



Quick & Healthy No-Recipe Meals



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GROUND BEEF

Frozen Ground Beef Crumbles – Basic recipe

1. Use 90% lean or higher ground beef for these directions; 16 ounces raw ground beef yields about 12 ounces fully cooked ground beef crumbles.
2. Brown no more than 1 pound of ground beef at a time in a large skillet. As ground beef browns, some meat juices are released. If you overload the skillet, moisture is trapped and meat is steamed rather than browned.
3. Brown beef with one chopped medium onion as so many recipes call for both beef and onions. The onion also has antioxidant properties and slows flavor changes. Do not add salt now as it may hasten undesirable flavor changes. Add the salt when you use the crumbles in a recipe.
4. Brown lean ground beef in large nonstick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until beef is not pink, breaking beef up into 3/4-inch crumbles. Remove beef with slotted spoon.



Storage:

1. Cool and refrigerate beef crumbles promptly in shallow containers. Containers may be placed in the refrigerator before beef has cooled entirely. Loosely cover refrigerated container until beef has cooled.
2. Promptly transfer the cooled beef crumbles to plastic "freezer," NOT "storage" bags. Eliminate air pockets. Label and date packages; include amount of beef or number of servings.
3. Speed freezing and hasten thawing by freezing crumbles in a thinner, flattened shape in freezer bags. Do not stack packages — the quality will be better if the beef freezes faster. A rounded shape takes longer to thaw through to the middle. Flattened packages also will stack better in your freezer. Place on a flat surface, such as a metal pan or cookie sheet, until frozen. Then, remove and stack.
4. Use frozen beef crumbles within 2 to 3 months for best flavor and quality. Freeze at 0 degrees F or lower.

Use ground beef crumbles to make:

BARBECUE BEEF WITH POTATO

The entire frozen beef crumbles mixture makes enough for 4 servings.

For each person, you'll need:

- 1 medium sized all-purpose potato
- 1/4 – 1/3 cup of barbecue sauce (*prepared or see following recipe for homemade 3-ingredient BBQ sauce*)
- About 2 tablespoons shredded cheese or as desired.

Directions:

1. Bake desired number of potatoes (*directions for baking potatoes are given later in this handout in potato section*).
2. When potatoes are done, heat the frozen crumbles with the barbecue sauce. Add more sauce if desired.
3. Cut potato open and top with heated meat and sauce mixture. Top with shredded cheese.

OR ... simply heat frozen crumbles with barbeque sauce and serve on a bun.

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3-ingredient Barbecue Sauce**Ingredients:**

- No salt added ketchup
- Mustard
- Brown sugar

For 1 cup barbecue sauce: Mix together 3/4 cup (12 tablespoons) ketchup, 2 tablespoons mustard and 2 tablespoons brown sugar. Double or halve these ingredients to change amount.

CHILI WITH BEEF AND BEANS

Once you've made this "recipe" ... you'll never need to look at it again. Just keep cans of kidney beans and diced tomatoes on hand and you're ready to go!

Ingredients for 4 servings of soup:

- 1/2 batch make-ahead crumbled beef made with onion (need not be thawed — if the beef crumbles package is flattened when frozen, it's easy to break off about half the meat in the package for this recipe).
- 1 can (15.5 ounces) regular or no-salt-added kidney beans
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) regular or no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 1-1/2 tablespoons chili powder or to taste
- Shredded cheese (optional)

Directions: Mix all ingredients in a saucepan. Cover, simmer for 20 minutes to heat throughout and blend flavors. Stir occasionally. Add a little water, if needed, to thin broth. Top with shredded cheese if desired.

Freezing extra chili with beef and beans: *(suggested freezer storage time: 1 to 2 months for best quality)*

To freeze chili: Freeze in a freezer bag in the amount you wish to serve. Flatten the freezer bag and press out the air. Spread out in your freezer in single layers on a flat surface, until frozen. Then, stack together.

To reheat: Remove chili from freezer bag and reheat in a covered saucepan over low to medium heat until chili is heated throughout (165 degrees F); stir occasionally. OR reheat, covered, in your microwave in a microwave safe container; stir occasionally.

PASTA WITH MEAT SAUCE**Ingredients:**

- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 (28-ounce) of crushed tomatoes
- 1/2 to 1 batch of frozen beef crumbles

Directions:

1. Sauté the garlic in a couple tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat in a large saucepan until it turns golden brown.
2. Add the tomatoes and the beef crumbles and continue heating over medium heat. Turn heat down once the mixture starts to simmer. Continue heating for about 10 to 15 minutes for flavors to blend. Meanwhile, prepare your pasta according to package directions.



