

Home Economics Kitchen Skills



*Becoming a daughter
with purpose.*

by Amy Maryon

Our society has lost the art of healthy living. The rise of obesity and health concerns are on the rise. This is partly due to the fact that woman today have never learned the fine art of cooking or the benefits of nutrition. We have lost the simplicity of creating meals that are good for us. Our society has turned to a fast food mentality without realizing the consequences awaiting us. This book is written for the future homemaker, single woman, or career woman to encourage and help as you gain skills for your future. You will at one time in your life be responsible for the nutritional welfare of someone else why not start today.

The best way to learn how to do something is to learn from someone who has gone before you AND to practice it again and again. I hope you enjoy learning these skills and benefit from putting them into practice.

As with all my writing, this is uncopyrighted material.

Introduction

A symmetrical education in today's world is rare. Many girls have gone out to educate themselves to the highest degrees. They are proficient at speaking in other languages, have spent numerous hours practicing musical talent, and have educated themselves in books to a higher degree. Those are all fine things to attain, but how many hours are actually spent learning and improving upon the skills that will get them through life the most?

People can go through life never speaking a foreign language, but EVERYONE needs to eat. Everyone I have ever known appreciates a good cook. Nothing tastes better than perfectly baked bread, homemade chocolate chip cookies, and a full course meal made from scratch. Plus, who doesn't love saving money by cooking from the basics, instead of relying on over-priced convenience foods? I can guarantee that if you were to get married, your husband would be ever so appreciative of a wife who knows her way around the kitchen and can help stretch his hard earned paycheck. Who would want a beautiful young bride who is placing burned dinners and harder than rock cookies in his lunch each day?? You can save yourself much embarrassment and wasteful hours by practicing your skills now and improving upon them before you get married.

The best way to learn is to start at the beginning, learn the basics, and from there build upon each foundation. Eventually, you will be

producing meals that your family will enjoy and doing it with the satisfaction of independency.

This course is designed to help you with the basics of the kitchen and some lessons in simple cooking. It is designed to be completed in one semester. It is divided up into weekly lessons.

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Major Kitchen Appliances

Refrigerator

Unless you live in or have visited a third world country, most of us have no idea what it is like to not have a refrigerator. If we want to quench our thirst we can grab an ice cold drink from it. We can shop and store our foods until we are ready to use them in the refrigerator to prevent spoil. If we end up making too much and don't want to waste it, the refrigerator keeps it from going bad. It is a wonderful delight to be able to have this appliance.

The refrigerator needs to be kept clean. Wipe it out at least once a week with a mixture of all natural cleaner, or use vinegar and water. Clean the coils on the bottom and the back once a year. One of the number one reasons for refrigerator failure, is dirty coils. Use a long handle bristle brush or a vacuum wand and clean it out.

Although it keeps your food cold, food still does spoil. Be sure to check food for spoilage, by looking for visible mold growing on items or separated milk products.

- Always use the oldest milk and drinks first to avoid waste.
- Use leftovers up within a week, or dispose of them.
- Always check foods for discoloration or unusual odors before eating them.
- Cover foods so that odors do not taint other foods. Onions are especially hard to contain. Use an air tight plastic container or double bag it.

- Do not store cans of food in the refrigerator. Place them in plastic containers with lids.
- Place all your condiments on the door of the refrigerator so that they are easily seen.
- Do not place milk items along the bottom of the door, that is a warmer spot. Place them near the top— the coldest part of your refrigerator.
- Check your vegetables and fruit frequently, as they will go bad.
- Be sure to chop vegetables and fruit up for the foods that you need, so they do not go to waste.

Most refrigerators have a freezer to store items in. Be sure to defrost your freezer twice a year to avoid ice buildup, unless it is equipped with a frost free freezer.

Keep your food rotated in the freezer in order to use up items that get lost in the back. Store smaller items up front, so that you will see them. You can store your flours in the freezer to prevent them from going bad in the cupboard.

The stove/oven

This is another device most of us all have. There are a variety of them out there, but they all work in similar ways. Have an adult show you how to correctly use all the controls on your oven and stove. Learn how to use the timers. If it has a self cleaning option, learn that as well.

This item can get dirty really quickly. Be sure to wipe as you are cooking in order to avoid stuck on food. If you do have burnt or stuck on food, spray with some all natural cleaner or use vinegar. Let it soak for 20 minutes while you clean another area of the kitchen. By that time, it should loosen the burnt on food.

Your oven should remain clean as well. About once per month, you should do a thorough cleaning by using a commercial oven cleaner. If it has a self cleaning option, use that instead. The best way to keep it clean is by preventative maintenance. Clean up any spills after the oven has cooled. Use a spatula scraper to remove tough baked on foods.

Microwave ovens and Dishwashers

We won't be referencing these two items in our study. If you do have them, learn how to properly care and use them.

Small Kitchen Appliances

The electric mixer

This is a great labor saving invention. Back in the olden days, they would have to mix everything by hand. It was a long hard task. If your mixer ever dies on you, and you cannot get another one, you will understand how hard it is. The mixer makes our butter and sugars cream better, makes mixing a cake go so quickly, and even helps eliminate the hand mixing of making breads. There are a variety of mixers out there. Mixers on a stand give you the ability to just turn it on, add your ingredients, and walk around the kitchen completing other tasks. That is nice. A hand held mixer does not allow you the ability to do other things but it is an affordable device. There are many safety precautions to be aware of while using this device. Be sure not to get anything caught in the beaters. Whether it be your hair, the cord, or a spoon, keep all things away while this is operating. Children should be taught at a young age to never put their fingers in the bowl to test while you are mixing up an item.

Do not overload your mixer. Sometimes when making a cookie dough, you add multiple items that become difficult for the mixer to work properly. This will result in a burned out motor. The appliance will get hot and have a burning smell. Unplug it immediately, and let it cool before trying again. It must be kept cleaned to work properly. Wipe out any food that may get in where the beaters attach. The air holes where the motor head is should be kept clean as well.

The crockpot

This is another great tool to have in the kitchen. It works similar to your oven, and will cook food slowly over the course of the day. The crockpot is good to use when you will have a busy day, and won't be able to tend to dinners in a timely manner. It is also good to use on those really hot days when you want to conserve energy by not using your oven.

The blender and the food processor.

These have moving parts that cut, chop, slice shred, and purée ingredients. If using the blender, you usually have to add liquid to get it to properly mix. Be sure to place the lid on it before turning it on in order to avoid sprays around your kitchen. The food processor rarely requires extra liquid to work. Most foods can be dropped through the funnel while the machine is running. Most food processors won't turn on without being properly closed. This is a safety precaution as the blades are extremely sharp, and will chop fingers off without hesitation. Use extra caution when cleaning both of these items. When finished using them, immediately rinse and wash them. Place all blades back into the container to avoid anyone accidentally touching them in the drying rack. They are extremely sharp!!!! Never stick an item in the machine when using.

Toaster

Most of us know what a toaster is. It helps toast our breads, or warms up a waffle or pancake when in a hurry. Use a wet cloth and wipe it down while doing your daily cleaning of the kitchen. Once a month be sure to empty the tray on the bottom which collects all the crumbs from the foods.

There are so many more items that are helpful to have in the kitchen, not necessities, but helpful appliances to own.

Waffle maker—the ability to make your own homemade waffles

Sandwich maker—nice for a smaller family, easily makes pocket sandwiches

Electric griddle—great for cooking large amounts of grill cheeses, hamburgers, hot dogs, steaks, and bacon.

Electric tea kettle—if you don't own a microwave this is great for making tea, or instant coffee each day.

Air pop popcorn maker-great for a low calorie snack

Electric can opener—because can openers will fail, even hand held ones, nice to have a backup.

Safety in the kitchen

Wipe up all spills immediately. They make slippery floors which cause falls. Spills can also be tracked all through the home by unsuspecting people stepping in them.

Clean as you go---Keep your counters clean as you cook, and wash cooking tools as you use them. While using raw meat, be sure to clean up immediately. Disinfect cutting tools, knives, cutting boards and counter tops to avoid contamination of other foods. Washing dishes is not fun for everyone but an integral part of cooking. Just learn to enjoy it.

Chop foods on a cutting board to avoid contamination of different foods , and to keep your countertops from being ruined.

Handle knives and scissors carefully, never be in a hurry. When handing them to someone else, hand them pointing down. If you put scissors in the dish water, be sure to wash them immediately to avoid someone from accidentally grabbing them in the sink.

Keep all saucepan and skillet handles turned toward the back of the stove. This is especially important with small children around. A curious child can easily grab the handle, and cause hot foods to fall on them. If the handles are turned back, you are less likely to bump them and cause pans to spill on the floor.

While cooking on the stove never keep a metal spoon in the pan cooking food. Metal is an excellent conductor of heat. The spoon will be extremely hot if left in the pan while cooking. Use wooden or plastic handled spoons.

Keep potholders next to the stove, or hang them on a hook nearby. A saucepan handle may not seem hot at first, but it may feel hotter and hotter as you carry it to your work area. While taking lids off of pans, be sure to open it away from your face and body to prevent steam burns. Avoid marred countertops by protecting them from hot pans. Be careful to keep dish towels and rags away from the burners in order to avoid fires.

Always wash your hands and pull your hair back before cooking. Be careful not to sneeze or cough on food while preparing. Keep a bottle of hand sanitizer on your kitchen sink for quick hand cleaning.

Keep all cabinets and cupboard drawers closed while in the kitchen. You want to avoid unnecessary hurts by someone hitting their head on an open cabinet.

Be careful! Remember water and electricity do not mix. Be sure to watch for standing water or appliance cords that have gotten wet before you plug them in.

Thoroughly cook pork, poultry, and beef. They are especially vulnerable to harboring organisms that cause illness if not properly cooked. Use a meat thermometer to ensure proper cooking.

Avoid cross contamination. Raw meat and fresh eggs can contain harmful bacteria until heated properly. When preparing, keep eggs and raw meat separate from your other foods. Wash any cutting boards, knives, and counter tops that come in contact with these foods.

Week 1 hands on skill----using the blender

Try your hand at making delicious and easy breakfast drinks by using the blender.

Chocolate monkey milkshake

2 c milk
1 ripe banana, cut into chunks
2 T chocolate syrup
1 T peanut butter
2 scoops ice cream or 6 ice cubes
Place all ingredients into blender and turn on medium until combined.

Strawberry banana smoothie

1/2 banana
1/2 c plain yogurt
1 c frozen strawberries
1/4 c orange juice
Drizzle of honey
Mix all until frothy, serve immediately.

Tropical Smoothie

1½ c low fat coconut milk
½ c frozen pineapple chunks with juice
½ c ice cubes
3 medium strawberries
1 tsp lime juice
Mix all until blended smoothly

Breakfast smoothie

1 c strawberries
1 banana
½ c oats
1 tsp raw honey
½ c peanut butter
1 c milk
Handful of ice cubes
Blend until well combined

Here are some things to remember when cooking:

- Did you pull your hair up in a pony tail and tie up any loose clothing?
- Did you thoroughly wash your hands and wipe down areas to prepare food in?
- Did you gather up your ingredients before you begin working to ensure they are available?

After....

- Did you put away all food items where they belong in the kitchen?
- Did you wash all utensils used in preparing food?

- Did you wipe down appliances after use?
- Did you wipe down countertops, check walls and floors for any mess you made while preparing food?

Week 2

COOKING TERMS

Here is a list of cooking and food terms to be familiar with as we venture into the kitchen.

Definitions of food and cooking terms:

a la king	served in rich cream sauce usually seasoned with mushrooms, green peppers, and pimento
a la mode	served in style, served with ice cream
au gratin	food mixed with cream or white sauce and topped with crumbs, grated cheese , or both; browned in the oven under the broiler
baste	to spoon liquid over food while it is cooking, prevents from drying out and adds flavor
bouillon	clear meat broth, may be made with bouillon cubes
bread	to coat with bread crumbs alone or to first coat with beaten egg or milk, then in crumbs
condiment	seasoning served at the table
consommé	a clear stock soup , usually served double strength
cream	to soften and make creamy by beating with mixer. Ex. Creaming butter and sugar when mixing cookies.
cut in	to combine solid shortening with flour by repeated cuts through both substances, using two knives in a scissor fashion or a pastry blender
dash	a few sprinkles from a shaker about $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp

dredge	to coat with flour or a mixture of seasoning and flour or bread crumbs
fold	to gently mix ingredients with a down, over, up, over motion Ex. Egg whites are often folded into waffle mix to make it light and fluffy.
garnish	to decorate one food with another
hors d' oeuvres	a French term pronounced "or derv", meaning an assortment of appetizers or dainty finger foods
julienne	to cut into long, thin strips
knead	to work dough by stretching, folding, and pressing it with palms of hands to develop strands of gluten and make dough smooth and elastic
lukewarm	not hot or cold—approximately 95-100 degrees
marinate	to let food stand in a mixture to improve the flavor and texture, which usually contains vinegar and some spices
mince	to chop food very fine with a chopper or sharp knife
parboil	to partially cook food in boiling water, then continue cooking in a different method like grilling
puree	to blend food in a blender till smooth
sauté	to lightly brown or cook in small amount of fat in skillet
scallions	another term for green onions
simmer	to reduce the heat from boiling—full bubbles—to a low heat to continue the bubbles to let the flavors blend

Cooking Abbreviations

There are many abbreviations that you will come across as you are cooking and baking in the kitchen. Learn these as you will see them quite frequently.

Common abbreviations

Cup	=	c
Tablespoon	=	T or Tbsp
Teaspoon	=	t or tsp
Ounce	=	oz
Pint	=	pt
Quart	=	qt
Gallon	=	gal
Pound	=	lb
Dozen	=	doz
Baking powder	=	bp
Baking soda	=	bs
Hour	=	hr
Minute	=	min
Package	=	pkg
Packet	=	pkt
Amount	=	amt

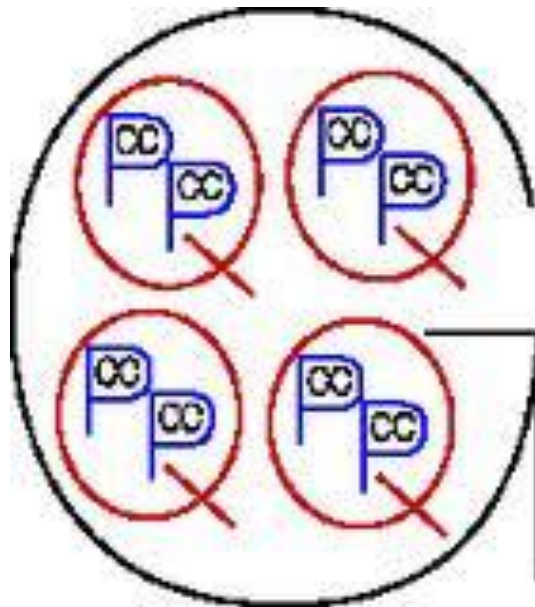
Cooking equivalents

When cooking a recipe, sometimes you will need to double or triple the amounts to make it suitable for your family. In some cases, you will need to divide the recipe down to get the right amount for the people you are making it for. This is where measurement equivalents come in

handy. Learn these amounts to help make it quicker for you to solve the amounts needed.

1 tsp	=	1/6 fl oz	=	1/3 Tbsp
1 Tbsp	=	1/2 fl oz	=	3 tsp
1/8 cup	=	1 fl oz	=	2 Tbsp
1/4 cup	=	2 fl oz	=	4 Tbsp
1/2 cup	=	4 fl oz	=	8 Tbsp
1 cup	=	8 fl oz	=	1/2 pint
1 pint	=	16 fl oz	=	2 cups
1 quart	=	32 fl oz	=	2 pints
1 gallon	=	128 fl oz	=	4 quarts

Here is a good visual to remember. The G is for gallons, there are 4 Q's (quarts) in a gallon. 2 P's (pints) in a quart and 2 c's (cups) in a pint.



Measuring accurately

Measuring accurately is a very important thing to remember when you begin your kitchen skills, especially in baking items. If you put just a little bit too much of one ingredient in, you might just spoil a whole batch of cookies. As you gain more skills, you will be able to see, areas where you don't have to be as precise, and can "estimate" ingredients amounts.

Study these ways of measuring ingredients so that you will be informed for when it is your turn to bake.

- When measuring out dry ingredient like flour, sugar, and powdered sugar, fill the plastic measuring cup to the top and use the flat part of a butter knife to level off the top of the cup.
- When measuring brown sugar, press the bottom of a spoon into the sugar to push it down into the cup. Then level off.
- When measuring dry ingredients into a measuring spoon, level off the same way as above.
- When measuring liquids, use a clear glass or plastic measuring cup. Set it on the counter, and check the line at eye level to ensure proper measurement.

Choosing recipes

When looking for recipes to try making, look for the healthier choice. You want recipes that have the most basic natural ingredients. Those with less ingredients are best and easiest to do. There is nothing wrong with using a store bought package of an item in your recipe, but for nutritional reasons you want to minimize the amount of processed foods that you are putting into your body. You should start to think,

"if I can make this homemade first, I should," versus paying someone else to make it for me.

Week 2 hands on skill---using the food processor

This week you are going to work on using the food processor (if you do not have one you can use a blender)

****note:** Be extremely cautious when using the food processor, as the blades are very sharp. Take care when washing and rinsing the blades as well. Put it away immediately when finished to avoid any little hands touching the blades.

Homemade hummus

1 T minced fresh garlic
1-19 oz can of garbanzo beans, drain out ½ of the liquid
4 T lemon juice
1 T olive oil
2 T peanut butter
½ tsp cumin
Sprinkle of paprika for garnish
Put all of the above in a food processor and process until combined. Put in a bowl and garnish with a sprinkling of paprika. If you are using a blender, you may need to add some water to help it mix in the blender.
Serve with Pita chips or cut up vegetables.

Homemade salsa

2-14.4 oz cans of diced tomatoes
1 small can of green chilies
½ onion, chopped
½ bunch of cilantro leaves
1 T lemon juice
Salt to taste
Place all in food processor and pulse to combine.
Serve with tortilla chips.

Easy Artichoke Dip

2-14 oz cans of artichokes, drained (water packed, not oil)
8-ounces of Parmesan/Romano cheese
1 c mayonnaise
Salt and pepper

Place all in food processor and pulse a few times until well combined. Put into an oven proof container and bake 350 for 15 minutes.
Serve with crackers or small pieces of bread.

Black bean dip

2 cups drained, black beans
4 t tomato paste
3 T water
2 tsp minced garlic cloves
2 tsp lime juice
½ t cumin
½ tsp salt
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper
2 green onions, chopped with scissors
2 T mild green chilies---from a can
Place all in food processor and puree until smooth.

Serve with tortilla chips.

Here are some things to remember when cooking:

- Did you pull your hair back and tie up any loose clothing?
- Did you thoroughly wash your hands and wipe down areas to prepare food in?
- Did you gather up your ingredients before you begin working to ensure they are available?

After....

- Did you put away all food items where they belong in the kitchen?
- Did you wash all utensils used in preparing food?
- Did you wipe down appliances after use?
- Did you wipe down countertops, check walls and floors for any mess you made while preparing food?

Week 3

Practicing new skills

Reading about kitchen skills will not make you a good cook. The only way to develop good cooking ability is to actually prepare food. There is no substitute for experience. Although a good cook is always eager to learn all that she can from books, magazines, blogs, or by talking to other cooks. Don't worry if some of your food doesn't turn out the first time, we have all had our flops as new cooks in the kitchen. Try, try, and try again and be persistent. Gaining knowledge in the kitchen is a skill you will never regret learning in your lifetime.

The following is a list of things you want to complete while preparing your foods in the kitchen.

- Put ingredients away when finished with them
- Wash the dishes as you go
- Dry the dishes and put away
- Wash the countertops and any food that may have splattered on the walls, cupboard doors, or floor
- Scrub the sink
- Wash the stove
- Put the dishcloth and dishtowel in the laundry or hang them up to dry
- Sweep the floor

The following is a checklist to do for your own personal self while cooking

- Did I wash my hands and pull my hair back before starting to cook?
- Did I follow all the directions?
- Was I kind and friendly to the people around me? (for ex. inquiring little brothers and sisters.)
- Did I keep my work area clean and neat?
- Did I practice good safety habits?
- Did I complete my project on time?
- Did I leave the kitchen clean and neat after I was finished?

Breakfast for a good start to your day

Breakfast has been called "the most important meal of the day." A healthy breakfast refuels your body and helps you function at your peak. Research shows that eating a healthy breakfast improves attention, concentration, academic achievement, and physical energy.

After a night of sleep, stomachs are empty and blood sugar is low. Start your day off right with a healthy, nutritious breakfast for optimum mental and physical wellness. A healthy breakfast should provide complex carbohydrates, protein and a little fat, because this combination will hold off hunger for hours.

Breakfast is the #1 most skipped meal of the day. There are many reasons people skip this meal. Most are excuses. They may sleep too late, not feel hungry in the morning, want to lose weight, or might not like the "traditional breakfast foods." Those are just "excuses." None are good reasons to skip breakfast.

If you tend to push the snooze button too often in the morning, there are things you can do to avoid running out of the house without breakfast. You can eat a banana, granola bar, or some peanut butter on toast while you are driving in the car. You can use your new skills with the blender and make a smoothie to take and drink while on your way.

No time to cook eggs in the morning?? Hard boil eggs. Then chop them up and set the mixture on a piece of toast with some shredded cheese. This is one of the easiest ways to get your protein in for the day.

Dieters rarely lose weight by skipping out on breakfast. By mid-morning they are usually starving, and will tend to overeat at the next meal. You are better off to eat a bowl of oatmeal or grab some fresh fruit like a banana.

If you do not feel like eating because you are not accustomed to it, force yourself to start with something. It may be as simple as a glass of milk or a banana. Then the next week add a muffin, bagel, or slice of toast. The following week try adding an egg or maybe some french toast. You will be surprised at how much better you feel when you do eat breakfast.

Planning and preparing a breakfast meal

The best way to become proficient at making meals in the kitchen is by actively doing it. This week you will plan and prepare a breakfast meal for your family. Don't worry. Serve it at dinner time so that you are not rushed in the morning.

Things to think about:

Try and choose a variety of colors for your meal. If all of your foods are white or tan in color, then the meal looks blah. Choose a variety of colors to also incorporate different nutrients into your meal.

You want to try and choose from the different food groups when thinking about your meal. Keep it simple.

Choose something from the bread/grain/cereal group-----oatmeal, pancakes, waffles, etc.

Choose from your protein group---eggs, turkey bacon, turkey sausage, or peanut butter for your pancakes

Choose some fruit ---strawberries, blueberries, cantaloupe, or fresh pineapple.

That will ensure a well balanced meal to your family.

A checklist of things to do before preparing your meal

- Wash your hands and pull your hair back
- Clean up the area where you plan to work
- Ensure that you have all the ingredients you need before beginning
- Read the instructions so that you know what to do
- Check the amount of the finished food to ensure you have enough for your family
- Keep a dishrag nearby to easily clean up spills
- Keep your work area clean

Tidbits on cereals

Home cooked cereals are much more economical than ready to eat boxed cereals. They are easy to prepare and very nutritious.

For cooking most cereals figure approximately 3 or 4 times as much water as cereal. Fine grains take a little more, and flaked cereals a little less. For longer cooking time, slightly more water is needed.

Cooked cereal may be varied in a number of delicious ways. Use milk for cooking instead of water. The starch will swell slightly more when cooked in milk. Sweeten with brown sugar instead of white sugar, or use honey to sweeten. Add raisins, nuts, cinnamon, or chopped apples to cooked oatmeal.

Leftover cooked cereal should not be wasted. It can be sliced when cold and fried in a little fat on a skillet. Serve with syrup. It can also be used in recipes that call for bread crumbs like meatloaf.

Freeze any leftover pancakes or waffles. They can be popped into the toaster for another morning.

Heat a waffle iron before pouring in batter to prevent sticking. A small amount of fat or spray may be needed to coat before putting on batch. Do not scrub iron with soap or abrasives. Use a damp cloth to clean it.

Week 3 hands on skills—making breakfast

Choose one recipe from this group:

Oatmeal

1 ¼ cups water

Bring to a rapid boil. Slowly stir in ¼ c oatmeal, ¼ tsp salt, and 2 tsp brown sugar or honey. Cover and let sit for 1-3 minutes.

Whole wheat pancakes

1 c whole wheat flour

¼ c white flour

3 tsp baking powder

¾ tsp salt

2 T sugar

1 c milk

2 T oil

1 egg

Mix together and fry on a hot griddle. Serve with maple syrup.

**note you can use all white flour if that is what you have or you can use white whole wheat flour for both of the flours. Depends upon what you have. You will find that you will substitute and use the ingredients your family likes best.

Waffles

***preheat your waffle iron while mixing these up

2 c flour

2 T sugar

1 tsp salt

3 tsp baking powder

2 eggs separated----means to crack the egg and carefully pour out the yellow part into one bowl and the white clear part into a separate bowl---takes skill

¼ c melted margarine

1 ¾ c milk

Combine all the dry ingredients together along with the egg yolk, melted margarine and milk. In a separate bowl you are going to beat the egg whites until stiff. Do this on high speed for about 3-5 minutes they will start to make peaks that will stand up as you are beating them.

To your waffle mixture you are going to carefully fold in the egg whites to your batter. You gently fold them in as to not flatten them. This will help your waffles to be lighter.

If your waffle iron is hot, carefully open it and pour your batter from a one cup measuring cup and do an X pattern across the griddle. If you have a 4 waffle maker you will use about 2 cups of batter for the 4. Close the top down and let it cook for about 1 minute, carefully lift it open and see if it is finished. You want a lightly browned waffle that is firm. I find it easiest to take it out with a fork, lifting the edges up carefully.

Serve this with maple syrup or if you have some frozen

Baked Oatmeal

2 eggs, beaten

1 c milk

½ c oil

1 c brown sugar

2 tsp baking powder

1 tsp salt

½ tsp cinnamon

Mix the above thoroughly, by hand. Then stir in 3 cups oatmeal.

Pour into a greased 9x13 baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for about 25 minutes. Test the center by poking it with a toothpick and when pulled out it comes out clean. Serve warm with syrup, fruit puree, or milk.

One from this group:

Make turkey bacon or sausage. Cook it on a griddle, carefully laying out the strips of bacon side by side to ensure proper cooking. Turn when completely cooked. You can also lay the strips on cookie sheets, and cook in the oven at 400 degrees until browned and crisp.

or make eggs....

Scrambled eggs

7 eggs
½ c milk
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper
½ c shredded cheese

Beat the eggs until light and fluffy with a wire whisk or fork. Add milk and stir well. Mix in the salt and pepper. Pour into a large skillet over medium heat. If you are using a stainless steel pan spray it with nonstick cooking spray before adding the egg mixture. When eggs begin to set, scrape gently the bottom of the pan with a spatula to allow the uncooked eggs to flow to the bottom. Continue to stir gently until the eggs are almost completely set. Remove from heat and sprinkle with cheese and cover for 2-3 minutes. Serves 6

Baked eggs

Spray a muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray. Crack one egg into each muffin hole as many as you need for guests. You can also sprinkle the tops of the eggs with bacon bits. Place into an oven and bake 350 for 30 minutes. To test doneness, gently press down on the center of the egg to see if it is still gooey. Adjust time as needed.

