



Cut Your Grocery Bill **IN HALF** — with — America's Cheapest Family[®]

Includes so many
**INNOVATIVE
STRATEGIES**
you *won't* have to
cut coupons

- Free up \$3,000 or more annually
- Spend less time shopping and cooking
- Save huge money on organics

Steve & Annette
ECONOMIDES

New York Times Best-Selling Authors

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

Cut Your Grocery Bill in Half with America's Cheapest Family*

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The Power of the Plan

Templates for Researching and Listing Sale Items

STORE 1:		
ITEM	PRICE	COUPON

STORE 2:		
ITEM	PRICE	COUPON

Annette's Loss-Leader List

ALBERTSONS

GM Cereal 9-13oz 1.77
 Betty Crocker Cake Mix 59¢
 Light Br Sugar 2# 1.00
 Cornstarch 16oz 1.00
 Evap milk 12oz 79¢
 Nature Valley Granola Bars 2.00
 Broccoli Cheddar Cauliflower 99¢/lb
 Cilantro 33¢ bunch

BAKATAS

Tomatoes 99¢
 Baguette Bread 50¢
 Whole milk 1.49 L2 (40.00 purchase)
 Bananas 39¢/lb
 Pineapples 2.80
 40% off Shamrock (Egg Nog?) ^{whipping cream}
 7-Eleven Hotdogs, lunch meat, bacon 40% off
 Food Club cereals 1.99
 Pillsbury Grand Biscuits 16oz 1.66
 Baskin Ice cream sherbet 1.75 qt 2.00
 Sitos/Cheetos 10oz 1.50
 Zucchini or yellow squash 89¢/lb
 McIntosh Apples 1.50/lb

SAFEWAY

* Boneless Beef Chuck Steak, Chuck Roast 1.49/lb
 * Corn on cob 10-2.00
 * Best Foods Mayo 30oz 1.88
 * Kraft Singles 99¢ L1
 * Doritos 1.90 L2
 * Hillshire Farm Smoked sausage 16oz 2.00 L2
 * Starkist Tuna 50¢/lb
 * Kraft salad dressing 16oz 1.50
 * Van Camps pork + beans 50¢
 Arm + Hammer laundry det 100oz 3.50
 Nature's Cupboard breads 24oz 1.50
 Lucerne Eggs 18ct B161P
 * Potatoes 18¢ russets 2.99

SPROUTS

* Watermelons 99¢ each
 Bartlett Pears 2lbs-1.00
 green peppers 3-1.00

Sample Menu Sheet

DAY	ACTIVITY	DINNER MEAL
Sunday	Home night—schedules and kids' payday	
Monday	Early dinner: 4H clogging for Abbey, everyone else weight training	
Tuesday	Joe work	
Wednesday	Joe baseball	
Thursday	All weight training	
Friday	Young adult/singles group	
Saturday	Home—work on projects day	

Menu Planner

Sunday	<u>6/21</u> Leftovers	<u>6/28</u> Leftovers
Monday	<u>6/22</u> Clogging/paps Beef Stroganoff rice gr. beans	<u>6/29</u> Clogging/paps Sesame chicken rice beets
Tuesday	<u>6/23</u> Econ. bake day Chicken cashew rice onion celery water chestnuts	<u>6/30</u> Ham & gravy potatoes broccoli
Wednesday	<u>6/24</u> Cheese, sausage, spinach apple applesauce	<u>7/1</u> Sloppy Joes Buns tater tots, pickles or fruit
Thursday	<u>6/25</u> Spaghetti & meatballs Salad or squash	<u>7/2</u> Eggplant parmesan Spaghetti
Friday	<u>6/26</u> Julie home Hash - potatoe onion carrot	<u>7/3</u> Chicken fajitas rice, tortillas peppers, onions
Saturday	<u>6/27</u> YAS tower of Pizza veggies + dip Babel night	<u>7/4</u> YAS pool party hamburgers, hot dogs, pork ribs veggies, baked beans fruit, corn on cob

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Cake for June
Bdays

desserts

Menu Planner

DATE	WEEK 1	DATE	WEEK 2
Sun __ / __	Activity ----- Meal	Sun __ / __	Activity ----- Meal
Mon __ / __	Activity ----- Meal	Mon __ / __	Activity ----- Meal
Tues __ / __	Activity ----- Meal	Tues __ / __	Activity ----- Meal
Wed __ / __	Activity ----- Meal	Wed __ / __	Activity ----- Meal
Thurs __ / __	Activity ----- Meal	Thurs __ / __	Activity ----- Meal
Fri __ / __	Activity ----- Meal	Fri __ / __	Activity ----- Meal
Sat __ / __	Activity ----- Meal	Sat __ / __	Activity ----- Meal

