

Family Dinner's

*This week our focus will be family dinner type meals – a meal you may think of when you would sit down with all! Sharing a family meal provides an experience that touches all of our senses – sight, touch, taste, smell and listening to warm laughter or good conversation. Family meals help provide a regular, consistent opportunity to create a shared experience that is meaningful and offers a sense of belonging to all. Research has shown that regular and meaningful family meals offer a large variety of benefits to children and parents. **While families are encouraged to share meals, not every meal has to be a sit-down dinner extravaganza.***

The most important thing about family meals is to make them frequent, fun and family-centered.

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Family Meal – Conversation Starters

Mini Meat Loaves

Ingredients

- 1-pound Ground Beef (any ground meat would work)
- 1/2 c. dry Breadcrumbs
- 1/2 c. Old-Fashioned Whole Oats
- 1/4 c. Skim Milk
- 1/2 tsp. Salt
- 1/2 tsp. Worcestershire Sauce
- 1/4 tsp. Pepper
- 1/4 c. Onion, diced
- 1 large Egg, beaten
- 1/2 c. Cheddar Cheese, shredded

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Mix all ingredients together.
3. Coat muffin tins with nonstick spray.
4. Scoop beef mixture evenly into 10 portions in muffin tins.
5. Bake for 30 minutes or until internal temperature is 160 F.

Yield: 4 servings

Meatloaf Glaze

Ingredients

- ¾ cup Ketchup
- 1 ½ tsp White Vinegar
- 2 ½ Tbsp Brown Sugar
- 1 tsp Garlic Powder
- ½ tsp Onion Powder
- ¼ tsp Pepper
- ¼ tsp Salt

Instructions

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
2. With about 10 minutes cooking time left – pour a bit over each mini loaf.

Roasted Carrots, Potatoes and Onions

Ingredients

- 1 lb. Small Red Potatoes (any potatoes, may use larger – cut to bite size)
- 1 lb. Baby Carrots
- 1 medium Onion
- 3 Tbsp Olive Oil
- 2 tsp minced Garlic
- 1 tsp Thyme
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1 tsp Pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Line a large baking sheet with foil or parchment paper.
2. Wash and dry the potatoes. Then chop the small red potatoes into quarters. Cut potato pieces smaller than carrot pieces so they'll cook in the same time.
3. Chop the onion.
4. Mix olive oil, garlic, thyme, salt, and pepper in a large bowl.
5. Add potatoes, carrots, and onions to the bowl. Mix to coat the vegetables with the oil and seasonings.
6. Spread potatoes, carrots, and onions in a single layer on the baking sheet. Roast in the oven for 40 minutes or until they reach desired tenderness. Stir halfway through cooking time.
7. Season with more salt and pepper, if desired, and serve warm.

Yield: 8 servings

American's Favorite Pork Chop

Ingredients

- 4 Pork Chops, 3/4-inch thick
- 3/4 c. Italian dressing
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire Sauce

Instructions

1. Place all ingredients in a self-sealing bag; seal bag and place in refrigerator for at least 20 minutes (or as long as overnight).
2. Remove chops from bag, discarding marinade.
3. Grill over a medium-hot fire, turning once, until just done, about eight to 11 minutes total cooking time, until internal temperature on thermometer reads 160 degrees. If baking – bake at 400 degrees for about 25 minutes – make sure to temp and wait until thermometer reads 160 degrees.

Yield: 4 servings

Baked Chicken with Vegetables

Ingredients

- 4 sliced Potatoes
- 6 sliced Carrots
- 1 small Onion, chopped
- 1 1/2 lbs. cut-up Chicken Breasts
- 1/2 c. Water
- 1 tsp. Thyme
- 1/4 tsp. Pepper

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Place potatoes, carrots and onion in a large roasting pan. Put chicken pieces on top of vegetables.
3. Mix water, thyme and pepper. Pour over chicken and vegetables.
4. Spoon juices over chicken once or twice during cooking.
5. Bake at 400 degrees for one hour or more until chicken reaches an internal temperature of 170 F and is browned and tender.