Tip: "Heat" up mixture by adding a dash of red pepper flakes. Add a teaspoon, or to taste, of Italian seasoning for added flavor. Eat any extra pasta sauce in 3 to 4 days or freeze and use in 2 to 3 months for best flavor.

BOILED EGGS

Prepare perfect boiled eggs that may be stored in the shell in the refrigerator for 7 days or if peeled, should be eaten the same day they're cooked. Use eggs through the week to make several "no recipe required dishes." Here's how to boil eggs an American Egg Board media release: (<https://www.incredibleegg.org/wp-content/uploads/Hard-Boiling-Egg-Safety-Fact-Sheet.pdf>)



1. Place eggs in saucepan large enough to hold them in a single layer. Add cold water to cover eggs by one inch. Heat over high heat until the water is boiling, then turn the heat off.
2. Remove from burner. Cover pan. Let eggs stand in hot water about 12 minutes for Large eggs (9 minutes for Medium eggs; 15 minutes for Extra Large).
3. Cool completely in a bowl of ice water. Peel and eat eggs immediately or refrigerate them in their shells to enjoy up to a week later.

Additional tips from the American Egg Board include:

- **Boiled, but just barely.** While the cooking water must come to a full boil, the pan is immediately removed from the heat so the eggs can cook gently in the hot water which produces tender eggs and minimizes cracking.
- **Very fresh eggs can be difficult to peel.** Buy and refrigerate eggs a week to 10 days in advance of cooking them to make peeling easier. This brief "breather" allows the eggs time to take in air, which helps separate the membranes from the shell.
- **Hard-boiled eggs are easiest to peel after cooling.** Cooling causes the egg to contract slightly in the shell.
- **Peel a hard-boiled egg.** Gently tap egg on the countertop until the shell is finely cracked all over, then roll it between your hands to loosen the shell. Peel starting at the large end and hold the egg under cold running water to help ease the shell off.
- **Banish the greenish ring.** This harmless but unsightly discoloration that sometimes forms around hard-boiled yolks results from a reaction between sulfur in the egg white and iron in the yolk. It occurs when eggs have been cooked for too long or at too high a temperature.

BOILED EGG BASIC USES

Add to Salads: Cut into wedges or circles and add (gently!) to salads.

Deviled eggs or egg salad: Ingredients —boiled eggs, mayonnaise, mustard

Deviled eggs. Cut eggs in half and remove yolks. Place yolks in a small zipper-lock plastic bag to mix. Start by adding about 1 teaspoon of mayonnaise per egg. Include a small dab or more of mustard if you like. Close the bag and knead together until mixture looks like a paste; add more mayonnaise if needed. Push the egg mixture toward one end of the bag and cut about 1/2-inch off the corner. Squeeze the bag gently to fill the egg whites with the mixture. **OR**, mash ingredients together with a fork in a small bowl and spoon into the egg shells.



Egg salad: Egg salad is most frequently used in sandwiches. A scoop of egg salad atop tomato wedges and/or a bed of lettuce also makes an attractive salad. Chop the eggs and combine with about 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise per egg. Add a small dab of mustard (or more to taste) for extra zing!

POTATOES

Potato pointers from Potatoes USA at

<https://www.potatogoodness.com>

- **Preparing potatoes for cooking.** Gently scrub potato with a (clean) vegetable brush under cool running water. Most nutrients are preserved when potatoes are cooked and eaten with the skin on. If peeling, use a vegetable peeler or sharp paring knife and keep the peeling very thin since many of the nutrients are found close to the skin. Preserve the color of cut potatoes by storing them in cold water, and add lemon juice or a little vinegar. Limit water soaking to two hours to retain water-soluble vitamins.
- **Refrigerate any leftovers within two hours of serving** to prevent food-borne illnesses. Any meal leftovers should be consumed within a few days. We (USA Potato) don't recommend freezing cooked potatoes at home as they become watery upon reheating. The potato is 80 percent water; and when frozen, this water separates from the starch and nutrients.



POTATO BASIC PREPARATION METHODS

Baked potatoes: Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Most cooks recommend baking russet potatoes because of their flavor and texture. Wash, then pat potatoes dry with a paper towel. Poke about 8 times all over with a fork. Rub the skin with **olive oil or vegetable oil**. Bake about 1 hour on a rack set on a baking sheet with sides in the middle of the oven. Or, place potato(es) directly on oven rack in middle of the oven; place the second oven rack below and put a baking sheet with sides on it to catch any drippings. Determine if a potato is done by inserting a fork into the center of the potato; the fork should slide in without any resistance.