Poached eggs

These are also sometimes known as “dippy” eggs, you can dip your toast into the yolks or you can cook them until firm.

Fill a small frying pan with about an inch of water. Heat the water on high until it reaches a bare simmer. Bubbles will start appearing at the bottom of the pan, then turn down to low. Crack one egg into a small bowl or cup. Gently slip the egg into the water that is simmering. If you want you can use a spoon and gently push some of the egg whites closer to their yolks, to help them hold together. If you have canning rings, you can place them into the pan and pour the egg into the mold to hold its shape. Add all the eggs in the pan, keeping some distance between them.

Turn off the heat and cover the pan. Set a timer for 4 minutes. At this point the egg whites should be completely cooked, while the egg yolks are still runny. If you want the yolks firmer, you may need to cook longer.

Gently lift the poached eggs out of the pan with a slotted spoon and place on a plate to serve. Serve with a dash of salt and pepper.

Then choose from this group:

Fresh, frozen, or canned fruit serve with this meal.

Depending upon where you live, check out the resources for local fresh fruits. You can serve slices of oranges, a bowl of berries, or a fresh fruit salad. If you are not able to buy fresh fruit, look to frozen unsweetened next. As a last resort, buy canned. Canned fruit is usually made with sugar.

- Did I wash my hands and pull my hair back before starting to cook?
- Did I follow all the directions?
- Was I kind and friendly to the people around me? (for ex. inquiring little brothers and sisters.)
- Did I keep my work area clean and neat?
- Did I practice good safety habits?
- Did I complete my project on time?
- Did I leave the kitchen clean and neat after I was finished?

Week 4

Baking cookies

Cookies come in such a variety of types, kinds, and sizes that they will fit almost any occasions. Directions are usually easy to follow so that an amateur can easily enjoy good results.

As with any baking that you do, remember that the different kinds of flour and different brands of margarine's and shortenings can give you considerably different results. It is simplest to find a good brand that works well for you, and then stick with it.

Bar cookies are usually the easiest and quickest way to make cookies, since they do not require additional time for dropping or cutting out. They are baked in a pan much like a cake, and are cut into bars when partially cooled.

Drop cookies are made from a dough, and are usually dropped or pushed from a spoon with rubber scraper onto a cookie sheet. Cookies should be placed at least one inch apart on a cookie sheet to allow for spreading during baking. To minimize spreading, dough may be chilled before baking.

Cookies should be baked on sheets rather than pans with tall sides which would hinder the heat from flowing evenly throughout the cookies. Baking sheets should be cold when cookies are placed on it so they will not melt down and spread too much during baking.

To speed up the process if you have only one baking sheet, cut two sheets of foil to fit the baking sheet. Place cookies on the foil and slide the baking sheet under it to bake. Fill the second sheet of foil with cookies while the other one is baking. To remove the baked cookies, simply slide the foil and cookies onto a rack to cool slightly.

Slip baking sheet under second batch of cookies and return to oven. Remove baked cookies from foil and reuse for the next batch. If you like soft cookies, do not over bake them. Remove from oven when they are barely set. Over baked cookies are hard and crumbly.

Rolled cookies take the most time, but are great for decorating on special occasions. The dough must be chilled at least an hour for successful handling without adding too much flour to the dough. Too much flour makes dry, hard cookies. Rolling too thin or baking too long also makes dry cookies. If you like a softer cookie, roll to a scant 1/4 inch thickness, and bake just until set.

Cookies may be iced and decorated after baking. While icing is soft, colored sugar, candies, or sprinkles may be added to decorate cookies.

Oven temperature

When baking cookies, make sure to have your oven preheated at least 10 minutes before baking. . If you find your cookies to be usually pale and soft or your cookies seem to brown too quickly, it's likely the fault of your oven. Having proper oven temperature will dramatically improve the quality of your cookies.

Baking Time

Listen to your intuition when baking. Start checking on your cookies at the minimum baking time to ensure you don't over-cook or even burn them. If you prefer soft cookies, cook only to the minimum time. If you prefer your cookies to be browned with slightly crisp edges, cook a little longer.

Measuring ingredients

When mixing up dough for baking cookies, be sure to be very accurate when measuring out ingredients. Look back at the chapter on measuring accurately.

Chewier cookies

If you want a chewier cookie, instead of flatter, chill the dough for a few hours or overnight. When ready to bake, just take the dough out of the refrigerator and scoop it onto a cookie sheet.

Common ingredients and their purpose

Choosing flours

Aside from correctly measuring your flour, the type of flour you use and even the brand you use can significantly impact your cookies. Make sure to use a high quality flour. The more protein it has, the more gluten it will form. The dough will hold together better, and create a chewy, firm texture. The less protein flour has, the more light and tender the cookie will be. Typically all purpose white flour has less protein, and results in chewier cookies. Using more of a whole wheat flour will result in a harder, thicker cookie.

Baking Soda

Baking soda is a natural alkaline ingredient activated by liquid and acid, such as buttermilk, sour cream, yogurt, lemon juice, honey, natural cocoa powder, or brown sugar. Baking soda is four times stronger than baking powder. In addition to providing lift and structure to cookies, baking soda also promotes browning.

To test the freshness of baking soda, put about $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon into 1 T vinegar. If it bubbles and foams, then it is fresh. If it does not, it is old. Throw away.

Baking Powder

Baking powder is a combination of baking soda, acid, and cornstarch. It needs moisture to activate. Cookies made with only baking powder will generally be slightly taller and lighter.

To test the freshness of baking powder, place $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of baking powder into 1 cup of hot tap water. If it bubbles then it is fresh. If not, throw it away.

Eggs

It is important to use fresh eggs for baking. Always use the size of egg called for in the recipe as the ratio of liquid to dry ingredients has a significant impact on your cookies. Beat eggs into your cookie dough one at a time to allow them to fully incorporate. Although not necessary, room temperature eggs create the best cookie result. They are able to mix in better with the ingredients creating an airy, tender cookie. Take the eggs out of the refrigerator a little before you begin baking to ensure they warm a bit.

Butter

Most cookie recipes call for unsalted butter. This is because salt is usually an ingredient that is added to the dough as it enhances the sweetness and rounds out the overall flavor. If you do need to use salted butter in a baking recipe, omit half or all of the salt the recipe calls for. Unsalted butter is usually fresher because salt acts like a preservative. Unsalted butter has a smaller window of freshness and must be replenished at the store more frequently. If you do purchase it, store it in the freezer so it does not go bad. Just defrost

overnight in the refrigerator or at room temperature for a few hours. When baking cookies, butter should be at a cool room temperature, unless otherwise stated in a recipe. You should be able to push your fingers into the butter and make a slight indentation. If it is too warm, your cookies will spread too much while baking.

Salt

Always use regular, fine salt when baking cookies, unless otherwise noted.

Troubleshooting problems when baking cookies

If your cookies turned into flat puddles when baking, check the following issues:

- The dough may have been too “wet.” Make sure you are correctly measuring your flour. You can add in an additional tablespoon or two of flour.
- Were the butter and sugar overbeaten? Remember you only need to beat for 1 to 2 minutes on medium-high speed. Overbeating can cause the butter to warm up too much. Warmth weakens its ability to hold air, and therefore hold its shape.
- Did you add too much baking powder and/or baking soda? Too much chemical leavened can cause the cookies to deflate. Remember to check if it is expired by testing the freshness of these items.
- Was the baking pan coated in too much nonstick cooking spray? This can cause the cookies to spread in the oven.

- Was the baking pan hot from baking a previous batch of cookies? Be sure to use room temperature baking pans. Bring pans to room temperature quickly by carefully running the bottom of the pan under cool water.
- Was the butter too warm? If the butter is too warm and soft, it can cause the cookies to spread too much in the oven. Remember to use cool room temperature butter. Try chilling the balls of dough before baking.
- Scoop tall mounds of dough instead of disks before baking.

My cookies didn't spread at all.

- Remember to measure your ingredients accurately, not enough fat will cause this to happen.
- Is the oven too cold? Be sure to thoroughly preheat the oven for at least 10 minutes before baking.
- Was a dark nonstick baking pan used? This can prevent the cookies from spreading.
- Was the dough at a cool room temperature? Sometimes if the dough is too cold the cookies won't spread.

My cookies are hard and tough.

- Was the dough over mixed? Remember to mix in the dry ingredients until just incorporated, then stop mixing.
- Measure accurately the amount of flour called for. Try using all purpose flour.
- Were the cookies over-baked? Check the times to cook, and monitor each batch in the oven..

My cookies didn't bake evenly.

- Try baking only one sheet at a time in the center of your oven.

- Make sure you are scooping balls of dough that are as similar in shape and thickness as possible. Using a cookie scoop will help do so.

The bottoms of my cookies are burnt.

- Avoid using dark nonstick baking sheets, which promote browning and can lead to burning.
- Only use the middle oven-rack, anything too close to the heat source may cause burning.
- Start checking on your cookies at the minimum baking time.
- Remove the cookies from the cookie sheet and onto a wire rack 2 minutes after baking, the cookies will continue to cook on the hot pan.

Tips and techniques

- Remove cookies from baking sheets immediately because they will continue to cook on a hot sheet for a short time.
- Dark brown sugar has more flavor than light brown sugar, and is preferred in baking.
- To avoid damage to icings for toppings, especially on soft cookies which you wish to stack for storage, place a tray of cookies in freezer for a short while. Let harden. Then pack in plastic bags or containers, and return to freezer.
- Be sure to measure your flour correctly. This is the most important tip for any good baker. Adding too much flour will make your baked goods tough and dry. Be sure to not overwork the dough; mix just until the flour disappears.
- Chill your cookie dough before baking. Chilling the dough helps softer doughs keep their shape, and makes the dough easier to work with.

- Freeze your dough. Making and freezing doughs ahead of time not only is a great time saver, but it also improves the texture of the cookies. Icebox cookies are shaped into a log, wrapped, and chilled or frozen until it's time to bake. You can form drop cookie dough into balls and freeze. Then bake from the frozen state, adding a few minutes to the baking time.
- Be sure to soften your butter beforehand. It's difficult to soften butter properly in a microwave oven; too often part of the butter melts, this will change the structure of the cookies. Butter and sugar form the basic structure of the cookies. The sugar cuts small air pockets into the butter, which are stabilized by the flour and filled with CO₂ from the baking powder. Soften butter by letting it stand at room temperature for a couple of hours. You can also grate the butter into a bowl, then it will soften in a few minutes.
- Unless specifically stated otherwise, ingredients are best when used at room temperature. This is true except in very hot kitchens.
- To prevent the motor on your portable hand mixer from burning out, pay attention to how hard it is working. Cookie doughs tend to be stiff. You can almost always stir in your final dry ingredients by hand if necessary.
- Always preheat the oven. Putting an item into a cold oven will alter the baking time and the consistency of the finished product.
- Use a timer to help keep track of cooking time. It's easy to get distracted - and, if you do, your cookies can be overdone before you know it.
- Clean up as you go along so that your time in the kitchen can be enjoyable and kept to a minimum

Week 4 hands on skill---baking cookies

This week, you will try your hand at baking cookies. Take all that you learned about cookie baking and put it to work. Choose one of the following recipes.

Chocolate chip cookies

2 1/4 c all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1 c unsalted butter
3/4 c granulated sugar
3/4 c packed brown sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 large eggs
2 c (12-oz. pkg.) semi sweet chocolate chips

PREHEAT oven to 375° F.

COMBINE flour, baking soda and salt in small bowl. Beat butter, granulated sugar, brown sugar and vanilla extract in large mixer bowl until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gradually beat in flour mixture. Stir in morsels and nuts. Drop by rounded tablespoon onto ungreased baking sheets.

BAKE for 9 to 11 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on baking sheets for 2 minutes; remove to wire racks to cool completely.

Oatmeal raisin cookies

3/4 c unsalted butter
3/4 c white sugar
3/4 c brown sugar, packed
2 eggs
1 tsp vanilla
1 1/4 c all purpose flour
1/2 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
3/4 tsp cinnamon
2 3/4 c rolled oats
1 c raisins

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

In large bowl, cream together butter, white sugar, and brown sugar until smooth. Beat in the eggs and vanilla until fluffy. Stir together flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Gradually beat into butter mixture. Stir in oats and raisins. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets.

Bake 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven, or until golden brown. Cool slightly, remove from sheet to wire rack. Cool completely.

Easy peanut butter cookies

1 c white sugar
1 c peanut butter
1 egg

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine the peanut butter, white sugar and egg. Mix until smooth.

Drop spoonfuls of dough onto the prepared baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 6 to 8 minutes. Do not over bake! These cookies are best when they are still soft and just barely brown on the bottoms.

Sugar cookies

1 1/4 c white sugar
1 c butter
3 egg yolks
1 tsp vanilla
2 1/2 c all purpose flour
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp cream of tartar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease 2 cookie sheets.

Cream together sugar and butter. Beat in egg yolks and vanilla.

Add flour, baking soda, and cream of tartar. Stir.

Form dough into walnut size balls and place 2 inches apart on cookie sheet. Don't flatten. Bake 10 to 11 minutes, until tops are cracked and just turning color.

Chocolate Whoopie pies

cream together thoroughly

1 1/2 c soft butter

3 cups sugar

Add, beating until fluffy

3 eggs

2 tsp vanilla

Sift together dry ingredients

5 1/2 c flour

1 1/2 tsp baking soda

1 1/2 tsp salt

2/3 c cocoa powder

Make sour milk

2 1/4 c thick sour milk or buttermilk—how do you make sour milk? In a measuring cup add 2 and almost 1/4 c milk. Add 2 T of vinegar to the milk and then stir, instant sour milk.

Add sifted dry ingredients alternately with milk. Chill dough at least 1 hour. Drop onto greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 for 8-10 minutes.

Filling:

5 T flour

1 c milk

Mix together in a saucepan and cook until thickened, stirring constantly. Mixture will be very thick. Cool thoroughly.

1 c shortening

1 c sugar

1/2 tsp vanilla

Beat together. Then add flour mixture and beat until very fluffy about 5 minutes.

Spread on cooled cookie and press two together. You can wrap these individually and freeze them.

Brownies

Cream thoroughly:

1 c butter, softened

1 3/4 c sugar

Add, beating until fluffy:

2-1 oz squares unsweetened chocolate, melted

Blend in:

1 c flour

Add

1/2 c chopped nuts

Fold in and then pour into greased 9 x13 pan and bake 350 for 35 minutes.

Vanilla butter cutout cookies

1 1/2 cups sugar

1 1/2 c butter, softened

2 eggs

2 tsp vanilla

4 c all purpose flour

1 1/2 tsp salt

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp cream of tartar

Beat together sugar and butter until creamy. Add eggs and vanilla. Beat well. Stir together dry ingredients.

Gradually add to creamed mixture until blended. Chill 30 minutes.

On lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/4 inch thick, and then cut with cookie cutters. Using a floured spatula, transfer cookies to ungreased cookie sheets. Bake 350 for 10 minutes.

Frosting:

1 1/2 c powdered sugar

3 T butter, softened

1 T vanilla

1 T milk

food coloring, optional

colored sugar or sprinkles

Combine sugar, butter, vanilla and milk. Beat until creamy. Thin with more milk to desired consistency. Add food coloring, if desired. Spread frosting over cooled cookies and decorate.

Chocolate no bake cookies

2 c sugar

1/2 c milk

1/2 c margarine

3 T cocoa

Combine in a saucepan. Heat until boiling, stirring until dissolved. Boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

1/2 c peanut butter

1 tsp vanilla

3 c oatmeal

1/4 c chopped peanuts, optional

Stir in until well blended.

Drop onto waxed paper. Let cool until firm.

Fruit filled oatmeal bars

1/2 c butter

1 1/4 c flour

1 c brown sugar

1 1/2 c oatmeal

Mix together until crumbly. Press 2/3 crumbs in a 9 inch square pan. Reserve other 1/3 crumbs.

Spread with 1-21 oz can fruit pie filling (cherry, blueberry, or apple) Sprinkle with reserved crumbs.

Bake at 325 for approximately 20 minutes. Cool and cut into squares

Molasses cookies

1 c butter, melted

2 c brown sugar

2 eggs

6 T molasses

4 c flour

4 tsp ginger

4 tsp baking soda

4 tsp cinnamon

2 tsp nutmeg

1/2 cup sugar, for rolling

Cream brown sugar, butter, and eggs. Add molasses; mix thoroughly. In a bowl, put all dry ingredients and mix. Add to creamed mixture. Put sugar into a separate bowl. Take about 2 Tablespoons of dough and roll into a ball. Drop into sugar and evenly coat. Place on cookie sheet. Bake 350 for 8-10 minutes

Double chocolate crumble bars

1/2 c margarine

3/4 c sugar

2 eggs

1 tsp vanilla

3/4 c flour

1/2 c chopped pecans

2 T cocoa

1/4 tsp salt

2 1/2 c to 3 c mini marshmallows

1 c chocolate chips

1 c peanut butter

1 1/2 c crispy rice cereal

Mix the first 8 ingredients: spread on a sheet cake pan.

Bake for 15 minutes at 350. Remove from oven and sprinkle marshmallows across the top evenly; return to bake for 3 minutes more. Cool. When completely cooled, melt chocolate chips and peanut butter; add crispy cereal to mixture. Spread on top of the baked mixture. Refrigerate, then cut into squares.

The following is a checklist to do for your own personal self while cooking

- Did I wash my hands and pull my hair back before starting to cook?
- Did I follow all the directions?
- Was I kind and friendly to the people around me? (for ex. inquiring little brothers and sisters.)
- Did I keep my work area clean and neat?
- Did I practice good safety habits?
- Did I complete my project on time?
- Did I leave the kitchen clean and neat after I was finished?

When cookies are completely cooled you can place them in a plastic container to store on your countertop or put some in the freezer for another time.

Yes, cookie baking is a lot of work. You did it!!

Remember that cleaning up your workspace is important. Washing the dishes in between batches of cookies will ensure that they all get washed.

When you are all finished baking, clean up all your pans and utensils.

Wipe down the counter tops and check the walls for dough that may have "flung" out while mixing. Sweep the floor to remove any food that may have dropped. Enjoy your baked goods with a glass of milk. You deserve it! Baking is hard work!

Great job! If you accidentally left some in the oven too long and burned them, that is okay too. Just try and be more persistent and attentive to your duties.

Week 5

How to chop vegetables

A big factor in the quality of your meal is how small or large your chopped vegetables will be. Mind you, onions for example, are fine even if they are cut larger in your meals. However, if you can dice them up into smaller pieces, it makes all the difference. My daughter really enjoys cutting things up small, so I give this task to her quite frequently. For myself, I prefer to use the food processor, and get it done quickly.

When you have vegetables to prepare for a meal, like you will this week for making soup, you are going to have to take time to chop them up. If you have a food processor, use that to chop them up safely and efficiently. Some may prefer to do them with a knife.

How to chop an onion

There are very few recipes which don't call for a chopped or minced onion. Most everyone has onions on hand. If you do not, you can use dried, minced, chopped, or powdered onions when you are in a pinch. Remember, when a recipe calls for 1 whole chopped onion, don't put the equivalent of dried in the recipe. It is dried and compacted, thus you don't need as much.

When a recipe calls for 1 medium onion use the following:

- 1 Tablespoon of onion powder
- 4 Tablespoon of dried chopped onions

Instructions for chopping an onion:

Get out your cutting board to prevent damage to your counter tops. If you don't own a cutting board do this on a plate, baking pan, or something so that your counters do not get ruined.

1. To slice an onion, cut it in half, through the root. Peel off the papery skin .
2. Place each half cut side down and slice the onion lengthwise in parallel cuts. The smaller the cuts, the finer your onions will be. Be extremely careful when cutting as the knife can slip and nick your fingers. Try and hold the onion so that it stays in place instead of falling apart after cutting it. This will make it easier to make the cuts the other direction.
3. Now cut the onion in the other direction, making a cross cut on the onion to make small little dices. If your onion has already falling apart, it is okay this takes practice. Just let them fall and individually use your knife to chop across the strips of onion.

Chopping onions can make me cry?

If you have never experience "crying" while chopping onions before, you might be in for a surprise. When you cut an onion, you break cells, releasing their contents. Amino acid sulfoxides form sulfenic acids. Enzymes that were kept separate now are free to mix with the sulfenic acids to produce propanethiol S-oxide, a volatile sulfur compound that wafts upward toward your eyes. This gas reacts with the water in your tears to form sulfuric acid. The sulfuric acid burns, stimulating your eyes to release more tears to wash the irritant away The same is true

for garlic, and hot peppers. In order to avoid this, you can wear goggles or turn on a fan while cutting, but this is not usually convenient. You can put them into the refrigerator, or cut them under cool water as this slows down the chemical reaction.

How to chop celery

Celery can wilt within a matter of days, after purchasing fresh celery at the store. It is best to keep it in a **slightly opened plastic bag** to give it room to breathe. Use your vegetable crisper drawer if you have one. Properly stored, celery should last up to a week and a half in the fridge. Stalks that have started to go limp can be revived by cutting them off, and standing them cut-end-down in a cup of water in the fridge.

1. Separate the individual stalks from the bunch by gently prying them out from the bottom until they snap off.
2. Wash the individual stalks under cold running water to remove any dirt and debris. Then trim off the large white section off of the bottom of each stalk.
3. For slices to use in salads or soups, cut into 1/8th to 1/4-inch half-moons crosswise.

How to chop a carrot

1. Since carrots are a root vegetable and grow in the ground, they have a dirty outer layer that needs to be removed. Use a vegetable peeler, and remove the outer edges of the carrot sticks.
2. Then use a knife to chop off each end of the carrot and discard. Now, you have something to work with.
3. Place one vegetable on the cutting board. With your non-dominant hand, hold the vegetable firmly in place with the surface of your nails pointing toward and parallel to the blade. Ensure that your nails are closer to the blade than the skin of your fingers. For soups, you can usually just slice these into thin coin shapes. Carefully hold onto the carrot, as it will roll if you don't hold it firmly.
4. With your cutting hand, firmly grasp the knife at the handle keeping your index finger and thumb at either side of the upper part of the blade, or your index finger on top of the blade in order to ensure stability. Make sure your fingers cannot slide under the blade.
5. Your cutting motion will be similar to that of a paper cutter. Where the front part of your knife touches the board at the top and then slices through the carrot. It should be a smooth cutting experience, not a forceful "chop."

How to cut a potato

This week you will be making a soup for your family. You might want to leave the skins on the potatoes. Some prefer to peel them off.

Whichever way your family enjoys, you can do.

If you are going to leave the skins on the potatoes, scrub them under cool running water to remove dirt.

If you are going to remove the skins, use a vegetable peeler and remove all outside skin. You can do this into a large bowl that has been placed in the sink, to prevent your potato peelings from flying around.

1. To start the dice, cut the potato into planks lengthwise. Try and hold the potato together when cutting, as you did with the onion.
2. After you've cut the potato into planks, roll it a quarter turn, and cut the planks into rectangular strips lengthwise. Again try holding the potato together to cut down on your chopping time.
3. Holding the strips together, turn them and cut across the them crosswise to make cubes.

Now that you know how to chop up some basic vegetables, let's get to cooking!

Week 5 hands on skill---making soup

Women have been making soups since the beginning of time. If you watch old fashioned shows, you usually see the mom stirring up a pot of stew over the fire to feed the family. For most, this was all that they ate each day. Soups were made typically with water, meat, and a vegetable, if available. Most were watered down and didn't contain any spices. Today we have many more resources available to make a heartier tasting soup. With the cooler weather, nothing is better than a pot of soup simmering on the back burner of your stove. Soup is typically inexpensive to make. You can make a big pot of it early in the morning, and let it simmer on low all day long. A big pot of it will usually last for a few meals. It is a very economical thing to know how to do.

This week choose one of the following soups to prepare for your family. Check through the recipes first to make sure you have all the ingredients that you need to begin cooking. Many a wives have begun making a meal only to realize half way through that they were out of an ingredient. Gather them all to your workstation before beginning to avoid this.

Hearty chicken and rice soup

1 13 3/4 oz can of chicken broth
2 c cold water
2/3 c uncooked rice
1/2 c chopped celery
1/2 c carrot slices
3/4 lb processed American cheese
1 1/2 c chopped chicken

Add all the ingredients except the Velveeta cheese, into a stock pot. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until vegetables are soft. Add the cheese and stir until cheese melts. Serve.

Tomato soup

In a large stock pot over medium heat combine the following

- 1 can of tomato juice
- 1 tsp of onion powder
- 1/2 tsp of baking soda
- 2 tsp of salt
- 4 tsp of sugar

While that is heating, in a saucepan, melt 5 Tablespoons of butter. After the butter has melted, add 4 Tablespoons of flour.

Continue stirring over medium high heat until you get a thick paste. Be careful to stay with this as it will burn quickly.

After the tomato juice mixture has reached the boiling point, you can add your butter/flour mixture and stir continuously to thicken and remove any lumps. A whisk is a good tool for this job.

Turn down the temperature to a simmer. Now you will add your milk. Slowly pour in 6 cups of milk and heat until warm.

Potato bacon chowder

- 2 potatoes, peeled and cubed
 - 1 c water
 - 1 medium onion, chopped
 - 1 stalk of celery, chopped
 - 1 can cream of chicken soup (10 ¾ oz)
 - 1 ¾ c milk
 - 1 c sour cream
 - ½ tsp salt
 - Dash pepper
 - 1 bag of bacon bits—the soft kind not hard ones.
- Place potatoes, onions, celery, and bacon in a medium pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat: cover and cook for 10-15 minutes or until tender. Stir in the soup, milk, sour cream, and salt and pepper. Cook over low heat for 10 minutes until heated through. Do not boil, as the sour cream will separate resulting in clumpy looking soup.
- To serve you can sprinkle with shredded cheese and chopped slices of green onion.

Cheeseburger soup

- ½ lb ground beef
- ¾ c chopped onion
- ¾ c shredded carrots
- ¾ c diced celery
- 1 tsp dried basil
- 1 tsp dried parsley flakes
- 4 T butter, divided
- 3 c chicken broth
- ¼ c sour cream

In a 3-qt. saucepan, brown beef; drain and set aside. In the same saucepan, sauté the onion, carrots, celery, basil and parsley in 1 tablespoon butter until vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes. Add the broth, potatoes and beef; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 10-12 minutes or until potatoes are tender.

Meanwhile, in a small skillet, melt remaining butter. Add flour; cook and stir for 3-5 minutes or until bubbly. Add to soup; bring to a boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Reduce heat to low. Stir in the cheese, milk, salt and pepper; cook and stir until cheese melts. Remove from the heat; blend in sour cream.

Chicken noodle soup

- 1 package(s) (32-ounce) chicken broth
 - 4 c water
 - 1 T olive oil
 - 1 small onion, chopped
 - 2 stalk(s) celery, thinly sliced
 - 2 medium carrots, thinly sliced
 - Pepper
 - 1 lb skinless, boneless chicken-breast halves, cooked
 - 3 c -(6 ounces) uncooked medium egg noodles
 - 1 c frozen peas
- In 5- to 6-quart sauce-pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and cook 5 minutes or until lightly browned, stirring occasionally. Add celery, carrots, broth, water, and 1/8 tsp ground black pepper; cover saucepot and heat to boiling over high heat. While vegetables are cooking, cut chicken into 3/4-inch pieces.
- Uncover saucepot and stir in noodles; cover and cook 3 minutes. Stir in peas and chicken; cover and heat to boiling, 3 to 4 minutes.

