citrus fruits (e.g., oranges, limes, lemons)</b>	Buy fruit that feels heavy for its size without any specific soft spots. Juicier citrus fruit will yield slightly when squeezed.	Store at room temperature up to 1 week. Or, refrigerate up to 1–2 months.
<b>Cooking greens (e.g., kale, collards) — except spinach</b>	Buy fresh, crisp, brightly colored greens.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 5–10 days.
<b>Corn</b>	Buy in husks that are moist and green. The silk attached at the tip should be golden brown. Instead of peeling back the husks, which can dry out the corn, feel through the husks for plump kernels underneath.	Refrigerate, with husks still on, in a plastic bag for up to 2 days.
<b>Cucumber</b>	Buy firm without any soft spots.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days.
<b>Eggplant</b>	Buy with smooth skin without any soft spots.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days.
<b>Garlic</b>	Buy with papery skin without any green sprouts.	Store in a cool, dark place (away from potatoes) for 2–3 weeks.
<b>Grapes</b>	Buy firm grapes still attached to the stem and free from mold.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag, up to 1 week.
<b>Green onions</b>	Buy when greens are brightly colored and white parts are firm.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days.
<b>Lettuce or salad greens</b>	Buy crisp-looking greens without signs of mold or browning.	If damp when purchased, dry first. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. Place a dry paper towel in the bag to absorb any extra moisture.
<b>Mangoes</b>	When ripe, mangoes will “give” or feel slightly soft when pressed.	Ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe mangoes for up to 3 days.
<b>Melons</b>	Buy melons that yield slightly when you press on the end opposite the stem. Watermelons should have a yellow spot on the bottom.	Ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe melon for up to 3 days.
<b>Mushrooms</b>	Buy firm and fresh looking. They should look dry but not dried out.	Refrigerate for up to 1 week. If you buy loose, place in a paper bag first.

If refrigeration is not available, some fruits and veggies can be stored in a cool room or basement instead. Try potatoes, beets, carrots, other root veggies, apples, and pears.



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## Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables continued &gt;

Fresh Fruit or Vegetable	How to Purchase	How to Store
<b>Onions</b>	Buy firm and heavy without cuts, bruises, or green sprouts.	Store in a cool, dark place (away from potatoes) for 2–3 weeks.
<b>Parsnips</b>	Buy firm without any soft spots.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days.
<b>Pears</b>	Buy pears without any soft spots or bruising. Press at the top of the “neck” (near the stem) to judge ripeness. When ripe, pears will “give” or feel slightly soft when pressed.	Ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe pears up to 3 days.
<b>Potatoes</b>	Buy firm and free from soft spots and sprouts.	Store in a cool, dark place (away from onions) for 10–12 weeks.
<b>Spinach</b>	Buy crisp-looking without signs of mold or browning.	If damp when purchased, dry first. Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 3–5 days. Place a dry paper towel in the bag to absorb any extra moisture.
<b>Stone fruit (e.g., peaches, plums, nectarines)</b>	Buy when brightly colored and free from bruises or soft spots. When ripe, fruit will “give” or feel slightly soft when pressed.	Ripen at room temperature. Refrigerate ripe stone fruit up to 3 days.
<b>Summer squash (e.g., yellow squash, zucchini)</b>	Buy with firm, smooth skin without any gashes.	Refrigerate in a plastic bag for 4–5 days.
<b>Sweet potatoes</b>	Buy with papery skin without blemishes.	Store in a cool, dark place (away from onions) for 10–12 weeks.
<b>Tomatoes</b>	Should yield to gentle pressure but not be soft. Take a whiff — if it doesn’t smell like a tomato, it won’t taste like one.	Store at room temperature for 2–3 days.
<b>Turnips</b>	Buy when firm. It should not feel soft or look shriveled.	Refrigerate for 2–3 weeks.
<b>Winter squash</b>	Buy hard squash that still has some of the dried-out stem attached.	Store in a cool, dry place for up to 1 month.



# Freezing Fruits and Veggies

Buy fruits and veggies in bulk when they are in season and the price is good. Freeze the extras to use another time.