Boiled potatoes: If you want potatoes that hold their shape — such as for potato salad — use red, yellow or purple potatoes. Russet potatoes are often used for mashed potatoes; Yukon Gold potatoes may be used for mashed potatoes as well as potato salad. You can leave the skin on potatoes with thin skins; russet potatoes, however, have a tougher skin and are usually peeled. **For mashed potatoes or plain boiled potatoes,** halve potatoes or if potatoes are large, quarter them (cut in half vertically and then horizontally) OR cut into about 2-inch chunks. **For potato salad,** cut potatoes into bite-sized cubes. **For all boiled potatoes:** Cover with enough cold water to cover the tops. Add 1/2 teaspoon salt to water, if desired. Turn up the heat and bring water to a boil, covering the pan with a lid. (A lid with a glass top is helpful to monitor the heat.) Reduce heat so potatoes continue to cook in gently boiling water. Potatoes are done when easily pierced with a fork, about 15 to 25 minutes for larger pieces of potatoes; 10 or more minutes for bite-sized cubed potatoes.

Mashed potatoes: Boil potatoes as described above. Drain potatoes in a colander or — if boiled in a pot for cooking pasta — in the pasta insert. Return to empty pot; heat over medium low heat about 1 to 2 minutes to dry potatoes; stir occasionally. Mash potatoes with a potato masher (especially if you are mashing Yukon Gold potatoes with the skin remaining) or with a potato ricer. Stir in room temperature butter or tub margarine, about a half tablespoon per potato. Heat milk and add a little at a time until desired consistency is reached.

Roasted potatoes: Preheat oven to 450 degrees F with oven rack in the center. Wash, peel and cut potatoes in 1-inch chunks; place in a mixing bowl; leave skin on thin-skinned potatoes. Toss potatoes with **olive oil** until evenly coated ... start by adding 1 tablespoon. Sprinkle on **dried rosemary, crushed** (start by adding about 1/2 teaspoon); add **salt** and **pepper** as desired. Stir to distribute seasonings. Bake in single layer on a baking sheet with sides, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and tender when pierced with a fork (25 to 35 minutes).

Potato salad: When bite-size cubed boiled potatoes are cool enough to handle, stir in mayonnaise until desired amount is achieved. Add mustard a dab at a time until you have a taste you like. Add other ingredients, such as chopped celery, onions and hard-cooked eggs as desired.

PASTA

- When pairing pasta with a sauce, remember that:
 - Thin, delicate pastas, like angel hair or thin spaghetti, are better served with light, thin sauces.
 - Thicker pasta shapes, like fettuccine, work well with heavier sauces.
 - Pasta shapes with holes or ridges, like mostaccioli or radiatore, are perfect for chunkier sauces.
- Here are some general guidelines for measuring dry vs. cooked pasta. (Shapes may vary in size according to the manufacturer, so use these measurements as generalizations.)
 - 8 oz. uncooked small to medium pasta shapes = 4 cups cooked (Examples: Elbow macaroni, Medium Shells, Rotini, Twists, Spirals, Wagon Wheels, Bow Ties, Mostaccioli, Penne, Ziti, Radiatore, Rigatoni)
 - 8 oz. uncooked long pasta shapes = 1 1/2-inch diameter bunch = 4 cups cooked (Examples: Spaghetti, Angel Hair, Linguine, Vermicelli, Fettuccine)
 - 8 oz. uncooked egg noodles = 2 1/2 cups cooked



Source: National Pasta Association at <https://www.ilovepasta.org/resource-center/cooking-tips>

PASTA IMPROV

| FOOD | AMOUNT PER PERSON | TABLE FOR FOUR |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Pasta | 4 oz. dried/person | 1 lb. |
| Vegetables | 1 cup/person | 4 cups |
| Cheese and/or meat and/or fish | 1/3 – 3/4 cup combined per person | 1-1/3 – 3 cups |
| Sauce | 1/4 – 1/2 cup per person | 1 – 2 cups |
| Sauces to use sparingly | 1 – 2 tablespoons/person | 4 – 8 tablespoons |
| Flavorings | 1/2 teaspoon – 2 tablespoons/person | 2 teaspoons – 8 tablespoons |

TIPS:

- Cheese, meats and fish can be combined and the amount added should be the TOTAL. For example, a recipe for four people using sausage and Parmesan cheese could incorporate 2-1/2 cups of sausage and a half cup of parmesan cheese, making a total of three cups (the maximum amount for four).
- Unless you are confident that you will want the maximum amount of any ingredient, you may have better success if you add ingredients incrementally, tasting with each addition and then adjusting. Remember to taste, taste, taste, as you improvise.
- Sauces can be combined. The amount added should be the TOTAL. For example, add a stronger flavored sauce, such as hoisin, to a milder sauce, such as broth, to pump up the flavor without overwhelming the dish. A recipe could use 1-3/4 cups broth and 1/4 cup hoisin, to make a total of two cups (the maximum for four). Or, sauces can be combined to create new flavors, such as a mixture of salsa and tomato sauce.
- When choosing vegetables, consider canned, frozen, fresh or jarred ingredients.