Sample List of Veggies and Starches

VEGGIES / FRUITS	STARCHES
Applesauce	Beans
Asparagus	Biscuits / rolls
Baked apples	Butternut squash
Beets	Corn—frozen kernel
Broccoli	Cornbread
Brussels sprouts	Corn on the cob
Cabbage	Muffins
Carrots	Noodles / pasta
Cauliflower	Potato or tortilla chips (special occasions only)
Green beans	Potatoes (baked, mashed, or oven fried)
Green salad	Rice (brown or white)
Pickles	Yams
Spinach	
Squash (patty pan, yellow crookneck, zucchini)	
Add your own family favorites	

Completed Week of Activities with Dinner Meals

DAY	ACTIVITY	DINNER MEAL	IN FREEZER	FROM SCRATCH
Sunday	Home night—schedules and kids' payday	Shepherd's pie with broccoli	X	
Monday	Early dinner: 4H clogging for Abbey, everyone else weight training	Chicken enchiladas, rice, and carrots	X	
Tuesday	Joe work	Cooked ham, mashed potatoes, green beans		X
Wednesday	Joe baseball	Baked ziti with green salad	X	
Thursday	All weight training	Chicken vegetable soup with blueberry muffins	X	
Friday	Young adult / singles group	Tacos including lettuce, tomato, cheese, and meat		X
Saturday	Home—work on projects day	Leftovers		

Easy Dinner Combinations

MAIN DISH	STARCH	VEGETABLE
BEEF MEALS		
Beef brisket with mustard and onion	Baked potatoes	Cooked carrots
Beef stroganoff	Rice	Green beans
Meat loaf	Corn (frozen)	Broccoli
Shish kebab	Oven-fried potatoes	Cauliflower
Shepherd's pie	Dough crust	Squash—zucchini
Salisbury steaks	Baked potatoes	Broccoli
CHICKEN MEALS		
BBQ chicken	Corn	Green salad
Cashew chicken	Rice	Celery and onions
Chicken fajitas	Tortillas and rice	Peppers and onions
Oven-fried chicken	Mashed potatoes	Creamed spinach
Marinated chicken	Baked potatoes	Beets
PORK MEALS		
Breaded pork chops	Oven-fried yams	Asparagus
Sweet and sour ham	Rice	Pineapple, carrots, onions, and green peppers in recipe
Ham	Scalloped potatoes	Cooked carrots
Ham & split pea soup	Cheese muffins or biscuits	Carrot, celery, and onion in soup
MISC. MEALS		
Marinated lamb shoulder chops	Yams	Green beans
Vegetable lentil soup	Banana bread	Veggies in soup
Hot dogs	Beans	Applesauce

Sample Lunch Rotation

DAY	“MAIN DISH”	FRUIT	DESSERT / EXTRA
Monday	Egg salad sandwich	Apple	Homemade cookie
Tuesday	Tuna fish sandwich	Pear	Pretzels
Wednesday	Yogurt in small plastic container	Raisins	Tortilla chips
Thursday	Peanut butter & jelly	Carrots	Homemade trail mix
Friday	Lunch meat sandwich	Pineapple chunks	Cookies