To freeze fruits and veggies, follow these simple steps:

1. Rinse produce. Pat dry.
2. Prep as directed in the chart on page 47.
3. If freezing vegetables, blanch (briefly cook in boiling water) for the amount of time shown in the chart. Using a slotted spoon, immediately transfer boiled veggies to a bowl of ice water. Drain well and pat dry.
4. Place produce in a single layer on a baking sheet and freeze.
5. Transfer frozen produce to a large freezer-safe bag or other airtight container.



Most produce maintains its quality when frozen up to about 6 months (for fruits) or 12 months (for veggies).

Blanching slows the loss of flavor, color, texture, and nutrients during freezing. Veggies frozen without blanching are safe to eat, but may not maintain their quality for as long. If you're pressed for time, hearty veggies like broccoli, carrots, corn, and summer or winter squash can be frozen without blanching. But you may want to use them up more quickly than blanched frozen veggies.



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# Bean Basics

Dried beans are packed with nutrients, low cost, and easy to prepare.

## 1. Clean

- Before soaking, sort through dried beans or lentils.
- Throw out any that are discolored or shriveled.

## 2. Soak

### To soak quickly:

- Fill a pot with water. Add beans. Bring to a boil.
- Boil beans for 5 minutes. Turn the heat off. Cover, and let sit for one hour.
- Drain the soaking water. Rinse the beans.

### To soak overnight:

- Fill a bowl with 3 cups cold water per 1 cup beans.
- Soak beans for 8 to 12 hours at room temperature.
- Drain the soaking water. Rinse the beans.

## 3. Cook

- Add enough water to cover dry beans or lentils by two inches.
- Simmer the beans for 30 minutes to 2 hours, until cooked. You may need to add water to keep beans from drying out.
- Beans and lentils are done when they are easy to break open with a fork.

## 4. Store

- Use right away. Or, store in refrigerator or freezer.
- When you are ready to use frozen beans, defrost and prepare like canned beans.

## Bean Cooking Times

Use 1 cup of dried beans to make about 3 cups cooked.	Use this much water.*	Cook for this amount of time.
Black beans	3 cups	About 2 hours
Blackeyed peas, cowpeas	2½ cups	½ hour
Great northern beans	2½ cups	1 to 1½ hours
Kidney beans	3 cups	About 2 hours
Lentils (do not soak)	2½ cups	½ hour
Lima beans	2½ cups	45 minutes to 1 hour
Navy or pea beans	3 cups	1½ to 2 hours
Pink or pinto beans	3 cups	2 hours

\*At high altitudes (above 3,500 feet), dried beans take more time to rehydrate and cook.



# Soups Made Simple

Soup makes an easy lunch or dinner. Leftovers can be frozen for another day.

Use the chart below to choose ingredients from each column. Follow the chef's tips and step-by-step directions below to make your soup.

Protein 1 pound (diced meat)	+	Vegetables 2 cups, chopped	+	Liquid 4 cups	+	Whole Grains 1½ cups, cooked
Beef (shoulder, round or brisket)		Onions		Water		Brown rice
Chicken/Turkey (leg or thigh; boneless, skinless)		Greens (spinach, kale, collards, chard, etc.)		Low-sodium stock/broth		Whole wheat pasta
Pork (shoulder/butt)		Celery				Barley
Beans or lentils (cooked, or drained and rinsed from a can)		Zucchini				Quinoa
		Tomatoes				
		Carrots				
		Mushrooms				
		Broccoli				

## If using meat as your protein:

1. Heat 1 Tablespoon canola oil in a soup pot over medium-high heat. Sauté meat until lightly browned, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the vegetables. Reduce heat to medium and sauté for 5 minutes. If using canned or thawed frozen vegetables, skip this step and add vegetables during step 4.
3. Add liquid and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes or until meat is cooked through. Stir occasionally to keep ingredients from sticking to the bottom of the pot.
4. Add cooked grains during the last 5-7 minutes of cooking time, to warm through.

## If using beans or lentils as your protein:

- Skip step 1 above. Follow the remaining steps, adding beans to the liquid in step 3. Shorten the total cooking time to 15 minutes.