- Don't overlook the flavor combinations on the shelves at the grocery store, such as onion or roasted garlic flavored broth. Improvise with tartar sauce in place of mayonnaise, for example.
- For PASTA SALADS transfer the pasta to a large serving bowl. Toss with additions such as vegetables, cooked flavorings, meats and cheeses. Toss with sauce and other flavoring ingredients. Season to taste with salt and pepper and serve.
- For HOT PASTA DISHES, heat the sauce and stir into pasta. Toss with additions such as vegetables, meats and cheeses. Toss with flavoring ingredients, season to taste with salt and pepper and serve.
- When substituting dried spices for fresh, reduce amount by two thirds.
- When preparing a hot pasta dish, reserve about 1/4 cup of the pasta cooking water and add it to the sauce.

Basic Improv (personalize to your tastes) Serves 4

- 1 pound pasta
- 4 cups vegetables
- 2 - 3 cups cheese and/or meats and/or fish
- 1 - 2 cups sauce
- 1/4 - 1/2 cup flavoring ingredients - choose one, two or several
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Put the water on to boil.
2. Gather all ingredients. Chop and blanch or sauté vegetables that need it. Grate cheese if necessary. Cook and chop meats or fish if necessary. Cook flavoring ingredients that need it.
3. Cook the pasta according to package directions. After cooking, rinse under cold water for pasta salads or simply drain for hot pasta dishes.

Source: National Pasta Association at <https://www.ilovepasta.org/resource-center/healthy-living/pasta-improv>

DRY COOKED BEANS

- Draining and rinsing canned dry beans reduces their sodium by about 40%.
- There are 1-1/2 to 1-3/4 cups of beans in a can of beans.
- Some ways to minimize the "musical fruit" effect include:
 - Discard the soaking water when preparing dry beans from scratch and rinse beans thoroughly before cooking them.
 - Gradually increase the amount and frequency of beans in your diet. This gives your body a chance to adjust to them. For example, start with one-fourth cup of beans.
 - Try Beano™, a non-prescription product available in the pharmacy section of many stores. It contains an enzyme that breaks down the gas-producing substances in beans. Use immediately before consuming beans.
 - As with adding all types of fiber to your diet, drink plenty of fluids and maintain regular physical activity to help your gastrointestinal system handle the increased fiber.



BEAN, CORN & TOMATO SALSA

Proportions aren't all that important in this recipe ... just think: can, can, cup: 1 (15-oz.) can black or red beans, 1 (11-oz.) can corn and 1 cup salsa. Drain beans and corn. Mix all ingredients together. Eat.

SANDWICHES

The possibilities for sandwiches are endless. Here are four quick ideas.

ODDS & ENDS OF CHEESE SANDWICH



Use up extra odds and ends of cheese by shredding them with a grater or in a food processor. Mix in your choice of ingredients: Cut or chopped into small pieces (i.e. olives, pickles, pimientos, chives, walnuts, peppers, etc.). Add enough mayonnaise (regular or low-fat) to bind the ingredients together. Spread on your favorite bread.

BASIC TUNA, SALMON OR CHICKEN SANDWICH

For two sandwiches: (*For one person, use half and eat the remainder within 4 days.*) Drain small can (approximately 5-oz. size) of tuna, salmon or chicken (regular or no salt added) and flake with a fork. Add enough mayonnaise (regular or low fat) to moisten to your liking; include a dab or more of mustard if desired. Additional add-ins include: Chopped celery, pickle relish, chopped boiled eggs, grated sharp cheese, chopped herbs and minced onion. Serve on regular or toasted whole grain bread with (if desired) a slice of tomato and lettuce.

