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Eat Well!

A Newsletter for Healthy Eating



Winter 2018

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Cost of Convenience - Lunch

By Kate Yerxa, Extension Educator

Packing lunch for when you are away from home for school or work can help save money on your food bill. Packing your lunch takes extra time out of your day. Instead of thinking about a loss of your time, think about it as paying yourself through the money you save, instead of paying a restaurant or business.

Protein foods can be the more expensive food items at the grocery store. The exception is protein foods like:

- dry beans,
- nuts,
- seeds, and
- eggs.

Nut butters are an inexpensive lunch food and can be used in many recipes.

Food companies know that many people like the convenience of packing their lunch, so they started making food items to make your job faster.

Look at the comparison of cost and calories for making your own peanut butter and jelly sandwich compared to buying a pre-made, frozen peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Item	Cost	Calories
Homemade PB & J	\$.34	240 calories
Store bought, frozen PB & J	\$.65	210 calories

If you enjoy different types of sandwiches, it may seem like a cost savings to buy deli lunch meat and make your own sub sandwich instead of purchasing one from a sandwich shop. You do save money by making your own sandwich at home, but you can save even more money by baking or roasting meat, or boiling eggs at home and making sandwiches from that.

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Looking for ways to save money on food? The *Eat Well!* newsletter has always given you great ideas on how to save money on food. Now these ideas are even easier to spot. Look for this picture in the *Eat Well* newsletter to find great tips to save money on food. **SAVE MONEY.**



Compare the cost savings for ham, turkey, chicken salad and egg salad:

Item	Home Prepared		Store Bought	
	Price per pound	Price per ounce	Price per pound	Price per ounce
Sliced Ham	\$2.49	\$.16	\$6.99	\$.44
Turkey Breast	\$2.29	\$.14	\$4.99	\$.31
Chicken Salad (with mayo)	\$2.97	\$.19	\$9.99	\$.62
Egg Salad (with mayo)	\$1.08	\$.07	\$7.32	\$.46

Making one change in what you pack for lunch 5 days each week can add up to big savings over a year!

Food Safety Corner

Is a Slow Cooker Safe?

By Stephanie Libby, UMaine Dietetic Intern

Yes. A slow cooker is a small electric appliance that can be left on the countertop to cook foods for 4 or 8 hours at a time. Slow cookers typically have a warm, low and high setting. This low and slow approach is great for cooking tougher, typically less expensive, cuts of meat.

Slow Cooker Facts

- Slow cookers typically have a low (170°F) setting and a high (280°F) setting.
- Water or liquid is only needed to create steam. The liquid level should cover the ingredients to ensure proper heat transfer.
- Some recipes may not call for liquid because many foods, such as meats and vegetables, create their own liquid.
- Tougher cuts of meat that cook well in a slow cooker include: chicken thighs, london broil, chuck steak, flank steak, and pork shoulder.
- Lifting the lid during the cooking process decreases the temperature by 10-15°F and increases the cooking time by 30 minutes.

Why is a slow cooker safe?

The direct heat from the pot, steam and long cooking time kills bacteria making slow cookers a safe way to cook foods.

Slow Cooker Safety Reminders

- Always wash hands and use clean equipment.
- Preheat the cooker and add hot liquids, if possible. Cook foods on the highest setting for the first hour to reduce the amount of time the food is in the temperature danger zone (40-140°F). This is especially important when cooking meat and poultry.
- The warm setting is not intended to cook food.
- Always thaw meat and poultry before putting it in a slow cooker. Frozen foods will not reach a safe temperature fast enough to be safe to eat.
- It is important to make sure the meat and poultry is at a safe internal temperature:
Roasts: 145-160°F
Poultry 165°F
Soups, and sauces: 165°F
- Food should not be left to cool in slow cooker. Eat immediately or transfer to shallow containers and refrigerate.

Source:

University of Minnesota Extension. Slow Cooking and Food Safety. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/preserving/safe-meals/slow-cooker-safety/>



Kid's Korner

Garlic White Bean Dip

Children can be a big help in the kitchen!

Ingredients

- 1 (15 ounce) can of drained and rinsed cannellini beans
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (2-3 teaspoons bottled minced garlic)
- 2 tablespoons bottled lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste

Directions

1. Place beans, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil, in a blender.
2. Blend 1 to 1½ minutes until the mixture is smooth.
3. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
4. Serve with pita or tortilla chips.

Leftovers: dip may be stored in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days and would be an excellent sandwich spread.

Nutrition tip: Olive oil is a good source of healthy fats called monounsaturated fats.

Food safety: Children may help by adding ingredients to the blender, blending, and taste testing. Always be sure to supervise children while using a blender and helping in the kitchen.