### Chef's Notes:

- **Vegetables:** Softer vegetables like spinach or zucchini will cook faster. Add during the last 5-7 minutes of cooking time.
- **Whole Grains:** Cook grains according to package instructions ahead of time. Refrigerate and add to soups you make that week.
- **Seasonings:** In addition to salt and pepper, try adding herbs and spices such as dried thyme, parsley, or ground cumin. Or, kick up the flavor by adding some minced garlic, hot peppers, ginger, or citrus zest. When using fresh herbs, add them at the end of cooking to keep the flavor fresh.

# Casseroles: An Easy, Make-Ahead Meal

Use the guide below to choose your ingredients. To cook, season with salt and pepper or other spices, to taste. Bake at 350°F for 40-60 minutes or until top is brown and bubbly.

Protein 1 cup, fully cooked	+	Vegetables 1½-2 cups, chopped	+	Sauce (choose one)	+	Whole Grains 1½ cups, cooked	+	Toppings ½ cup
Beef (lean cuts), cubed or ground		Greens (kale, spinach, chard)		Low-fat or nonfat cream soup, such as mushroom, celery, or tomato (10 ounce can) + ¼ cup nonfat milk		Brown rice		Grated low-fat cheese
Chicken or turkey (boneless; skin removed), cubed or ground		Mixed vegetables (such as carrots, peas and corn)		Diced tomatoes (14.5oz can, drained — approx. 1 cup) + ½ cup reduced-fat sour cream (optional)		Whole wheat pasta		Bread crumbs
Low-sodium ham, diced		Zucchini				Barley		Crushed corn flakes
Beans or lentils		Mushrooms				Quinoa		Crushed tortilla chips
Canned tuna or salmon		Broccoli				Cubed whole wheat bread (1 cup)		

## Casserole Ideas:

- **Chicken, Rice & Broccoli:** 1 cup diced, cooked chicken + 1½ cups chopped, blanched broccoli + 1½ cups cooked brown rice + 1 can cream of mushroom soup + ¼ cup nonfat milk + ½ cup shredded low-fat cheese on top.
- **Smoked Turkey & Spinach:** 1 cup diced, smoked turkey + 1½ cups chopped spinach + ½ cup chopped mushrooms + 1½ cups cooked barley + 1 can cream of celery soup + ¼ cup nonfat milk + ½ cup shredded low-fat cheese on top.
- **Mexican Black Beans & Rice:** 1 cup black beans + 1½ cups chopped spinach + ½ cup corn + 1½ cups cooked brown rice + 1 cup diced tomatoes + ½ cup low-fat sour cream + ½ teaspoon ground cumin + ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper + ½ cup shredded low-fat cheese on top.

## Chef's Tips:

- **Vegetables:** Cook firmer veggies like carrots or broccoli, and heartier greens like kale or collards, for 3-4 minutes in boiling water. Drain well before adding to casserole. If using canned or thawed frozen vegetables, drain them well. You don't need to cook them before adding.
- **Whole Grains:** Cook grains according to package instructions ahead of time. Refrigerate and add to casseroles you make that week.
- **Toppings:** Toppings like bread crumbs, corn flakes, or tortilla chips may brown quickly. Cover the casserole loosely with foil while cooking. Remove the foil for the last 5-10 minutes.

# Cook It Up Quick

Use these ideas to save time on busy weeknights.

## Stay Organized

- Organize your kitchen. Know where to find the ingredients and cooking tools you need.
- Read the recipe all the way through at least twice. Make sure you have all the ingredients and supplies you will need.
- Prep all ingredients — such as rinsing and chopping all of the vegetables — before you start cooking. Everything should be ready to use as soon as the recipe calls for it. If you can, prep some ingredients the night before.



## Use the Freezer

- Cut up large amounts of onions, carrots, celery, and peppers. Freeze in large, zip-top plastic bags. Use as needed.
- Double the recipe and freeze the extra portion. Serve it later in the month when you don't have time to cook.

## Make Cleanup Easy

- Wipe up spills as they happen.
- Line baking sheets with aluminum foil. Then use it to cover leftovers.
- Presoak pots, pans, and dishes as soon as they are used.
- Clean as you cook. Don't save it all for the end.
- Use plastic dishes for easier cleanup and fewer accidents with kids.
- Organize a family cleanup team. Sing while you're working together.