In these soup recipes you can substitute a few things depending upon what your family buys. For chicken broth, you can mix up your own by stirring together water and chicken bouillon. This is a ratio of 1 tsp to 1 cup of water. You will have to pull out your math skills to figure out how much in comparison to ounces 😊

For chopped chicken—you can use some from dinner leftovers that you have saved and put into the freezer for a later time. Or you can purchase a can of chunked chicken for the ease of it.

Soups are one of those meals that you don't have to worry about being exact on things. You can substitute items that you don't have on hand to save money and just improvise. If you don't have frozen peas, but do have canned, than use those. Gather up the fragments that you do have as to not waste the resources that God has given to you.

When making soup, be careful not to have your burners up too high. You want to avoid accidentally "burning" your dinner.

Remember your checklist of things to remember

1. Did I wash my hands and pull my hair back?
2. Is the area I am going to work in clean?
3. Do I have all the ingredients that I need to make the soup?
4. Now you are ready to begin.

When finished, remember to leave the kitchen cleaner than when you began. That is a positive trait for a good cook.

Quick breads and muffins

Quick breads are not typically as sweet as a cookie, but more flavorful than plain bread. They make a great addition to breakfast and work great as a quick snack. If you become proficient at making them with good results, they are excellent to give as homemade gifts---who wouldn't enjoy eating a delicious tasting homemade treat??

Quick breads require a different process than your "knead and let rise bread dough" does. For most quick bread and muffin recipes, the dry ingredients and the wet ingredients are mixed separately first. Mix your dry ingredients together thoroughly to ensure even distribution since the liquid is only mixed in for a short time. Blend beaten eggs and milk thoroughly without beating up excessive foam. The two mixtures are combined quickly, mixing only until dry ingredients are moistened. Over-mixing causes toughness and tunnels.

Tips and techniques

- The amount of flour needed for breads can vary. This is why you will see in some bread recipes 2-3 cups of flour. Well which is it? It all depends upon how much moisture the flour already contained. Also, it depends on how the flour was handled and stored both before and after it was purchased and on weather conditions. Flour keeps best in a cool dry place. We store ours in the freezer, but bring to room temperature when it is ready to bake.

- If you do not have muffin tins, use cupcake liners placed inside regular canning jar rings to hold them in place. Place these on a cookie sheet. You can also make jumbo sized muffins with these and larger mouth rings. If you need to make many muffins, this is an excellent way to get many done at one time.
- To test for doneness on a quick bread or muffin, insert a toothpick into the center and pull it out. If it is clean, than your bread is done. If it is still gooey, than cook for a few more moments and then test again.
- To lower the fat in your recipe for muffins or quick bread, you can substitute some of the oil with an equal amount of almost any fruit puree (applesauce, pumpkin puree, mashed bananas)
- Muffins and quick breads freeze well. Take a day, and make a bunch to put in your freezer for when unexpected guests stop by or you want a quick and easy treat for the day.
- Muffins will release from pans more easily without tearing if allowed to cool a few minutes in the pans before removing. For nicely shaped muffins that don't have a rim around the top, do not grease the sides of the muffin tins. Grease only the bottoms.

Troubleshooting

Try these fixes to common problems:

Bread sticks to pan. Unless you're using high-quality nonstick metal or silicone baking pans, you should always grease the pans before you pour in the batter. The best thing to use for greasing the pan is shortening, because its melting point is higher than any other kind of fat, which helps maintain a "shield" between pan and batter while the bread is baking. A high-quality cooking spray--one that won't bake on to your pans and discolor them--is also a fast, easy fix. You can also prevent sticking by removing the bread from the pan sooner: let the

bread cool for at least twenty minutes in order to set before inverting the pan.

There are big holes and "tunnels" in the bread, and/or the bread is tough. These problems are usually caused by over-mixing..

There's a big crack down the middle of the quick bread loaf. The crack on top happens when top of the loaf "sets" in the heat of the oven before the bread is finished rising. Don't worry--it's normal for quick breads. Drizzle the loaf with icing or dust with confectioners' sugar.

My blueberry muffins look green! By reacting with the alkaline baking soda, the blueberries' pigments can turn green. Toss the berries with the flour mixture before combining the ingredients; the coating should help. If you're using frozen berries, don't thaw them before using them.

The bread looks done on the outside, but it's still raw in the middle. This is one of the most common quick bread problems, and it can be caused by a few different factors. The oven temperature could be too high. Try lowering the oven temperature and/or putting a loose tent of foil over the top of the bread, so it won't burn before the middle has time to catch up.

Flour and fat nutrition

This section is to inform you about the different types of flour and which are best for you to choose. Most of these recipes call for all purpose flour. Here we learn what flour is made of.

Wheat grains consists of 3 parts:

- **Bran:** This is the hard outer layer of the grain where the majority of the fiber lives.
- **Germ:** This part is the tiny bit in the middle of the grain, also known as the embryo. This part contains the greatest concentration of nutrients.
- **Endosperm:** This is what surrounds the germ. This is the largest part of the grain. It mostly consists of starch and contains almost no fiber or other nutrients.

Wheat grains are extremely nutritious in an unaltered state. There is much of a process to get from the wheat grain to the fluffy white powder we are accustomed to. There are typically 3 types of flour that are readily available:

Bleached white flour: Avoid

Bleached flour is made using only one part of the grain: the endosperm. As we know the endosperm does not have much nutritional value, but it also turns out it can actually be harmful to our health. To bleach flour, it is chemically treated with a chlorine gas. The same chemical used to clean swimming pools is treating bleached flour!! The flour is treated with chlorine because it makes it that perfect white color that we're accustomed to seeing. It also artificially "ages" the flour, which betters the taste.

Unbleached white flour: Use in moderation

Unbleached flour, just like the bleached variety, is only made from the endosperm so it contains very few nutrients. It is, however, allowed to age naturally, and isn't bleached with chlorine. It is a much better alternative to bleached flour. Typically when you buy all purpose white flour—this is it.

Whole wheat flour: Best choice

Whole wheat flour uses all three layers of the wheat grain: bran, germ and endosperm. It contains high amounts of nutrients and lots of fiber. Eating fiber-rich foods helps lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels. It also slows down digestion, which makes us feel full faster and for a longer period of time so we are less prone to overeating. There is a white whole wheat flour that tastes very similar to white flour, but with the benefit of it being whole wheat as to not lose any nutritional value. This is our choice for flour.

So what should you do if you are used to eating whole wheat flour, and you can't imagine leaving your white flour behind?? Try removing bleached flour from your diet altogether. Whole wheat flour is obviously the best choice, but if you're not used to the taste of whole wheat flour, start gradually incorporating it into your cooking.

If a recipe calls for one cup of flour, use 3/4 cup unbleached flour and 1/4 cup whole wheat flour. Once you get accustomed to the taste, gradually increase the ratio of whole wheat flour to white flour. This will take time, but little by little you can increase your level of nutrition by taking some small steps.

Oil and fats (butter):

Butter is a traditional fat. It is made from a simple process that comes from separating the cream from the milk. This is a natural process that only takes a little patience. Once it has separated, all you need to do is skim off the cream and shake it until it becomes butter. It can be made in the blender in about 2 minutes.

Now let's talk about vegetable oils and margarines:

Vegetable oils are oils that have been extracted from various seeds. The most common include rapeseed (canola oil), soybean, corn, sunflower, safflower, peanut, etc. Unlike coconut oil or olive oil that can be extracted by pressing, these new-fangled oils have to be extracted in very unnatural ways.

The process of making canola oil is overall complicated. It is made from a hybrid version of the rapeseed and is genetically modified and heavily treated with pesticides. They then heat it at an unnaturally high temperature so that it can oxidize. It is then processed with a petroleum solvent to extract the oils from it. Then it is heated some more, and acid is added to remove any nasty wax solids that formed during the process. From there it is treated with chemicals to improve the color.

Sounds yummy?!?!? Now if you want to make margarine, you take it a few steps farther and hydrogenate it until it becomes a solid. Hmmm...maybe something we should be avoiding.

You can actually make your own coconut oil and olive oil. If something can be made at home, don't you think it would be the best choice to use? Do an internet search as to how to make it. See the difference in these oils. I don't recommend doing it, I just want you to think about how those "vegetable oils" are made, and why it is a BETTER choice to use coconut oil and olive oil for cooking and baking.

The problem with these "bad" oils is that they are in every sort of convenience food. If you look on the back of any wrapper, you are sure to see one of them listed. This is all about choices. Try and choose the best nutritional product as possible. It won't always be possible, but for the majority of the time that you eat, let it be wholesome.

Week 6 hands on skill---making quick breads or muffins.

Try your skills this week at making either a muffin or bread out of these recipes. You can either make them in bread pans or muffin tins, your choice.

Pumpkin bread

1-15 oz can pumpkin
4 eggs
1 c oil
2/3 c water
3 c sugar
Mix the above thoroughly.
3 1/2 c flour
2 tsp baking soda
1 1/2 tsp salt
2 1/2 tsp pumpkin pie spice—mixture of cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger
Mix these ingredients until combined and then add them to the first mixture.
Place in 3 greased bread pans and cook 350 for 40

Donut muffins

1/2 c white sugar
1/4 c margarine, melted
3/4 tsp ground nutmeg
1/2 c milk
1 tsp baking powder
1 c all purpose flour
Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease 24 mini-muffin cups or 12 regular size muffin cups.
Mix 1/2 cup sugar, 1/4 cup margarine, and nutmeg in a large bowl. Stir in the milk, then mix in the baking powder and flour until just combined. Fill the prepared mini muffin cups about half full.
Bake in the preheated oven until the tops are lightly golden, 15 to 20 minutes.
While muffins are baking, place 1/4 cup of melted margarine in a bowl. In a separate bowl, mix together 1/2 cup of sugar with the cinnamon. Remove muffins from their cups, dip each muffin in the melted margarine, and roll in the sugar-cinnamon mixture. Let cool and serve

Cinnamon quick bread

1 1/2 c butter
3 c sugar
3 eggs
Cream the above and then in a separate bowl mix:
• 6 c flour
• 3 tsp baking soda
• 3 tsp salt
Alternatively add the flour mixture and 3 cups buttermilk into your creamed mixture and mix until combined.
Grease 3 bread pans and pour in half the mixture evenly into the 3 pans.
In a separate bowl combine:
2/3 c sugar
2 T cinnamon
Sprinkle half the mixture evenly over top of the batter in the pans. Pour the remaining batter evenly over the cinnamon mixture. Top with the remaining cinnamon sugar on 3 breads.
Bake 350 for 40 minutes.
**Don't have buttermilk—combine 3 cups milk with 3 T vinegar and stir. This will cause the milk to curdle within a few minutes. Substitute for the buttermilk.

Banana bread

1 3/4 c all purpose flour
1 1/2 c sugar
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
2 eggs
2 medium ripe bananas mashed
1/2 c oil
1/4 c plus 1 T buttermilk
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 c chopped walnuts—optional
In a large bowl, stir together flour, sugar, baking soda and salt. In another bowl, combine the eggs, bananas, oil, buttermilk and vanilla; add to flour mixture, stirring just until combined. Fold in nuts.
Pour into a greased bread pan. Bake at 325 degrees for 1 hour 20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool on wire rack. Yield: 1 loaf.

Week 7

Salad and washing vegetables

This week you get to do more chopping skills. You are going to choose from one of our salads and make it for your family.

Here are some tips to help you make fantastic salads.

- When choosing your lettuce, make sure it's the freshest that you can get. There should be no blemishes, bruising, or yellow on the leaves.
- To get a head start on making the salad, clean the greens, wrap them in a clean, dry kitchen towel, and place the towel in a plastic bag. Leave the bag open and refrigerate. The leaves keep for up to one week.
- Drying salad greens can be a chore, but a salad spinner can make quick work of the job. A salad spinner is a piece of equipment that is really quite handy. If the spinner makes preparing salad more attractive to you, why not invest in this moderately priced kitchen tool? Or better yet, put it on your holiday wish list.
- Tearing greens is preferable to cutting them. It's easy and gentler on the greens, and it looks better too. If you use a metal knife when cutting your salad, your greens will 'rust' sooner than if you use a plastic knife or just tear them with your fingers.
- **Need an easy way to "core" a head of lettuce?**
 - Just grab the head of lettuce firmly on either side and smack it on the countertop. Then turn it over and pull the now-separated core from the head of lettuce. You may need to wiggle it a bit, but it should give pretty easily. Takes about 3 seconds, no more trying to cut out the core of the lettuce.

Washing the vegetables...is it necessary?

Bacteria such as Listeria, Salmonella, and E.coli may all be lurking on your produce whether they are organically grown or conventionally grown. These bacteria all cause food-borne illness, and need to be washed away.

How to Wash Fruits and Vegetables

- Start by keeping your kitchen countertops, refrigerator, cookware and cutlery clean.
- Always wash your hands before preparing meals and handling fruits and vegetables.
- Wait until just before you eat to prepare your fruits and vegetables to wash them. They have natural coatings that keep moisture inside, and washing them will make them spoil sooner.
- Wash all pre-packaged produce. Sometimes we think just because it is package that it is clean, that is not the case usually.
- Clean the whole thing - even the parts you don't eat. Bacteria can live on the rinds or skins of foods like bananas, potatoes or rutabagas. Though you may peel them away and toss the coverings in the trash, the bacteria can be transferred from the rind to the knife; then on to the part you are cutting.
- Gently rub vegetables and fruit under running water. Don't use any detergents or soaps. These chemicals will leave a residue of their own on your produce.
- Leafy lettuce and greens are best when submerged in a bowl of cold water to ensure all grit is removed off the leaves.
- You can buy commercial sprays to wash your fruit and vegetables but it isn't really any better than cleaning thoroughly with plain water. It is better to save your money, than waste it.
- For lettuce and cabbage heads, tear off the outer leaves and rinse the rest of the vegetable.

- Rinse berries and other small fruits thoroughly. Allow them to drain in a colander.

Remember, when preparing your meals and using a cutting board, NEVER use the same tools to cut meat or poultry with when preparing your vegetables and fruit. You have to properly wash and rinse off all residues, because hidden bacteria can stay present. It is safest to use a different cutting board for meat and one for vegetables.

Vegetable nutrition

Eating a salad everyday is a good lifelong habit to produce. It is an easy way to get in a few servings of fresh vegetables packed full of vitamins and nutrients.

Most people do not get enough fresh fruits and vegetables into their diets. We need to be eating more dark green and orange vegetables. If you do eat more green salads, you will likely have a higher amount of antioxidants—vitamin C and E, folic acid, and alpha- and beta- carotene. Antioxidants are substances that help protect your body from damage caused by harmful disease.

Even experts agree that there is a direct link between eating lots of fruits and vegetables and lower risks of many diseases, particularly cancer.

Eating leafy salads also gives you much needed fiber in your body. Think of fiber working like sand. It grips and grinds out bad bacteria in the body.

Eating salads can also help us eat less by filling you up with good foods so that you eat less of the cooked meal. Be sure to make your own salad dressing, or use low calorie dressing.

Best choice for vegetables:

- **Green leafy vegetables**, such as kale, chard, collard greens, spinach, parsley, and dark green and red leaf lettuce are high in carotenoids, and best eaten raw in salads. Head lettuce is fine to eat occasionally, but it offers very little nutrition. If you need that extra "crunch" mix your salads with head lettuce and some leafy lettuce like spinach to help adjust your taste buds to new textures.
- **Broccoli**---both the green flower heads and stalks are nutritious.
- **Red and green peppers** are a good addition to salads.
- **Garlic and onions** are nutritious eaten raw. Mix up a batch of homemade salad dressing and add these ingredients into it for an easy addition to your health.
- **Tomatoes**—which are actually a fruit, are good in salads. Cherry or grape tomatoes are a great and easy addition to salads.
- **Carrots** are sweet and high in carotenoids. They are super when grated into any kind of salad.

When preparing your salad, make most of it vegetables, and keep it light for the extra toppings like cheese, eggs, nuts, and salad dressing.

Week 7 hands on lesson---preparing a salad

This week you will be preparing a salad. Choose from one of the following to serve with a meal.

Italian salad

2 bunches of Romaine lettuce, torn
2 c grape tomatoes
1 can sliced olives, drained
1 small red onion, thinly sliced and separated into rings
8 pepperoncini
¼ c grated Parmesan cheese
1 c croutons
½ c fat free Italian dressing
This is best to make when ready to serve. Toss all vegetables first then sprinkle with parmesan and toss with salad dressing to evenly incorporate the flavors.

Spinach salad

4 slices bacon cooked and cooled, or if time does not allow, use a bag of soft bacon bits as an alternative
1 -16 oz bag fresh spinach with stems removed
2 hard cooked eggs, chopped
1 small red onion, finely chopped
For dressing:
½ c white sugar
1/3 c ketchup
¼ c oil
¼ c vinegar
2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
Place spinach into a large bowl, sprinkle with bacon, eggs, and onion. Gently toss the salad. In small bowl, whisk together the dressing ingredients. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss to combine all ingredients.

BBQ chopped chicken salad

Romaine lettuce and spinach
2 c chopped chicken, mixed with your favorite BBQ sauce
Can of corn, drained
Can of black beans, drained
Shredded Monterey jack cheese, 1 cup
1 tomato, chopped
1 avocado, chopped
Tortilla strips, or a handful of cheese flavored tortilla chips, crushed
Your choice of dressing---french or ranch is a good choice.
You can serve this in individual bowls so that guests can prepare their own salads with choice of toppings. Or you can create the salad on a platter. Place the salad down first and carefully layer the ingredient as listed. Drizzle with dressing. You can always add more dressing when eating.

Create your own salad

Choose leafy lettuce
Get vegetables that are dark green and orange in color
Green onions make a nice addition, if you don't enjoy regular onions
Make your salad have different colors—that ensures you receive a variety of vitamins.
Add cranberries and nuts to make your salad more nutritious.
Canned orange segments make a good addition
Make your own croutons—see recipe below
Make your own dressing—see recipes

It is very easy to make your own croutons. Plus it has much less fat, because they are not deep fried like commercial brands.

1. Take slices of bread, day old bread works best.
2. Spread with butter on both sides, or you can brush on olive oil
3. Sprinkle with a variety of spices—garlic salt, basil, oregano, and Parmesan cheese are good choices
4. Bake at 300 degrees until crispy -about 20 minutes
5. When cooled, cut into cubes

It is easy to make your own salad dressings as well. Take a look at the ingredients listed on the back of a salad dressing bottle---there are many. Try mixing up your own in the blender. Try any of the following combinations. Remember it will take some time for the flavors to blend together in homemade dressing. Be sure to mix these up, and let sit for at least an hour or two so the flavors combine together.

Italian dressing

¾ c olive oil
1/3 c vinegar
2 T finely chopped onion
1 tsp honey
1 tsp mustard
1 tsp dried basil
1 ½ tsp salt
½ tsp dried oregano
1 tsp black pepper
2 T minced garlic fresh
2 T lemon juice
2 T raw sugar
Combine all in blender and puree for few seconds until combined.

French dressing

1 c honey
1 T minced onion
2 tsp mustard
2 tsp paprika
2 tsp salt
½ c vinegar
2 c oil
Combine all in blender and puree for few seconds until combined.

Week 8

All about bread

Baking bread brings a real sense of satisfaction to the creative cook. It is a skill that when greatly mastered, will be a useful resource for your entire life. There is nothing better than delicious slices of homemade bread spread with butter or jam. Making good yeast raised bread requires time and patience. Once you have mastered the technique, however, I am sure you will agree that it is well worth the effort to make this delicious smelling treat for your family. This tutorial will teach you all that you will ever need to know about bread making.

If you are in-experienced in bread baking, begin early in the day. Give yourself plenty of time to avoid rushing the dough, and not having it done by the time it needs to be served. Allow a minimum of 5 hours for the whole process.

A hard wheat flour rich in gluten makes the best bread. (White whole wheat flour is a good choice) Lighter milled and softer wheat all-purpose flours can be substituted if necessary, but are not as good for bread. Never use self rising flour in yeast breads.

If you do not bake bread regularly, keep in mind that flour deteriorates in quality with age. Flour should not be kept in a warm pantry for many months since it will lose its freshness, and will not produce the best baking results. If you bake regularly, there should be no problem. However, if you buy special flour and bake only on occasion, store the unused portion in the freezer where it can be stored indefinitely.

Flours also vary in moisture content, so the exact amount needed each time you bake can vary slightly. If dough is sticky after full amount is added, this could be the reason. Simply add a little more flour.

Yeast is available in individual serving packets, or you can buy it in bulk. Store closed yeast in the refrigerator for best results.

It is important that water for dissolving yeast is at the correct temperature. If not hot enough, it will not dissolve and activate the yeast properly. If too hot, it will kill the yeast cells. It should be 110-115 degrees---I run it straight from my hot tap water.

Any good solid shortening, butter, margarine, or oil can be used for the fat in baking bread.

Tips and techniques

- To test whether yeast is still active mix small amount of yeast in 1/4 cup of warm water in which 1/4 tsp sugar has been dissolved. Yeast should begin to foam and bubble within 5 minutes. If it doesn't, yeast should be thrown away.
- To reduce rising time of bread, the amount of yeast can be increased. One pkg yeast to 2 cups liquid will rise in approximately 1 hour. 2 pkgs yeast to 2 cups liquid will rise in approximately 35 minutes. Extra yeast does not make a yeasty taste. A yeasty taste is caused by dough being too warm during rising or by rising too long. When doubling the recipes for bread, the amount of yeast does not have to be doubled, usually 1 1/2 times is sufficient.
- Bread recipes that do not include eggs and milk will turn out better, and will dry out less quickly than those that do.

- Bread keeps best when stored in a cool dry place, but not in the refrigerator. If weather is warm, store extra bread in the freezer, and thaw when needed.
- Do not over bake breads especially rolls, muffins, and biscuits. Over baked breads are dry and crumbly. Rolls become hard.
- The use of granite or heavy black pans for baking bread causes it to burn or turn too dark on the bottom. Use shiny aluminum pans for best results.
- To cut out biscuits in a hurry, roll out dough, and cut in squares or triangles with a knife instead of a biscuit cutter.

Common ingredients and their purpose

Yeast

This basic ingredient is a living organism that breathes and eats just as we do. The breathing, which is fermentation, gives off carbon dioxide gas. Which when trapped in the gluten of the flour, causes the bread to rise.

Yeast is inactive when in its dry form, but as you add it to liquid and give it something to feed off of, it begins its work. Yeast likes to eat sugar, but it doesn't like salt. It doesn't do well in extremely hot temperatures. It is also prone to over-eating: too much sugar in a recipe can cause your yeast to slow down significantly instead of boosting it. When making your bread, it is a good practice to add the warm water, yeast, and sugar or sweetener first. Then let it sit for a few minutes to allow it to begin fermenting.

What type of yeast should you buy? The best is a good quality dry or instant yeast. If you buy it in bulk, it is usually fresher and much less expensive. You want to avoid the rapid rise yeast. It goes against good

bread making. The longer the rise, the better the fermentation process resulting in better flavor.

Sweeteners

How much sweetener do you need for your breads? Typically 1-2 teaspoons is sufficient when using 1-2 Tablespoons of yeast. Even though yeast makes its own food by converting the starch in flour into sugar, a little quick fix of pure sugar right at the beginning is best to give it a kick start.

Flours

We talked about flours back in week 6

Salt

Why do we need salt in bread recipes? You need it for flavor. If you forget to put it in your recipe, it will make your bread taste like cardboard. Salt brings out the flavor in food, just as in bread.

Liquid

The liquid activates the yeast, and they combine with gluten to form the elastic strands that help bread to rise. If you add too little liquid you will get a hard, poorly risen loaf; the gluten in flour is tough and needs to expand. Too much liquid and you will get a loaf that rises, then collapses; the gluten has expanded and thinned too much

Fat

Fat gives bread a finer softer texture and helps keep bread fresher longer. You can use coconut oil, vegetable oil, shortening or lard.

Alternative ingredients

Sometimes yeast raised breads use scalded milk or eggs added to the dough. These give more structure and strength to the loaf. It also gives added nutrition by providing whole protein.

Steps to making bread

1. Sprinkle yeast into warm water, stirring until dissolved. Add at least 1 tsp of the sweetener called for in the recipe. This helps to activate the yeast much more quickly. Stir again until the sweetener has been dissolved. Then let the mixture set while you are measuring other ingredients.
2. Combine your yeast, your liquids, and shortening mixture in mixing bowl with electric mixer or whisk.
3. Add flour, 1 cup at a time, beating well after each addition. Do this until you have about 1/2 of the flour required for the recipe. It is important to beat thoroughly at this point to obtain light tender bread.
4. Then cover and let rest for about 20 minutes. This resting time can be omitted, but will give you a lighter, nicer textured bread. It also makes the bread dough easier to knead without working in too much flour.
5. Add additional flour with a heavy spoon until very stiff. Then use your hands to work remaining flour into the dough until stiff enough to knead. Sprinkle flour over sticky surfaces as you work to keep your hands and the bowl from getting too sticky. Add the minimum amount of flour possible to obtain a workable dough.
6. The kneading process is important. It develops the gluten structure of the dough so that the gas produced by the yeast will be trapped. Kneading takes from 5-15 minutes, depending on how large a batch of dough you have, how fast you work, and your skill

level. Thorough kneading gives uniform grain, fine texture, and good volume.

7. Grease your bowls generously, place dough in bowl, flip it over, and cover it with a cloth. Let it rise in a warm spot, about 80-85 degrees, until double in size. This should take about an hour.

On sunny days you can set the bowl in the sunlight. You can even turn your oven on low for about 3 minutes, and then shut off and place your bowl in the oven. It is important to let the dough rise properly. Do not let dough over rise. This will greatly damage the quality of the bread. The yeast cells stretch beyond their capacity and break. Dough will not rise properly a second time and bread will have a poor volume, a coarse texture, and a yeasty taste when baked. Dough that did not rise enough tends to be heavy and soggy. To test dough, quickly press two fingers deeply into the dough. If the indentation remains, the dough is ready to be punched down.

8. To punch dough down, plunge your fists into the center of the dough. Do this several times to break up air pockets in the dough.

Then turn dough over so the smooth side is up. Let rise until double again. It does not take as long the second time around. If you need to delay baking the bread because of your schedule, it may be worked down another additional time. It will not hinder the quality of the bread. It may also be placed in the refrigerator tightly covered to retard rising. Be sure to let dough rise until double after removing from the refrigerator.

9. After it has doubled again, you can shape it into loaves and placed in greased pans.

10. Let your bread rise until it starts to peek over the top of pan.

11. Preheat your oven 350. Place pans on lower oven rack so tops don't overbrown, and leave airspace around each loaf for even browning. Jarring the pan on the way to the oven could cause

dough to fall slightly. Bake for 40 minutes until golden brown and it sounds hollow when crust is tapped.

12. Remove from oven immediately, and grease tops with butter or margarine. Cover loosely with a cloth, and let cool. As soon as bread has cooled, place it in plastic bags and close tightly. Store at room temperature or freeze.