SHOPPING LIST

ITEM	QTY	ITEM	QTY	ITEM	QTY	ITEM	QTY
CONDIMENTS		Baking soda	___	FROZEN FOOD		Chuck steak	___
Jelly/jam	___	Salt/pepper	___	Ice cream	___	Round steak	___
Peanut butter	___	Garlic powder	___	Orange juice	___	Roast beef	___
Honey	___	Spices	___	Apple juice	___	Chicken—whole	___
Shortening	___	Bouillon	___	Grape juice	___	Chicken—cut-up	___
Oil	___	HOUSEHOLD		Cranberry	___	Turkey	___
Vinegar	___	Dishwasher soap	___	Misc. juice	___	Turkey ham	___
Maple syrup	___	Dish soap	___	Spinach	___	Lamb—leg	___
Ketchup	___	Laundry detergent	___	Peas	___	Lamb—chops	___
Mustard	___	Bleach	___	Corn	___	Pork—chops	___
Mayonnaise	___	Bath spray	___	Green beans	___	Pork—roast	___
Pickles	___	Soap	___	Brussels sprouts	___	Italian sausage	___
Relish	___	Sponges	___	Mixed veggies	___	Ham	___
Salad dressing	___	Furniture polish	___	PERSONAL		VEGGIES	
Olives	___	Lightbulbs	___	Toothpaste	___	Avocado	___
Tomato paste	___	Vacuum bags	___	Shaving Cream	___	Broccoli	___
Tomato sauce	___	Glass cleaner	___	Razors	___	Cabbage	___
Tomatoes diced	___	Comet	___	Deodorant	___	Carrots	___
Gravy	___	BREAKFAST		Floss	___	Cauliflower	___
CANNED FRUIT		Cold cereal	___	Shampoo	___	Celery	___
Pineapple	___	Oatmeal	___	Conditioner	___	Corn	___
Applesauce	___	Hot cereal	___	Kotex maxi	___	Cucumbers	___
Mandarin oranges	___	Coffee/Tea	___	Thins	___	Green onions	___
Raisins	___	PAPER GOODS		Light days	___	Green pepper	___
CANNED GOODS		Tissues	___	Vitamins	___	Lettuce	___
Tuna	___	Toilet paper	___	Stockings	___	Mushrooms	___
Cream chicken	___	Napkins	___	DAIRY		Potatoes	___
Cream mushroom	___	Saran wrap	___	Milk	___	Radishes	___
Tomato soup	___	Foil	___	Margarine	___	Squash	___
Asparagus	___	Wax paper	___	Whipping cream	___	Tomato	___
Beets	___	Zip bags, large	___	Whipped cream	___	Yellow onions	___
Sauerkraut	___	Small	___	Sour cream	___	Zucchini	___
STARCHES		Freezer bags, large	___	Cottage cheese	___	FRUIT	
Spaghetti	___	Small	___	Yogurt	___	Apples—red	___
Fettuccini	___	Sandwich bags	___	Eggs	___	Apples—green	___
Rice, brown	___	Toothpicks	___	CHEESE		Apricots	___
Rice, white	___	Paper plates	___	Cheddar	___	Bananas	___
Stuffing	___	Paper cups	___	Swiss	___	Berries—blu/blk/ras	___
Dry beans	___	BREADS		Mozzarella	___	Cantaloupe	___
BAKING SUPPLIES		Crackers	___	Monterey Jack	___	Cherries	___
White flour	___	Chips—tortilla	___	Ricotta	___	Grapes	___
Wheat flour	___	Chips—potato	___	Parmesan	___	Honeydew	___
Sugar	___	Bread	___	PROCESSED MEATS		Nectarines	___
Yeast	___	Buns	___	Hot dogs	___	Oranges	___
Nuts	___	Cookies	___	Turkey franks	___	Peaches	___
Jell-O	___	DOGS		Bacon	___	Pears	___
Hot cocoa	___	Bones	___	Lunch meat	___	Plums	___
Pudding	___	Rawhide chews	___	MEAT		Strawberries	___
Coconut	___	Food	___	Ground beef	___	Watermelon	___
Cocoa powder	___						

Shopping to Win

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Price Tracker Sheet

ITEM _____

Date	Store	Brand	Size	Price	Price per Unit

Price Book Page Data for Raisins

ITEM: RAISINS					
DATE	STORE	BRAND	SIZE	PRICE	PRICE PER UNIT
4/10/04	Fry's/ Kroger	Dole	4 lbs.	\$5.07	\$1.27 lb.
5/15/06	Trader Joe's	Organic Thompson	1 lb.	\$1.59	\$1.59 lb.
5/15/06	Sam's Club	Sunmaid	4 lbs.	\$5.19	\$2.03 lb.
9/15/09	Fry's / Kroger	Kroger	24 oz. / 1.5 lbs.	\$4.99	\$3.32 lb.
9/15/09	Fry's / Kroger	Sunmaid	24 oz. / 1.5 lbs.	\$4.49	\$2.99 lb.
9/15/09	Fry's / Kroger	Sunkist	12 oz.	\$2.00	\$2.66 lb.
9/15/09	Fry's / Kroger	Sunmaid	15 oz.	\$3.49	\$3.72 lb.