Nutrition Facts

6 servings per container
Serving size 2
tablespoons(61g)

Amount per serving
Calories 90

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 3g 4%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 110mg 5%

Total Carbohydrate 12g 4%

Dietary Fiber 3g 11%

Total Sugars 0g

Includes 0g Added Sugars 0%

Protein 4g

Vitamin D 0mcg 0%

Calcium 35mg 2%

Iron 1mg 6%

Potassium 143mg 4%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



Makes 6 servings Serving Size: 2 Tablespoons
Cost per recipe: \$2.56 Cost per serving: \$0.45

Ask Eat Well

Brenda Bracy

Community Education Assistant, Cumberland County

Brenda Bracy has worked for the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Eat Well Nutrition Program in Cumberland County for the past 21 years. Brenda's favorite aspect of the job is the variety of the work. Not only the variety of nutrition lessons and activities, but mostly the variety of people she teaches nutrition to. Over the years, Brenda has developed relationships with countless families, youth, and community organizations. Knowing that the nutrition education she has taught has made a positive impact in individual and family lives is what keeps her going. Brenda says, "It's true, variety is the spice of life!"



In her spare time Brenda enjoys being with her family, watching her two grandchildren grow up, and staying active. She appreciates the different seasons in Maine, which allows her to enjoy outdoor activities such as snowshoeing, walking trails, or taking in the scenery while riding her bike. She also enjoys cooking and gardening.

Q. I find it costs a lot of money to buy meat for my family. What are some ideas to help me save money on protein foods?

A. Pay attention to portion sizes, substitute meat with beans, and check unit pricing.

Meat as a protein choice can increase your grocery bill, but with some careful planning you can make some changes to reduce cost. Some suggestions include reducing your portion size of meat.

Cutting down on the amount of meat you eat to a ¼ of your plate will help lower your food bill. If you and your family enjoy beans, they are a healthy, low cost source of protein that can help reduce the cost of protein in your diet. Beans have an added benefit of being low fat, and are a good source of fiber.

Beans can be eaten alone or added to chili, tacos, hummus, soups or salads.

Lastly, don't forget to look at "unit pricing" when you're at the grocery store. Unit pricing is a tool that allows you to make cost comparisons per ounce, pound, or quart. For example you probably already use this tool when you compare the cost of meats per pound, or the cost of canned vegetables per ounce. Don't miss this great tool when you're out shopping. It's usually placed on the shelf below the item, and next to the total cost tag.



Eat Well! is published four times a year for current, past and future UMaine Extension Eat Well program participants. For more information on Eat Well, contact your County Extension office. **Managing Editor:** Kate Yerxa, MS, RD, **Extension Editor:** Phoebe Nylund, Eat Well Program. **Eat Well Committee:** Kathleen Savoie, MS, RD, Extension Educator; Kate Yerxa, MS, RD, Extension Educator; and Christine Finemore, Community Education Assistant. **Design and Production:** Phoebe Nylund, Eat Well Program.

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Food Bites

Cutting Up a Whole Chicken

By Stephanie Libby, UMaine Dietetic Intern

Before cutting up the chicken, wash your hands and use clean utensils and work space.

Separating the legs from the body

- Cut through the skin between the thigh and body.
- Bend the thigh back until the hip joint breaks and cut through the joint.

Separating the thigh and drumstick

- Cut the skin above the knee joint.
- Break and cut the joint to separate.

Separating the wings

- Pull the wing away from the body.
- Cut the skin between the wing and the body.
- Bend the wing until the joint breaks and cut through the joint to separate.

Separating the breast from the back

- Cut along the breast end of the ribs on one side making sure to cut towards the neck.
- Repeat on the other side.

- Bend front and back halves apart.
- Cut through neck joints to separate halves.

Dividing the back

- Hold the back at each end and bend inward toward the skin until bones break.
- Cut the back in half where the bones are broken and cut off the tail.

Dividing the breast

- Hold the breast at each end and bend inward toward the skin until bones break.
- Cut the breast bones to separate.

Food Safety Tips: Remember to wash your hands after touching chicken. Rinsing chicken before cooking is not recommended because it is an easy way to spread bacteria.

Source

University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Cutting Up a Whole Chicken. <http://food.unl.edu/NEP/NEP%20Documents/Cutting%20Up%20a%20Whole%20Chicken%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>.





Quick and Easy Eat Well Recipe Parmesan Garlic Chicken and Potatoes



Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons oil, divided
- 2 pounds bone-in chicken thighs (other chicken pieces may be used)
- ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper to taste
- 1 pound potatoes, cut in quarters (4 medium potatoes)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 teaspoons thyme
- Grated parmesan to taste

Directions

1. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, heat 2 tablespoons oil. Add chicken and season with salt and pepper.
2. Cook 3 to 4 minutes until golden brown. Flip over and cook 3 minutes more.
3. Meanwhile, in a 6-quart slow-cooker, toss potatoes with remaining 1 tablespoon oil, butter, garlic, and thyme.
4. Add chicken to slow cooker and toss gently.
5. Cover and cook on high for 4 hours or low for 8 hours, until potatoes are tender and chicken is fully cooked reaching an internal temperature of 165°F.
6. Add parmesan cheese to taste.

Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
Serving size	1/4 of recipe(301g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	350
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 16g	21%
Saturated Fat 4g	20%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 65mg	22%
Sodium 240mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 35g	13%
Dietary Fiber 5g	18%
Total Sugars 2g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 18g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 36mg	2%
Iron 3mg	15%
Potassium 887mg	20%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Makes 4 servings Serving size: ¼ recipe Cost per recipe: \$5.97 Cost per serving: \$1.49