How to knead bread dough

1. When you knead, you will use only the heels of your hands. Sprinkle some flour on the countertop, and plop your finished raised dough onto the flour.
2. Push down on the dough with your hand heels.
3. Fold the dough in half.
4. Turn the dough about 45 degrees, and knead with your hand heels again.
5. Turn the dough about 45 degrees and knead with your hand heels again.
6. Continue with this pattern -folding, kneading, and turning for the required length of time called for in the recipe.

Some tips to remember

- Lightly dust your hands with flour to keep the dough from sticking to you.
- Kneading can get messy, wear an apron while making bread.
- Always keep a measuring cup of flour by your work area in case you need to sprinkle some more on counter top to prevent stickiness.

How to shape into loaves

1. Forming a loaf of bread out of dough is easy. All you need is a clean counter or board and a rolling pin. Begin by using the rolling pin to roll the dough into a rectangular shape.
2. Starting along one side, roll up dough to form loaf.
3. Pinch seam closed. This holds the bread shape together. If you are having problems keeping the seam closed, wet the seam with water and pinch to make stick
4. Bring ends over seam and pinch closed. This step keeps the ends of the bread from splitting open while baking.
5. Roll loaf over so that the seam is on bottom. Finish shaping dough into a loaf by pushing on ends.
6. Place in prepared greased pans and let rise.

Clean up

Hot water is the worst thing you can use on bread dough. The heat makes the bread dough even stickier, and you end up with a gloppy mess that sticks to everything.

The easy way to wash bread dough off your bowl and utensils is this:

1. Scrape off as much excess dough with a spatula or dish scraper.
2. Fill the bowl with COOL soapy water, toss in all utensils, and leave it for 15 minutes.

3. Drain the water, grab the scraper again, and get all the loose dough off. Throw it in the kitchen scraps compost bin or the trash - it will do very bad things to your drain if you let it go down.
4. Using more cool water and a washable cloth/sponge, wash everything. Once things look clean, finish up with a bit of hot water, like you would wash your dishes regularly
5. Do the same for your counter tops. Scrape, wash in cool water, and then in hot water.

Week 8 hands on skill---basic bread making

Use this simple recipe to make a basic whole wheat dough

Basic whole wheat bread

3 cups warm water
6 T oil
2 T honey
1 1/2 T yeast
8 c white whole wheat flour
2 1/4 t salt
Follow the steps as outline in this chapter to make this bread.

You have already become familiar with regular bread baking. You have tried your hand at muffins or quick breads, now I want you to try and make something different this week along with your homemade bread. Something you aren't used to making. I want you to choose from the following:.

Tortillas

2 c all purpose flour
1/2 tsp salt
3/4 c water
3 T olive oil

In a large bowl, combine flour and salt. Stir in water and oil. Turn onto a floured surface; knead 10-12 times, adding a little flour or water if needed to achieve a smooth dough. Let rest for 10 minutes.

Divide dough into eight portions. On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion into a 7-in. circle.

In a large nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray, cook tortillas over medium heat for 1 minute on each side or until lightly browned. Keep warm until serving time.

Crescent rolls

3 1/2 c flour
2 tsp dry yeast
1/3 c water, warm
3/4 c milk, warm
1 1/2 T sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp salt
4 T butter, softened

Filling

4 or 5 T butter, softened

Topping

1 1/2 T butter, melted

In a large bowl, mix flour with sugar and salt. Dissolve the yeast in the warm water and add to the flour mixture. Add eggs and milk, mix everything together. Add the butter and knead until the dough is smooth and soft. Cover with a clean dish towel and let it rise for about 1 hour in a warm area, until doubled in size.

Punch dough down and divide into 2 equal parts. Form them into balls. On a floured surface roll each part into a 16 inch round, using a rolling pin. It will look like a round pizza crust. With the back of a spoon, spread about 2 tbsp of very soft butter onto the dough round. Cut the round into 16 triangles like slicing a pizza.

Start rolling each triangle into crescents, starting from the longest side to the smallest point. Once rolled, curve the edges and place on a greased baking tray with the tip tucked down and under the roll. Repeat rolling with the rest of the triangles. Let them rise for about 20 minutes. Melt additional 1 1/2 tbsp butter and brush the tops of the rolls with melted butter. Bake in a preheated oven at 400 degrees for 14-18 minutes until puffed and golden brown.

Angel biscuits

1 pkg active dry yeast
1/4 c warm water
2 c buttermilk
5 c all purpose flour
1 T baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp salt
3 T white sugar
3/4 c shortening

In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Let stand for 5 minutes until bubbly. Add buttermilk to yeast mixture, and set aside.

In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Cut in shortening with a until mixture resembles coarse meal.

****How do I "cut" in shortening???** Use two knives and a criss-crossing cutting motion to distribute shortening throughout the mixture. Continue until mixture breaks up into blueberry-sized pieces.

Stir in yeast mixture until dry ingredients are moistened. Turn dough out onto a floured surface, and knead 4 or 5 times.

On a lightly floured surface, roll dough to 1/2 inch thickness. Cut out biscuits with a 2 1/2 inch round cutter. ****If you don't have a round cutter, use a drinking glass dipped in flour.** Place on lightly greased baking sheets, barely touching each other. Cover, and let rise in a warm place until almost doubled in size. Bake in preheated 425 degree oven for 10 to 12 minutes, or until browned.

Dinner rolls

1 T active-dry yeast
1/2 c warm water
1/2 c milk
1 large egg
2 T oil
2 T sugar
1 tsp salt
3 c all-purpose flour
1 T butter

In a large bowl, stir the yeast into the warm water and let it sit until dissolved. In a separate bowl, whisk together the milk, egg, oil, sugar, and salt. Add this to the yeast mixture and stir until combined. Add all the flour and stir until it forms a shaggy dough.

Knead the dough for 8-10 minutes, until smooth but slightly tacky. It should spring back when poked.

Let the dough rise: Cover the mixing bowl and let the dough rise in a warm spot until doubled in size, about an hour.

Dust your work space with a little flour and turn the dough out. Divide the dough into 12 pieces. To shape the rolls, tuck the edges underneath to form a plump little package.

****Tip on shaping**

As you shape the rolls, you want to stretch the top of the dough ball while simultaneously sealing the bottom. The stretching helps the dough hold up to the expansion that occurs in the oven, while the sealing prevents the roll from opening up while baking and becoming wrinkled and doughy on the bottom. You don't want to roll the dough into a ball like you would with clay.

Grease a 9x13 pan with nonstick coating. Arrange the rolls inside the pan spaced a little apart. Let the rolls rise until they fill the pan about 30-40 minutes. When almost done rising, preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Melt the butter and brush it over the risen dinner rolls. This helps the tops to brown and keeps the crust soft. Bake the rolls until golden, 15-18 minutes.

Pita bread

1 pkg of yeast
1/2 c warm water
3 c all purpose flour
1 1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp granulated sugar
1 c lukewarm warm water

Dissolve yeast in 1/2 cup of warm water. Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Let sit for 10-15 minutes until water is frothy.

Combine flour and salt in large bowl.

Make a small depression in the middle of flour and pour yeast water in depression.

Slowly add 1 cup of warm water, and stir with wooden spoon.

Place dough on floured surface and knead for 10-15 minutes until smooth and no longer sticky.

Spray large bowl with cooking spray and place dough in bowl. Turn dough upside down so all of the dough is coated.

Allow to sit in a warm place for about 3 hours, or until it has doubled in size.

Once doubled, roll out in a rope, and pinch off 10-12 small pieces. Place balls on a floured surface. Let sit covered 10 minutes. Preheat oven to 500 degrees and make sure rack is at very bottom of oven.

Roll out each ball of dough with a rolling pin into circles. Each should be 5-6 inches across and 1/4 inch thick.

Bake each circle 4 minutes until bread puffs up. Turn over and bake additional 2 minutes.

Remove each pita with a spatula from the baking sheet and add additional pitas for baking.

Take spatula and gently push down puff.

Cinnamon rolls

Dough:

1 package yeast

1/2 cup warm water

1/2 cup scalded milk

****What is scalded milk? Milk** that has been heated to 180 °F. At this temperature, bacteria are killed, enzymes in the **milk** are destroyed, and many of the proteins are denatured. Bring it nearly to a boil and then remove from heat if you don't have a thermometer.

1/4 cup sugar

1/3 cup butter or shortening

1 teaspoon salt

1 egg

3 1/2 to 4 cups all-purpose flour

Filling:

1/2 cup melted butter, plus more for pan

3/4 cup sugar, plus more for pan

2 tablespoons ground cinnamon

3/4 cup raisins, walnuts, or pecans, optional

Glaze:

4 tablespoons butter

2 cups powdered sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3 to 6 tablespoons hot water

Heat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water and set aside. In a large bowl mix milk, sugar, melted butter, salt and egg. Add 2 cups of flour and mix until smooth. Add yeast mixture. Mix in remaining flour until dough is easy to handle. Knead dough on lightly floured surface for 5 to 10 minutes. Place in well-greased bowl, cover and let rise until doubled in size, usually 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

When doubled in size, punch down dough. Roll out on a floured surface into a 15 by 9-inch rectangle. Spread melted butter all over dough. Mix sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over buttered dough. Sprinkle with walnuts, pecans, or raisins if desired. Beginning at the 15-inch side, role up dough and pinch edge together to seal. Cut into 12 to 15 slices.

Coat the bottom of baking pan with butter and sprinkle with sugar. Place cinnamon roll slices close together in the pan and let rise until dough is double in size.. Bake for about 30 minutes or until nicely browned.

Meanwhile, mix butter, powdered sugar, and vanilla. Add hot water 1 tablespoon at a time until the glaze reaches desired consistency. Spread over slightly cooled rolls.

Crepes

****serve these with jam, maple syrup, or applesauce**

1 c flour

2 eggs

½ c milk

½ c water

¼ tsp salt

2 T butter, melted

In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour and the eggs. Gradually add in the milk and water, stirring to combine. Add the salt and butter; beat until smooth.

Heat a lightly oiled griddle or frying pan over medium high heat. Pour or scoop the batter onto the griddle, using approximately 1/4 cup for each crepe. Tilt the pan with a circular motion so that the batter coats the surface evenly.

Cook the crepe for about 2 minutes, until the bottom is light brown. Loosen with a spatula, turn and cook the other side. Serve hot.

Grape nuts--cereal

3 ½ c whole wheat flour

1 c brown sugar

1 tsp salt

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp cinnamon

2 c buttermilk

2 tsp vanilla or maple extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with waxed paper.

Combine flour, brown sugar, salt, baking soda, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Stir in buttermilk and vanilla extract; mix well. Pour mixture into prepared baking sheet and spread evenly with a spatula.

Bake in the preheated oven until browned and firm, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool patty in the baking sheet for 10 minutes before removing to cool completely on a wire rack.

Preheat oven to 275 degrees.

Break cooked patty into chunks and crumble them. You want them to resemble broken up cookie crumbs. Divide crumbs over two baking sheets.

Bake in the oven until dry, stirring every 10 minutes, about 30 minutes. Allow crumbs to cool completely and store in an airtight container.

Simple homemade granola

2 tsp ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp ground ginger

¼ tsp salt

3 T honey

2 T oil

2 T maple syrup

2 T water

1 tsp vanilla

2 c whole oats (not instant)

1/2 c chopped pecans

1/2 c crisped rice cereal

1/4 c wheat germ

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees.

In a large bowl, whisk together the cinnamon, ginger, 1/4 teaspoon salt, honey, oil, maple syrup, water, and vanilla together. Add in the oats, pecans, rice cereal, and wheat germ. Toss to coat completely.

Spread the granola out on a greased baking sheet. Bake until dry and crisp, but not yet browned, 30 to 35 minutes, stirring once or twice. Allow to cool completely before storing in an airtight container.

Week 9

Meal manners

It takes much time and effort to have an attractive table and a tasty meal. When a cook prepares a meal, you should respect the time and effort by coming to the meal with a decent appearance, a grateful attitude, and careful consideration for the others dining. Slouching in your chair, displaying a grumpy, negative spirit, and being thoughtless or selfish can ruin an otherwise wonderful meal.

No one enjoys eating with someone who wolfs his food down, slurps his soup, talks with his mouth full, or who burps loudly. Manners are common courtesy shown to others so that everyone can enjoy delicious food in a pleasant atmosphere. If you practice using good manners at every meal, you won't be embarrassed on special occasions by not knowing what to do. Or you won't be viewed as acting rude out of a daily habit that you should not be doing.

When we are at home, it has been said that we act the worst with those we love. That is a sad thing to say. The opposite should be true. We may wolf our food down because we are in a hurry: or we reach across the table, because we are getting impatient. We may unknowingly come from outside all dirty and not wash up to make ourselves presentable.

Our family mealtime should be one of the most pleasant times of our day. We should engage in good conversation, instead of monotone answers.

Here are some things to remember when eating a meal with family

- Sit up and remember to bring the food to your mouth
- Wait for a lull in the conversation to ask politely to pass food
- Answer questions pleasantly
- Be alert to requests from other family members
- Use your napkin
- If you are missing something, like a fork, get up and get it yourself

Using appropriate humor is also good at the table. It creates a happy mood. Avoid teasing and joke telling at this time. Don't use it to beg for requests of your parents. It is a good time to discuss current events, things that are important at your church, and maybe some interesting things that happened during the day.

Whoever is responsible for making the meal, be sure to THANK THEM. Even if you did not enjoy something, thank them for taking the time to make the food for you to eat. Always help CLEAN UP AFTERWARDS. Don't view your Mom, or whoever is making your meals, as a slave who cooks and cleans for you. Ask BEFORE they have to tell you what you can do.

Rules for when you are a guest in someone else's home, many will apply to home life as well:

- Leave your personal problems at home, don't use this time to discuss negative things going on in your life.
- Stand behind your chair and wait to sit down until the hostess sits down.
- If you are a boy, you should help the girl sit in her chair

- Keep your hand in your lap when not using it, instead of on the table
- When food is passed, take a moderate helping, keeping in mind there are others eating.
- Lay your utensils on your plate when taking a drink
- Cut your food into small pieces. Place your knife across the top of your plate in between cutting
- Use your napkin frequently, which should be in your lap
- Chew slowly and quietly with your mouth closed. Swallow your food before you begin to talk.
- Wait to begin eating until the hostess begins passing the food. Pass it to your left. Pass all the food before you begin eating.
- Bread or rolls should be torn apart, and butter should be placed on it as you eat it.
- When eating soup, spoon should be brought up away from you then into your mouth.
- When you are finished eating you should place your knife and fork across the middle of your plate. Place your napkin to the left of your plate.
- If an accidental spill occurs, instantly offer to help clean it up
- Engage in lively conversations with your hostess, try and get others to talk about things. Do not talk much about yourself. Avoid topics of controversy. Make things pleasant.
- Do not leave the table before your hostess does. Always ask to be excused before leaving the table.
- If all else fails, and you are not sure what to do during a meal, follow your hostess's lead.
- You can follow up with a thank you card or a quick phone call of thanks.

Conversation table starters

Family meal time is an important time for everyone in the family. Families who eat dinner together regularly are more likely to have stronger, happier family relationships. As families struggle to find amounts of quantity and quality time together, family dinnertime provides the opportunity for both.

I would encourage you to print this list of questions off, and cut them into individual questions. Roll them up, place them in a mason jar, and set them on your table. Take a few out at meals, and ask everyone what their answers are. I am sure you will get a good quality conversation going.

I have made the font bigger as it will be better to use for printing.

.

Are you comfortable as a leader or as a follower?
Have you ever stood up for something you thought was right?
How are you different from everyone else?
How does a person become courageous?
How will you know when you're "grown-up"?
If you could be a famous person for a week, who would you be and why?
If you could be animal, what would you be and why?
If you could eat just one food everyday for a month and nothing else, what would it be?
If you could have 50 pounds of anything other than money, what would you want?
If you could have any pet, what would you choose and why?
If you could have any superpower, which would you choose?
If you could have any view from your bedroom window, what would it be?
If you could have dinner with anyone (past or present), who would it be and why?
If you could have one dream come true, what would it be?
If you could only eat three foods the rest of your life, what would they be?
If you could open your own retail store, what type of merchandise would you sell?
If you could pick your own name, what would it be?
If you could play any instrument, what would it be and why?
If you could see your future, where will you be in ten years?
If you could trade places with your parents for a day, what would you do differently?
If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be?

If you could travel back in time, where would you go?
If you had one wish (and you can't wish for more wishes),
what would you wish for and why?
If you had the attention of the world for just 10 seconds,
what would you say?
If you had the time and money and could go on any month-long
summer vacation where would you go?
If you had to write your own personal definition of the word
"Success", what would it say?
If you were a multimillionaire, where would you be and what do
you believe you would be doing at this moment?
If you were to write a book, what would you choose as the
topic?
If you were writing an autobiography, what would be the
book's title—besides your name?
In your opinion, what is the best piece of music ever written?
What are the qualities that make you a good friend?
What do children know more about than adults?
What do you think is the hardest part about being a kid?
What do you think is the hardest part about being a parent?
What has been the happiest day of your life so far and why?
What is one piece of advice that you wish you could pass along
to everyone?
What is one thing you are grateful for today?
What is one thing you could have done better today?
What is one thing you couldn't live without?
What is one way you helped another person today?
What is something you want to learn how to do and why?
What is the craziest thing you've ever eaten?

What is the most beautiful place you have ever seen?
What is the nicest thing a friend has ever done for you?
What is your favorite book and why?
What is your favorite childhood memory?
What is your favorite holiday and why?
What is your favorite movie and why?
What is your favorite sport to play?
What is your favorite time of the day?
What is your greatest talent or ability?
What one special talent would you like to have?
What three things would you like to change in the world?
What three words would you use to describe yourself?
What two items would you grab if your house was on fire?
What was the best part of your day?
What would you like to be doing in 10 years?
What would you most like to do for someone else if you had the money and time?
What's the first thing you'd do if you were president?
What's the nicest thing you've ever done for someone?
What's the scariest thing that ever happened to you?
What's the ultimate ice cream sundae?
What's your favorite family tradition?
When you're having a bad day, what do you do to feel better?
Where would you like to go on our next family vacation?
Which household chores do you like to do and which do you try to avoid?
Which is more important, intelligence or common sense?
Who is one of your heroes and why do they inspire you?
Who is one person in your life you are thankful for and why?

Would you give up junk food to live 10 years longer?

Would you rather be a great musician, athlete, scientist, artist, politician, or writer?

What is the most vivid dream you can remember? What do you think it means?

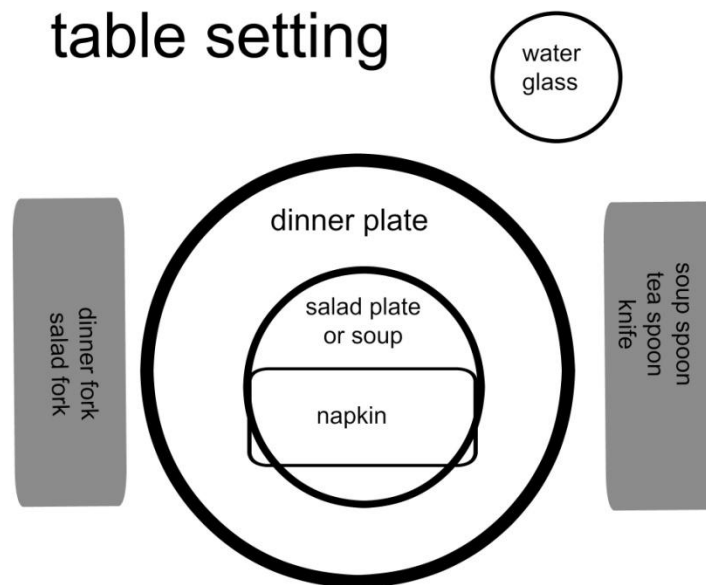
What do you think is the biggest problem in our country?

Does it matter if a person makes a moral or immoral choice even if nobody knows?

How to set a table

In your life, most of the meals you serve and eat will probably be in an informal setting. For special occasions, you might get to eat at a fancy restaurant or a nice event for a formal meal. Here you will learn of both of them.

Less formal table setting



This is a basic everyday table setting. One that you might already set each night for dinner in your own home. This is the easiest of the two, involving the least amount of tableware as there are less courses involved.

The longer tined forks are the dinner forks and the shorter ones are for salad.

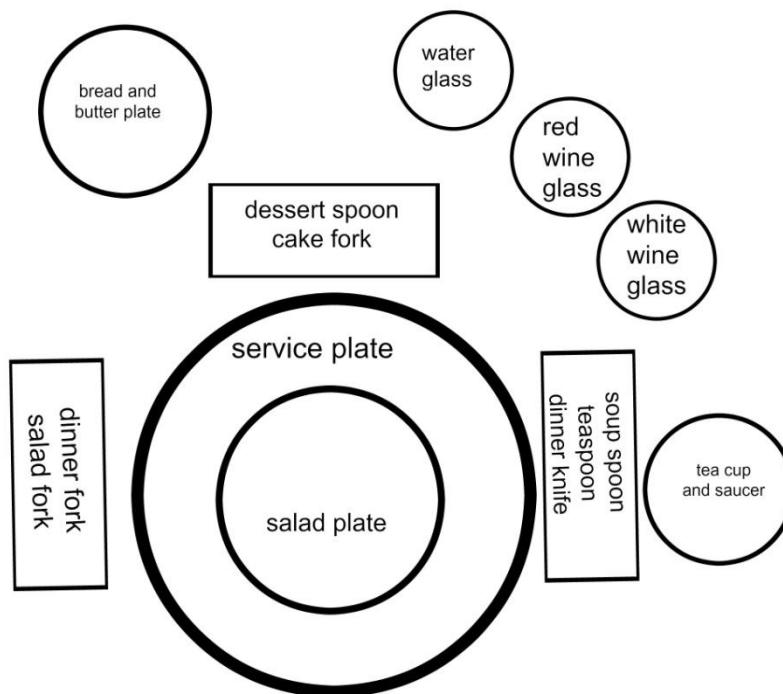
Soup spoons are fatter and larger.

The sharp side of the knife is facing inward towards your plate.

Make sure everything is balanced and even when setting the table.

Most of us won't see a formal table setting very much in our life. It requires a lot of dishwashing!!! A good rule to remember when eating at a formal place setting is start from the outside and work your way in. That way you will be able to know which utensils to use.

Formal table setting



On your bread and butter plate is placed a butter knife on an angle pointing towards the upper left.

The tea cup and saucer is generally not placed on the table until dessert time.

If soup is served, the waiter will bring that out separately to stack on top of your plate position.

Napkin etiquette

Depending upon where you dine, a napkin may be folded neatly on the center of your plate or off to the left.

When seated, immediately take the napkin and place it in your lap. There is no need to open the napkin fully. Fold it in half, and place it on your lap.

Carefully blot your mouth when eating, to remove crumbs and food. Do not wipe.

If you need to leave the table to use the restroom, place the napkin loosely to the left side of your plate.

When you are finished eating, place your napkin loosely to the left of your plate.

It is acceptable to place your fork and knife lengthwise at the top of your plate, signaling that you are finished with your meal

NEVER blow your nose, use it as a bib , or throw it on the plate when you are finished..

If you bite into something difficult to chew (like a piece of meat or gristle), you don't spit it into your cloth napkin. When no one is looking, you discreetly take it out with your two fingers and put it on the edge of your plate. You do this in case your napkin drops accidentally and the server picks it up. You don't want food to roll out of it.

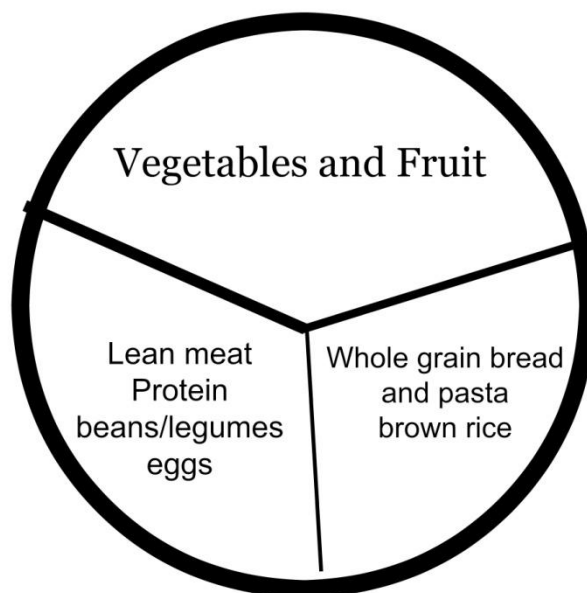
Week 9 hands on skill---practicing manners

This week print off the conversation starters and put them to use in your family. Set the table properly as outlined in this lesson. Continue each day with choosing a few questions to help get the conversation flowing at your dinner table. Use all the manners outlined in this week's lesson from this day forward.

Making lunch

Good nutrition doesn't just happen. You must plan for it. The concerned homemaker does not wait until meal time to start thinking about what food she will prepare for her family. She learns all that she can about nutrition, and uses that information to prepare food that is tasty and good for her family. She delights in planning meals that are nutritious that her family will like.

How do you go about planning a balanced meal? You need to choose foods that give your family the proper number of servings of the various food groups each day. At the same time don't overload fats and sugars.



This should give you a generalized idea of what you should serve your family. Keep sauces, condiments, and extras to a minimum.

There are many different recommendations for how many portion sizes of each food group we need to eat, but here is a general guideline to help you plan your meals:

This is for an adult women not a child.

Vegetables	4 servings per day	1 cup raw leafy vegetables (about the size of a small fist) 1/2 cup cut-up raw or cooked vegetables 1/2 cup vegetable juice
Fruit	4 servings per day	1 medium fruit (about the size of a baseball) 1/4 cup dried fruit 1/2 cup fresh, frozen, or canned fruit 1/2 cup fruit juice
Whole grains	6 servings per day	1 slice bread 1 oz dry cereal (check nutrition label for cup measurements of different products) 1/2 cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal (about the size of a baseball)
Protein	3 servings per day	3 oz cooked meat (about the size of a computer mouse) 3 oz grilled fish (about the size of a checkbook)
Dairy	2.5 servings per day	1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk 1 cup fat-free or low-fat yogurt 1 and 1/2 oz fat-free or low-fat cheese (about the size of 6 stacked dice)

An activity to try this week.....

Make a list of all your meals and what you eat on a piece of paper for a week. Evaluate it at the end of the week and see where you come up short.

1. How many desserts did I eat this week?
2. How many times did I eat fried foods?
3. Did I eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to get necessary vitamins and nutrients?
4. Did I eat more protein-rich food that I needed?
5. Am I eating whole grains vs. white flours?

Tips for planning meals

1. Use seasonal foods in your meal plan. Since foods are generally cheaper in season, it will help save money. Strawberry shortcake with fresh strawberries may look good in winter, but if you are paying \$5 a quart for them, that is not a frugal choice.
2. Use variety in your meal planning. Just because you cooked a big pot roast, doesn't mean you should eat it for the next 4 days. Freeze some of the leftovers for another time.
3. Use your creativity to make meals appealing.
4. Your food textures should vary. You don't want a whole meal full of just crunchy items.
5. You want a variety of tastes. If your meal contains all hot and spicy Mexican items, it would be good to offset that with something mild in your meal.
6. You want your meal to look good. You don't want to serve all of the same colored foods in one meal. Use some garnishes to make things presentable.