WRAPS

Wrap It Up! (1 8- to 10-inch) whole wheat tortilla

Filler Ingredients:

- 1 to 2 tablespoons "dressing" to moisten contents, such as salad dressing, mayonnaise, salsa, guacamole or hummus
- 1/2 cup of your favorite combination of chopped, shredded and/or leafy vegetables, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, lettuce, cabbage, spinach, onions, peppers, celery, olives, avocado, jicama, radishes
- 1/4 cup of a protein food, such as sliced, cooked, meat; flaked fish; tuna or salmon; cooked dried beans; refried beans; a scrambled egg or chopped, boiled egg
- 1 to 2 tablespoons shredded cheese

Directions:

- Follow package directions for preparing the tortilla before filling it — you will often be advised to heat the tortilla briefly (such as in a microwave oven or a hot pan) to make it more pliable.
- Mix all filler ingredients together and spread on the tortilla. Or, you can layer them on the wrap and top with the dressing. Leave a 1-inch margin around the edge of the tortilla.
- Roll up the tortilla and enjoy! There are several ways to wrap a wrap; two common methods are:
 - **Method 1:** Simply start rolling from one side until the wrap is completely rolled.
 - **Method 2:** Fold in one or both ends and roll up the tortilla

Tip 1: To help hold the wrap together, wrap it in tin foil, wax paper or plastic wrap or parchment paper.

Tip 2: If you plan to prepare the wrap to eat later, start with a layer of well-dried lettuce leaves or another leafy green base. This will help keep the tortilla from becoming soggy.

GRILLED CHEESE & TOMATO SANDWICH

Enjoy a hot and healthy meal in a hurry with this Grilled Cheese and Tomato Sandwich.

Ingredients:

- Bread (preferably whole grain)
- Sliced cheese
- Thin slice of a large tomato
- Margarine, olive oil or butter

For each sandwich: Lightly spread one side of 2 slices of bread with margarine, olive oil or butter. Lay 1 slice with buttered side down on a cutting board and top with a slice of cheese, followed by a tomato slice and ending with another cheese slice. Cover with second bread slice, buttered side up. Grill sandwiches on medium heat until golden brown and cheese starts to melt. Use a double-sided, hinged indoor grill (such as a George Foreman grill); a panini press; a griddle; or a frying pan. You'll need to flip sandwiches to the other side on the griddle and frying pan. Serve immediately.

Alice's Tips:

- A knife with a serrated edge works best for slicing tomatoes.
- If you're limiting your sodium intake, use Swiss cheese that has only 54 mg sodium/ounce, about 1/3 the amount of sodium in 1 slice of bread.

TOAST TOPPERS



- **Peanut butter smiley face toast:** Get out the carrots, apples, raisins and peanut butter and make this kid-friendly and nutrition-friendly smiley face toast snack with kids or grand kids! Serve on whole grain toast. Serve remaining sections of carrots and apples with the sandwich. Or chop them up and combine with raisins for a tasty salad; use vanilla yogurt and a dash of cinnamon for a quick salad dressing.
- **Berry smiley face toast:** While you're toasting some whole grain bread, wash a couple of blueberries and about 4 to 5 raspberries for the eyes and nose. Top the toast with a spreadable cheese. Add the eyes and nose and you're good to go. For a final touch, you might add a "bow" made from a couple of mint leaves.
- **Zucchini and radish toast topper:** For each piece of toast, spread bread with some type of spreadable cheese or with cream or Neufchatel cheese. Pat zucchini and radish slices dry on a clean paper towel and place on bread.
- **Cheese and nut toast topper:** For each piece of toast, mix together about 2 - 4 tablespoons of shredded or finely chopped cheese; 1 - 2 tablespoons of chopped nuts; and enough mayonnaise to bind them together. Spread on toast and enjoy!

SALADS

Extra virgin olive oil is often used as the basis of salad dressing.

Here are some tips for using olive oil successfully:

- Store in a cool, dark place and keep tightly covered.
- Refrigeration causes olive oil to become cloudy and harden; it clears up when returned to room temperature.
- Extra virgin olive oil has a more pronounced flavor and is often used to flavor salads and dressings; as a base for marinades; and drizzled on foods, such as pasta, just before it is served.

Properly stored, opened olive oil may last a year or more. NOTE: Extra virgin olive oil may smoke if heated at higher than a medium temperature.



Adding the oil and vinegar directly to a salad: In Italy, salad dressing often isn't mixed separately from the salad. Here are the basic directions for making salad dressing with just 3 ingredients that are mixed directly into the salad. This method is convenient if you're making a salad just for yourself and eating it right away. Plus, you're never left with half-used bottles of salad dressing lingering in your fridge.