Unit Price Quiz

Instructions: Draw a line from the Deal Price to the correct Unit Price. Prices have been rounded up to the nearest penny.

Note: The answers are not provided . . . we want you to use your head or your calculator to get it right.

	DEAL PRICE
1	10 for \$10
2	3 for \$5 Daisy Sour Cream, 16 oz.
3	2 for \$7 boxes of Splenda
4	3 for \$3
5	2 for the price of 1 @ \$5.99
6	Buy 1, get 2 free for \$5.99
7	Buy 2 (@ \$1.50 each) and get 1 free
8	4 for \$5 Fleishmann's Margarine, 1 lb.
9	6 for \$1, gift bags
10	3 for \$7, 12-packs of soda

UNIT PRICE
\$1.25
\$3.00
\$1.67
\$1.00
\$3.50
\$1.00
\$2.00
\$2.33
\$1.00
\$0.17

Salad Dressing Price Tags

WISHBONE SLD DRESSING ITAL FF

16 FZ

2⁹⁹

18.7¢
PER OZ

WISHBONE SLD DRSNG CARB OPTION RANCH

16 FZ

3⁹⁹

25.0¢
PER OZ

WALDEN FRM SLD DRESSING CLASSIC FR

12 FZ

2⁷⁸

23.2¢
PER OZ

STR BRND DRESSING CALIFORNIA FRENCH

16 FZ

2²⁹

14.4¢
PER OZ

Prepackaged Savings

ITEM	PER POUND LOOSE	PER POUND BAGGED	% SAVED
Apples	\$1.50	\$1.33	11
Carrots	69¢	60¢	13
Potatoes	79¢	38¢	52
Onions	79¢	67¢	15

Comparison of Packaged and Pre-Packaged Produce Weight and Pricing

ITEM	BAG SIZE / OZ.	BAGGED PRICE / PER LB.	PRICE PER LB. LOOSE	BAGGED WEIGHT MAX	ACTUAL PRICE PER LB. BAGGED	% SAVED VS. LOOSE
Apples	3 lb. / 48 oz.	\$3.99 / \$1.33 lb.	\$1.50 lb.	52 oz.	\$1.23	18%
Carrots	1 lb. / 16 oz.	69¢ / 69¢ lb.	69¢ lb.	20 oz.	55¢	20%*
Carrots	2 lb. / 32 oz.	\$1.59 / 80¢ lb.	69¢ lb.	39 oz.	65¢	6%
Carrots	5 lb. / 80 oz.	\$2.99 / 60¢ lb.	69¢ lb.	84 oz.	57¢	17%
Potatoes	5 lb. / 80 oz.	\$2.79 / 56¢ lb.	79¢ lb.	89 oz.	50¢	37%
Potatoes	10 lb. / 160 oz.	\$3.79 / 38¢ lb.	79¢ lb.	167 oz.	36¢	54%*
Onions	3 lb. / 48 oz.	\$2.00 / 67¢ lb.	79¢ lb.	51 oz.	65¢	20%

Eggs

USDA WEIGHT REQUIREMENTS	
SIZE	DOZEN WEIGHT
Jumbo	30 ounces
Extra Large	27 ounces
Large	24 ounces
Medium	21 ounces

LIQUID OUNCES FOR ONE DOZEN EGGS			
SIZE	AVERAGE	HIGH	LOW
Medium	21	24	19
Large	22	24	20
Extra Large	22.3	23	21

Warehouse Prices Versus Grocery Sale Prices

ITEM	WAREHOUSE PRICE	PRICE PER UNIT	GROCERY STORE SALE PRICE	PRICE PER UNIT	PERCENT SAVED
Heinz Ketchup	(2) 60-oz. bottles \$4.69 28 oz. would cost \$1.09	3.9¢ per oz.	28-oz. Heinz Ketchup 79¢	2.8¢ per oz.	27.5%
Spaghetti	6 lbs. for \$2.78	46.3¢ per lb.	1 lb. 33¢	33¢ per lb.	29%
Cereal—Honey Bunches of Oats	3.25 lbs.—\$6.05	\$1.86 per lb.	1-lb. box \$1.50 no coupon	\$1.50 per lb.	19.4%
Nestle chocolate chips	60-oz. bag—\$6.38 12 oz. would be \$1.28	10.6¢ per oz.	12-oz. bag—\$1.00	8.3¢ per oz.	31%