Tips for organizing a meal plan

1. Begin with a basic menu. A good cook doesn't usually make it up as they go along. They might deviate a little with a side dish, but their main food stays the same. Having a menu saves time and money.
2. You need to think ahead. While preparing your meal, you should be constantly thinking, "what is it that I can do next to complete my meal?" When your meat is browning and you are waiting, peel some vegetables to be used in the meal. You also have to think about what foods you have to prep before cooking. Does your meat need to be thawed? Do I need to mix up my bread dough early enough to have it be done for dinner time?
3. Think about how long it takes to cook something. That way you can be prepared to start the meal on time.
4. You should plan some "make ahead foods." If you have all last minute items for your menu, you are going to be running around trying to get them done. Plan some food that you can make and do ahead of time, that is a key.
5. Read the entire recipe before beginning to make sure you have all the ingredients.
6. Ask other good cooks what it is they do, or how they made something. Learn from the best.

How to make hardboiled eggs

Hardboiled eggs are an easy way to get quick protein for the day. You can make some of these up, and leave in the refrigerator for a quick grab and go snack or make some into sandwiches. There are 2 ways to make them, try both.

Making in the oven

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Put 1 egg in each of 12 muffin cups.
3. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes.
4. Plunge baked eggs in a large bowl filled with ice water until cooled completely, about 10 minutes.
5. Carefully pierce egg on side of pan and begin peeling off the shells.

Making on the stove

1. Place eggs in saucepan large enough to hold them in a single layer.
2. Add cold water to cover eggs by 1 inch.
3. Heat over high heat just to boiling.
4. Remove from heat and cover pan.
5. Let eggs stand in hot water for 10 minutes.
6. Drain immediately and place in bowl of ice water.
7. Pierce shells and peel off.

Some notes on eggs

Sometimes your egg yolks will appear greenish. This is a harmless but unsightly discoloration that can be unappealing. This happens when eggs have been cooked for too long or too high of a temperature because of a reaction between sulfur in the egg white and iron in the yolk.

Piercing shells before cooking is not recommended. If not sterile, the piercer or needle can introduce bacteria into the egg. Also, piercing creates hairline cracks in the shell through which bacteria can enter after cooking.

Never microwave eggs in shells. Steam builds up too quickly inside and eggs are likely to explode.

Very fresh eggs can be difficult to peel. To ensure easily peeled eggs, buy and refrigerate them a week to 10 days in advance of cooking. 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 right after cooling. Cooling causes the egg to contract slightly in the shell.

To peel a hard-boiled egg: Gently tap egg on countertop until shell is finely crackled all over. Roll egg between hands to loosen shell. Starting peeling at large end, holding egg under cold running water to help ease the shell off.

Storage time: In the shell, hard-boiled eggs can be refrigerated safely for up to one week. Refrigerate in their original carton to prevent odor absorption. Once peeled, eggs should be eaten that day.

Week 10 hands on skill-- making lunch

This meal of the day will vary depending upon who you are cooking for. Most of us can get by with a small salad, sandwich, or soup. Others working more labor intense jobs will need a hearty meal. Make sure you plan accordingly when deciding which recipes to make.

Choose a sandwich from the list below.

Choose some fresh vegetables and fruit to cut up and enjoy.

Choose a side to compliment your meal, hard-boiled eggs, crackers, cheese slices, dill pickles, cottage cheese, yogurt, depending upon your sandwich choice.

If you are making this as a special treat, why not make a light dessert?

Sandwich choices

Club sandwich—layer toasted bread spread with mayo, lettuce, tomato slices, 2 slices of bacon, turkey lunchmeat, slice of cheese, and top with toasted bread spread with mayo. If you are making these for a “heartier” group, you can make a double layer by repeating the ingredients and having 3 slices of bread in a sandwich. Poke some toothpicks into the tops of the sandwich to hold it together.

Egg salad—this is made with all mayo. You can substitute half of it for plain nonfat yogurt for a healthier approach.

Prepare hardboiled eggs. Slice the eggs into quarters, chop them into pieces, and place in a medium bowl.

Combine and mix ingredients. Add celery, onion, mayo, chopped pickles or relish, a pinch of salt and several grinds of pepper.

Taste and adjust seasonings. Taste the egg salad and add more salt and pepper, onion, or mayonnaise if needed. Spread on bread and serve.

Chicken salad

1 ½ lbs cooked leftover chicken breast—from a meal, or buy a can of chunk chicken

¾ cup of sliced green onion

¾ cup of small chopped celery

¼ cup fine chopped parsley

½ cup of mayonnaise

½ cup of plain yogurt

¾ cup of sliced almonds and dried cranberries or sliced grapes
optional

Salt and pepper

Serve on croissants, pita, or regular sandwich bread.

Grilled ham and cheese

Butter slices of bread and place butter side down in frying pan. Top with few slices of ham lunchmeat and Swiss cheese. Spread a thin squirt of mustard on, then top with other slice of bread, buttered on outside. Cook over medium heat until browned and then flip to brown the other side.

Grilled cheese

Butter a slice of bread and place butter side down in frying pan. Top with slices of cheese and another piece of bread. Fry over medium heat until browned and then flip to do other side.

Wraps

You can make a variety of wraps by using tortillas and place things like spinach leaves, lettuce leaves, lunchmeat, grilled chicken chunks, hummus, cheese, shredded carrots, cucumbers, green onions, alfalfa

sprouts, and a squirt of dressing if desired. You can use your imagination and what you enjoy.

Peanut butter sandwiches

Another easy sandwich is a peanut butter sandwich. You can top this with jam, honey, or thin slices of apples or bananas.

BLT

You can make this on toasted bread or in a tortilla wrapped up. Fry slices of bacon and layer it with tomato slices and lettuce leaves. You can use mayonnaise or your favorite dressing for these.

Use this as an evaluation for yourself

Did you remember to follow all safety rules when preparing food in the kitchen?

Did you serve lunch on time?

Did you remember to completely clean up your work area leaving it better than when you started?

Did you set your table according to the informal table setting?

After lunch be sure to wash all dishes and put them away.

Store leftovers in the refrigerator for another meal.

Week 11

All about chicken

When you are preparing fresh meat products such as chicken, beef, and fish you need to take special precautions to ensure that you do not transfer bacteria that could make you sick. Pay attention to these instructions to avoid spreading possible bacteria in your kitchen.

Raw chicken can harbor harmful salmonella bacteria. If bacteria are transferred to work surfaces, utensils, or hands, they could contaminate other foods, as well as the cooked chicken, and cause food poisoning. With careful handling and proper cooking, this is easily prevented.

Wash hands and kitchen work areas such as cutting boards and utensils thoroughly with hot soapy water **IMMEDIATELY** after they have been in contact with raw meat or poultry. This includes **ALL** fresh or frozen products. Your hands should be washed before handling food and between handling different food items.

Think as soon as you touch the raw meat, "I have bacteria on my hands," Whatever you touch, you spread it. If you touch the faucet to turn on the water, then the next person can touch it and continue spreading it. If you drip it on the floor, it can be tracked somewhere else. Whatever comes in contact with raw meat you should wash immediately.

Even if you use several types of meat for a recipe, wash cutting boards and knives thoroughly to prevent cross contamination.

To avoid cross-contaminating other foods, separate raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, bags, and in your refrigerator.

Use separate cutting boards for raw meats, poultry, seafood, and your vegetables.

Do not rinse your poultry in your sink; it does not remove bacteria. It only spreads raw juices around your sink and onto your countertops. Bacteria in raw meat and poultry can only be killed when cooked to a safe internal temperature.

Cook poultry thoroughly. Use a thermometer and cook it to at least 165 degrees internally. Pierce the poultry in multiple places. Be sure to pierce through the thickest part, making sure you don't pierce all the way through the meat. Go to about the middle to test the temperature. This is a fairly inexpensive tool to use, but I recommend it highly for new cooks. Leftovers should be refrigerated no more than 2 hours after cooking. Do not leave food out as bacteria will start to form.

The color of cooked poultry is not a sign of its safety. Only by using a food thermometer can you accurately determine that it has reached its safe internal temperature.

When purchasing poultry products be careful when touching the packaging. It could have been handled improperly. Keep a small bottle of hand sanitizer in your purse, and use it after touching the package. Place underneath your shopping cart or in the provided plastic bags.

Keep a cooler in your vehicle for warmer weather to ensure products stay cold. Immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer when you return home.

You can store leftovers in the refrigerator safely for up to 3 days.

Thaw poultry in the refrigerator not on the countertop or in cold water. Plan ahead and do this overnight.

If you barbeque poultry, place cooked poultry on a separate plate when finished. DO NOT place it on the same one that transported the raw meat to the grill.

If you marinate your chicken in sauces such as Italian dressing---which makes for a tender, delicious tasting chicken---throw away the marinade. Do not reuse for a later time.

Cuts of chicken

Whole chickens

Are exactly what it says---the WHOLE chicken. You can buy these either fresh or frozen. This makes for a nice meal when roasted or baked in the oven.

Breast

This is the white part of the chicken, and it is skinless. It is used in most recipes as it is the easiest, because it contains no bones.

Sometimes it contains part of the veins of the chicken. They are white, and you can easily cut those off before serving. It might contain some extra fat pieces as well that can be removed. Sometimes you can find skinless tenderloins. This part is usually more expensive, but is a perfected part of the breast. It does not contain any veins or fat that

need to be cut out. I know this is the gross section, but you need to be aware of what you are eating.

Chicken wings

This is also a white meat portion and contains 3 sections the drumettes, wing mid section and wing tip. This is sometimes made into hot wings.

Chicken leg

This is the drumstick- thigh portion of the chicken. You can also buy this part separated into drumsticks and thigh portions. These both usually contain bones.

Week 11 hands on skill--making a chicken meal

This week you will choose to make a meal with chicken as its main part. Be sure to use ALL of the safety precautions when preparing and handling the meat.

Baked Italian chicken

6 chicken breast halves
½ c flour
2 eggs, beaten
¾ c bread crumbs
½ c parmesan cheese

Sauce

2 T butter
2 T flour
1 ¼ c milk
1 tsp salt
½ t basil
¼ t pepper
1 c mozzarella cheese shredded
1 small can tomato sauce

Roll chicken breasts in flour, dip in eggs. Combine crumbs and ¼ c parmesan cheese, pat onto chicken. Bake uncovered in a greased 9x13 baking pan at 400 for 30 minutes. Pour sauce over chicken and bake 15 minutes more.

SAUCE: melt butter in pan, stir in flour until smooth. Add milk, bring to a boil. Cook 2 minutes. Stir in remaining seasonings and cheese.

Serve with spaghetti noodles and jarred spaghetti sauce
Green beans and homemade bread.

Creamy chicken breast

4 boneless,skinless chicken breast
8 slices swiss cheese
1 can cream of chicken soup
¾ c sour cream
1 c stove top stuffing
¼ c butter
salt and pepper

Arrange chicken breast in 9 x13 baking pan. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Layer cheese on top of chicken. Mix soup and sour cream together. Pour over the cheese. Melt butter and combine with stuffing mix. Sprinkle on top, bake uncovered 350 for 1 hour.

Serve with a plain pasta and a vegetable.

Honey mustard chicken

3 Lbs chicken pieces-- you can use breast, thighs, or drumsticks

½ c honey

¼ c whipped salad dressing

4 T mustard

Pinch cayenne pepper

2 tsp chicken seasoning or an all purpose seasoning

Place chicken pieces in greased baking dish, sprinkle with chicken seasoning. Combine honey, miracle whip, mustard, and cayenne and pour over chicken. Bake, uncovered, at 350 for 20 minutes. Turn pieces over and coat with sauce, bake for another 20 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink inside.

Serve over rice or couscous--a lighter alternative to rice, it comes in a box like the packaged rice.

Choose a vegetable too.

Slow cooker chicken and dumplings

2 T butter

4 boneless skinless chicken breast

1 onion finely diced

2 T chicken bouillon or 2 cubes

2 cans cream of chicken soup

2 cans of mixed vegetables or your family favorites--diced carrots, corn, peas

2 cans of biscuits--the small size

flour

Place the chicken, butter, soup, mixed vegetables, chicken bouillon, and onion in a greased slow cooker, and fill with enough water to cover.

Secure lid and cook for 5 to 6 hours on High. About 30 minutes before serving, roll each torn biscuit piece in flour (to prevent them from sticking together), then drop into the slow cooker. Replace lid and cook remaining 45 minutes.

Chicken fajitas

4 boneless skinless chicken breast

2 bell peppers--green, yellow, orange, or red cut into strips

2 onions cut into strips

1 bottle of Italian dressing

tortillas

toppings lettuce, sour cream, shredded cheese

This is an easy meal to start preparing the night before. In a large plastic bag, place your chicken breast and 2/3 bottle of Italian dressing. Let marinate overnight.

In a separate bag place the remaining dressing and your sliced onion and peppers. Let these marinate overnight as well.

The next day around dinner time, place the chicken into a skillet with some of the liquid. Cook over medium heat until cooked through. You want to use a thermometer to test the internal temperature of the chicken. If you do not have a thermometer, cut in the center of the chicken and see if it is still pink. When it is cooked, remove from pan and cut into strips.

Place the chicken strips and peppers and onions into the pan again and cook over medium high heat. You want to blacken the food just a tad to give it that "grilled" effect.

Serve on tortillas with various toppings.

Serve with a side of boxed Mexican rice. Choose corn as your vegetable

Hot wings

- ½ c soy sauce
- ½ c Italian dressing
- ½ c bottled hot sauce
- 3 lbs frozen chicken wings

Place the above ingredients into a large plastic bag. Refrigerate overnight.

Cover a large cookie sheet with foil and spray with nonstick cooking spray. Place drained chicken wings on the foil lined cookie sheet. Bake at 400 for 45 minutes. Flip the chicken and cook 30 minutes more. Be sure to check the internal temperature of the chicken with a thermometer or pierce the meatiest part of the chicken wing to see if the meat is cooked and not pink.

Suggestions to serve with: baked oven fries and a salad

An easy way to make baked oven fries, is to wash and slice potatoes into wedge sections. Toss in a bowl with some olive oil, salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Spread in a single layer on a cookie sheet lined with foil. Bake 400 degrees about 30 minutes until potatoes are cooked. You can do this with sweet potatoes as well. A healthier alternative to French fries and cheaper!!

Chicken Divan

- 2 c rice
- 3 c water
- 1 bag of frozen broccoli florets
- 2-3 c cooked chicken, cubed. Cook over medium heat, in a skillet with a little water until no longer pink.
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1/2 c whipped salad dressing
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 c shredded cheddar cheese

Combine soup, water, whipped salad dressing, and lemon juice. Grease a 13x9 pan. Layer rice, followed by broccoli and then the chicken. Pour creamed soup mixture over the broccoli. Sprinkle cheese on top. Bake at 350 for 30-60 minutes.

Country chicken and biscuits

- 1 bag of real bacon bits
- 2 cups cooked chopped chicken
- 1-10 oz pkg frozen mixed vegetables or peas and carrots
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup
- 1 ½ c of milk

Combine all the ingredients and place in a greased 9x13 baking pan.

For the biscuits

- 1 ½ c biscuit mix
- 2/3 c milk

Combine together until just mixed. Drop by spoonfuls to form 6 biscuits around casserole. Bake uncovered 20 minutes until biscuits are golden brown.

A complete meal. You can serve with some fruit as a side

Oven barbecued chicken

8-10 pieces of chicken --whatever your family will eat, breasts, tenderloins, drumsticks, thighs, wings
1 bottle of favorite barbecue sauce

Place chicken in a 9x13 baking dish. Top with barbecue sauce. Bake covered for 45-60 minutes. Uncover and bake additional 20 minutes until chicken is done. Check with a thermometer for doneness.

Serve with a starchy side--potatoes, rice, or pasta

Choose a vegetable that your family will enjoy.

Chicken etti

1 -8oz pkg spaghetti cooked and drained
1 T butter or oil for sautéing
½ c chopped onion
1/3 c chopped green pepper
1/3 c diced celery
2 T chicken bouillon dissolved in 1 cup hot water
1 can cream of mushroom soup
2 c diced cooked chicken
¼ tsp pepper
1 c processed American cheese, cubed

In large pot sauté onion, green pepper, and celery in 1 T of butter or oil until tender. Add all the other ingredients except the spaghetti and mix thoroughly. Cook about 3 minutes over low heat. Add spaghetti and combine thoroughly.

Serve with a vegetable.

For some of your meals you might choose to make rice or pasta. Here you will read how to make it properly.

How to make rice

For most rice, use a 1:2 ratio of one cup of rice to two cups of water . Measure a half cup of uncooked rice per person and scale this ratio up or down depending on how much you're making. Check packages for correct water/rice ratio.

Determine how much rice you will be cooking based on recommendations above.

Fill a large pot—rice expands make sure it has room to grow—with amount of water needed. Turn on high and bring to a full boil.

Stir in rice, with a sprinkling of salt and pepper and 1 tsp butter per 1 cup of rice—if desired. You don't have to add salt, pepper, or butter we make it all the time without these additives. Stir, and bring back to a full boil.

Place lid on rice and turn heat down to a low simmer. You want it to still be gently bubbling---called simmering—DO NOT take the lid off. Rice is cooked by *steaming*.

Brown rice takes about 30-40 minutes. Start checking the rice around 18 minutes for white rice and 30 minutes for brown rice. When done, the rice will be firm but tender, and no longer crunchy. It is fine if it's slightly sticky but shouldn't be gummy. If there is still water left in the pan when the rice is done, tilt the pan to drain it off.

Turn off the heat and remove the lid. Fluff the rice with a fork and let it sit for a few moments to lose that wet-just steamed texture.

How to cook pasta

Fill a large pot 2/3 the way with hot water. If you use cold, it takes your stove that much more energy to heat it. Make sure that you don't under fill the pot, this will make your pasta sticky.

Turn the stove to high and heat water to a full boil stage. Keep a lid on the pot to conserve energy and to boil quicker. Some cooks add 1 T

olive oil to prevent sticking of noodles and others add 1 teaspoon of salt to bring out the flavor. Neither are required.

After the water is boiling, add your box of pasta and stir. Make sure to scrap the bottom so that the pasta does not stick.

After water returns to a full boil, set the timer to the recommended cooking time from your box of pasta. You can turn down the stove just a little to prevent it from boiling over. Do not cover the pasta as the water will boil over. You can stir it during this cooking time.

When it nears time, use a slotted spoon and remove one noodle from the water. Be careful as this is hot!! Take a bite to taste doneness. If it is chewy, let it boil for a few more minutes.

When done, turn stove off and have your colander in the sink to drain. Pour the pot out away from you to prevent being burned by steam and dump noodles into colander. Use extra caution, because this is extremely hot and WILL burn you.

Shake out the extra water from the colander, and then return noodles to the pot. Do not put back on hot burner, or it will burn your noodles to the pan.

Do not rinse your noodles unless you are making a cold salad dish.

Immediately serve or cover with sauce. If the noodles are left to sit, they will get sticky. You can prevent this by lightly tossing in olive oil.

Week 12

Cakes and cupcakes

Cake baking can be as simple these days as opening up a box and making it, or it can be made elaborate by mixing up something wonderful from scratch.

To make a good cake, you must do the following:

- use good ingredients -you want to make sure that all of your ingredients are not passed expiration
- all ingredients should be at room temperature when using, unless noted differently in a recipe
- measure ingredients exactly-no "about" measurements for cakes
- use a good quality margarine or solid shortening, do not use oil when recipe calls for margarine or shortening.
- use clean shiny pans so a dark crust does not form on the cake.
- glass or dark metal pans will result in excessive browning. If you have no other choice, turn the temperature down 15 degrees to prevent browning.
- important to use the correct pan size. Batter should be at least 1 inch deep in the pan.
- prepare your pans before mixing the cakes. Use shortening and you can lightly dust with flour after greasing.
- read the recipe carefully before you begin to make sure you understand the procedure.

Typically when making a cake you are to cream the shortening until soft, then add sugar, and continue beating until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and the flavoring. Beat very well until fluffy. Add sifted ingredients in three portions alternatively with liquid ingredients in two portions beginning and ending with dry ingredients. Do not over mix.

Mix only until blended. Be sure to scrape your bowl thoroughly while mixing.

Sometimes eggs are called to be separated, and the beaten whites to be added later. If this is the case, beat egg whites in separate bowl until soft peaks form.

How to separate eggs

It is best to do this when eggs are chilled. It helps the yolk to stick together better.

Carefully crack the egg, in the middle of the shell against a side of the bowl.

Hold the egg so that the cracked part is facing up. Pry open the egg gently, catching the yolk in half of the shell. Do this above a bowl, making sure no part of the yolk or the shell falls in.

Let the white slide into the bowl. Take the eggshell half with the yolk sitting in it and switch the yolk to the other half, making sure it doesn't fall into the bowl or "melt". Repeat this about three times, switching from side to side as the white continues to drip into the bowl.

This takes practice. Know that if you accidentally get any yolk into your egg whites, they will not beat up into white fluffy peaks.

It is best to do these one at a time in a separate bowl, then transfer to the mixing bowl. That way if you mess up on your last egg, you won't have to re do all of the eggs.

If this method is difficult you can also use your hands.

Wash your hands thoroughly.

Have someone crack an egg into your hand cupped slightly.

Carefully let the white part slide from your fingers into the bowl.
Carefully keep the yolk cupped inside your hand.

This is just an easier way, with practice you will get skilled doing it with the shell.

Tips and techniques

- Always preheat your oven to correct temperature before placing the cake in the oven. Do not let pans touch each other or the sides of the oven to obtain even baking.
- Cakes should not be disturbed. Do not open the oven door until it is time to check out whether it is done. Otherwise, this could cause the cake to fall.
- Cake is done when the top springs back when lightly touched with a finger, or when a wooden toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
- Cakes should be cooled for about 5-10 minutes before turning out of the pan in order to avoid breaking the cake apart. Cake is difficult to remove when it is too cool. An easy way to avoid cakes sticking to the pan is to line it with waxed paper. Just cut a piece to fit the bottom of the pan.

- When greasing your pans for baking, some will need nonstick cooking spray. If you do not have any on hand you can use shortening. Just place your hand inside of a plastic baggie, and grease your pan with it. Then throw away your baggie.
- To soften margarine for baking, place it for a short time under the broiler in the oven, watch this carefully! Shortening should not be melted for cakes or cookies.
- For a throwaway cake plate, cover a circle of cardboard with foil.
- In many cakes, the egg whites can be beaten separately and folded in last to obtain a lighter cake
- For an extra moist cake, cover the cake tightly about 5 minutes after removing it from the oven. Keep it covered until cool.
- Place 4 narrow strips of waxed paper on a plate under the cake before icing it. These can be easily pulled out after cake is iced to remove any mess and leave clean edge around cake on plate.
- If a layer cake sticks to pan, return to a warm oven briefly. It should come out easily.
- Dip knife into hot water to heat it in order to help smooth icing that is difficult to spread.
- To slice cake easily, dip knife in hot water first, then wipe with a towel.
- If you do not have enough muffin tins for making cupcakes, use a cookie sheet and regular canning jar rings to hold the papers in place.
- To make heart shaped cupcakes, place small balls of foil between a muffin pan and paper cup to indent them into the shape of a heart.
- To make black frosting for decorating cookies or cakes, add blue color to chocolate frosting.
- Set a cake on a turntable for easy mobility while icing.

- For perfect cupcakes, make sure to measure your ingredients accurately. For perfect sized cupcakes-use an ice cream scoop for even distribution and same-sized cakes.
- Testing of cupcakes: when touching the tops they should spring back gently.
- Allow cupcakes to cool for a few moments before removing from pan. Allow to completely cool before frosting, or your will get melty frosting.
- To prevent cakes from getting dry when storing, cover them with frosting to lock in moisture.
- Frostings made with puddings or whipped topping need to be stored in the refrigerator to ensure freshness.

Icing the cake

Ice the cake as soon as it is cool to seal in moisture and freshness. Do not try and ice a warm cake. If you are making a layer cake, place the bottom layer upside down on cake plate so the smooth flat side is up.

Spread with filling or frosting. Add top layer, top side up, so the smooth straight sides are together. If your cake is too rounded on top, a thin slice can be removed to level it off. In this case, raw edge should be put down because it would be difficult to spread icing onto it without pulling up the cake.

Brush off loose crumbs. Spread icing on sides of cake first.

Depending upon the thickness of the icing, it sometimes helps to go around the entire sides of the cake with a thin layer of icing first to seal in crumbs. Then add a second coat of desired thickness. Bring icing up high on the sides of the cake to make a good sharp edge at the top of the cake. Pile remaining icing on top. Spread lightly then make swirls or ridges with a knife to look attractive. Place the spatula on

the top of the frosted cake. Tilt it slightly and lift up to get an icing peak. Continue onto another spot until the entire cake has small peaks on top.

A smooth top is perfectly acceptable. If you let the cake sit iced for a couple of hours, it'll form a slight crust. Once it's got that crust, place a large piece of waxed or parchment paper loosely over the top of the cake. Gently, rub your hands over the top of the cake to smooth any ruff areas. You can do the same thing on the sides.

Troubleshooting

My cake didn't rise and is as flat as a pancake

- You may have forgotten to put in baking powder or didn't use all purpose flour, which is self-rising.
- Check for the freshness of your baking powder.
- Don't over mix your ingredients. Once your ingredients are combined, stop whisking and start baking.
- If the cake is soft and spongy, you can put on a thin layer of icing, and cut it into mini cakes to serve.

My cake is stuck in the tin

- Run a knife around the edge of the cake, between the cake and the baking tin. Give it a little pat around the edges and on the bottom.
- Don't attempt to get it out of the tin when it is hot. Let it sit for 15 minutes or more. As it cools it will shrink a bit and stick together better.
- When ready to flip the cake out, place a serving platter or plate on top of the cake tin and flip them simultaneously. Your cake should pop out onto the plate if you properly greased the pans.

- If it comes out broken and in pieces, crumble up the cake, and layer it with some prepared pudding and cool whip to make a trifle. It all tastes the same.

My cake is burnt

- If it is completely burnt---like black beyond saving, throw it away.
- If it is a little crispy around the edges, but soft on the inside, then cut off the edges. Frost as usual.
- If your cake starts to brown before the inside is cooked, place a piece of tin foil on top to stop browning and allow the inside to cook.

My cake is too dry

- Make sure to add the correct amounts of flour. If you put in too much flour, the wet ingredients will absorb the flour leaving your cake dry and crumbly.
- Turn them into cake pops by adding some frosting, mixing, and forming them into balls. Place on waxed paper and freeze. Dip in melted chocolate.

My cake has sunk in the middle

- Don't open the door when baking a cake. Only check it when it is in the last few minutes of baking.
- If the cake is sunk in the middle, but cooked all the way through, just cover the top of the cake with frosting or pudding to disguise the concave.

My cake has risen unevenly

- Make sure to spread it evenly into the baking pan when preparing.
- If you need to fix it, slice off the uneven piece with a bread knife. Cover with frosting to hide the imperfection.

Week 12 hands on skill--- making cakes/cupcakes

Choose a cake or cupcake recipe to make this week.

