



Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program
A joint project of Texas AgriLife Extension,
Texas Department of Human Services,

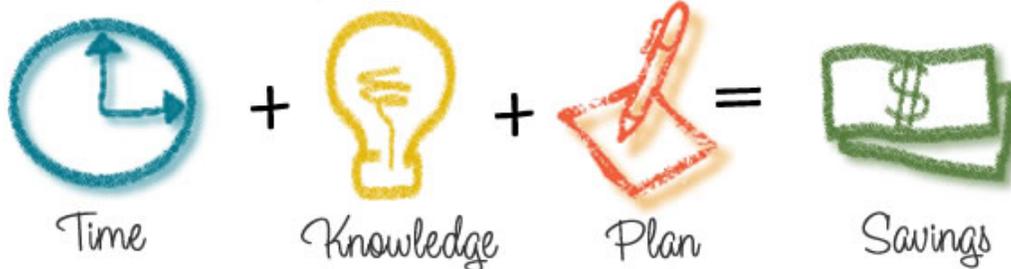
TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Swisher County
310 West Broadway
Tulia, Texas 79088

April, 2015

Spring Fun Food

Spring Fun Food Facts



1. Plan Menus and Make a List.

A sure way to overspend is by wandering aimlessly through the aisles and tossing whatever looks good into your cart. Instead, plan menus and write a shopping list that corresponds with the store aisles. Look for menu planning and recipe help on your supermarket's website. Many feature tools for planning and pricing meals.

2. Use Coupons and Rewards Cards.

Did you know the Sunday inserts in your local paper have anywhere from \$50 to \$75 worth of coupons in them? Clipping coupons or printing them from websites can save you 10 to 15 percent on your grocery bill.

Also consider joining your supermarket's shopper's club. Not only will you enjoy price specials, but you may receive additional coupons for items you regularly purchase at check-out or by email.

3. Buy Store Brands.

The Food Marketing Institute reports 60 percent of shoppers say they are economizing by buying store brand products (also known as private label). Private label brands are often 15 to 20 percent less expensive than their national brand counterparts while the quality of the food may match the national brand.

4. Buy On Sale and In Bulk.

Cruising the aisle for sales on shelf-stable items or products you use regularly is a great way to save money. However, buy larger quantities only if you have proper storage space and will use the food before it spoils.

5. Compare Unit Prices.

Use the "unit price" (price per pound, ounce or pint) to compare national brands with store brands, or bulk and economy-sizes with single-serve or regular-size packages. Many stores show the unit price on a shelf tag.

6. Read Food Labels.

Compare nutrients using the % Daily Value in the Nutrition Facts panel. Five percent or less is low – try to aim low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sodium. Twenty percent or more is high – try to aim high in fiber, vitamins and minerals.

7. Shop the Perimeter.

Fresh produce, meats, dairy and breads tend to be on the outer perimeter of supermarkets, so start there before hitting the inner aisles for other necessities.

8. Shop Seasonally.

Fresh produce often costs less when it's in season. Visit a local farmer's market or join a produce club to take advantage of seasonal fruits and vegetables. For produce not in season, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables (with little or no added salt or sugar) are a nutritious option.

9. Keep Foods Safe and Prevent Food Waste.

Use dating information ("sell by" and "best used by") to help select the freshest foods at the market. Put cold and frozen foods in your shopping cart last and store them right away in the refrigerator and freezer. Once you're home, store foods so those with the oldest "sell by" dates will be used first.

10. Pay Attention at the Check-Out.

Make sure prices ring up as advertised or as indicated on the shelf label, especially for sale items. Some stores will even give you the item free if they make a mistake on the price.

Food Group Economics 101

- **Produce:** Seasonal produce usually offers the best value for your money. However, for produce that isn't in season, canned or frozen fruits and vegetables may be more economical.
- **Grains:** Count on whole-grain breads, cereals, pastas and other grain products to add variety to your meals at a low cost. Buy in bulk when possible and cook them yourself rather than buying quick-cooking or pre-seasoned varieties.
- **Dairy:** Look for special sale promotions for milk, cheese and yogurt. but avoid purchasing more than you can use by the expiration date.
- **Protein:** Calculate cost per serving, not cost per pound, when buying meat, poultry, fish, and eggs. Eggs, chicken and turkey are usually your most economical choices. Also consider vegetarian sources of protein like beans, peas, peanut butter and nuts.

Cooking Tips for One or Two

It can be tricky when cooking for one (or even two) to make the most of your ingredients and to minimize dishes — particularly when many recipes focus on making a meal for a family and serve four to six people. But just because you have a smaller household doesn't mean you should abandon the kitchen for takeout.