Cooking That Will Save You Time, Money, and Sanity

Beef Pricing Figures

CUT OF MEAT	PRICE PER LB.	%WASTE	FINAL PRICE PER LB.
Chuck roast—bone-in	99¢ (sale price)	25%	\$1.24
Chuck steak—boneless	99¢ (sale price)	0	99¢
Top round purchased bulk from a restaurant supply warehouse	\$1.00 purchased with a coupon. 27 lb. slab	15%	\$1.15

List of Basic Spices

SPICE	USED IN
ALLSPICE	Sausages, cakes, desserts, fruit pies, jerky, chicken, fish, breakfast breads, stews, split pea soup, rice pilaf
ANISE	Licorice flavor for cakes, breads, cookies, fruit, root vegetables
BASIL	Pesto, great with tomatoes, herb breads like Focaccia, spaghetti sauce, poultry, lamb, fish and seafood, and a must for Italian dishes of any kind
BAY LEAF	Stew, soup, stock, marinades, pickles, beans, tomatoes
CARAWAY SEED	Rye bread, crackers, sausage, cabbage, soups, stews, pork
CARDAMOM	Sweet and savory, pastries, pudding, ice cream, breads, hamburgers, meat loaf, fruits
CELERY SEED	Soups, stews, stir-fry, salad dressing (crushed seeds), breads
CHILI POWDER	Peps-up bland dishes, Mexican dishes, and, of course, chili
CHIVES	Raw in salads, yogurt sauce, and as a baked potato topping
CILANTRO	Soups, stir-fry, Mexican dishes, rice, potatoes, fava beans, clams
CINNAMON	Desserts, spice breads and cakes, Middle Eastern dishes, coffee, chutneys, mulled wine, pumpkin bread or pie, baked apples, apple pie
CLOVES	Ham glaze, spiced breads, desserts, syrups, preserves, mulling cider
CORIANDER	Curry powder, vegetables, baked apples, pies, marinades, fish, soup stock
CUMIN	Greek shish kebab, breads, chutneys, meats, vegetable stew
CURRY	Indian cooking, meat stews, lentils, vegetarian dishes
DILL	Fish, seafood, root vegetables, potato salad, green salads, salad dressings, and pickling. Annette uses a little dill in her dough for shepherd's pie.
FENNEL	Fish, Italian breads, pickles, soups, roast pork, beans, vegetables
GARLIC	Chicken, lamb, Italian dishes, soups, Greek dishes, stir-fry

GINGER	Oriental dishes, works well with garlic, great with fruit
LEMON PEEL	Cookies, cake, breads, muffins, Oriental dishes
MARJORAM	Salads, egg dishes, mushroom sauces, fish, poultry
MINT	Chicken, pork, lamb, grilled fish, fruit salad, fruit punch, lemonade
MUSTARD	BBQ sauces, root vegetables (especially potatoes), pork, shrimp
NUTMEG	Lamb, fruit desserts, cakes, egg and cheese dishes, pumpkin pie, pumpkin bread
ONION POWDER	Great with meats, veggies, pasta, rice, potatoes
ORANGE PEEL	Cookies, cakes, breads, Oriental dishes
OREGANO	Italian and Greek cooking (our common bond), beans, stews, soups
PAPRIKA	Adds spice and color to Hungarian cooking, potatoes, rice, noodles, fish, chicken, egg dishes, soups
PARSLEY	Fresh in green salads, soups, spaghetti sauce, meat loaf, meatballs
PEPPERCORN	Add if you want to increase the heat of a recipe—can be ground
POPPY SEEDS	Breads, bagels, pretzels, cakes, salad dressing, vegetables—just don't eat any before a drug test.
ROSEMARY	Focaccia and other breads, stews, vegetables with olive oil, lamb, beef, poultry, shish kebab, crackers
SAGE	Pork, poultry, stuffings, sausage, stew, focaccia bread
SESAME	Breads, cookies, Asian cooking, noodles
TARRAGON	Fish, poultry, egg dishes, marinades for game meat, herb vinegars, mustards, flavored butters—Annette uses this in turkey gravy.
THYME	Clam chowder, marinade for pork and game meat
TURMERIC	Colors sauces yellow, beans, lentils, soup, rice, pickles, relishes
VANILLA	Dessert baking, fruit, pancakes, cookies, ice cream, custard, cakes, syrups
WHITE PEPPER	Less potent than black pepper—used to add zip