Kids can help parents save time by:

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# Packaged Food Makeover

Love the convenience of packaged foods? Try these tips for making them healthier — or making them yourself!



Packaged Food	Make It Healthier	Make It Yourself
<b>Ramen noodles</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for brands that bake the noodles instead of frying them.</li> <li>• Stir in fresh or frozen veggies. Try broccoli, peas, edamame (soy beans), or spinach.</li> <li>• Add protein if you like. Try leftover cooked chicken, fish, or beef. Or, add cubes of tofu.</li> <li>• Use only half of the seasoning packet.</li> </ul>	<p>Cook whole grain angel hair pasta and your favorite chopped veggies in low-sodium broth until tender. Add leftover cooked chicken, fish, or beef, cubed tofu, or thawed edamame. Cook until heated through. Season with low-sodium soy sauce.</p>
<b>“Just add meat” boxed meals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use lean ground beef, chicken, or turkey.</li> <li>• Drain fat from cooked meat.</li> <li>• Add whatever veggies you have on hand. Try broccoli, carrots, or spinach.</li> </ul>	<p>Try these recipes from your book:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turkey Burger Macaroni (page 143)</li> <li>• Barley Jambalaya (page 125)</li> <li>• Turkey Tacos (page 146)</li> </ul>
<b>Boxed macaroni and cheese</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add fresh or frozen broccoli or spinach to the pasta during the last few minutes of cooking.</li> </ul>	<p>Homemade mac and cheese is easier to make than you may think! See page 107 for our stovetop version.</p>
<b>Frozen pizza</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buy a plain cheese pizza. Add your own toppings.</li> <li>• Top with your favorite cooked veggies. Try broccoli, peppers, onions, and olives.</li> <li>• If you want meat, add low-fat turkey pepperoni. Or, use cooked chicken or turkey sausage.</li> <li>• Look for whole grain crusts if you can find them. If not, look for thin crusts.</li> </ul>	<p>Making your own pizza is fun for the whole family. Try The Works Pizza on page 139. If you have time, make your own whole grain crust! Use the dough recipe on page 149.</p>

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Packaged Food Makeover continued >

Packaged Food	Make It Healthier	Make It Yourself
<b>Taco dinner kits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for taco kits with whole wheat or corn tortillas.</li> <li>• Use lean ground beef, chicken, or turkey.</li> <li>• Cook half the amount of ground meat called for. Drain fat. Stir a can of rinsed and drained black beans or pinto beans into the cooked meat.</li> <li>• Add cooked veggies like chopped tomatoes or shredded zucchini.</li> <li>• Top with low-fat cheese or sour cream.</li> </ul>	Set up a taco buffet! Use the recipe on page 146. Let each family member add toppings to suit his or her taste.
<b>Frozen or prepackaged Chinese food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If veggies aren't included, stir them in! Try bell peppers, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, and edamame.</li> </ul>	Try the Noodles with Peanut Butter Sauce (page 133). Or, make your own stir-fry (page 78).
<b>Canned ravioli or pasta dishes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for products made with whole grain pasta.</li> <li>• Add your favorite cooked veggies. Try zucchini, yellow squash, or spinach. Or, serve with a veggie-filled side salad (see page 76).</li> </ul>	Make your own pasta dinner using the options on page 74! Or, try some of our tasty pasta recipes like Spaghetti and Meatballs (page 136) or Pasta with Roasted Vegetables (page 134).
<b>Frozen chicken nuggets or fish sticks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compare labels. Choose a brand with less saturated fat and sodium.</li> <li>• Look for chicken nuggets made with white meat instead of dark.</li> <li>• Serve with a hearty salad (page 76) or a colorful vegetable side dish (page 92, 98, 102).</li> <li>• If fries on the side are a must, make your own Sweet Potato Fries (page 108).</li> </ul>	It's easy to make your own chicken fingers or fish sticks! Try the recipes on page 122 and 123 for healthy, baked versions. Serve with colorful side dishes.
<b>Frozen waffles or pancakes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look for whole grain pancakes or waffles.</li> <li>• Top with fresh fruit and yogurt instead of syrup.</li> </ul>	Make a batch of Orange Oatmeal Pancakes (page 116) on a day you have extra time. Freeze them in single servings. Pull them out when you're in a hurry.