The best part of cooking for one is that there are no worries about what anyone else wants for dinner. You have the flexibility to enjoy beans with salsa and avocado or a quick omelet with veggies for dinner if you want

The first step to dinner-for-one success is to make cooking healthy meals a priority. Planning ahead and arming yourself with a few tips and tricks will put you on the path to triumph in the kitchen.

The best strategy when cooking for one is to become friends with your freezer. Instead of scaling down, cook up full recipes: cook once, eat twice. Save time, money and clean up by freezing soups, chili, pasta dishes and extra vegetables. Pull these frozen meals out when you don't feel like cooking or just need a quick meal.

More kitchen tips for one:

Grains

- Cook a batch of whole grains such as brown rice or barley and freeze in individual portions using a muffin pan. Once frozen, the discs can be stored in a zip-top bag.
- Have a six-pack of whole-grain English muffins or a whole loaf of bread? Tuck those extras into the freezer for another day; wrap them tightly in plastic wrap to prevent freezer burn.
- Visit the bulk bins at your local health food and grocery stores. You can buy exactly what you need with no waste and it's often less expensive per pound. In addition to grains, you can score a deal on dried herbs and spices as well as nuts, seeds and dried beans.

Veggies and Fruits

- If you're not able to go food shopping a few days a week (most of us aren't), embrace frozen produce. Frozen produce can be just as nutritious as fresh and it's there when you need it. Just choose options without added sauces and sugar. Since they're already chopped up, frozen fruits and veggies are ready to add to smoothies, soups and stir-fries. And because they're frozen, there is no rush to use them before they spoil.
- Bulk bags of fruits and veggies are only a better deal if you eat them before they spoil. Only buy what you can reasonably eat before the produce perishes: take extra grapes or cherries out of the bag and pare down that bunch of bananas to what you'll eat.
- Be strategic. Enjoy your most perishable fresh produce like berries and spinach early in the week. Save heartier produce like cabbage, carrots and potatoes for meals later in the week.

Protein: Meat, Poultry, Eggs, Beans

- Eggs can make a meal happen in a flash, anytime! They are an excellent source of protein and contain a bounty of nutrients such as vitamin D and choline. You can hard-boil a few on the weekend to have as an easy breakfast, snack or quick salad addition.
- Buy a whole package of meat or poultry and wrap individual portions in freezer-safe paper; label each with the date and contents.
- A potato masher can easily tame a can of pinto beans into delicious refried beans — a pinch of cumin, garlic and chili powder and you're ready to eat!

Scrumptious Strata

Ingredients

2 whole eggs
¼ cup reduced-fat milk
1 slice whole-wheat bread, torn into small pieces
¼ cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
¼ cup diced onions (frozen is easiest)
¼ cup diced bell peppers (frozen is easiest)
1 pinch each of garlic, oregano and crushed red pepper
Salt and pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Spray an oven-safe glass dish with non-stick cooking spray and pre-heat oven or toaster oven to 350°F.
2. In a small mixing bowl, beat eggs and milk. Add veggies, cheese and bread and toss to coat.
3. Pour into prepared dish and bake for about 25 minutes, or until top is browned and knife inserted into the center comes out clean.

Cooking Note

This recipe is flexible — feel free to change the vegetables to what you have on hand. It is also easily doubled (or quadrupled) to serve more people.

Nutrition Information

Serves 1

Calories: 389; Calories from fat: 206; Total fat: 23g; Saturated fat: 11g; Trans fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 462mg; Sodium: 507mg; Total carbohydrate: 19g; Dietary fiber: 3g; Sugars: 6g; Protein: 27g

Reviewed November 2014 Holly Larson, MS, RD, is a nutrition expert, freelance writer and owner of Grass Roots Nutrition based in Oxford, OH.

Carrot Fries Recipe

French fries? Forget them and try these for way more antioxidants and fewer calories! They're super easy to make, too.

Ingredients

1 pound of carrots
Cooking spray
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Peel the carrots and cut them into strips about 1/4 inch thick and a few inches long.
3. Coat a baking pan with cooking spray and spread the carrots onto it. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Bake 15 minutes. Flip them over and coat them with a bit more cooking spray, salt and pepper; bake another 15 minutes until lightly browned.

Nutrition Information

Serving size: 1/4 recipe
Serves 4

Calories: 45; Total Fat: 0g; Saturated Fat: 0g; Cholesterol 0 mg; Sodium: 370 mg; Total Carbohydrate: 11 g; Dietary Fiber: 3g; Sugars: 5g; Protein: 1 g.

Chicken Tacos with Salsa Verde

These tacos are bursting with bold flavors. Remove the seeds and membrane of the jalapeño if your family prefers a milder flavor, or just omit the jalapeño. Queso fresco is a mild, crumbly Mexican cheese that can be found in many major supermarkets. If you can't find it, feta is a good substitute.

