



Nourish

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Dinner for Two?



You might be preparing to host or attend holiday meals in the next couple of months. While gatherings of groups of people are common during holidays, many people live in one- or two-person households throughout the U.S.

About 37% of two-person households (ages 45 to 64) were empty nesters, while 80% of people ages 65 and older were in one- or two-person households, according to 2019 statistics. Sometimes cooking for one or two may not seem to be worth your effort; however, a little meal planning can save you money and time.

Before you begin planning meals, “shop” your refrigerator, freezer or pantry first. Try to plan your menu a week at a time and place the list on your refrigerator or counter. If you want to save some money, use the sale ads to help you plan and shop in season.

Try these tips to reduce quantities of your favorite recipes.

- Choose recipes that are easy to divide mathematically. In recipes calling for three eggs, use two eggs and remove 2 to 4 tablespoons of liquid (if present) from the recipe.
- If a recipe calls for a can of beans or soup and you would like to divide the recipe in half, use what you need and either refrigerate or freeze the remaining food. Place in a freezer-safe container and label the container with the contents and date.
- Add seasonings gradually. Sometimes you may need to add more (or less) of the spice to reach the desired flavor.
- Check for doneness of halved recipes five to nine minutes sooner than the original recipe.
- Keep notes about what works — and what doesn't!

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Question

I cook for two of us. We never use up an entire loaf of bread before it becomes moldy. We always have leftovers, and we get tired of our meals.

In many stores, you can buy small loaves of bread, but sometimes they are similar in price to the full loaf. Figure out how many slices you will consume in the next few days, then place the remaining bread in a freezer bag, label and freeze. Consider buying items that can be purchased in smaller amounts at the meat counter or in the produce aisle.

Almost any food can be frozen. Search www.ndsu.edu/agriculture for the “Food Freezing Guide” for recommendations. The “Food Storage Guide” from NDSU Extension provides tips on how long food will last in your pantry, refrigerator or freezer.



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Think of leftovers as “planned overs” and consider these tips.

- Use planned-over macaroni to make pasta salad or quick casseroles. Add planned-over vegetables or meat.
- Make mini pizzas by topping English muffins with planned-over spaghetti sauce, vegetables and shredded cheese.
- Add chopped onions, mushrooms, peppers and cooked meat to canned spaghetti sauce. Serve spaghetti sauce over noodles one day, then add kidney beans and chili seasoning for another meal.
- Top a microwave-baked potato with planned-over chili and cheese.
- Mix chopped yellow squash, green peas and grated carrots with a prepared rice mix.
- Spice up canned tomato soup by adding chopped green onion, celery and some garlic powder.

Here's a way to use planned-over roasted poultry for a tasty, easy and warming soup for colder months. Add some garlic toast, apple slices and milk for a complete meal.

Turkey or Chicken Vegetable Soup for Two



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1 cup chopped cooked turkey or chicken
1/4 cup chopped onion
1/4 cup chopped celery
1/2 cup sliced carrots
1/4 teaspoon thyme or seasonings of choice
2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
Pepper (to taste)
1 cup cooked pasta (such as bowtie, shells, macaroni, etc.)
or 1 cup cooked rice

Add all ingredients, except pasta or rice, to pan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cook covered until vegetables are tender crisp, about 10 to 15 minutes. Add cooked pasta or rice and cook a few more minutes until pasta or rice is heated.

Makes two servings. Each serving has 270 calories, 4.5 grams (g) fat, 26 g carbohydrate, 31 g protein, 1.5 g fiber and 240 milligrams sodium.