Yield: 6 servings

Bake and Freeze Spaghetti Casserole

Ingredients

- 8 ounces uncooked Pasta (elbow macaroni, bow ties or spaghetti – broken up)
- 1 Tbsp. Canola Oil or Any Oil
- 1 1/2 c. canned Chicken (drained)
- 2 cloves Garlic (chopped)
- 1 tsp. dried Oregano (optional)
- 1/4 tsp. Black Pepper
- 2 (15-ounce) cans low-sodium Tomatoes, not drained
- 3/4 c. reduced-fat Cheddar Cheese (shredded – may also shred own)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and place in a 9- by 9-inch baking dish.
3. In a large skillet over medium heat, combine chicken, garlic and pepper. If using oregano, add that, too. Cook in oil until hot, about five minutes. Stir in tomatoes.
4. Lower the heat and cook for 10 minutes.
5. Spoon tomato and chicken mixture over the pasta in the baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese.
6. Bake for 30 minutes or until hot and bubbling. Serve immediately or cool to room temperature, then freeze up to three months.

Yield: 6 servings

Beef Stew – A Secret Recipe

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds Lean Beef, cut into 1-inch pieces (may also use ground beef)
- 1/3 c. All-Purpose Flour
- 3 Tbsp. Vegetable Oil (or any oil)
- 1 (28-oz.) can Italian-Style stewed Tomatoes, undrained (any canned tomatoes)
- 1 (14.5-oz.) can Low Sodium Beef Broth (any broth or vegetable juice)
- 1 medium Onion, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 tsp. Black Pepper
- 1/2 tsp. dried Thyme Leaves
- 3 medium Potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 c. baby Carrots or 2 c. sliced carrots, 1-inch thick

Instructions

1. Toss the beef with flour in a medium bowl.
2. Heat oil in a large, heavy saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the beef and cook for five minutes, until browned, turning occasionally.
3. Add tomatoes, broth, onion, pepper, and thyme; bring to a boil over high heat.
4. Reduce heat to low and cover. Simmer for 45 minutes or until the beef is just tender.
5. Add the potatoes and carrots; return to a boil.
6. Reduce heat and cover. Simmer for 45 minutes or until the beef and vegetables are tender.

Yield: 8 servings

Beef Stroganoff

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp. Butter
- 12 oz. beef tenderloin, thinly sliced (venison may be used)
- 1 lb. fresh or canned Mushrooms, quartered
- 1/2 c. chopped Onions
- 1/2 tsp. dried Dill Weed
- 1/2 tsp. Salt
- 1/4 tsp. Black Pepper
- 1/2 c. Low Sodium Beef Broth or Water
- 1/2 c. reduced-fat Sour Cream or Plain Greek Yogurt

Instructions

1. In a large non-stick skillet, melt butter or margarine over medium high heat.
2. Add half of beef and cook until browned, turning once. Remove from skillet. Repeat with remaining beef.
3. Add mushrooms, onions, dill, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes.
4. Add broth and return beef to skillet. Cook until heated through.
5. Remove from heat and add sour cream. Stir until blended.
6. Serve over cooked egg noodles, whole grain pasta, zoodles or spaghetti squash.

Yield: 5 servings

Chicken and Biscuit Pot Pie

Ingredients

- 1 (10-ounce) can Cream of Chicken Soup (Reduced Sodium)
- 1 ½ c. low-fat Milk
- 1 ½ tsp. Italian Seasoning
- 2 c. diced Potatoes (slightly undercooked)
- 3 c. cubed Chicken (like breast meat)
- 1 (16-ounce) bag Frozen Mixed Vegetables, thawed
- 1 (16-ounce) can refrigerated Buttermilk Biscuits
- ½ c. Shredded Cheddar Cheese

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 375 F.
2. Boil water. Peel and dice potatoes. Cook to soften but do not overcook.
3. Thaw vegetables in a microwave oven. Spray a 13- by 9-inch pan with cooking spray.
4. In a large bowl, mix soup, milk and seasoning.
5. Add cooked potatoes, chicken and thawed vegetables and mix gently.
6. Cut biscuits into fourths and add to mixture.
7. Place in baking dish and bake for 35 to 40 minutes, until the biscuits are no longer doughy.
8. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cheese. Return to oven until cheese melts (about three to four minutes).

Yield: 8 servings

Note: This recipe is fairly high in sodium because of the biscuits and soup. You can use a smaller can of biscuits to reduce the sodium and calories, or be sure to accompany this meal with lower-sodium options such as fresh fruit for dessert. Also you may use the recipe below to make your own Cream Soup sauce as well.

Homemade Cream Soup Sauce

Ingredients

- 3 Tbsp Butter or Margarine
- 4 Tbsp All Purpose Flour
- Dash of Salt
- 1 cup Chicken Broth (Low Sodium or any Beef/Bone or Vegetable)

Instructions

1. Put medium saucepan over low heat and add butter.
2. Sprinkle in flour and salt while whisking; continue to whisk for 1 minute.
3. Continue whisking while pouring in all the chicken broth.
4. Whisk constantly while cooking until sauce gets thick and bubbly.