# Spice It Up

Lose the salt. Use herbs and spices to kick up the flavor of your meals.



Make the most of your herbs and spices with these tips.

- **Make herbs and spices last longer.**
  - **Fresh:** Wrap the stems in damp paper towels. Store them in a plastic bag in the produce bin of your refrigerator. They will last about 1 week.
  - **Dried:** Store in airtight containers away from heat (e.g., not above your stove), moisture, and direct sunlight. They will last about 1 year.
- **Cut down on costs.**
  - **Use dried herbs and spices,** particularly if you would only use a small amount of the fresh. Dried are often cheaper.
  - **Look for dried herbs and spices sold in bulk.** Buy just the amount you need for the recipe, particularly if you do not use that spice often.
  - **Check out ethnic food aisles** or ethnic food stores for herbs and spices. They often have much cheaper prices for the same ingredient.
  - **Substitute with more commonly used herbs or spices.** If a recipe calls for an herb or spice you do not have on hand and will likely not use again, try using a more common item. See the table on page 38 for ideas.
- **Make your own spice mixes.** Making your own helps you limit sodium and other unnecessary ingredients added to premade mixes. You can also use the spices right in your pantry instead of buying a new mix you may not use up! See the mixes on page 39 for ideas.
- **Try new flavor combinations.** Got a craving for Italian food? Mix it up by flavoring a favorite dish with garlic, basil, and oregano. Check out the table on page 39 for ideas.
- **Use them at the right time.**
  - Fresh herbs add great flavor to uncooked dishes, like salads or cold pastas. If using them in a cooked dish, add in the last few minutes so flavor stays vibrant (unless the recipe says otherwise).
  - Dried herbs and spices are great for marinades, slow-cooked soups or stews, pastas, casseroles, and many other dishes. Add them near the start of cooking so they have time to soften and release their flavors.
- **Replace them when needed.** Throw out fresh herbs when many brown spots appear. For dried herbs and spices, check the color and scent. If the color has faded, or the smell is weak, it's time to replace them.

Continued >

Spice It Up continued >

## Common Substitutions for Herbs and Spices

If the recipe calls for...	Try this instead!
Allspice (1 teaspoon)	½ teaspoon ground cinnamon + ¼ teaspoon ground cloves + ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
Basil	Oregano or thyme
Cardamom	Ginger or cinnamon
Chervil	Parsley or dill
Cilantro	Parsley
Cinnamon (1 teaspoon)	¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg or allspice
Cloves	Allspice, cinnamon, or nutmeg
Cumin	Chili powder
Ginger, fresh (1 Tablespoon)	Ginger, ground (⅓ teaspoon)
Marjoram	Basil or thyme
Nutmeg	Cinnamon
Oregano	Thyme, basil, or marjoram
Rosemary	Thyme or tarragon
Sage	Marjoram or rosemary
Thyme	Basil, marjoram, or oregano
<b>Any fresh herb (1 Tablespoon)</b>	<b>The same herb in dried form (1 teaspoon)</b>



Continued >

Spice It Up continued >

### Homemade Spice Mixes

Mix spices together in a small bowl. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 months.

#### Italian Seasoning

- 1 Tablespoon dried basil leaves
- 1 Tablespoon dried oregano leaves
- 1 Tablespoon dried rosemary leaves
- 1 Tablespoon dried thyme leaves

#### Jerk Seasoning

- 1 Tablespoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

#### Pumpkin Pie Spice

- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

#### Taco Seasoning

- 4½ teaspoons chili powder
- 4½ teaspoons ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano leaves
- ¼ teaspoon salt



**To use taco seasoning:** In a large skillet, add 1 pound lean ground beef, turkey, or chicken. Cook, crumbling meat with a mixing spoon or rubber spatula, until no longer pink. Add 1 batch of seasoning (3 Tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon) and ¼ cup water. Stir to mix. Cook until water evaporates, about 1 minute.