Once-a-Month Cooking Time Comparison

ACTIVITY	TIME SPENT
Annette's involvement: OAMC cooking day—preparing seventeen meals. Time spent preparing, cooking, and cleaning up.	6 hours
Family involvement: Usually at least one of the kids will help Annette the entire day, and as other family members are available, they'll pitch in too. So the approximate number of "man" hours would be 6 plus another 5 (for the intermittent helpers).	11 hours
Meal preparation: Daily warming of the meal and preparing side dishes. 30 minutes per meal.	8.5 hours
Total hours spent preparing seventeen meals	25.5 hours
Conventional meal preparation: Assuming cooking from scratch and cleaning up 17 meals at an average of 2 ½ hours per meal (some take less time, and some take more).	42.5 hours
Total time saved	17 hours per month

Sample Once-a-Month Cooking Day Meal Plans

	MONTH 1		MONTH 2
BEEF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stuffed grape leaves 2. Tagliarini 3. Sloppy joes 4. Stew 5. Shepherd's pie 	BEEF	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reuben sandwiches 2. Hash 3. Hamburgers 4. Tacos 5. Shepherd's pie
CHICKEN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chicken pot pie 2. Nacho chicken 3. Orange chicken 4. BBQ chicken 5. Sesame chicken 	CHICKEN	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lemon chicken 2. Chicken Parmesan 3. Nacho chicken 4. Chicken fajitas 5. Chicken enchiladas
HAM / PORK	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sweet & sour ham 2. Split pea soup 3. Ham & scalloped potatoes 	HAM / PORK	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Orange ham 2. BBQ ham
MISC.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vegetable bean soup 2. Calzones 	MISC.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cream of broccoli soup 2. Vegetable lentil soup 3. Eggplant Parmesan

Stocking Up and Organizing—Store It, Find It, Use It

Pantry Stock

ITEM & DESCRIPTION	QTY IN STOCK
Applesauce We buy a nonsweetened brand from a warehouse club in a #10 can. Used at the end of the month to supplement our fruit intake. Must be eaten quickly or it will spoil in the refrigerator, so we schedule it two or three times in one week once opened. Smaller family units may be better off buying 32-ounce jars or smaller, to minimize spoilage.	3 or 4 cans
Asparagus, canned We keep this in stock to eat when asparagus is out of season. It also helps to stretch our menu at the end of the month when our fresh veggie supply is waning and adds variety to our diet.	3 to 6 cans
Baking soda Used in baking, as a pool chemical, in laundry, and for brushing our teeth (sure, it sounds gross, but our dentist is amazed at how clean our teeth are). Purchased in 10-pound bags from a warehouse club.	20 pounds
Beets, canned Kept in stock to eat at the end of the month when our fresh veggie supply is waning. Adds variety to our diet.	3 to 6 cans
Black olives Used in pasta salads, green salads, tacos, and relish trays for potlucks and parties.	6 to 12 cans
Bouillon cubes We buy these in 1-pound containers and always keep chicken and beef on hand—127 cubes in each box. Used for adding flavor to many recipes and gravy.	1 pound of each

Cocoa powder We've found the best prices to be Kroger's generic brand. It is expensive, but used sparingly for Annette's killer gooey brownies and no-bake oatmeal cookies.	1 tin
Cold cereal We regularly reach our buy price of \$1.50 or less per box with either a sale or by combining a sale with coupons—even for some really expensive types of cereal. We mark the box tops with the purchase month and year, then store them in the pantry. This helps us to use the oldest boxes first. We schedule cereal on our breakfast menu twice each week. It can easily be stored for eight months to one year. The rule at our house is to combine a “sweet” cereal with a “healthy” one. The kids go along with this rule and readily share it with any friends who happen to be visiting on a day when we have cold cereal. We consider cereals like cornflakes, Rice Krispies, and Raisin Bran to be “healthy” types. And cereals like Froot Loops, Cap'n Crunch, Apple Jacks, or Golden Crisp are “sweets.” We add fresh fruit whenever possible.	10 to 20 boxes
Cream of chicken/mushroom soup We use a couple of cans of each per month in various recipes.	4 to 8 cans
Extra virgin olive oil Used regularly for making hash browns on Sunday morning, pizza dough, and in salad dressings. We usually find the best deals on gallons, but you'll sometimes find better pricing on quarts.	1 gallon
Gelatin dessert We always keep several boxes on hand to whip up for a quick refreshing summer dessert. Brand names don't matter; just go for price. It's not very nutritious, but adding fruit does help—and a little whipped cream makes it a real treat!	10 to 15 boxes
Honey Used for cooking and baking. We usually purchase in a 1-gallon bucket from a local honey distributor. Over time it can crystallize. Just set it on the stove when cooking something in the oven (like a turkey) to melt it down.	1 gallon
Hot cereal During the colder months we cook this up twice each week from scratch. It only takes about twenty minutes to cook eight cups. There are usually some leftovers that our “bottomless pit” teenage boys love to devour after they finish working out at night. We stock up on oatmeal and farina—sometimes purchased in bulk and stored in plastic containers. We also purchase the instant type when it is on sale for \$1 per box or less. We use this when we travel or when life is hectic—although we don't like to make it a habit.	3 to 5 pounds / Instant 1 or 2 boxes