Apple dapple cake

3 eggs
beat well
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ c oil
2 tsp vanilla
2 c sugar
Add, beating well.
2 $\frac{3}{4}$ c flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
1 tsp cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp nutmeg
mix together and then add to above mixture
 $\frac{1}{4}$ c flour
3 c apples, chopped
1 c nuts chopped
mix together and then fold in
pour into a greased 9 x13 pan or a Bundt pan. Bake at 350 for 50 minutes.
Topping
1/3 c margarine
1 c brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{4}$ c milk
1 tsp vanilla
mix in saucepan and boil for 3 minutes. Pour hot topping over cake about 5 minutes after removing from oven.

Black forest cake

1 pkg chocolate cake mix—prepare as box states and bake in 2 round cake pans
To layer cake, place one cake layer on bottom, fill with half can of cherry pie filling and top with half carton of whipped topping. Top with additional cake piece, spread with remaining pie filling and top with cool whip.
You can add chopped, shaved chocolate on top for decoration—
Take a plain chocolate candy bar and carefully shave off thin slices and place on top of cake

Jell-O poke cake

1- 3 oz pkg raspberry or strawberry jello dissolved in $\frac{3}{4}$ c boiling water, stir until completely dissolved then add $\frac{1}{2}$ c cold water.
Bake 1 white cake mix, per box directions and place in a 9x13 inch pan.
Cool cake 25 minutes. Then pierce holes in cake at 1/2 inch intervals with sharp fork. Pour Jell-O over cake so that it soaks into holes. Refrigerate.
Topping:
1 envelope Dream Whip
1 pkg instant vanilla pudding
1 1/2 c cold milk
Whip until stiff, about 5 minutes, and spread over cake

Pineapple upside down cake

Melt 1/3 cup butter or margarine in 9x13 baking pan. Stir into butter 2/3 c brown sugar. Arrange in pan 8 slices pineapple and put 8 maraschino cherries in the center of the pineapple. Then prepare a yellow cake mix from a box and pour over top of your pineapple. Bake at 350 for 30-35 minutes. Cool for 5 minutes and then invert pan and serve warm.

Carrot cake

1 ½ c oil
2 c sugar
2 c flour
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp salt
4 eggs
3 c shredded carrot
1 c nuts, chopped

Beat the first 6 ingredients together for 2 minutes.

Add eggs, one at a time, continuing to beat. Add carrots and nuts; fold in. Pour into greased 9 x13 pan. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes, or until tested done with a toothpick. Cool and frost with cream cheese frosting.

Cream cheese frosting:

8 oz cream cheese
½ c butter
3-4 c powdered sugar
1 ½ tsp vanilla

Beat together cream cheese and butter. Add powdered sugar and vanilla. Beat until smooth.

Peanut butter chocolate cake

2 c flour
2 c sugar
2/3 c cocoa
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt
2 eggs
1 c milk
2/3 c oil
2 tsp vanilla
2 c brewed coffee, room temp

In bowl combine dry ingredients, add eggs, milk, oil and vanilla. Beat for 2 minutes. Stir in coffee. Pour into greased 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 for 35-40 minutes, or until tested done. Cool completely on a wire rack.

For the frosting:

Beat 1 pkg cream cheese and ¼ c creamy peanut butter in mixing bowl until smooth. Beat in 2 c powdered sugar, 2T milk, 1/2 tsp vanilla. Spread over cake and sprinkle with chopped peanut butter cups.

Cupcake recipes

Basic white cupcakes

1 c butter, softened
1 ½ c sugar
1 T baking powder
½ tsp salt
4 large eggs
1 c milk
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 2/3 c all-purpose flour

Directions

Heat oven to 350°F. Line 12 regular-size muffin cups with paper liners.

Beat butter, sugar, baking powder and salt in a large bowl with mixer on high speed 1 minute or until well blended. Add eggs; beat 2 minutes or until fluffy. On low speed beat in milk and vanilla (batter may look curdled), then flour just until blended.

Spoon scant 1/4 cup into each muffin cup, filling each about 2/3 full.

Bake 20 to 25 minutes until a wooden pick inserted in centers of cupcakes comes out clean.

Cool in pan on a wire rack 5 minutes before removing from pan to rack.

Basic chocolate cupcakes

1 c butter, softened
1 ½ sugar
½ c unsweetened cocoa powder
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp salt
2 large eggs
1 c milk
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 ½ c all-purpose flour

Directions

Heat oven to 350°F. Line 12 regular-size muffin cups with paper liners.

Beat butter, sugar, cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt in a large bowl with mixer on low speed 1 minute or until well blended. Add eggs; beat 2 minutes or until fluffy. Beat in milk and vanilla (batter may look curdled), then flour just until blended.

Spoon scant ¼ cup batter into each muffin cup, filling each about 2/3 full.

Bake 20 to 25 minutes until a wooden pick inserted in centers of cupcakes comes out clean. Cool in pan on a wire rack 5 minutes before removing from pan to rack

Easy frosting

2 cups confectioner –powdered sugar
2 T butter, softened
2 T milk
½ teaspoon vanilla extract

In bowl combine all ingredients and beat on medium speed until smooth. If it is too thick add a few more drops of milk, too thin—add a sprinkling more of powdered sugar.

Want chocolate frosting? Melt the butter and add in ½ cup cocoa powder. Add remainder ingredients.

All about ground beef and pies

Food safety—ground beef

This section is just as important as the “chicken” section. Make sure that you read and understand all about safety when handling raw meat. This information is taken from the USDA website and is free for public use.

Can bacteria spread from one surface to another?

Yes. It is called cross-contamination. Bacteria in raw meat juices can contaminate foods that have been cooked safely or raw foods that won't be cooked, such as salad ingredients. Bacteria also can be present on equipment, hands, and even in the air.

To avoid cross-contamination, wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling ground beef to make sure you don't spread bacteria. Don't reuse any packaging materials. Use soap and hot water to wash utensils and surfaces which have come into contact with the raw meat. Utensils and surfaces can be sanitized with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Don't put cooked hamburgers on the same platter that held the raw patties or use utensils that touched the raw meat unless you wash the platter or utensils first.

What's the best way to handle raw ground beef when shopping?

At the store, choose a package that feels cold and is not torn. If possible, place the package in a plastic bag so leaking juices won't drip on other foods. Make ground beef one of the last items to go into your shopping cart. Separate raw meat from ready-cooked items in your cart. Have the clerk place the raw ground beef in a separate bag.

Use some hand cleaner while finishing up your shopping.

Plan to drive directly home from the grocery store. You may want to bring a cooler with ice for perishables.

How should raw ground beef be stored at home?

Refrigerate or freeze ground beef as soon as possible after purchase. This preserves freshness and slows the growth of bacteria. It can be refrigerated or frozen in its original packaging if the meat will be used soon.

If refrigerated, keep at 40 °F (4.4 °C) or below and use within 1 or 2 days.

For longer freezer storage, wrap in heavy duty plastic wrap, aluminum foil, freezer paper, or plastic bags made for freezing. Ground beef is safe indefinitely if kept frozen, but will lose quality over time. It is best if used within 4 months. Mark your packages with the date they were placed in the freezer so you can keep track of storage times.

What is the best way to thaw ground beef?

The best way to safely thaw ground beef is in the refrigerator. Keeping meat cold while it is defrosting is essential to prevent the growth of bacteria. Cook or refreeze within 1 or 2 days.

To defrost ground beef more rapidly, you can defrost in the microwave oven or in cold water. If using the microwave, cook the ground beef immediately because some areas may begin to cook during the defrosting. To defrost in cold water, put the meat in a watertight plastic bag and submerge. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately. Do not refreeze raw ground meat thawed in cold water or in the microwave oven unless you cook it first.

Never leave ground beef or any perishable food out at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour at 90 °F and above).

Is it dangerous to eat raw or undercooked ground beef?

Yes. Raw and undercooked meat may contain harmful bacteria. USDA recommends not eating or tasting raw or undercooked ground beef. To be sure all bacteria are destroyed, cook meat loaf, meatballs, and hamburgers to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160 °F (71.1 °C). Use a food thermometer to check that they have reached a safe internal temperature.

Are there people who are more at risk from eating ground beef that is undercooked or mishandled?

The very young, the very old, and those with immune systems that have been weakened by cancer, kidney disease, and other illnesses are most at risk and vulnerable to illnesses associated with contaminated food. The symptoms of food borne illness — such as diarrhea or vomiting, which can cause dehydration — can be very serious. Safe food handling practices at home or anywhere food is served is especially important for those in the “at-risk” group.

Is it safe to partially cook ground beef to use later?

No. The partial cooking of food ahead of time allows harmful bacteria to survive and multiply to the point that subsequent cooking cannot destroy them.

Can I refrigerate or freeze leftover cooked hamburgers? How should they be reheated?

If ground beef is refrigerated promptly after cooking (within 2 hours; 1 hour if the temperature is above 90 °F), it can be safely refrigerated for about 3 or 4 days. If frozen, it should keep its quality for about 4 months.

When reheating fully cooked patties or casseroles containing ground beef, be sure the internal temperature reaches 165 °F (73.9 °C).

Why is pre-packaged ground beef red on the outside and sometimes dull, grayish-brown inside?

Oxygen from the air reacts with meat pigments to form a bright red color which is usually seen on the surface of meat purchased in the supermarket. The pigment responsible for the red color in meat is oxymyoglobin, a substance found in all warm-blooded animals. Fresh cut meat is purplish in color. The interior of the meat may be grayish brown due to lack of oxygen; however, if all the meat in the package has turned gray or brown, it may be beginning to spoil.

Why does ground beef release a lot of “juice” while cooking?

In making ground beef, some retail stores grind the meat while it is still frozen. Ice crystals in the frozen meat break down the cell walls, permitting the release of meat juices during cooking. The same thing happens after ground meat is frozen at home.

What causes ground beef patties to shrink while cooking?

All meat will shrink in size and weight during cooking. The amount of shrinkage will depend on its fat and moisture content, the temperature at which the meat is cooked, and how long it is cooked. Basically, the higher the cooking temperature, the greater the shrinkage. Cooking ground beef at moderate temperatures will reduce shrinkage and help retain juices and flavor. Overcooking draws out more fat and juices from ground beef, resulting in a dry, less tasty product.

How can consumers handle ground beef safely in their homes?

When meat is ground, more of the meat is exposed to the harmful bacteria. Bacteria multiply rapidly in the “Danger Zone” — the temperatures between 40 and 140 °F (4.4 and 60 °C). Refrigerate or freeze ground beef as soon as possible after purchase. This preserves its freshness and slows the growth of bacteria. It can be refrigerated or frozen in its original packaging if the meat will be used soon. To keep bacterial levels low, store ground beef at 40 °F (4.4 °C) or below and use within 2 days, or freeze. Never leave ground beef or any perishable

food out at room temperature for more than 2 hours — 1 hour at 90 °F (32.2 °C) and above.

Follow these tips when handling and preparing meat:

CLEAN. Wash hands and surfaces often. Unless you wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces the right way, you could spread bacteria to your food, and your family.

Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after handling ground beef to make sure you don't spread bacteria. Use soap and hot water to wash utensils and surfaces which have come into contact with the raw meat. Utensils and surfaces can be sanitized with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water.

SEPARATE. Don't cross-contaminate. Even after you've cleaned your hands and surfaces thoroughly, raw ground meat can still spread illness-causing bacteria to ready-to-eat foods-unless you keep them separate.

Bacteria in raw meat juices can contaminate foods that have been cooked safely or raw foods that won't be cooked, such as salad ingredients. Bacteria also can be present on equipment, hands, and even in the air. To avoid cross-contamination, keep everything clean. Don't reuse any packaging materials. Don't put cooked hamburgers on the same platter that held the raw patties unless you wash the platter again.

COOK. Cook to the right temperature. Did you know that the bacteria that cause food poisoning multiply quickest in the "Danger Zone," the temperatures between 40 and 140 °F (4.4 and 60 °C)?

To destroy harmful bacteria, cook ground beef to a safe minimum internal temperature of 160 °F (71.1 °C) as measured with a food thermometer.

CHILL. Refrigerate promptly. Illness-causing bacteria can grow in perishable foods within 2 hours unless you refrigerate them.

Some tips and techniques

When you go to the grocery store, you will notice that there are lots of different kinds of ground meat. There is hamburger meat, ground beef, ground round, ground chuck, and ground sirloin. Which do you buy?? It depends upon what your family prefers. Some will look at the pricing, as it is directly related to the different levels of fat in beef. Usually the lower the fat content, the higher the cost will be per pound. Ground sirloin is the leanest kind of ground beef that you can purchase and will taste the best---but it is usually at a significantly higher price. Most can buy ground round or chuck and then drain off the remainder of fat after cooking.

Place a colander and drain out the beef after it has been cooked. DO NOT let this go down your drain. As it cools it will solidify in your pipes and ruin them. Pour outdoors out of the way, or let cool and put in the trash.

When buying ground beef, you should use it fresh within 2 days of buying it. If you want to use it for a later time you can put it in the freezer.

One of the BEST things you can do when you buy ground beef is to immediately place it in a pan and cook it. Drain and let cool. Place in freezer bags or containers and place in your freezer. When your recipe calls for ground beef, you won't have to take the time to cook it. You can just thaw your meat and continue on with the recipe. This is a HUGE timesaver in food preparation.

All about making pies

Pie, along with ice cream, reportedly ranks as one of the favorite desserts in the United States. For most people they prefer apple, then cherry. Of course, there is a staple pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving as well. Unfortunately, making good pies is an art that has plagued many beginners and some others to the point of despair. They have concluded that "pies are something I cannot make!" This doesn't necessarily have to be true. Most people fail because of the lack of knowledge and experience.

A good pie must have a good crust, and the crust of course gives the most problem. There is an art to making a flaky tender crust.

As with all worth-while accomplishments in life, a few failures should not cause one to conclude that a good job is impossible.

We can usually accomplish anything that we set our minds to. If you take a little extra time now in your teens to learn how to make a good pie crust, you will be able to make great pies for the rest of your lifetime.

Let's get started.....

Two important items that are needed: the flour and the fat you use. Different brands of flour and fat can give quite different baking results. Choose an all purpose flour like Gold Medal.

Using butter is the easiest option to obtain a flaky crust. Shortening can also be an excellent substitute for butter.

Glass or dull metal pie pans give the best results with a pastry. You want the pie crust to turn out crispy and lightly browned. The dull

metal pans absorb the heat and cause it to brown. This helps to avoid having soggy crusts.

The correct proportion of flour, water, and fat are of prime importance. Too much fat will make a greasy dough that will tend to cling together before you add the water. It will be difficult to roll out and will probably fall apart when you try to put it in the pie plate. If too much water is added, the dough will become soggy and sticky. It will take up too much flour as you roll it out. This will cause it to become tough.

The amount of water may vary slightly with brands of flour. Water should be ice cold for good mixing results. If too much flour is added, the crust will be tough.

The dough must also be mixed correctly. The flakiness in pastry is obtained by the proper amount of mixing. The tiny particles of fat throughout the dough cause it to flake apart. Over mixing the dough when combining flour and fat causes the fat areas to dissolve and makes for less flakiness. Mix only until the texture resembles coarse crumbs about the size of peas. The tenderness of the crust depends a lot on how much the dough is worked when mixing in the liquid and rolling out the crust. Working the dough excessively develops the gluten structure in the flour and toughens the dough. This is why you should not add flour after mixing in the liquid.

For best results the ingredients for making pastry should be cold . This is opposite for most baking ,where ingredients should be room temperature.

Easy pie crust
Makes one crust

1¼ c all-purpose flour
1 stick cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
½ tsp salt
3 to 4 T ice water

In a food processor, pulse the flour, butter, sugar, and salt until the mixture resembles coarse meal with a few pea-size clumps of butter remaining.

Add 2 tablespoons of the water at a time down the chute until mixture forms a ball. Put into a floured container and cover. Set in freezer to chill for ½ hour or 1 hour in refrigerator.

Roll out on a well-floured board into a circle, rolling from the center to the edge, turning and flouring the dough to make sure it doesn't stick to the board. Fold the dough in half, place in a greased pie pan, and unfold to fit the pan. Pinch the edges along the rim to seal to edge.

Bake as recipe calls for

Tips and techniques

- If you have problems with the crusts browning too much on the edge before the center of the pie is done, cut a 1 1/2 inch wide circle of foil, and lay on top of edge while baking. Remove the foil about 10 minutes before the pie is done so the edge will be slightly browned.
- To measure sizes for top and bottom crusts while rolling out dough, hold inverted pie plate over rolled dough.
- Crumb crusts do not need to be baked before being filled. If using unbaked, they should be chilled first to set the melted margarine. Otherwise the filling will immediately begin to soak into the crust. They will be crisper if baked a short time. Cool the filling before pouring into crust.
- Use glass pie plates for custard pies or fruit pies when the crust and filling are baked together.
- Place the pan on the lower rack in the oven nearer the heating element.
- When making a crumb crust, save some of the crumbs to sprinkle on top of the pie for garnish.

- If you like a shiny top crusts on pies, brush lightly with slightly beaten egg whites. Be careful not to let excessive egg whites settle on low parts of the pie. For a special touch sprinkle the top with granulated sugar or cinnamon.
- Use a pizza cutter for quick cutting of strips of a lattice pie top.
- Do not place pies against the edge of the oven when baking as the edges will tend to burn. Leave a little space around each pie for even baking and browning.
- Place the pie on a metal baking sheet during baking.

Choosing your pie

Pumpkin pie

¾ c granulated sugar
 1 can -15 oz pumpkin
 2 eggs
 1-12 oz can evaporated milk
 1 tsp cinnamon
 1 tsp nutmeg
 In mixing bowl, beat the above ingredients until well combined. Pour into an uncooked pie shell. Bake in preheated 425 oven for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350; bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. Serve immediately or refrigerate. Top with whipped cream before serving.

Apple pie

6 apples, peeled and sliced
 2/3 cup sugar
 2 T cornstarch
 1 tsp cinnamon
 2 T butter
 1 tsp lemon juice (adds extra flavor)
 You will need 2 pie crusts for this for a top and a bottom.
 Mix apples, sugar, cornstarch, lemon juice, and cinnamon, pour into unbaked crust. Dot with butter.
 Place other pastry on top. Slit top, trim and pinch edge to seal. Bake at 400 for 30 minutes.

Canned fruit filling pie Cherry or Blueberry

This is an easy way to make a fruit filled pie. You make your pie crust and pour in 2 -21 oz cans of canned pie filling. You need to make 2 crusts for the pie. The top layer you can roll it out and cut out with little cookie cutters--- star or heart shapes and then place them on top of your filling for something different. Bake 400 for 30 minutes.

Coconut cream pie

2 -3.4 oz each instant vanilla pudding mix
2 c cold milk
1 -8 oz container of whipped topping
1 cup coconut

Beat pudding mixes and milk in a large bowl with a whisk for 2 minutes. Stir in 1 cup of whipped topping and 3/4 cup coconut. Immediately pour into crust. Refrigerate for 4 hours until set. Meanwhile toast remaining coconut. Top pie with remaining whipped topping and coconut.

How to toast coconut

Oven method:
spread 1 cup on a cookie sheet and bake 325 until browned. This will take 5-10 minutes, stir a few times while toasting.

Chocolate pudding pie

For this pie you will need to bake your pie crust beforehand. Bake at 350 for 20 minutes until slightly browned. Make sure you preheat the oven first. If you put your crust to the oven before it is preheated, it may shrink down into your pan. Let the crust cool completely before filling.

2 pkg (3.9 oz) instant chocolate pudding
3 c cold milk

1 -8oz pkg whipped topping

Whisk the pudding and the milk until thoroughly combined. Pour immediately into pie crust. Chill. Before serving, spread on whipped topping.

You will be putting your pie making skills into effect next week when you prepare a dinner meal.

Week 13 hands on skill---making a ground beef meal

Mexican straw hats

4 c of cooked rice
1 lb hamburger, seasoned with 1 pkg taco seasoning
1 small onion, chopped
1 small green pepper chopped
1 can refried beans, heated
1 tomato diced
corn chips
salsa
sour cream
shredded cheese
ranch dressing
Begin with your rice, and build your own meal with your choice of ingredients and your choice of amounts.

Making mashed potatoes---peel and cut in quarters as many potatoes as you have guests. Typically 1 large or 2 smaller potatoes per person. Place in a large pot and fill with water about half covering the potatoes. With lid on, heat over medium high heat until boiling. Turn down to low medium, you want it to continue to boil but not to the point that it boils over your pot. Continue cooking for about 20 minutes. Test the potatoes by poking with a fork, if soft and break apart---then done. With lid on drain out liquid from pot, being careful not to burn yourself from the steam. After liquid is drained out, put in 1-16 oz container of sour cream for 10 lbs of potatoes. Use an electric mixer on high and beat potatoes until smooth. Make sure to get down in all of the corners of the pot when you are mixing.

Cheeseburger Meatloaf

½ c ketchup, divided
1 egg
¼ c bread crumbs
1 tsp onion powder, or 1/2 small onion, diced finely
1 lb uncooked ground beef
2 tsp mustard
2 tsp pickle relish---or dill pickles finely cut up
6 slices American cheese
Combine 1/4 cup ketchup, egg, bread crumbs, and onion powder. Crumble ground beef into the mixture. On a large piece of waxed paper, pat mixture into a 10x6 rectangle. Spread remaining ketchup onto meat to within 1/2 inch from long sides, and 1 1/2 inch from ends. Top with mustard and relish. Place 4 cheese slices on top. Roll up in a jelly roll style, starting with a short side. ---think rolling a cinnamon roll. Pull the waxed paper off as you roll it up. Place roll on a 7x11 inch greased pan. Bake at 350 for 45 minutes. Put remaining cheese slices on top, diagonally. Return to oven for additional 5 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.
Serve this with oven fries or make some mashed potatoes.

Hamburger gravy

2 lbs ground beef cooked with 1 small onion, diced
2 T beef bouillon
1/4 c flour
1 quart milk
salt and pepper to taste
Sprinkle flour over your cooked ground beef and onion. Stir until evenly coated and all fat is absorbed. Place skillet over medium heat, add 1/2 of milk and 2 T beef bouillon. Stir until gravy begins to thicken. Add remaining milk until desired consistency has been reached and gravy comes to a boil. Season with salt, pepper.
Serve over mashed potatoes and some peas

Beef stroganoff

1 1/2 lbs ground beef
1 small onion diced
1/2 bag of bacon bits
1 garlic clove minced
2 T flour
1/2 t salt and pepper
1/2 t paprika
1/8 t nutmeg

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 cup sour cream

Cook hamburger with onion, until browned. Stir in bacon bits, garlic, flour, salt and pepper, paprika, and nutmeg. Stir in 1 can of cream of mushroom soup.

Bring to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Before serving stir in 1 cup sour cream.

Serve on hamburger buns or if you want you can boil up some egg noodles and serve over that.

Bubble pizza

2 tubes of refrigerated biscuits cut in fourths

1 jar of pizza sauce

1 1/2 lb ground beef, cooked

your favorite pizza toppings

pepperoni

bacon bits

green peppers

onion

mushroom

olives

shredded mozzarella cheese

Mix together quartered biscuits, pizza sauce, meats and your choice of toppings. Pour into a 9x13 greased baking pan. Sprinkle with more cheese. Bake 350 for 40 minutes, or until biscuits are no longer doughy.

Spaghetti casserole

1 lb hamburger

1/2 onion, chopped

1 tsp salt

dash of pepper

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1-10 oz can tomato sauce

1 soup can of water

2 c mozzarella cheese shredded

1/2 lb spaghetti cooked and drained

Brown hamburger, add onion, seasonings, can of tomato sauce. Cook over medium heat 5 minutes. Mix in spaghetti. In a 9x13 casserole dish, layer half of the spaghetti mixture. Top with 1 can of cream of mushroom soup mix with 1 soup can of water. Sprinkle 1/2 the cheese on. Top with remaining spaghetti.

Sprinkle remaining cheese on top. Bake 350 until bubbly hot, 20 minutes.

Easy shepherd's pie

1 lb ground beef

2 c mashed potatoes

4 oz cream cheese, cubed

1 c cheddar cheese

2 cloves of garlic

4 c mixed vegetables, canned or frozen--peas, carrots, corn, and green beans are good choices.

1 c beef gravy---jarred or make from a packet

Brown your ground beef. While that is cooking---mix the potato, cream cheese, and garlic in medium sized bowl. Place the meat, vegetables, and 1 cup of beef gravy in a greased square baking dish. Top with potatoes mixture and then sprinkle cheese on top. Bake uncovered 20 minutes

How to make baked potatoes

Pre-heat the oven to 425°F. Rub the potatoes with olive oil, sprinkle them with salt and pepper, and prick them with the tines of a fork. You can lay them directly on the oven rack or place them on a baking sheet. Cook the potatoes for 45 to 60 minutes, until their skin is crispy and sticking one with a fork meets no resistance.

For softer skins, you can wrap them in foil before baking. If you are going to be gone for awhile, you can wrap the potatoes in foil and place in a crockpot and cook on low for 8-10 hours.

Serve with toppings.

Cowboy casserole with corn bread

- 1 lb ground beef
- ½ onion, chopped
- 2 red bell peppers, cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1 (15 ounce) can baked beans
- 1 T dry fajita seasoning
- 1 (8.5 ounce) package corn bread mix
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup milk

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cook the ground beef into a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring frequently, until beef is evenly brown. Add the onion, cook and stir until the onion is translucent. Add the red peppers, beans, and fajita seasoning; cook and stir until heated through. Spread out in an even layer on the bottom of a baking dish.

Mix the package of cornbread mix according to the directions using the egg and milk. Spoon over the ground beef mixture, and spread evenly.

Place in the oven and bake for 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the cornbread layer comes out clean.

Beefy rice casserole

- 1 lb ground beef
 - ½ tsp salt
 - ¼ tsp garlic powder
 - 3 c beef broth or use 3 cups warm water mixed with 2 beef bouillon cubes
 - 1 can (14.5 oz each) diced Tomatoes, undrained
 - 2 c frozen mixed vegetables
 - 1-1/2 c brown rice, uncooked
- Cook beef with salt and garlic powder in deep 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until crumbled and no longer pink. Add all remaining ingredients to skillet. Stir to combine. Bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook 30 minutes or until rice is tender and mixture is of desired consistency.

Chili topped baked potatoes

- 1 lb ground beef
 - 1 onion, chopped
 - 1 -16 oz can of pinto beans, drained
 - 1 -14.5 can diced tomatoes
 - 1 -10 oz can diced tomatoes and green chilies
 - 1 envelope ranch style dressing mix
 - 2 cups water
 - 4 large baking potatoes, cooked with skins on.
- toppings: shredded cheddar cheese, bag bacon, sour cream, ranch, green onions, etc
- Cook ground beef and onion in a large skillet. When completely cooked, stir in Pinto beans, tomatoes, ranch powder, and water. Bring to a boil and then turn down, simmer 20 minutes.

Week 14

Making dinner

Dinner is one meal of the day where most families come and spend quality time together. For most of us, this is the largest meal of our day. Since dinner is a larger meal, it requires more planning to prepare and serve. You will need to be better organized and commit more time to prepare the many different foods and have them all ready at the same time.