Ingredients:

- Vinegar (red wine vinegar or balsamic vinegar works well)
- Oil (extra virgin olive oil)
- Salt (if desired)

The basic ratio of vinegar to oil is about 1 part vinegar to 3 parts oil. For a 2-cup salad, begin by "eyeballing" amounts and mix in, gently, about 1 teaspoon vinegar with your fork. Then, mix in about 3 teaspoons oil. (TIP: It's handy to purchase your oil and vinegar in bottles from which small amounts can be drizzled amounts directly into your salad.) End by mixing in a dash of salt, if desired. Taste and adjust as needed.

CHOPPED SALAD

A chopped salad is known for containing small pieces of fresh produce, usually vegetables. Possibilities include onions, bell peppers, carrots, tomatoes, celery, lettuce, spinach, cabbage, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli, kale, peas, radishes, cucumbers, cooked corn cut from the cob and zucchini.

Additional foods include cooked shrimp; nuts; sunflower seeds; strips of grilled steak; cooked dry beans; boiled egg slices or wedges; cubed ham; bacon bits; cheese; olive slices; and fruits (i.e. mandarin orange wedges, blueberries and apple chunks). **A chopped salad may be easier to eat from a dish with sides.**

Ingredients:

- An assortment of vegetables; plan on enough to make about a 1-1/2 to 2 cups salad per person
- Additional cooked meat, eggs, cheese, cooked dry beans, lentils, nuts, seeds, etc. if desired
- Salad dressing of your choice

Directions:

- Prepare vegetables shortly before serving. Wash all vegetables, even if you plan to remove the skin. Smaller-sized produce can be used "as is;" larger vegetables are chopped into smaller pieces. Mix.
- Mix in any additional meat, cheese, etc.
- Toss with about 1 - 2 tablespoons of dressing per each two cups of vegetables.

SALAD IN A JAR

These salads are so easy to make! You don't have to use all the ingredients; however, it's very important to put the salad dressing on the bottom followed with a layer of hard, moisture-resistant vegetables to protect the remaining layers from getting soggy. The salad in the picture includes:

- Salad dressing (I used a vinaigrette)
- Chopped cauliflower
- Sliced radishes
- Black beans (as a source of protein)
- Shredded cheese
- Lettuce



Ingredients and Directions:

1. **Place salad dressing in the bottom of the jar** (about 2 to 3 tablespoons for a quart-sized salad; 1 to 2 tablespoons for pint-size jar). A vinaigrette-type dressing works well.
2. **Top with a layer of hard, moisture-resistant vegetables** (e.g. carrots, cucumbers, broccoli, radishes, cauliflower, red and green pepper).
3. **Follow with 1 or more of these protein foods:** Lentils; garbanzo beans or other beans (e.g. black beans, kidney beans, Great Northern Beans, red beans). Meat, such as canned tuna, previously roasted chicken or ham, may taste best and keep better if added at the time of serving. *(Note: Don't keep previously cooked meat longer than 3 to 4 days for adding at the time of serving your salad.)*
4. **Softer vegetables and fruits come next**, such as corn, olives, grape tomatoes and dried fruit (i.e. raisins, cranberries, blueberries, cherries).
5. **Nuts and seeds follow**, for example almonds, walnuts, and sunflower seeds. Chunks of cheese or shredded cheese also can be added now.
6. **Add salad greens last.** For the most nutrition, use dark green salad greens (i.e. romaine, spinach, etc.)
7. **Top the jar with lid and store in the refrigerator.** Place salad jar in an insulated bag with a gel pack if carrying it to work.
8. Some people like to shake the jar to distribute the dressing and eat directly from the jar. Many prefer to shake the salad into a large bowl. If shaking the salad from the jar doesn't mix the salad with the dressing sufficiently, gently toss with a fork until ingredients are coated. **Eat Salad in a Jar within 3 to 4 days.**

HOMEMADE WHOLE GRAIN CROUTONS

Making your own croutons is a tasty way to use bread that has dried out slightly. You'll save money, too! Making croutons from scratch is so easy and lets you control the type of seasonings and amount of sodium.

Ingredients:

- Whole grain bread (About 1/2 to 1 slice per person)
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Italian seasoning or garlic powder (optional)

(Continued on next page)

Directions (for homemade whole grain croutons):

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Lightly brush top side of bread with olive oil. If desired, sprinkle with Italian seasoning or garlic powder after bread is coated with oil. Cut into about 1/2 to 3/4-inch cubes. Leave the crust on.
3. Spread in a single layer on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake on the middle shelf of the oven for 5 to 10 minutes or until lightly browned and crisp. You don't have to turn croutons while they're baking.
4. Enjoy! These croutons taste best if eaten the same day they're made.