Hot cocoa / hot cider We drink this in the wintertime and stock up when it goes on sale. We usually buy cocoa and cider in boxes with individual packets when it's on sale. We've also bought hot cocoa in larger, bulk containers.	3 boxes of each
Jelly or jam PB&J sandwiches are a staple at our house. We also use jelly on toast and in smoothies.	6 to 12 jars
Ketchup Best prices are found during the summer barbecue season—especially Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. Used on hot dogs, hamburgers, meat loaf, and in some salad dressings. Sometimes we buy it in gallon cans and transfer into smaller squeeze bottles.	6 to 12 bottles
Legumes We keep several varieties on hand: split peas, navy beans, pinto beans, chickpeas, and lima beans. Split peas are used in ham and split pea soup. Often when Annette makes a pot of turkey soup, she'll add one cup of mixed beans (soaked in water to reduce gassiness) for additional protein. Legumes get harder as they age, so older ones will have to be soaked in water longer before cooking. We like cooking them in a slow cooker.	1 to 2 pounds of each
Maple syrup We rarely purchase the real stuff. It's a special treat if we find it on sale. We eat pancakes (whole grain) once or twice each week. We know syrup can be made from scratch, but we prefer to purchase 1-gallon containers of Mrs. Butterworth's or something similar at a warehouse-type store.	2 gallons
Mayonnaise Best sale time is during the summer. Don't stock up on too much, as it can go rancid. We use it for tuna fish and cold-cut sandwiches, potato salad, macaroni salad, etc.	6 jars
Mustard We purchase this by the gallon and then transfer it into smaller squeeze bottles, or in small bottles (for pennies) using a coupon.	1 gallon
Nuts We keep four varieties in stock: peanuts, walnuts, pecans, and almonds. Lately these have become very expensive—probably due to the South Beach or Atkins diets. We use them sparingly in our baking. Steve likes to snack on walnuts—it helps him avoid sugary stuff; Annette prefers peanuts. Store in the freezer in zippered bags to avoid them going rancid.	2 pounds of each
Peanut butter We buy the all-natural stuff—just peanuts and salt. The oil separates from the peanuts and must be mixed in (we use our mixer to do this). All opened jars are stored in the refrigerator. We keep no more than six 32-ounce jars on hand. If stored too long they can go rancid.	6 jars (32 ounces)

Pickles We buy spears by the gallon. Vlasic is our favorite brand. We eat them at lunch or on pizza nights. Joe loves to snack on pickles.	2 gallons
Pineapple chunks We buy these in #10 cans and use them to supplement our fruit intake when we run low on fresh fruit. We'll go through one can in about two days. They can be spooned into a plastic container for school or work lunches. Be careful, they can start to ferment if stored too long in the refrigerator . . . <i>hic!</i>	3 cans
Pudding We love warm chocolate pudding cooked on the stove—instant is taboo in our house. The best prices are found around Thanksgiving.	10 boxes
Relish Mostly used in tuna fish sandwiches and on hot dogs. Bought in gallon containers and then transferred to reused peanut butter jars.	1 gallon
Rice, brown and white We prefer to use brown rice as a side dish for health reasons, but we always have white rice on hand for times when dinner needs to be thrown together quickly. Brown rice cooks in 40 to 50 minutes, white in 20 minutes. Brown rice can go rancid after 6 months if stored at room temperature.	5 to 10 pounds
Salad dressing We make this from scratch if we have the time (Italian, oriental, and honey French), or we stock up when it is on sale.	6 to 12 bottles
Sauerkraut We use one can per month for Reuben sandwiches and sometimes on hot dogs.	4 to 6 cans
Shortening We know this is controversial, but pie crusts and certain cookie recipes just require it. One can lasts us two years. <i>Used sparingly in your diet it shouldn't be an issue.</i>	One #10 can
Spaghetti and other pasta It makes a great side dish or main dish. When it hits our buy price, we stock up on 10 to 16 pounds as we go through about 1 ½ pounds in one meal—with a little left over for lunches.	10 to 16 pounds
Stuffing Most of the time Annette makes this from scratch (remember we cook one turkey almost every month during the winter/cooler months). If she can pick up a box for pennies, with coupons, she'll keep them on hand to prepare as a side dish—this can be served at times other than Thanksgiving.	1 to 3 boxes