A complete dinner menu typically includes:

- an appetizer or soup
- salad
- entree or main dish
- starchy vegetable
- green or yellow vegetable
- bread and butter
- dessert

Not all families serve a meal this way all of the time, but if you want to serve a nice meal try and include all of the above items.

Some tips to help you plan your meal:

- **Plan for variety.** It shouldn't be the same routine every evening. A good cook will try and spruce things up and serve things differently each time. If you have carrots with pot roast, next time serve it with peas.
- **Include foods from all 5 food groups.**
- **Dinner should include a variety** of tastes, colors, textures, and shapes.

- **Plan to prepare some in the oven or crock pot.** These can be prepared ahead of time and cooked without your full attention. While they cook, you can prepare other things.
- **Make casseroles.** These include items from many of the food groups. While it is cooking you can easily make a salad and dessert.
- **Make fruit special.** Include it in a pie or bars. You can even use it as a topping on simple cakes.
- **Try not to get in a rut.** Constantly look up new recipe ideas to bring variety to your family meals.

Your goal is going to prepare a complete meal for your family. Maybe you can invite a neighbor or some friends over to enjoy the "fruits of your labor."

You are going to need to do the following to prepare:

- **The menu**-you must consider cost and availability of foods as you compose your menu.
- **Get the food**-you will have to carefully study your recipes and decide what you have in your pantry, and what you need to purchase at the store. Plan carefully so that you are not frustrated when you start preparing and realize that you are out of ingredients.
- **Organize the preparation**--You need to read through the recipes again. Which takes the longest to bake or cook? Which needs to be refrigerated or frozen and for how long? Which can be made ahead of time and refrigerated? Allow for adequate time for preparation for each recipe.
- **Planning the table.** Remember from week 9

Week 14 hands on skill--making a dinner

Choosing a menu for dinner

Today you are going to plan your complete dinner menu. I have given you many suggestions on this page, but feel free to use any of your families resources for cookbooks or other meal ideas.

You will be including the following in your menu:

- soup or salad
- bread
- casserole or main dish
- vegetable
- dessert-pie

Decide.....Soup or salad?

You are going to choose a soup or a salad as the first course of your dinner.

Tips for salads

- Use a minimal amount of dressing for a tossed salad to avoid undue wilting. Do not add dressing until just before serving. Place your greens in the refrigerator before serving.
- For crisper salads, dry green completely until absolutely water free and chill thoroughly.

- to prolong the life of cucumbers, peppers, zucchini, and other fresh vegetables in refrigerator, wrap in paper towel to absorb moisture and place in a plastic bag with a few holes punched in it for air.
- Use a potato peeler to peel a long, continuous strip from a nice red ripe tomato. Wind strip round and round into a tomato rose to garnish salads.
- To make fringed cucumbers slices, trim ends of cucumber, but do not peel. Pull sharp fork prongs firmly down length of cucumber on each side all around making indentations the entire length of cucumber. Then slice thinly and chill.
- If you like croutons on your salad, you can easily make your own. Butter slices of bread, cut into cubes. Sprinkle with garlic salt and Parmesan cheese. Place in 300 degree oven until dry and barely beginning to toast.

Tips for soups

- Instant potato flakes make an excellent thickener for stews and soups
- Use bouillon cubes for extra flavor when adding liquid to homemade or canned soups.
- For a special touch in your soup choose a garnish. Choose one that best suits your soup: snipped parsley or chives, croutons, shredded cheese, crumbled bacon, crushed corn chips, or a dab of sour cream.

Choose a soup recipes from week 5.

Here is a quick and easy vegetable soup recipe to try.

Easy vegetable soup

1 can of tomato soup and 1 can of milk or water
Your choice of vegetables---onions, mixed vegetables, green beans,
garlic, potatoes---anything you enjoy.
Salt and pepper
Combine all in a pot and heat to serving

Or you can choose a salad to make for your meal.

Seven layer lettuce salad

1 head of lettuce, broken in pieces
½ c celery, finely chopped
¾ c frozen peas, thawed
½ c onion, chopped
¼ c green pepper, chopped

1 large tomato chopped
3 hard boiled eggs, diced

Layer these ingredients in a tall glass bowl in the order given. If you do not have a tall glass bowl , you can layer it in a 9 x 13 baking dish.

For the dressing. You can either use a bottle of ranch dressing or make the following:

1 c whipped dressing

1 T sugar

2 T milk

combine the above and spread over top of your salad.

Top with 1 c grated cheddar cheese

Sprinkle with crumbled bacon bits.

Refrigerate several hours or overnight before serving.

Spinach salad

You will need 2 lb of fresh spinach leaves. Chop or break into bite sized pieces. Drain well and dry thoroughly.

Add the following to your spinach leaves:

1 med onion chopped

4 hard cooked eggs sliced

6 slices bacon, fried and crumbled or 1 pkg bacon bits

1/2 lb fresh mushrooms sliced (optional)

For the dressing, pour the following into the blender and mix:

¾ c vegetable oil

2/3 cup sugar

½ c catsup

¼ c vinegar

2 tsp Worcestershire sauce

Pour the dressing over the top and serve immediately.

Taco salad

cook 1 lb hamburger until browned and drain the liquid off. Let cool

Mix the following in a large serving bowl

1 head of lettuce, broken into pieces

1- 16 oz can kidney beans, drained

1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

3 tomatoes chopped

1 -6 oz pkg taco or corn chips crushed lightly

1 medium onion chopped

1-8 oz bottle of french dressing

Add the hamburger and serve immediately

You could also make a vegetable salad. Choose some of the following to add to it:

- torn bite sized pieces of lettuce, choose a variety to add
- diced tomatoes
- boiled diced eggs
- chopped onions
- sliced cucumbers
- sliced radishes
- shredded carrots
- shredded cheese
- croutons
- cranberries
- almonds
- chopped meats—lunch meats or cooked chicken
- top with your favorite bottled dressing

Choose a main entrée

Chicken on rice made simple

2 c rice

1 chopped onion

1 1/2 c celery, chopped

1 can cream of mushroom soup

1 can cream of chicken soup

2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp pepper

1/2 tsp all purpose seasoning

2 T soy sauce

3 c water

4 chicken breast halves, 2 leg quarters—or any kind your family prefers

In a roaster pan, sprinkle uncooked rice, onion, and celery. Lay chicken pieces on dry rice, onion, and celery. Combine soups, salt, pepper, all purpose seasoning, soy sauce, and water. Stir until smooth. Pour over chicken. Bake at 350 for 2 hours.

Chicken pot pie

STEP ONE:

Heat oven to 425 degrees. Bake pie crusts as directed on box for Two-Crust Pie using 9-inch glass pie pan.

STEP TWO:

combine the following:

1 can cream of chicken soup

1 can mixed vegetables, drained

1 can chunk chicken breast, or 1 cup shredded chicken

STEP THREE

Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust.

STEP FOUR:

Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown.

Easy lasagna

8 oz lasagna noodles, oven ready
uncooked
1 lb hamburger, browned
3/4 c chopped onion

1 large can of tomato juice 5-6 cups

2 tsp salt

1 tsp sugar

sprinkle of garlic powder

1/2 tsp oregano

2 tsp basil

CHEESE MIXTURE

1 lb mozzarella cheese

1 lb cottage cheese or ricotta

3/4 c Parmesan cheese

Mix meat, onion, juice, salt, sugar, and spices. Simmer, uncovered for 30 minutes. In a greased 9 x 13 pan, layer 1 cup sauce, and 1/2 of noodles. Then 1/2 of the sauce and 1/2 of the cheese.

Repeat. Cover with foil and bake 350 for 1 hour.

Burrito casserole

1 -pkg flour tortillas

FIRST MIXTURE:

1 c cream of mushroom soup

1 c sour cream

SECOND MIXTURE:

1 lb hamburger, browned

1 pkg taco seasoning

1 -16 oz can re-fried beans

1 c salsa

2 c shredded orange cheese

Mix the first mixture and spread a thin layer in bottom of a 9 x 13 pan. Put second mixture in shells and roll up, place in pan. Pour the rest of the cream mixture over them, and top with cheese.

Bake at 350 until cheese melts and is bubbly, about 30 minutes.

Serve with chopped lettuce, diced tomatoes, salsa, and sour cream.

Meat lovers pizza bake

1 lb ground beef

1/2 c chopped green pepper

1 small can mushrooms

1 -15 oz jar pizza sauce

1- 3.5 oz pepperoni, chopped

2 c shredded mozzarella cheese

3/4 c biscuit/baking mix

2 eggs

3/4 c milk

In a large skillet, cook beef and green pepper over medium heat until meat is no longer pink. Stir in the pizza sauce, pepperoni, and mushrooms.

Transfer to a greased 9 x 13 baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese.

In a small bowl, combine the biscuit mix, eggs, and milk until blended.

Pour evenly over the cheese. Bake uncovered at 400 for 30 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Honey mustard chicken baked

1 c whipped salad dressing

4 T mustard

3 T honey

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Place chicken breast in a 9x13 pan.

Mix the above ingredients together and spoon over the chicken. Cover and bake 350 for 45 minutes.

Choose your vegetables /and your starch

Depending upon which main entrée you chose, you want some sides that compliment your meal. Some may require a starch-like rice, potatoes, or noodles. Others already have that incorporated into the dish and all you will need is a vegetable. You can choose canned or frozen vegetables. I would choose a simple and plain way to prepare these, unless you have a favorite recipe picked out. I will give examples of some vegetables to choose. Do whatever you decide, these are just suggestions.

chicken on rice made simple—this already has a starch I would choose any of your favorite vegetables like corn, green beans, or peas.

easy lasagna—this already has a starch I would choose any of your favorite like corn or green beans.

burrito casserole—this would be good with a side of rice. You can purchase a box of Mexican rice and prepare it with the directions on the back. Choose a vegetable like carrots or green beans.

chicken pot pie—this is almost a complete meal with vegetables already inside. I would serve it over a plain couscous or rice.

meat lovers pizza bake—I would serve this with homemade macaroni and cheese and some peas or frozen broccoli

honey mustard chicken baked—you can serve this with any rice or noodle sides. There are many to choose from at the store for around \$1. Choose broccoli, sweet potatoes, corn, or green beans.

Choose a bread

You have learned much about baking bread. You can choose from any of the recipes you have already made. Look back and maybe choose

biscuits, crescent, or dinner rolls. You can also mix up a batch of your bread dough the day before and have it ready for your meal.

I am including our favorite bread dough recipe that we make each week.

Honey whole wheat bread

3 pkg yeast
5 cups warm water
1 T plus 2/3 cups honey
2/3 cups oil
1/2 cup sugar
2 t salt
4 c flour
1 c wheat germ
6-8 cups more flour

First get your yeast mixture going. I add 1 cup warm tap water, 3 pkg yeast (or 3 T if you are using the bulk mix), and 1 T honey.

While your yeast is rising, I add the rest of the ingredients into the bowl.

4 cups warm water, 2/3 cups honey, 2/3 cups oil(I use coconut), 1/2 c sugar(I use raw), 2 t salt, 4 c flour(I use white whole wheat) and 1 c wheat germ.

mix it with your mixer, a whisk, or a heavy wooden spoon.

after you have mixed it for about 3 minutes you can add the rest of your flour, 1-2 cups at a time

Keep on mixing in the flour, as it gets thicker you will have a nice spongy type dough.

You can knead this dough right in the bowl, to avoid the mess on the countertops.

After kneading for about 3 minutes. Transfer to a greased bowl and flip to cover both sides with oil.

Cover and let rise until double in size.

Punch down and form into loaves

I use stainless steel pans, they cost more, but I have had these for years. It is better for your health, they clean up well, and they are very durable. Invest in a few if you can. Grease your pans before adding your dough.

Let rise just until the bread is peeking over the top of the pan, bake 350 for 40 minutes.

If you want to spruce up your butter you can try making cinnamon butter for your meal. It's very easy and delicious.

With a mixer beat

- 1 stick butter, softened
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cinnamon

Finally a dessert

For your dessert, there are numerous ideas to choose from. We are going to use the information from last week about pie making. This pie you can make the day before, so that you will have no worries about getting it all done on time.

Purchasing ingredients and preparing

Now that you have all of your menu planned, you need to purchase the ingredients that you will use. Go back and see exactly what items that you need to make your meal. Check your pantry and see what you already have and what you need to purchase. Go and get your ingredients this week so that you can make your meal.

Remember all of the tips with proper food handling skills.

Remember the safety issues with keeping your hair pulled back, washing your hands, and keeping the kitchen cleaned up as you work.

Remember about setting the table and cleaning up afterwards. Be a gracious host.

Week 15

Easy cooking

I know as wives and mothers it is important to be able to say that we cook everything from scratch. Unfortunately in today's society that is not always feasible. Most people are caught with the dilemma of not having nearly enough time to do all the things they would like to do. In order to save time, they are resorting to canned and packaged products often to help speed up the cooking process.

Even though most of us would agree that homemade is better and cheaper, sometimes we do have to consider which is more important-- the time or the money? If you are working out on the job all day long, need to hurry home in the evening, and have a hearty meal ready for your family as quickly as possible, you probably will need all the help you can get with quick fix ideas.

One of the most important things for efficiency is to plan ahead. It takes a small amount of time to plan your menu for dinner the night before. You can take a package of hamburger out of the freezer to thaw. Or better yet, when you purchase your hamburger bring it home and cook it all. Place it in plastic quart bags and freeze. When it comes time for dinner, just thaw your package. This will save you a lot of time in preparing the meal.

You should always have a quick fix stash on hand in your pantry.

Whether it is jars of alfredo sauce and noodles, or jarred spaghetti sauce and noodles, keep something in your pantry for those days when things are just not going right and you need dinner ---FAST.

Here are some tips for quick fixes

- instead of rolling out biscuits and cutting them with cutters, make drop biscuits by simply adding additional liquid to the ingredients.
- make quick doughnuts by poking a hole in the middle of canned biscuits. Fry in hot fat and dust with powdered sugar. These are best eaten while still warm.
- dust cakes with powdered sugar instead of frosting them.
- Make bar cookies instead of drop or rolled cookies
- When chopping green onions, use a pair of scissors.
- Scissors speed up the time it takes to cut little ones foods on their plates.
- to save the amount of time it takes to make a white sauce, substitute a can of 10 oz cream soup for casseroles when time is limited

The benefits of a slow cooker

The crockpot or slow cooker is one of the best time-saving appliances in the kitchen. It is a great appliance to learn to use because it is so easy. Just throw in the ingredients and turn it on. Hours later you have a meal waiting for you.

It is great for warm summer days, as it doesn't heat your whole kitchen up. Also, it is good for days that you are going to be out of the home, but still need a meal to come home to at dinner time. I like to use it for ease. I like to throw all my dinner materials in it early in the morning, and then go about my day knowing dinner is slowly cooking away.

Some tips to help your experience with crockpot cleaning easier:

- Spray the inside of your crockpot with nonstick cooking spray to make clean up a breeze.
- The low setting on a crockpot is about 200 degrees, the high 300 degrees.
- One hour on high is equal to 2 hours on low.
- Foods cooked on the bottom of the slow cooker cook faster and will be moister because they are immersed in the simmering liquid.
- Only fill the crockpot one half to two-thirds full. The foods will not cook properly if the appliance is filled to the brim. If the food and liquid level is lower, the foods will cook too quickly.
- Follow the layering instructions carefully. Vegetables do not cook as quickly as meat, so they should be placed in the bottom of the appliance.
- Don't lift the lid to stir, especially if you are cooking on the low setting. Each time you lift the lid, enough heat will escape that the cooking time should be extended by 20 minutes to half an hour.
- Most meats require 8 hours of cooking on LOW. Use cheaper cuts of meat - not only do you save money, but these meats work better in the slow cooker. Moist, long cooking times result in very tender meats.
- For best results, ground meats must be cooked in a skillet before cooking in the crockpot.
- Dairy products should be added during the last 30 minutes of cooking time, unless the recipes states otherwise because they will curdle.

We have many great resources and tools available in this day and age to help us prepare food easily, but yet keep them nutritious.

Week 15 hands on skill---prepare a quick fix meal and crockpot meal.

Choose one of these easy meals to make for dinner:

Menu 1

- sloppy joes or sloppy joe casserole
- homemade macaroni and cheese or boxed macaroni and cheese
- canned vegetable, peas
- canned fruit, applesauce

For the sloppy joes—cook 1 lb of ground beef and add 1 can of sloppy joe sauce to it. Serve over hamburger buns.

For sloppy joe casserole—cook 2 lbs ground beef and add 2 cans of sloppy joe sauce and mix. Pour into 9 x13 baking pan and top with bag of tater tots. Bake 350 for 30 minutes.

For macaroni and cheese---cook 1-16 oz package of macaroni until almost done. Drain and pour noodles into 9 x13 baking pan. Pour in 2 cups of milk, 2 cups shredded cheese, and 2 inch chunk of processed cheese cubed. Sprinkle on some salt and pepper and stir gently. Cover with foil and place in oven 350 for 30 minutes.

Menu 2

- taco soup
- serve with corn chips, shredded cheese, sour cream or ranch

For the taco soup you will need the following:

- 1 lb cooked ground beef
- 1-4 oz can green chilies, chopped
- 1 pkg ranch seasoning
- 1 pkg taco seasoning
- 1 can corn
- 3 -14 1/2 oz cans of diced tomatoes
- 3 -15 oz cans of chili beans
- 2 -15 oz cans of pinto beans, drained

Mix everything in a pot and bring to a boil. Let simmer on low for 30 minutes. Serve with corn chips, shredded cheese, and sour cream or ranch on each individual bowl.

Menu 3

- chicken etti
- green beans
- Parmesan biscuits

How to make chicken etti:

- 1 -8 ounce pkg of spaghetti cooked until tender, about 12 minutes
- Add to cooked, drained pasta the following:
 - 1/2 cup chopped onion
 - 4 T of chopped green peppers
 - 1 cup of chicken broth, if you don't have canned or boxed chicken broth, which we don't use, you can make your own. Measure 1 cup hot tap water into a measuring cup add 1 chicken bouillon cube or 1 T chicken bouillon powder. Stir to combine.
 - 2- 10 oz cans of cream of chicken soup
 - 2 cups of diced cooked chicken, use 1 large breast cooked or use canned chicken if needed
 - 1 cup american cheese, cubed.

Stir the above ingredients together; heat and serve.

How to make Parmesan biscuits:

- 1- 8oz container of refrigerator buttermilk biscuits
- 1 1/2 T of melted butter or margarine.

Separate the biscuits. Brush the tops and sides of each biscuit with butter. Place on cookie sheet.

Sprinkle with the following ingredients that have been mixed:

- Parmesan cheese 1/4 cup
- garlic salt or powder 1/2 tsp
- onion salt or powder 1/2 tsp

Bake at 375 for 10-12 minutes.

Menu 4

- marinated chicken breast
- Alfredo noodles and sauce
- broccoli

For the marinated chicken breast, this will require some preparing. Do this the night before. Place however many boneless, skinless chicken breasts that you will need in a gallon plastic bag. Add 1 bottle of Italian dressing to that bag. Zip shut and let sit in refrigerator until ready to use the next day.

Cook on grill or broil in oven for 10 minutes on each side, until no longer pink in the middle.

For the Alfredo and noodles, cook 1 pkg of fettuccine noodles as stated on back of package.

Add 1 jar of Alfredo sauce to the drained, cooked noodles.

Cook the broccoli by steaming it in a little bit of water, or use your microwave.

You can either serve it separately or add it all together in one bowl.

Menu 5

Poor man pizza

How do you make a poor man style pizza?? Use whatever pieces of bread that you have. You can use bread slices, bagels, tortillas, hamburger buns, English muffins, or pita for the bread. Spread some pizza sauce on top and then add your favorite pizza toppings. Diced deli ham, bacon bits, chopped onion, chopped peppers, pineapple, pepperoni, mushrooms, diced tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, etc.

Bake in oven 400 for about 5-10 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Serve this with green beans and applesauce.

Menu 6

Quick tuna and macaroni dinner

1- 7 oz pkg of macaroni and cheese----cooked and prepared according to package directions

Add 1-6 1/2 oz can tuna drained

And 1 -10 oz can of peas, drained

Mix and heat thoroughly. Serve

Menu 7

- spaghetti and sauce
- canned green beans
- parmesan biscuits from menu 3

Prepare spaghetti noodles as directed on box.

In separate pan cook 1-lb ground beef until cooked add 1 jar of spaghetti sauce . Serve over noodles with some Parmesan cheese.

Menu 8

- taco's hard or soft shell
- pkg of Mexican rice
- corn

Tacos are an easy meal to make, you will need the following:

- 2 lbs ground beef cooked and seasoned with packet of taco seasoning. Follow directions on back of packet.
- taco shells either hard or soft or both
- refried beans from can
- chopped shredded lettuce
- shredded cheese
- chopped tomatoes
- sour cream or ranch

Make your packaged rice according to the directions.

Menu 9

- Hamburger's helper bacon cheeseburger pasta
- green beans
- applesauce

Hamburger's helpers bacon cheeseburger pasta

- 8 ounces uncooked penne pasta
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1/2 pkg of bacon bits
- 1 can (10 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces) condensed tomato soup
- 1 cup shredded cheddar

Directions how to make the mock hamburger helper:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. While pasta is cooking; cook beef over medium heat in a large skillet until no longer pink. Drain and set aside.
3. Drain pasta, add to skillet.
4. Stir in the soup, beef and bacon; heat through.
5. Sprinkle with cheese, cover and cook until the cheese is melted.

Menu 10

- Sausage and red beans
- Rice
- Corn bread

Sausage and red beans

- 1 pkg smoked sausage
- 2 cans diced tomatoes
- 2 cans chili beans
- 2 -8oz cans of tomato sauce
- 1/2 chopped onion
- 2 stalks celery diced
- a teaspoon of each basil and oregano

Mix all in a skillet and cook until heated through. In separate pot cook 1lb rice according to package directions.

week 16

Nutrition and overnight breakfast

In today's day and age, you can pick up any magazine, watch any news program, or browse through the collection of health related books and easily see that there is a HUGE fascination with diet and weight loss. There is a miracle cure for everything. God has decision our bodies for us to take care of it. We are to treat our bodies as "living temples" for the glory of the Lord. Well what does that mean as far as carbs, what fats to eat, and what's healthy and not?

Keep it simple.

God designed our earth with plenty of plant and animal life to eat from. The problem is that our society has taken the "convenience" mentality, and we buy MOST all of our food when it has already been prepared and packaged by someone else. Most convenience food has very little nutrition in it. It is made to be able to be stored on food shelves for weeks, months, and sometimes years at a time. This can't be healthy. When looking to choose foods to eat, try and pick them closest to their natural state.

Avoid overeating

When eating food, eat slowly. You can shovel in food much faster than your brain can register. Typically when feeling famished and we eat quickly, we usually eat WAY more than necessary. Keep a large glass of water and drink it with your meals. When taking a bite savor each one.

Enjoy it. As soon as your stomach feels content, stop eating. **AVOID** going passed and making yourself feel stuffed. You will only feel tired, have an upset stomach, and later on you might feel a little guilty for over eating.

Eating for energy

Food is energy for your body. Nothing more, nothing less. Think about your food before you eat: "Why am I eating this?" "Do I really need this?" This will help you focus on eating enough to keep you moving, and choosing foods that will give you prolonged energy. Remember, sugar is one of the worst things for your body. It provides instant glucose to your system resulting in immediate energy. A short time afterward, the glucose is gone and your body is back to craving cheap sources of energy, like more sugar. The end result is insulin release in response to that meal promoting fatigue and brain foginess.

Organic

If possible, choose organic fruits and vegetables. This means they are grown with no pesticides being sprayed on them. Sometimes this is not an option, as it is more expensive. I like to think that if it is something that I am directly eating the peel off of, like apples, carrots, green onions, etc then organic is best because then I am not directly eating pesticides. If your fruit or vegetable has a peel that you take off, like oranges, bananas, or potatoes, those are typically safer if you can't choose organic because you peel off the area being treated. If you can't get fresh produce, frozen is the next best thing. Avoid canned

and packaged fruits and vegetables as the preservatives are usually going to work against you.

Avoid chemical toxins

People think that because it's lower fat, fat free, or reduced calorie than it is better to eat than the normal version, but not always. Most of the time lower fat products contain artificial sweeteners or chemically made materials. Artificial sweeteners like Splenda or Nutri Sweet. These are most often consumed in diet drinks, diet sodas, and "sugar-free" products. Think of them as toxins (because they are) that slow down your body's metabolism. Look at the labels. If you can't pronounce or understand them—avoid them.

Drink water

Our bodies are made up of mainly water. Water is what we use to wash the outside of our body to keep it clean. We should be doing the same to the inside. Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated, flush out your system, help you avoid feeling sluggish, and help you to avoid eating.

Importance of calcium

As a woman, it will be important for you to get enough calcium for your bones, teeth, and if you are carrying a baby for your unborn child.

Most people think that you can only get calcium through dairy products like milk and cheese, but that is untrue. Here are 10 foods that contain a high amount of calcium.

- Almonds contain almost 100 mg of calcium per ounce.
- Kale is a super food which is high in calcium, other minerals and antioxidant. Cook as a side dish or add to your salad for an extra calcium boost.
- Broccoli can be steamed for a high calcium side dish or add it raw to salads for an extra boost.
- Oatmeal provides a significant amount of calcium. Just one packet of instant oatmeal provides about 100 mg.
- Black eyed peas are a good source of calcium, potassium, folate, and other nutrients.
- Orange juice added to your breakfast will boost your calcium levels. You can even buy calcium enriched orange juice.
- Salmon is a nutritious fish loaded with essential fatty acids, but it is also rich in calcium and other minerals.
- Blackstrap molasses used in place of some of the sugar or syrup in recipes will help increase your calcium and iron intake. Molasses contains even more calcium than milk.
- Figs are a great source of calcium. Four of them will provide you with more than 100 mg of calcium.
- Sesame seeds sprinkled on cereal or salads can add higher calcium levels along with fiber and unsaturated fat.

How much sugar is in that?

From birth, we are trained to expect sugar, lots of sugar, in almost everything that we eat. It's not enough that children grow up never eating peanut butter without the accompaniment of jelly. Even peanut butter has sugar added for a double whammy of unnecessary sugar.

For most, we don't even think about the amount of sugar in our foods. The average American eats 100 pounds of sugar a year!!!! The rise of diabetes is huge. I have read that 1 in 3 children will develop diabetes in their lifetime. That is a HUGE number!! Diabetes isn't just dealing with medication, or getting shots. It is about losing limbs, your eyesight, and making you more susceptible to skin bacterial infections, There are many resources online that do a great job of showing sugar content in foods. The best way to avoid too much sugar is to avoid processed foods as much as possible.

If you can imagine a regular sugar cube, it contains about 4 grams of sugar. We will use that visual to talk about how much hidden sugar is in foods we eat.

1 can of name brand soda has 39 grams of sugar that equals $9 \frac{1}{2}$ sugar cubes!! Think about instead of drinking that 1 can of soda, but just eating $9 \frac{1}{2}$ sugar cubes.

Dried cranberries are sour right? One serving has 26 grams of sugar about $6 \frac{1}{2}$ sugar cubes. How did they get so much sugar in them?