Alice's Notes:

- If desired, use low sodium bread; check with your grocery store or local health food stores for availability. Besides using croutons in salads, toss them atop soups just before serving.

BREAKFAST

An easy way to add taste and nutrition to your morning oatmeal is to make it with **milk** rather than water. Using milk makes oatmeal taste creamier as well as adding calcium and protein to your breakfast. Making your oatmeal with milk automatically adds about a cup of milk to your meal! Next, add some fruit by tossing in **frozen blueberries**. Blueberries are high in antioxidants, plus they help quickly cool your oatmeal. Top your cereal with a sprinkling of **cinnamon**. Cinnamon is one of the sweeter spices and you are likely to use less — if any— sugar on your oatmeal.

**HAVE IT YOUR WAY PARFAIT** _____

Layer yogurt, low-fat granola and fresh, frozen or canned fruit in whatever proportions you'd like. Add nuts and you've included a 4th food group. Here are some possible yogurt/fruit combinations to layer with granola:

- **Blueberry Lemon Parfait:** Lemon yogurt and blueberries
- **Red, White and Blue Parfait:** Strawberries or raspberries, blueberries, bananas and vanilla yogurt
- **Tropical Parfait:** Kiwi, mango, pineapple and coconut or vanilla yogurt
- **Berry Good Parfait:** Any combination of berries such as strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, boysenberries, blackberries, etc. served with vanilla or a berry-flavored yogurt.
- **Peachy Parfait:** Sliced peaches and vanilla or peach yogurt. If desired, top with raspberry jam or raspberry syrup.

OVERNIGHT OATMEAL _____**Ingredients:**

- Oatmeal (old-fashioned or quick-cooking)
- Milk
- Yogurt (any flavor)
- Frozen or fresh berries

For each serving of overnight night meal, just remember: Add 1/2 cup each of ingredients beginning with oatmeal. Follow with milk, then yogurt and end with berries.

SNACKS

A few snack suggestions:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables are the original no-recipe convenience food.
- Reverse the proportions of ice cream and fruit topping. Add more fruit and less ice cream to keep calories in check.
- Refrigerate ripe bananas to make them last a few days longer. They may turn brown on the outside but will still be light and creamy-colored on the inside.



SALSA YOGURT DIP

Mix two parts plain yogurt with one part salsa (for example, mix 1 cup plain yogurt with 1/2 cup salsa.)

TRAIL MIX

Trail mixes provide a healthy and convenient snack mix. When you make your own trail mix, you can control the ingredients for the most nutrition. Make your own trail mixes by combining nuts, dried fruit, cereals and small crackers. Here are some tips for making healthy trail mixes:

- Limit the serving size to about 1/4 cup to keep calories at a reasonable amount.
- Use unsalted versions of nuts.
- Choose cereals and crackers that are whole grain, and lower in sugar and salt.
- Limit the amount of any added candy. Consider using “mini” versions of candy, such as mini chocolate chips, to distribute a smaller amount of candy throughout the mix.

Here is a trail mix recipe to get you started.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup almonds
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips or M&M's
- 1 cup dried fruit
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 1 cup oatmeal squares

Directions:

1. Measure ingredients and put in a large zip close bag.
2. Shake to mix.

Makes 16 servings; Serving size: 1/4 cup; Per serving: 140 calories, 20 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat, 3 g protein

Recipe courtesy of North Dakota State University Extension Service

BERRY SMOOTHIE

Ingredients:

- Milk or fruit juice
- Yogurt (any flavor)
- Frozen fruit (for example: berries, cherries, or sliced peaches)

For each smoothie, all you need to remember is: Add 1/2 cup of the above 3 ingredients with the liquid added to the blender first, followed by the yogurt and the berries added last. Blend until smooth; add more milk if you want a thinner smoothie or more frozen fruit for a thicker smoothie. If desired, sweeten with about a teaspoon of sugar or honey.

HOW TO KEEP GUACAMOLE FROM TURNING BROWN

Use this simple, easy-to-remember, tip to keep your favorite guacamole recipe from turning brown. I've seen photos of guacamole stored for about 24 hours this way that remained green. *(And, it worked for me!)*

1. Pack guacamole firmly (to remove air bubbles) into a container with a tight-fitting lid and so it is level. *(I pressed down on the guacamole with a spoon).*
2. Cover with about 1/2-inch lukewarm water. Put lid on container; refrigerate.
3. Carefully pour off the water before serving. Stir guacamole to mix in any remaining moisture. Store for up to 24 hours.