Yield – about 1 cup

Creamy Tuna Noodle Casserole

Ingredients

- 2 c. dry Noodles
- 1/3 c. Onion, chopped
- 2/3 c. Celery, chopped
- 1 (7-oz.) can Tuna, drained and flaked
- 1 (10-oz.) can Reduced-Fat Cream of Mushroom Soup
- 1 (6-oz.) can Nonfat Evaporated Milk (or Half & Half)
- 2/3 c. crushed Potato Chips/Crackers/Cornflakes (optional)

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray or grease casserole baking dish.
2. Cook noodles according to package directions.
3. Sauté celery and onions, stirring occasionally until tender.
4. Combine noodles, tuna, soup, sautéed vegetables and evaporated milk. Mix well.
5. Pour into prepared casserole dish and sprinkle with potato chips or choice of crunch item.
6. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until chips are golden brown. *Double the recipe and freeze one for later use.*

Yield: 6 servings

Lemon Broiled Fish Fillets

Ingredients

- 3 lb. Fish Fillets
- 6 Tbsp. Butter
- 1 tsp. Salt
- ½ tsp. Pepper
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire Sauce
- 2 Tbsp. Lemon Juice
- Paprika
- ½ c. Low Sodium Chicken or Vegetable Broth

Instructions

1. Place fish in greased broiler pan.
2. Melt butter; mix with salt, pepper, Worcestershire sauce and lemon juice.
3. Brush fillets with this mixture. Sprinkle with paprika.
4. Broil 3 inches from source of heat for about 5 minutes or until golden brown.
5. Turn, brush again with sauce and sprinkle with paprika. Broil 7 minutes longer until fish flakes easily when tested with fork.

Yield: 6-8 servings

Lentil and Veggie Cheddar Bake

Ingredients

- 1 c. Red Lentils
- 2 c. Water
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. Cheddar Cheese
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Red Bell Pepper, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ Green Bell Pepper, finely chopped
- 1 small Onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of Garlic, crushed (2 tsp Minced Garlic)
- Black pepper and salt to season
- 4 Eggs

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. Bring red lentils and water to a boil in a saucepan. Reduce heat to simmer. Cover and cook until water is almost absorbed, turn off heat, add lid and leave for 10 minutes to soak up any remaining liquid.
3. In the meantime, spray a frying pan with spray oil and cook the onion, peppers and garlic for approximately four minutes.
4. Once lentils are ready, add them to a bowl.
5. Add the onion, red pepper, green pepper and garlic, then season with salt and pepper.
6. Add the cheddar and eggs and mix thoroughly.
7. Spray an 8-inch round pan with cooking spray, add the mixture and bake in the oven until it is golden and set, about 30 to 40 minutes.

Yield: 8 – 1/8 pie servings

Apple Coleslaw

Ingredients

- 2 c. Cabbage
- 1 c. grated Carrot
- 1/2 c. chopped Green Pepper
- 2 c. chopped Apple
- 5 Tbsp. Nonfat Yogurt (Plain, Vanilla or Lemon-flavored) or Greek Yogurt (same flavors)
- 1 Tbsp. Mayonnaise, nonfat
- 1 tsp. Lemon Juice
- 1/4 tsp. Dill Weed

Instructions

1. Wash the cabbage under running water. Cut it into fine shreds to make 2 cups.
2. Peel and grate carrot. Chop green pepper into small pieces. Remove the core and chop the apple into small pieces.
3. Put the cabbage, carrot, green pepper, and apple in a large bowl. Stir together.
4. Put the yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon juice and dill weed in a small bowl. Stir together to make a dressing.
5. Pour the dressing over the salad. Toss to mix.

Yield: 4 servings

Brown Rice Pilaf

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cup Brown Rice or Wild Rice or Combination
- 3 cups Water
- ¼ cup Almonds, chopped
- 1 tsp dried Parsley
- ½ tsp Garlic Powder
- ¼ tsp Pepper

Instructions

1. Place all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil – turn down to medium low heat and let simmer until all water evaporates, about 20-30 minutes.
2. Fluff cooked rice with a fork.