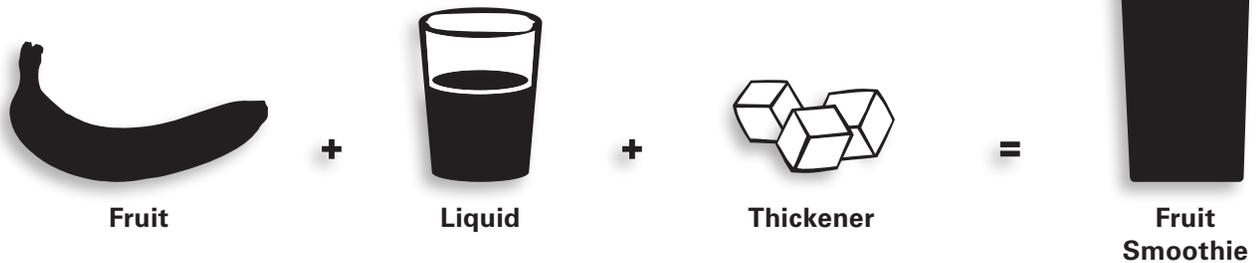
### Herbs and Spices Around the World

As your cooking skills improve, try using new flavors to jazz up your favorite meals. Use the list below to test out flavors commonly used by cultures around the world.

Asian Flavors	Italian Flavors	Middle Eastern/African Flavors		Latin/Caribbean Flavors
Cinnamon	Basil	Allspice	Ginger	Allspice
Cloves	Marjoram	Caraway	Hot peppers	Cinnamon
Coriander	Oregano	Cardamom	Marjoram	Chili powder
Curry	Rosemary	Cinnamon	Mint	Cilantro
Ginger	Sage	Cumin	Paprika	Cumin
Hot peppers	Thyme	Curry	Parsley	Curry
Mint		Dill		Hot peppers
Mustard seeds				Nutmeg
Turmeric				Oregano

# Make Your Own Fruit Smoothies

Smoothies are easy, healthy, and can be made to your liking!



Add ingredients from each column to blender. Blend until thick and smooth.

Fruit (½ -1 cup sliced or chopped per smoothie – fresh or frozen)	+	Liquid (½ to 1 cup per smoothie)	+	Optional Flavorings (up to ½ tsp per smoothie)	+	Thickener (up to ½ cup per smoothie)
Bananas		Apple juice, 100% juice		Ground cinnamon		Ice
Strawberries		Orange juice, 100% juice		Vanilla extract or flavor		Low-fat or nonfat yogurt (plain or frozen)
Raspberries, whole		Cranberry juice, 100% juice		Zest from lemon, lime, or orange		Frozen low-fat or nonfat yogurt
Blueberries, whole		Low-fat or nonfat milk, plain or flavored		Coconut flakes, unsweetened		Silken tofu
Peach		Soy milk, plain or flavored		Honey or maple syrup		
Mango		Almond milk				
Pineapple						

## Try these combos!

**Very Berry:** ½-cup mixture of strawberry, blueberry, and raspberry + ½ cup apple juice + ¼ cup plain yogurt + 1 tsp honey + ¼ cup ice

**Banana-Honey:** ½ cup sliced, frozen banana + ¼ cup apple juice + ¼ cup nonfat milk + ¼ cup plain yogurt + 1 tsp honey

**Triple-C Blaster:** ½-cup mixture of mango and papaya + ½ cup orange juice + ¼ cup nonfat vanilla yogurt + 1 tsp honey + ¼ cup ice

**Tropical Sunrise:** ½-cup mixture of banana and mango + ½ cup low-fat milk + ½ tsp coconut flakes + ¼ cup nonfat yogurt + ¼ cup ice

## Chef's Tips:

- Use milk, tofu, or yogurt to create a creamier smoothie.
- If adding frozen fruit, use less or no ice.
- Freeze slices of fruits that are about to go bad. Use them in smoothies.

# Delicious Dips & Spreads

Pair your favorite fruits, veggies, and whole grains with easy-to-make dips.

If you do not have a blender, use a fork to mash more solid ingredients. Then, blend with other ingredients using a mixing spoon.