Ingredients

2 teaspoons ground cumin
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon black pepper
3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs (about 12 thighs)
1 ½ tablespoons canola oil, divided
1 large onion, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
1 large carrot, peeled and chopped
1 medium jalapeño, sliced into thin rings (optional)
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 ½ cups salsa verde (green tomatillo salsa), divided
½ cup fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth
24 (6-inch) corn tortillas
½ cup crumbled queso fresco cheese
¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves
2 limes, cut into wedges (optional)

Directions

1. In a small bowl, combine cumin, salt and pepper. Rub mixture evenly over chicken thighs. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add half of chicken; cook 3 minutes per side or until browned. Transfer to a 5-or 6-quart slow cooker. Repeat procedure with remaining chicken.
2. Heat remaining ½ tablespoon oil in pan over medium heat. Add onion, celery, carrot, jalapeño and garlic; cook, stirring frequently, 5 to 7 minutes or until vegetables are tender and begin to brown. Transfer to slow cooker. Add 2 cups salsa and broth. Cover and cook on low 4 to 6 hours or until chicken shreds easily with a fork.
3. Remove chicken to a large bowl using a slotted spoon; shred with 2 forks.
4. Warm tortillas according to package instructions. Fill each tortilla with about ¼ cup chicken mixture, 1 teaspoon cheese, 1 teaspoon salsa and ½ teaspoon cilantro. Serve with lime wedges if desired.

Nutrition Information

Serving size: 2 tacos

Serves 6

Calories: 340; Total Fat: 14g; Saturated Fat: 3g; Trans Fat: 0g; Cholesterol: 80mg; Sodium: 620mg; Total Carbohydrate: 30g; Dietary Fiber: 4g; Sugars: 7g; Protein: 24g; Vitamin A: 25%; Vitamin C: 8%; Calcium: 6%; Iron: 8%.

Cooking Tips and Trends



Spring is a great time to hit the reset button and reintroduce some fresh foods into your kids' diet after a long winter. Get into the swing of spring with these seasonal favorites.

Strawberries

Loaded with vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients, fresh strawberries are a seasonal superstar. Just one cup provides more than a day's worth of vitamin C, plus a hearty dose of manganese, which is important for bone development. A serving of strawberries also packs three grams of fiber.

Strawberries are great eaten plain or with other foods. Sweet and colorful, berries are a great addition to smoothies, cereal and yogurt.

Spinach

Spinach is called a superfood for a reason: It's packed with vitamins A and C, which are essential for eye health, immune function and many other body processes. Vitamin K helps build strong bones. Spinach also contains folate and iron, which help prevent anemia. The magnesium and potassium are important for muscle development and growth.

If your kids are on-board with green stuff, serve spinach salads or add it to smoothies. Serve it sautéed with meat and fish. For veggie avoiders, the mild flavor of spinach is easily masked. Just puree and mix it into sauces, soups and meatballs.

Yogurt

A calcium-rich food, yogurt is important for building strong bones and teeth. At eight grams per 6 ounce container, yogurt is also a great source of protein. Greek yogurt has up to twice that much, however it provides less calcium. Yogurt is also a good source of probiotic bacteria, which can promote good digestion and immune system function.

Have your kids help make yogurt parfaits by layering yogurt, cereal and fruit. If they are adventurous, have them top their pancakes and waffles with yogurt and fruit instead of syrup.

Asparagus

Asparagus is an excellent source of bone-building vitamin K as well as folate. It also provides vitamin A and iron. Available in green, purple and white varieties, asparagus spears are fun to eat and go with all kinds of foods.

Roll asparagus in egg and panko crumbs and bake on a cookie sheet is a kid-friendly prep method. You can also add Parmesan cheese to the panko crumbs for a cheesy variation. Serve with teriyaki or tomato sauce for dipping or even a small amount of low-fat ranch dressing. This is also a great way to prepare broccoli, and is easy enough for the kids to help prepare. Getting kids involved in the kitchen will make them more likely to try new foods.

Source: www.eatright.org

Spring Fun Food Facts Newsletter is produced by the Swisher County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Sincerely,

Calley Runnels
CEA-FCS Swisher County

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service MONTHLY Educational Programs PROGRAMS

Nutrition and Exercise Class

April 8, 2015

2:00 p.m. Mid Tule Village Activity Room

317 SE 7th Tulia

Car Seat Class

April 22 & 29, 2015

Safe Riders Car Seat Distribution Program

at 2:00 p.m. in Annex Meeting Room

Pre-Registration Required

Call 995-3726

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