MISCELLANEOUS

MAYONNAISE MIX-INS

For each 1/4 cup of mayonnaise, use a spoon or small wire whip to add these amounts of mix-ins. Taste and add more if desired.

- 1/2 teaspoon of one of these spices:
 - Cumin powder
 - Curry powder
 - Chili powder
 - Smoked paprika
- 1 finely chopped tablespoon of one of these fresh herbs:
 - Chives
 - Rosemary
 - Tarragon
 - Thyme
 - Basil
 - Parsley
 - Oregano
- Add extra punch to any of previous mix-ins by adding a dash of one of these—taste before adding more:
 - Cayenne pepper
 - Garlic powder
- Mustard mayonnaise: Mix in 2 teaspoons of your favorite mustard. Dijon mustard is frequently combined with mayonnaise.

Basic Foods for Fridge, Freezer & Cupboard

By Alice Henneman, MS, RDN, Extension Educator,
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Would you like to go to your cupboard, refrigerator or freezer and already have most—if not all—the ingredients needed to make a meal? Use these foods as a “starter list” to help you begin developing a list that works for you. These foods were picked because they’re commonly available and mix and match with a variety of other foods.

Fruits

FRESH

- Apples
- Bananas
- Grapes, seedless
- Oranges

CANNED

- Oranges, mandarin
- Pineapple, canned in juice (pineapple tidbits are a versatile form)

FROZEN

- Berries, such as blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, etc.

DRIED

- Raisins, dried cranberries, etc.

Vegetables

FRESH

- Bell peppers
- Carrots
- Cabbage, shredded (buy smallest package size if cooking for a few people)
- Lettuce, darker green varieties (Romaine, green leafy, etc.)
- Onion (sweet onions are most versatile if buying only an onion or two weekly)
- Potatoes (white and sweet)
- Tomatoes (cherry and grape tomatoes tend to have the best flavor when other tomatoes are out-of-season)

CANNED

(no-salt-added forms available)

- Corn
- Tomatoes, diced

FROZEN

- Corn
- Peas

Dairy Products

- Cheese, cheddar and/or other favorite varieties
- Ice cream or frozen yogurt, low fat or fat-free
- Milk, low fat or fat-free
- Yogurt, low fat or fat-free (vanilla-flavored yogurt is especially versatile; or add your own sweetener and vanilla to plain yogurt, if desired)

Meat, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts

- Beans, canned or dry, such as Great Northern, navy, kidney, red, black, pinto beans, etc. (check for “no-salt-added” canned varieties)
- Beef, ground, 90–95% lean
- Chicken breast, skinless
- Eggs, large (“large” suggested as many recipes are designed for use with this size)
- Fish (frozen fish fillets lend themselves to many quick meals; thaw overnight in the refrigerator in original package on a plate on bottom shelf for easy use the next day)
- Nuts (almonds, walnuts, etc.)
- Peanut butter
- Pork loin chops, boneless
- Salmon (including canned and/or frozen forms of salmon; canned salmon is available in water pack varieties and may be found canned without the skin, if desired)
- Tuna, canned (water pack and low sodium varieties are available)
- Turkey cutlets

Grains

- Bread, whole wheat (can purchase low sodium forms at some stores)
- Cereal (whole grain)
- Crackers (look for varieties that are whole grain and lower in salt)
- Oatmeal (“Old-fashioned” oatmeal is very versatile; simply pulse it a few times in a blender if a recipe calls for “quick oats.”)
- Pasta (consider whole grain varieties)
- Rice (include some whole grain rice, such as brown rice)

N EXTENSION

Oils

- Extra virgin olive oil for dressings, dipping and drizzling
- Mayonnaise-type salad dressing (light and low fat forms available)
- Other oil for cooking: canola, corn, cottonseed, safflower, soybean, sunflower
- Soft (tub or squeeze) margarine with no trans fats

Seasonings

- Black pepper (consider freshly ground)
- Chicken broth, low sodium
- Chili powder
- Cinnamon
- Garlic, fresh or dry
- Italian seasoning (can be used as a quick seasoning for salad dressings, soups, rubs for meat, etc.)
- Mustard, Dijon-type (can find no-salt-added forms in some stores)
- Rosemary, dried leafy (crush slightly right before using to release added flavor in recipes; an inexpensive mortar and pestle works well for this)
- Thyme, dried leafy (see note by rosemary)
- Vanilla
- Vinegar (consider vinegars such as balsamic, red wine, cider, and white wine or rice vinegar – start with a small bottle and see which you use the most; vinegar easily lasts at least a year)

Sugars

- Sugar, white granulated
- Sugar, brown

Other

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

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