## Bean Dip

- Using a blender, mix 1 (15½-ounce) can beans (cannellini, chickpeas, black beans, etc.) rinsed and drained, 1 minced garlic clove, ¼ cup water, 1 Tablespoon canola oil, ½ teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon ground black pepper.
- For extra kick, add ¼ cup salsa. For a thicker dip, add ¼ cup low-fat yogurt. For a different flavor, add ¼ cup of your favorite rinsed and minced fresh herbs.
- Serve with cut-up fresh veggies, with whole wheat pita wedges or crackers, or as a sandwich spread.

## Honey Mustard Dip

- Mix ½ cup plain nonfat yogurt, 1 Tablespoon mustard, and 1 Tablespoon honey.
- Serve with Baked Flaked Chicken (page 122) or soft whole grain pretzels.

## Vegetable Dip

- Mix ½ cup nonfat plain yogurt, ½ cup reduced-fat mayonnaise, and 1 Tablespoon salt-free seasoning blend (or use ½ teaspoon each of dried chives and parsley, ¼ teaspoon each of garlic and onion powder, and ⅓ teaspoon each of salt and pepper). Use low-fat sour cream in place of mayonnaise if you like.
- Serve with cut-up fresh veggies. Or, use as a topping for quesadillas, tacos, or chili.

## Pumpkin Dip

- Using a blender, mix 1 (15-ounce) can pumpkin puree, 1 cup low-fat cream cheese (softened), ¼ cup powdered sugar, 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, and ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg.
- Serve with whole wheat graham crackers or apple wedges. Or, use as a spread on whole wheat toast or bread.

## Ricotta Fruit Dip

- Mix 8 ounces low-fat ricotta cheese, ½ cup nonfat vanilla yogurt, 3 Tablespoons of your favorite fruit preserves or jam, and ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon.
- Serve with cut-up fresh fruit or whole wheat crackers. Or, use as a spread on whole wheat toast, bread, or pancakes.

## Fruit Yogurt Dip

- Using a blender, mix 1 cup low-fat cream cheese (softened), ½ cup nonfat vanilla yogurt, ½ cup fruit puree — such as crushed pineapple, berries, or mashed banana — 1 teaspoon honey, and ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon.
- Serve with cut-up fresh fruits. Try apples, bananas, grapes, or strawberries.



## MONEY SAVER ALERT: LET'S TAC(O) ABOUT FOOD WASTE

### TODAY'S TOP TIPS

- ✓ The most expensive food is the food we waste. Plan to use up all the ingredients you have access to.
- ✓ Use your freezer to save money by throwing less food away.
- ✓ To reduce kids' food waste, let kids serve themselves and only offer 'tastes' of new foods.

MAKE IT WORK AT HOME	STAY MOTIVATED	
<p><b>Set a goal, start small.</b> Choose one new thing you'd like to try this week. Then keep it up — once it's an easy habit (and that might take weeks or months!), pick another new thing you want to try.</p>		<p><a href="http://cookingmatters.org">cookingmatters.org</a> Find our complete collection of quick, easy recipes, along with videos and tip lists.</p>
<p><b>Fill your feeds with inspiration.</b> It's easier to stay motivated when you've got regular reminders and tips popping up on your social media feeds. Follow Cooking Matters or other channels that help you get closer to your goals.</p>		<p>Follow us on Facebook <a href="https://www.facebook.com/cookingmatters.national">@cookingmatters.national</a> and Instagram <a href="https://www.instagram.com/cookingmattersnational">@cookingmattersnational</a> for regular tips and inspiration.</p>
<p><b>Remember that setbacks will happen!</b> That's ok — it's not all or nothing. We all have days or weeks that go off course. Start back with one small habit and take it from there. The good news is that once you've set new habits, it's easier and faster to get back on track the next time!</p>		<p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/CookingMatters">@CookingMatters</a> For our complete collection of video tips (including recipe videos!), check us out on YouTube.</p>
<p><b>Share what you've learned.</b> Want other family members and friends to join you on this journey? Share something exciting you've learned — or better yet, feed them something delicious and healthy so they'll know it's true! Don't pressure them — let them decide when they're ready to take on new habits themselves.</p>		<p><a href="http://Choosemyplate.gov">Choosemyplate.gov</a> This trusted site offers recipes, videos, games, and tips for eating healthy meals and snacks, and helping you raise healthy eaters.</p>