Quick, Healthy Meals for One or Two

It is often difficult to get inspired to cook for one or two people. No matter how many people you are cooking for, it is important to prepare healthy meals. Preparing your own meals can help you improve nutrition, save money, add variety to your meals and make modifications for special dietary needs.

Look for ways to include different food groups in your meal preparation. Combine food groups to increase nutrition and save time. Choose healthy cooking methods such baking, grilling, steaming and stir-fry. Take advantage of pre-chopped vegetables and prepared entrees at your local market. When using prepared foods, remember that they generally cost more and that you must follow instructions to make sure your food is cooked properly and safely. Using an instant read thermometer will help you cook your food to the correct temperature and help avoid over-cooking.

Converting your favorite recipes to smaller sizes? Use the charts below to help make changes.

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**Cutting Recipes to Half of a Recipe**

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<tr>
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<td>½ teaspoon</td>
<td>small egg or just the egg white</td>
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**Cutting Recipes to Third of a Recipe**

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<thead>
<tr>
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**Baked Chicken**

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts  
¼ teaspoon salt  
4 small potatoes quartered  
12oz. bag of frozen corn

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease bottom of baking dish or use non-stick spray. Sprinkle salt over chicken and place in baking dish. Place quartered potatoes over the chicken. Add corn, followed by onion and green pepper. Sprinkle with basil. Cover and bake for about 1 hour.

Serves 2

**Nutritional Information per Serving:**

500 calories, 4.5g fat, 810 mg sodium

Adapted from Cooking For 1 or 2, University of Illinois Extension
Small Batch Lasagna

2 ounces lean ground beef
¼ cup chopped onion
1 cup petite diced tomatoes
¼ teaspoon oregano
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon basil
4 ounces lasagna noodles, about 4 noodles

½ cup 2% fat cottage cheese
1 Tbsp. dry parsley flakes
1 egg (or ¼ cup egg substitute)
½ cup part-skim mozzarella cheese, shredded
¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
¼ cup water

Brown meat in a saucepan. Add onion and continue to cook until onion is tender. Drain fat. Add tomatoes, oregano, garlic powder, and basil; stir and simmer for 15 minutes. Mix together egg, parsley flakes and cottage cheese.

Lightly spray an 8 x 8-inch pan with nonstick cooking spray. Break noodles in half. Place a layer of noodles in the pan and top with ½ of the cottage cheese mixture then half of the meat mixture and half of the mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers. Pour ¼ cup of water over top, sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and cover tightly with foil.

Bake at 350°F for 25 minutes, remove foil and cook for 10 minutes more or until noodles are tender. Let stand a few minutes before cutting.

Optional modifications:
Increase cottage cheese to ¾ cup
Add salt to taste

Serves 4

Nutritional Information per Serving:
214 calories, 17 grams protein, 21 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams fat, 4 grams fiber, 74 mg cholesterol, 438 mg sodium

Adapted from Your Health and You, October 2008, University of Illinois Extension

Elegant Pork Chops

2 pork loin chops
⅛ teaspoon onion powder
1 can (7½ oz.) semi-condensed cream of mushroom soup
½ teaspoon salt (optional)
¼ teaspoon ground ginger
2 tablespoons dry white wine
6 tablespoons instant rice
Dash pepper


Makes 2 servings.

Nutritional Information per Serving:
530 Calories, 26 g protein, 23 g carbohydrate, 35 g fat, 88 mg cholesterol, 1199 mg sodium.

Source: Cooking for One or Two, University of Kentucky Extension
**Easy Chicken and Dumplings**

2 Tbsp. flour
2 Tbsp. water
1 cup chicken broth (try low sodium)

1 cup cooked chicken diced
¼ teaspoon salt
Dash pepper

Mix flour and water in a pan until smooth. Slowly stir in broth. Cook over medium heat until thickened. Add chicken, salt and pepper. Drop dumpling dough (see below) from a tablespoon onto gently boiling mixture, making 4 dumplings. Cover pan and cook on simmer for 15 minutes without lifting the lid.

**Dumpling dough:**

½ cup flour
½ teaspoon baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt
2 Tbsp. milk

Combine dry ingredients in bowl. Stir in milk until dough forms.

Serves 2

Nutritional Information per Serving:
300 calories, 11g fat, 1730 mg sodium

Adapted from Cooking For 1 or 2, University of Illinois Extension

**Oriental Chicken Stir-fry**

½ lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
1½ teaspoons regular margarine
8 oz. frozen mixed vegetables (broccoli, carrots, and water chestnuts)
1 Tbsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce
1 ½ teaspoons cornstarch
½ cup ready-to-serve, low-sodium chicken broth

½ teaspoon pepper
1 Tbsp. diced pimento (optional)
1 ½ teaspoons cornstarch
½ cup ready-to-serve, low-sodium chicken broth

Cut chicken into 3/4-inch strips and set aside. Melt margarine in a large non-stick skillet or wok on medium heat. Add chicken and stir-fry (continuously stir while frying in a small amount of fat) over high heat until it loses its pink color. Add mixed vegetables, soy sauce, pepper, and pimento. In a separate bowl, combine cornstarch and chicken broth; stir well. Add broth mixture to chicken and vegetables, stirring until thickened. Reduce heat to low; cover pan and simmer 5 minutes. (Can refrigerate leftovers for up to two days)

Serve with rice if desired.