Yield: 8 – ½ cup servings

Country Style Potato Salad

Ingredients

- 3 medium-sized Red Potatoes (about 3/4 pound)
- 1 c. Celery, chopped
- 1/2 c. Onion, minced
- 1 c. Peas (frozen)
- 1 Tbsp. Mustard
- 1/2 c. Mayonnaise, low-fat
- 1/2 c. Plain, Nonfat-Greek Yogurt
- Black pepper to taste
- Lettuce, tomato, chopped green onion (garnish - optional)

Instructions

1. Wash potatoes leave skin on and cut into bite-sized chunks. Place in pan and cover with water. Bring to a boil, lower to simmer and cook uncovered until potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Drain in colander and sprinkle lightly with cold water.
2. Put the rest of the ingredients in a large mixing bowl.
3. Drain potatoes well and add to the bowl.
4. Mix well and refrigerate until ready to use. Garnish with fresh lettuce and sliced tomatoes – if desired.

Yield: 4 servings

Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients

- 1-pound Red Potatoes
- ½ c. Skim Milk
- 2 large Garlic Cloves, chopped
- ½ tsp. Pepper
- 1 Tbsp. Fresh Chives, chopped (optional)

Instructions

1. Peel potatoes cut into quarters and place in cold, salted water for about 15 minutes. Drain in colander, rinse well and place in 2-quart saucepan containing 2 cups of boiling water. Cover and cook for 20 to 25 minutes or until tender.
2. Meanwhile, have milk warming over low to medium heat. Add garlic to hot milk and simmer until garlic is soft, about 20 to 25 minutes.
3. Remove cooked potatoes from heat, drain in colander, replace in saucepan and cover to keep warm.
4. Add milk-garlic mixture and white pepper to potatoes, mash with potato masher and then whip with an electric mixer. If desired, garnish with chopped fresh chives.

Yield: 4 servings

Superfood: Carrots

Carrots are root vegetables that were first grown in Afghanistan around 900 AD. Orange may be their best-known color, but they also come in other hues, including purple, yellow, red, and white. Early carrots were purple or yellow. Orange carrots were developed in Central Europe around the 15th or 16th century.

Carrots have a wealth of antioxidants and offer many health benefits. Here are the highlights:

They're good for your eyes. This is probably the best-known carrot superpower. They're rich in beta-carotene, a compound your body changes into vitamin A, which helps keep your eyes healthy. And beta-carotene helps protect your eyes from the sun and lowers your chances of cataracts and other eye problems.

Yellow carrots have lutein, which is also good for your eyes. Studies have found that it can help with or prevent age-related macular degeneration, the leading cause of vision loss in the U.S.

They can lower your risk of cancer. Antioxidants have been proven to fight off harmful free radicals in your body, and that can make you less likely to have cancer. The two main types of antioxidants in carrots are carotenoids and anthocyanins. Carotenoids give carrots their orange and yellow colors, while anthocyanins are responsible for red and purple coloring.

They help your heart. First, all those antioxidants are also good for your heart. Second, the potassium in carrots can help keep your blood pressure in check. And third, they have fiber, which can help you stay at a healthy weight and lower your chances of heart disease.

Red carrots also have lycopene, which helps prevent heart disease.

They boost your immune system. The vitamin C in carrots helps your body build antibodies that defend your immune system. Vitamin C also helps your body take in and use iron and prevent infections.

They can help with constipation. If you're having trouble going to the bathroom, try munching on some raw carrots. With their high fiber content, they can help ease constipation and keep you regular.

Family Meals

Sharing a family meal provides an experience that touches all of our senses – sight, touch, taste, smell and listening to warm laughter or good conversation. Family meals help provide a regular, consistent opportunity to create a shared experience that is meaningful and offers a sense of belonging to all. Research has shown that regular and meaningful family meals offer a large variety of benefits to children and parents. While families are encouraged to share meals, not every meal has to be a sit-down dinner extravaganza. The most important thing about family meals is to make them frequent, fun and family-centered.

To keep those family meals fun here are some fun conversation starts...pick ones that would be appropriate to who you have in your family...amazing what a simple question can get going along the dinner table!

- What was the best part of your day? What is your favorite thing to do every day? What don't you like to do during the day?
- What is most important to you?
- What was the first movie you saw in a theater? Or What is your favorite movie? Or What is the first movie you remember watching?
- What were the most popular toys when you were a young child? Or What was your favorite toy as a child?
- What type of music did you like when you were in school? Did you sing or play an instrument?
- Which was your favorite subject or class in school? Which class didn't you like?
- What were the fads in clothing that you liked best through the years? Which do you find amusing? What have been your favorite hairstyles?
- Which household chore do you like to do? Which is your least favorite?
- How many states have you visited? What places would you like to visit?
- Did you ever possess something of great value to you, but it was not worth much money?
- Have you ever had a nickname? Who started calling you that nickname?
- What's your favorite food that a grandparent or other relative made? Did you learn to make it?
- Did you have pets? What is your most unusual pet?