Yogurt covered raisins have 17 grams of sugar per serving. $4 \frac{1}{2}$ sugar cubes. It is called yogurt covered but it is basically candy-coated.

How about dried fruit that comes in rolls? It equals out to be about a gram of sugar per inch. They can be called fruit snacks but that amount is equal in percentage as a chewy sugar candy squares.

Sweetened yogurt is deceiving as well. In a 6 oz container it contains 27 grams of sugar about $6 \frac{3}{4}$ sugar cubes it is not as healthy as you might think.

Pay attention to the sugar in foods and drinks that you choose. You want to keep this level down. Even drinking your natural sugar in such things as juice is not as healthy as eating an apple or an orange. It is better to get all the fiber from the fruit then to just drink the liquid. Instead of drinking your calories, eat them!! It will help you fill up faster.

Week 16 hands on skill---making an overnight breakfast dish

Everyone enjoys getting up on time each morning and having their day run smoothly. For most of you as teenagers, if your day is running a little late, it is easy to grab something quick and head out the door in a hurry. As wives and mothers it is sometimes harder to grab enough "quick" breakfasts for everyone to get out the door on time. That is where BEING PREPARED comes in handy.

It is so important to realize the value of being prepared. Those who fail to plan, are preparing to fail. It is ALWAYS better to lay your clothes out the night before, have your home in order for the morning, and get school work and items needed for the next day ready, all before you go to bed.

As the primary person responsible for making food in the home, it is your job to make sure that everyone is afforded the opportunity for a healthy hearty breakfast to start their mornings out right. As a Mom myself, I can tell you that MANY times over the years I have resorted to cold cereal for breakfast for my children. I failed to plan ahead. Then I learned the value of overnight breakfast dishes, and life got easier.

Before I go to bed at night, I make breakfast and put it in the refrigerator for the morning. When I wake up, before I shower, I put the casserole into the oven and let it cook. This allows me to take the time for devotions in the morning, instead of running around preparing breakfast. It allows my mornings to start out peaceful.. As the children wake up, there is a warm, hearty breakfast waiting for them to eat. Simple and easy.

You have learned how to prepare a breakfast meal, and it probably took some time. This week I want you to learn the value of preparing ahead of time. You will make a breakfast casserole the night before, and get up early enough to put in the oven before your family is awake to ensure that breakfast will be ready on time.

Choose from the following one to make for your hands on lesson:

Baked brunch sandwiches

3 T mustard

12 slices bread

6 slices fully cooked ham

6 slices Swiss or provolone cheese

1 tomato thinly sliced

3 T butter softened

8 eggs

1/2 cup milk

salt and pepper

Spread mustard on one side of 6 slices of bread. Layer ham, cheese and tomato slice over mustard. Top with remaining bread that has been buttered on the top. Arrange in a greased 9x13 baking dish. Cut the sandwiches in half. Beat the eggs and milk. Add a seasoning of salt and pepper. Pour over sandwiches.

Cover with tin foil and refrigerate overnight. Remove from the refrigerator in the morning and bake uncovered for 30 minutes at 375.

Sandwiches will be golden brown and cheese will be melted.

breakfast burritos

12 eggs

1/2 cup chopped onion

1 medium green pepper, chopped

1 lb pork sausage, browned and drained

4 c cooked and shredded potatoes

3 c shredded cheese

12 flour tortillas

salsa for serving

In large skillet, fry potatoes until browned. Remove and set aside. In a large bowl, beat eggs, onion, and green peppers. Pour into a skillet.

Cook and stir until eggs are set.

Remove from heat and add potatoes and sausage, mix gently. Place about 3/4 cup of filling on each tortilla and top with 1/4 cup of cheese. Roll up and place in a 9x13 greased baking pan or wrap individually in foil.

Refrigerate overnight. Place in oven in the morning at 350 for 40 minutes or until heated through. Serve with salsa.

No turn omelet

8 eggs beaten
2 c cooked crumbled sausage, or cubed fully cooked ham, or bag of bacon bits
2 c shredded cheddar cheese
2 c milk
1 c crushed saltine crackers about 25
1/4 c chopped onion
1/4 c chopped green pepper
1 tsp salt and pepper each
IF your family prefers more ingredients you can add mushrooms, canned diced potatoes, any other item that your family likes in eggs, add it.
Combine all the ingredients and pour into a greased 9x13 baking dish.
Cover and refrigerate overnight.
Remove from the refrigerator and bake at 350 for 45-60 minutes.

crocpot apple cinnamon oatmeal

2 apples, peeled and diced
1/3 cup brown sugar
1 tsp cinnamon
2 cups oatmeal—old fashioned
4 cups water
Place the diced apples into the bottom of the crockpot. Sprinkle with sugar then cinnamon. Sprinkle oatmeal over the sugar and apples and slowly pour water over all. Do not stir this mixture. Turn on your crockpot on low and cook for 3-5 hours. Yes you will have to get up during the night and do this. Pretend you are a mom feeding a baby.

baked french toast

1 1/2 sticks butter
1 c brown sugar
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
12 slices of bread
10 eggs
2 cups milk
Melt butter in 9x13 baking dish. Add sugar and cinnamon, mix. Put bread, 2 slices high in pan, on top of sugar and butter. Beat eggs and milk. Pour over the top. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Bake at 350 for 30 minutes

overnight coffee cake

1/3 cup butter, softened
1/2 cup white sugar
1/4 cup brown sugar
1 egg
1 cup flour
1/2 t baking powder
1/4 t baking soda
1/2 t ground cinnamon
1/2 cup buttermilk
FOR THE TOPPING
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup finely chopped walnuts or pecans
1/4 t cinnamon
Grease an 8 inch square baking pan.
In a large bowl, cream the butter and the sugars. Add the egg, mix until well combined. In a separate bowl, combine all of your dry ingredients. Stir the flour mixture into the creamed mixture alternately with the buttermilk. Spread evenly into baking dish.
In small bowl mix the topping ingredients and sprinkle over the batter.
Cover and refrigerate overnight. Bake the cake for 45 minutes at 350 or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.
Serve this with a mug of hot cocoa.

crocpot egg casserole

12 breakfast sausage links cooked and chopped into pieces
12 eggs
1 c milk
salt & pepper, to taste
1 pkg. (2 lbs) potatoes o'brien (hash browns with diced onions and peppers)
1 tomato, diced or if not in season use
1 can diced tomatoes, drained
2 c. cheddar cheese, shredded

In a large bowl, beat eggs together with milk. Add salt and pepper. Stir in cut up sausage, potatoes o'brien, tomato, and cheese. Spray crock pot with cooking spray and pour egg mixture in. Cook on low heat for 6 hours.

country breakfast casserole

1 roll breakfast sausage, cooked
2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
6 eggs beaten
1 cup water
1/2 cup milk
1 pkg country gravy mix
6 slices bread, cut into 1 inch cubes
Spread, cooked and drained sausage in 9x13 baking pan. Sprinkle cheese over sausage. Beat eggs, milk, water, and gravy pkt in medium bowl with wire whisk until well blended. Pour over cheese. Arrange bread cubes evenly over mixture. Cover and refrigerate unbaked casserole overnight. Bake uncovered in 325 oven for 50 minutes. Insert knife in middle of casserole to see if it comes out clean, to ensure proper cooking.

Baked apple cinnamon french toast

1 tablespoon butter
3 medium apples, peeled and diced
2 tablespoons packed light brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
6 cups cubed bread
4 large eggs
¼ cup maple syrup
1 ¾ cups whole milk
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ cup pecans, chopped
confectioners' sugar, for dusting

Place a skillet over medium heat. Add in the butter. Once melted, add in the apple and brown sugar. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender. Turn off the heat and stir in the cinnamon and nutmeg. Set aside.

Grease a 9x9 inch baking dish. Place the bread cubes evenly in the baking dish.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the eggs, maple syrup, milk and vanilla. Pour the mixture evenly over the bread cubes in the dish. Sprinkle with the pecans. Spoon the apple mixture evenly on top. Cover tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Remove the plastic wrap from the baking dish. Bake, uncovered, for about 50 to 60 minutes. The custard should be set and should not "wobble" if you shake the pan. Remove from the oven and let cool for about 10 minutes before serving. Dust with confectioners' sugar, if desired.

biscuit, egg, and bacon cup
can of refrigerator biscuits
eggs
bag of bacon
shredded cheddar cheese
green onions

This is a super easy breakfast to make. Spray muffin tins with non stick cooking spray. Place 1 uncooked biscuit in the muffin tin. Smoosh it down to form the muffin tin and sides. Crack an egg on top of it.

Sprinkle with bacon bits, cheese, and top with green onions. Place in refrigerator overnight and put in oven in the morning. 400 for 20 minutes.

Place a piece of foil underneath the pan to catch any overflows that you may have.

Bacon egg casserole

This recipe might seem "unappealing" to some because of the sour cream. But the sour cream gives the eggs a fluffy texture that can't be beat.

Try them you will be surprised. We serve ours with ketchup.

18 eggs

1 1/2 cups milk

1 bag of real bacon bits

1-16oz container of sour cream

2 cups shredded Colby cheese

1/4 c diced onion or 2 teaspoon of dried onions

salt and pepper

In a large bowl, beat eggs; add milk, sour cream, onion, salt and pepper. Pour into a greased 9 x 13 baking pan. Sprinkle with cheese and bacon on top. Refrigerate overnight. In morning bake, uncovered 350 for 45 minutes.

Week 17

Hospitality meal

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Philippians 2:4

Making a simple meal and presenting it to another person or family is one of the biggest day brighteners for anyone to receive. There are many situations where you can help alleviate someone else's stress.

- Someone who just had a baby
- A family where dad is working long hours and mom is home with children by herself much of the time
- An elderly friend
- Family going through a sickness
- A single mom, working trying to make ends meet

As you go through life interacting with others, if you hear of someone going through a struggle, be attentive, seeking the Lord, and asking Him what it is you can do for that person. Sometimes, it may be something like making a meal or helping with the children for a few hours while mom gets a break.

But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Hebrews 13:6

Even if you don't have the finances to help make an extravagant meal, it doesn't cost much to make a simple casserole dish or to make an extra loaf of bread for someone. Think in terms of basic foods.

Things that people probably don't get around to making because they

don't have the time to. Especially if that family is going through a loss and is not at home, they probably are eating out at fast food restaurants. They would probably appreciate something homemade, as most everyone does.

Some tips for making a comfort meal:

- easy to transport
- easy to eat
- hold well
- freeze well

By hold well, I mean they can sit a day or two in the refrigerator without getting soggy, drying out, or turning into something nasty. They should require little to no assembly, shouldn't be overly complicated to eat (think, one-handed breastfeeding mama), and at the very least, need to survive the trip over.

Some planning needs to go into your "comfort meal." You need to think about the following things when choosing which meal you want to make:

- avoid common or serious allergens (never peanuts, for example)
- foods people have strong opinions about (such as olives, fish)
- pack it in containers that don't need to be returned, and be sure to note "I don't need them back"
- make large servings of at least one thing that freezes well, in case they already have more than enough and want to save something for later
- include a detailed menu that lists ingredients (again, a nod to dietary issues) and explains how to reheat and how to store extras, if necessary. I like to write right on the tinfoil with permanent marker.

- include enough that would satisfy a somewhat fussy child so the family hopefully won't need to prepare something else for little ones
- focus on fresh, healthy food with a modest sweet for dessert.
- Include paper products to eat with making the entire meal a huge blessing

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:2

Start thinking about a comfort meal that you can make for someone.

Some examples include:

- lasagna, salad with dressing packet, loaf of bread, pan of brownies
- taco or nacho meal—provide all that they would need for this in individual containers, homemade cookies
- macaroni and cheese, salad with dressing, and fresh fruit for dessert
- homemade garlic chicken noodle soup, fresh bread, muffins—for a sick family

These are just examples of things we have done or received in the past. Pay attention to meals that are easy to make in your family, or ones that you know the family you are making it for enjoys. Keep it simple, not overly complicated. It isn't a blessing, if it is stressful for you to get it done and to them.

Common cooking substitutes

Sometimes when you are cooking and baking, you will come to realize halfway through mixing up your ingredients that you are out of something. It isn't good frugal practice to rush out to the store every time you need something. Here is a list of common ingredients that you can substitute when cooking. Keep this list handy. As you grow in your cooking you will come to appreciate this list.

Baking powder	1 teaspoon	1/3 teaspoon baking soda + ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
Bread crumbs	1 cup	1 cup crushed crackers 1 cup crushed cornflakes 1 cup ground oats 1 cup crushed potato chips
Broth—beef or chicken	1 cup	1 bouillon cube dissolved in 1 cup hot water
Buttermilk (sour milk)	1 cup	1 cup milk + 1 T lemon juice—let stand 3 min
Ketchup	1 cup	1 cup tomato sauce + ½ cup sugar + 2 T vinegar
Chocolate unsweetened	1 square, or 1 ounce	3 Tablespoons cocoa powder
Corn syrup	1 cup	1 cup maple syrup
Cornstarch-for thickening	1 Tablespoon	2 Tablespoon flour
Cracker crumbs	1 cup	1 cup dried bread crumbs 1 cup ground oats
Cream, half and half	1 cup	7/8 cup milk + ½ Tablespoon butter 1 cup evaporated milk, undiluted 3 Tablespoons oil + enough milk to equal 1 cup
Whipped topping		Chill a 13 ounce can of evaporated milk for 12 hours. Add 1 Tablespoon lemon juice, whip until stiff.
Cream of tartar	1 teaspoon	1 teaspoon lemon juice or vinegar
Garlic	1 clove, small	1/8 teaspoon garlic powder ¼ teaspoon instant minced garlic ½ teaspoon granulated garlic ½ teaspoon to 1 teaspoon garlic salt
Herbs	1 Tablespoon finely cut	1 teaspoon dried ground or crumbled herbs
Honey	1 cup	1 ¼ cup granulated sugar and ¼ cup liquid. Use the liquid called for in the recipe
Hot pepper sauce	1 teaspoon	¾ teaspoon cayenne pepper plus 1 teaspoon vinegar

Italian seasoning		Combine 1 teaspoon basil + 1 Tablespoon parsley + ½ teaspoon oregano
Lemon juice, freshly squeezed	1 Tablespoon	1 Tablespoon bottled lemon juice 1 Tablespoon fresh or bottled lime juice
Maple syrup	2 cups	Combine 2 cups sugar and 1 cup water, bring to clear boil then take off heat. Add ½ teaspoon maple flavoring 1 cup honey
Mayonnaise for use in salads and dressings	1 cup	½ cup plain yogurt + ½ cup mayonnaise 1 cup either yogurt, salad dressing, or sour cream 1 cup cottage cheese pureed in blender
Evaporated milk	1 cup	1 cup liquid whole milk
Sweetened condensed milk	1 can	Heat the following ingredients until sugar and butter are dissolved: 1/3 cup and 2 Tablespoons evaporated milk, 1 cup sugar, and 3 Tablespoons butter or margarine
Mustard, dry	1 teaspoon	1 Tablespoon prepared mustard
Oil for sautéing		Substitute melted butter or margarine
Onion	1 small	¼ cup chopped, fresh green onions 1 1/3 teaspoons onion salt 1-2 Tablespoon instant minced onion 1 teaspoon onion powder 2 Tablespoon dried minced onion
Poultry seasoning	1 teaspoon	½ teaspoon ground sage+ ½ teaspoon dried thyme + 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
Pumpkin pie spice	1 teaspoon	½ teaspoon cinnamon + ¼ teaspoon ginger + 1/8 teaspoon allspice + 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
Shortening, solid used in baking	1 cup	1 cup butter or margarine
Sour cream	1 cup	1 cup plain yogurt ¾ cup milk + ¾ teaspoon lemon juice + 1/3 cup butter or margarine
Brown sugar	1 cup firmly packed	1 cup granulated sugar + ¼ cup molasses 1 cup raw or granulated sugar
1 cup powdered sugar	1 cup	1 cup granulated white sugar in blender will turn into powder
White sugar	1 cup	1 cup honey 1 cup brown sugar 1 cup powdered sugar
Tahini	1 Tablespoon	1 Tablespoon peanut butter
Tomatoes, fresh	2 cups	1-16 oz can diced tomatoes
Tomato juice	1 cup	½ cup tomato sauce + ½ cup water
Worcestershire sauce	1 teaspoon	1 teaspoon bottled steak sauce

Week 17 hands on skill---making a frozen dessert

Walking through the frozen ice cream isle in the grocery store will produce all sorts of ideas for yummy looking desserts. Most of these are high priced with very few servings. It is very easy to buy a plain inexpensive ice cream, and then jazz it up with ingredients to create your own ice cream dessert. If there is one that looks especially yummy at the store, take note of the ingredients and make it yourself.

Bake a basic cake, top it with simple ice cream, chopped candy bars, and then whipped topping. Simple, easy, makes a lot, and inexpensive.

The great thing about frozen desserts is that you can make them weeks in advance and just store them in the freezer. Cover with waxed paper and then tin foil to avoid freezer burn on them.

This week's hands on lesson is to prepare a frozen treat for your family.

Éclair Dessert

1 lb graham crackers
2 small boxes french vanilla pudding
3 1/2 c milk
8 oz cool whip
Fudge frosting:
1 oz unsweetened chocolate
2 T butter
1 1/2 c powdered sugar
1 tsp vanilla
2 T hot water

Line a 9x13 pan with a layer of graham crackers. Mix pudding and milk; add Cool whip. Spread 1/2 on crackers. Add another layer of crackers, then remaining pudding. Add another layer of crackers, then freeze. When frozen, top with fudge frosting. Make at least 1 day before serving time.

To make frosting: melt butter and chocolate over low heat, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; stir in powdered sugar and vanilla. Blend in hot water to make almost pour-able consistency.

Brownie dessert

1 c vegetable oil
2 c sugar
2 tsp vanilla
4 eggs
1 c flour
2/3 c cocoa
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 gal ice cream
fun toppings, like chocolate syrup,
oreo cookies, crushed M&ms
Blend oil, sugar, and vanilla in mixing
bowl; add eggs and beat well with
spoon. Combine flour, cocoa, baking
powder, and salt. Stir into egg
mixture. Bake in greased 9x13 pan
for 30-40 minutes. Cool brownies.
Spread slightly thawed ice cream
over top of brownies. Top with your
fun toppings. Freeze. Remove from
freezer about 15 minutes before
serving

Frozen pistachio delight

1 1/2 c graham cracker crumbs
6 T butter melted
1 1/4 c milk
2 small boxes pistachio pudding
1/2 gal vanilla ice cream
1-9oz cool whip
1/2 bag of toffee candy bits
Melt butter, mix with crumbs. Press
into a 9x13 pan. Bake at 325 for 10
minutes. Mix pudding with milk. Fold
pudding into softened ice cream and
spread over crust. Cover with cool
whip and top with candy bits. Freeze.
You can use an electric mixer to mix
the ice cream and pudding.

Snickers bar dessert

1/2 gallon soft vanilla ice cream
1 lg box instant chocolate pudding
1 lg box instant vanilla pudding
3/4 c peanut butter
12 oz cool whip
Mix all together except cool whip and
put in 9x13 baking pan. Top with cool
whip. Freeze.

Ice cream sandwich dessert

2 pkgs ice cream sandwiches
1 container of whipped topping
Chocolate syrup
Caramel syrup
Chocolate covered toffee candy bits—by chocolate chip
section in store
Line a rectangle baking pan with 1 pkg of ice cream
sandwiches
Cover with half whipped topping
Squirt chocolate and caramel topping on
Sprinkle with half the candies
Repeat layers
Freeze until firm and serve

Planning a family night

I know this is an “early stage” in your life, but something that you can do now as a teenager in your family. Then when you are older you can carry out some of the traditions in your own family.

Having a family night is a great way to stay connected as a family. When Dad or Mom are too busy all week long, with all of the tasks that are required to run a household, sometimes “fun” family time can take a backseat. If you designate one night a week for coming together, shutting off all media devices, and having some good old fashioned fun, it will create many memories for you to remember. These sometimes have to be planned. They don’t just happen. Have a plan of attack and go with it!

Here is a list of some ideas to do as a family. You will have to decide which are age appropriate. It is hard to pull out all the board games and play a normal game without having toddlers come and wreck your game night. Choose ones that will benefit all family members and save the older people things for after the little ones go to bed.

1. Have a bonfire. This is fun for everyone. Plan on roasting marshmallows over the fire. You can make a S’mores bar by putting out a large platter with different flavored marshmallows, a variety of candy bars, and graham crackers or fudge striped cookies. For little ones, make the smores inside a sugar cone and wrap it in foil. Place in the fire until melted. You can add peanut butter and bananas to this for something delicious.

2. Teach your child to star gaze. Do they know where the North star is? Show them the big and little dipper and how to identify it.
3. Family game night---if you have little ones, play simple games like duck, duck goose, and hide and seek. Keep it fun for everyone. For older ones you can choose from a multitude of board games.
4. Have a craft night—look up something fun to make and gather up all the supplies you need and get creative.
5. Go to the local playground and run around together playing tag. Bring along a football or basketball and play games.
6. Do a large family puzzle. One that you roll up and put away and only pull out on family game night. When finished, glue it and frame it.
7. Go exploring in the woods. Go hiking up paths. Visit the rivers. Look for wildlife, do something you can get a nature lesson.
8. If it snows, make a family of snowmen for each member of your family.
9. Go ice skating or sledding as a family.
10. Play “name that tune” by humming your favorite songs and having others guess them.
11. Get a large cardboard box—from an appliance store, color, and create a playhouse for your little ones. Cut in the door and windows and have everyone draw and color in details on the box.
12. Buy a couple packages of plastic cups and create a huge stacking cup tower. Your children will have fun trying to beat the clock and stacking them. You can also stack them up, take a clean sock rolled up, and try and knock them down.
13. Make paper airplanes and helicopters. Look up online how to make really cool ones. Have a paper airplane throwing contest.

Make sure and choose an appropriate meal for this night.

- Homemade individual pizzas—let everyone make their own—for a fun twist—grill them over a fire. Delicious!!
- Nacho or taco bar
- Munchie type snacks—mini hot dogs wrapped in crescent rolls, pizza rolls, etc
- Create an ice cream bar for everyone to choose their own favorites
- Have a fondue bar with melted chocolate or cheese. Have a variety of foods to dip.
- Homemade popcorn. Pop up a big bowl and sprinkle with ranch or chocolate popcorn flavorings.
- Make your own sandwich/subs
- Make up a batch of pretzel dough—let everyone mold and create their own shapes. Brush them with soda water and either sprinkle on salt or sugar/cinnamon mixture.

Scour the internet and do some research on snack ideas. I am sure you will come up with many more to make.

Document this

Document this and every future family night. Make a journal specifically for family night. Take pictures and post them in your scrapbook with writings on what you did. It will be a treasured memory in the years to come.

Creating a binder for future homemaking

Most of you are not even close to being out on your own in life, but I wanted to show you something that you can start now that will help you as you venture out into the world when you are older.

It is a home management binder. I have always had lists of ideas and papers everywhere clogging up my counter tops and bulletin boards. I would find recipes in magazines, cute decorating ideas, or crafts and I would cut them out, only to lose them in the daily shuffle of life. I can remember countless times my "list" had gotten lost, and I didn't know how I was going to do things because I didn't know what had to be done!! Then in the last few years I had read about other women creating home management binders, and I thought—yes that is a great idea.

It is very simple concept. Purchase a binder from the store. Get a better quality one, as you will be using this for the rest of your life. Spend more—invest one time. Get some tabs for dividing out your binder. You can purchase plastic ones that will erase easily each time you decide on a different section. You can purchase plastic clear sleeves to easily slide magazine clippings or printable recipes into it. You can use lined paper to copy recipes onto. Whichever your method, there are TONS of office materials available. Visit an office store, and I am sure you will find many ideas for building your binder.

Each tab will represent something for your home. Here are some ideas:

Homemaking—can include recipes, natural home cleaners, homemade beauty products, cleaning checklists, how to clean items, menu plans and to do lists

Finances—can include monthly budget, personal information—phone numbers and addresses.

Homeschooling—creative ideas for homeschooling, educational games

Personal study—favorite bible verses, inspirational quotes, things you want to learn

Gift ideas—homemade gift ideas, homemade card ideas, list of birthdays, anniversaries

All of these you will put into use in the future, but you can start collecting ideas now. When you have some free time, collect some ideas to add to your binder. You can even create book lists, game lists, and activities to do with an infant, toddler, and preschooler. So many things are available. The internet is full of FREE ideas. It just takes some time to look through them. .

Week 18 hands on skill---making a binder

Ask an adult if you can do some extra chores around the house to earn some money. Use this money to purchase your household binder. Do some research. You can find some really cute binders and fun dividers to create your book with.

As with everything, if you get a new recipe don't just "assume" it is good. Test it out on your family. Make sure that you have the correct measurements and ingredients written down before you store it away for later use. Take some of the recipes from this book to add to your binder.

Put your homemade gifts to the test by giving them to younger siblings or cousins. Learn how to make homemade beauty products, and give them away to your friends. By increasing your skill sets now, you will have so much more time to improve upon them for the future.

Completion

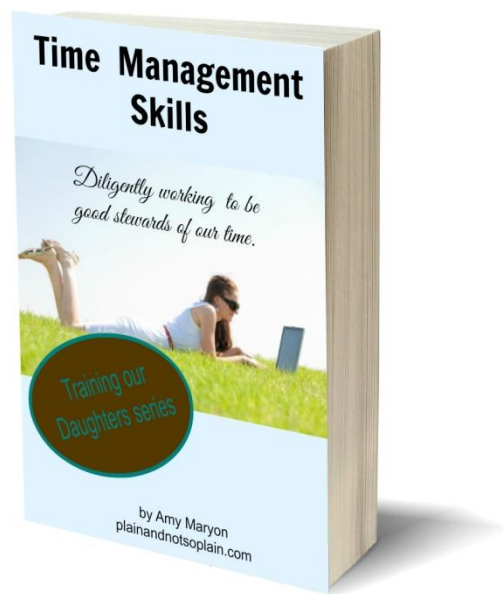
Congratulations you have completed a semester of home economics!!! You should now know your way around the kitchen quite well. Now that you have completed the home economics course, how do you feel? Do you feel like you have gained some new skills? As with everything in life you should continually strive to better train yourself. There is always a new skill to learn or a skill that we can perfect. Make it your goal to always strive to do your best. Search out and find new ways, new skills, new recipes, and new ways to do things.

If you feel like maybe some of these skills were too hard or maybe you didn't do as good a job as you thought, go back through and redo them. I am sure your family will be blessed by having you help out by learning skills. I know I have served many a blackened dinner and an overcooked dry dessert in my lifetime. It all takes skill and practice. It starts while you are young, so that by the time you are older, you will have perfected most of your skills and can better work on other things of importance to you.

Follow up

Now that you have completed the course and feel confident as a young lady in these skills, I would love to hear from you how you did. If you enjoyed it or if you did not enjoy it. I am open to all kinds of suggestions and thoughts. Please email me at plainandnotsplain@gmail.com

If you would like further study, I have available FREE on my blog at plainandnotsplain.com



Time management skills

Diligently working to be good stewards of our time

---from Training our Daughters series

It is the first book in this series of helping you on the path to become a godly woman.

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