Serves 3

Source: Recipes for One or Two, Penn State Extension, May. 2000

**Burgundy Pot Roast**

¾ pound beef chuck arm steak, boneless, cut 1-inch thick
¼ cup burgundy wine (optional)
¼ cup water
1 medium potato, pared and quartered
½ teaspoon salt (optional)

1 carrot, pared and quartered
½ teaspoon pepper
1 envelope instant onion soup mix (1 cup serving)
1 bay leaf
Place chuck steak and vegetables in oven cooking bag. Combine remaining ingredients. Close bag with tie. Marinate in refrigerator overnight. Make 6 half-inch slits in top of bag. Cook in 350°F oven, 1 to 1¼ hours or until tender. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Yield: 2 servings

**Nutritional Information per Serving:**
698 Calories, 48 g protein, 20 g carbohydrate, 44 g fat, 169 mg cholesterol, 703 mg sodium.

Source: Cooking for One or Two, University of Kentucky Extension

### Scalloped Potatoes

| 2 Tbsp. margarine or butter | ¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce |
| 2 Tbsp. flour | 1/8 teaspoon pepper |
| 1 cup milk | 2 medium potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced |
| ¼ cup shredded cheddar cheese | |
| ½ teaspoon salt | |

In a small saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Stir in flour until smooth. Gradually add milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir for two minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat and add the cheese, salt, Worcestershire, and pepper. Cook and stir until cheese is melted. Place potatoes in a small greased 1-qt. baking dish. Top with cheese sauce. Cover and bake at 350° F for 25 minutes. Uncover; bake 20 minutes longer or until potatoes are tender. Sprinkle with paprika if desired. Serves 2.

Adapted from More Recipes for One or Two! Utah State University

### Microwave Potatoes

| 2 potatoes, peeled and sliced thinly | ½ teaspoon pepper |
| ¼ cup sliced onions | ¼ teaspoon garlic powder |
| ¼ teaspoon salt | ¼ cup shredded cheese |

Coat a 9-inch microwave safe plate with nonstick cooking spray. Arrange potato and onion slices on plate; sprinkle with seasonings. Cover and microwave on high for 6-8 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese and cook for 2 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Makes 2 servings.

(Cooking time varies with each microwave.)

Variation: Add diced ham or cooked sausage.

Source: Cooking for One or Two, Montana State University Extension

### Corn Pudding

| 1 can (8½ oz.) whole kernel corn, drained | 1 tablespoon flour |
| Dash pepper | 1 tablespoon butter or margarine, melted |
| 1 tablespoon sugar | ½ teaspoon salt (optional) |
| 1 egg, beaten | ½ cup milk |

Combine corn, sugar, flour, salt and pepper. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour in mini loaf pan foilware. Bake in 325° oven 50 to 60 minutes, or until knife comes out clean.
Makes 2 servings.

Nutritional Information per Serving:
255 Calories, 9 g protein 35 g carbohydrate, 11 g fat, 111 cholesterol, 1038 mg sodium.

Source: Cooking for One or Two, University of Kentucky Extension, Publication No. FN-SSB.106

Mac ‘n Cheese for One

1 Tbsp. margarine or butter  
1 Tbsp. flour  
½ teaspoon salt  
Pinch pepper  
½ cup milk  
½ cup shredded cheddar cheese  
¼ teaspoon dry mustard  
¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
¼ cup (dry) macaroni noodles, cooked and drained  
2 saltines, crushed

In a saucepan, melt margarine or butter; stir in flour, salt and pepper. Whisk in milk until smooth. Cook and stir for two minutes. Reduce heat to low. Add the cheese, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, and onion; stir until cheese is melted. Add macaroni. Transfer to a greased 1-cup baking dish. Sprinkle with crushed saltines.

Bake uncovered at 350°F for 15 minutes or until heated through.

Yield: 1 serving

Adapted from More Recipes for One or Two! Utah State University

Tips for Healthy Eating from ChooseMyPlate.gov

☑ Cook once...eat all week!  
☑ Make half your plate veggies and fruits  
☑ Add lean protein  
☑ Include whole grains  
☑ Don’t forget the dairy  
☑ Avoid extra fat  
☑ Take your time  
☑ Try new foods  
☑ Satisfy your sweet tooth in a healthy way  
☑ Read the nutrition label to help you make better choices

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