Sugar Since we do a lot of baking from scratch, we keep quite a bit of sugar on hand. We realize that sugar is not the best thing to eat, so if you have health issues, minimizing sugar consumption is a good idea. It stores well, so we stock up only when it's on sale. It can be stored in plastic storage buckets to prevent moisture damage.	10 to 25 pounds
Tomato paste Used for making our traditional family recipe spaghetti sauce and sloppy joes. We buy the 4-ounce cans when they hit our buy price; otherwise we purchase the large #10 can at a warehouse club and spoon it into small plastic storage containers to freeze.	20 cans
Tomato sauce Another ingredient in our spaghetti sauce as well as in meat loaf and in another family favorite, tagliarini (ground beef and noodle casserole). We buy #10 cans and divide into two plastic storage containers to freeze once the can is opened.	2 cans
Tomato soup We know this can be made from scratch, but when it's on sale, we stock the pantry. It's always a great accompaniment with grilled cheese sandwiches.	6 to 10 cans
Tomatoes, diced Used for spaghetti sauce and in other recipes. We buy #10 cans (approximately 6 pounds) from a warehouse club.	4 cans
Tuna We buy 3-ounce cans of dark meat in water when they are on sale. We avoid Bumble Bee brand, no matter what the price, because the tuna is more shredded than chunked.	12 to 24 cans
Vegetable oil We actually prefer peanut oil or canola oil, but if we can't find it on sale, we go with vegetable oil. Used sparingly in pancakes and quick breads. Very seldom do we fry anything.	2 gallons max
White flour Used sparingly, often mixing it with some whole wheat. Mostly used for baking cookies, brownies, cakes, pancakes, pizza dough, banana bread, and sweet bread. Store in the freezer to prevent bugs.	10 to 15 pounds
Whole wheat flour We keep whole grain wheat in 5-gallon storage buckets. It stores well for years this way. We purchased a good-quality wheat grinder and grind up enough grain to fill two or three smaller containers at a time—which are then stored in the freezer. We mix whole wheat flour in almost everything we bake. Dessert-type recipes have more white flour than wheat in them.	
Yeast Purchased in bulk through a warehouse club in a 1-pound package. Store in a glass jar in the refrigerator—this keeps the yeast from losing its potency. Two teaspoons equal one packet of yeast.	1 pound

ITEM	SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS
EASY TO FREEZE	
Baking chocolate/ coconut	Keep it wrapped up airtight.
Bananas	Freeze old bananas, in the skin or out, in a zippered bag for use later in banana bread, smoothies, or pancakes. If you fully defrost a frozen banana in the skin, it's hard to peel it because it is so mushy.
Berries	Strawberries, raspberries, brambleberries, blueberries, blackberries, and other miscellaneous berries all freeze well. Rinse and store in zippered bags in small quantities.
Birthday cake	If you make too much, freeze it for later.
Bread, bagels, and muffins	The goal here is to minimize condensation. Double-bagging and removing as much air as possible are the keys. We pack two or three loaves to a plastic grocery bag, tie the top, and set it gently in the freezer. Once frozen, it can be located elsewhere in the freezer. Try not to crush it by placing under heavier items. We predominantly buy whole wheat bread—it's denser than white bread, contains less moisture, and has fewer problems when defrosting.
Cheese	We freeze mostly shredded cheese, but, on occasion, solid chunks. Chunk cheese will crumble when thawed out. Ricotta cheese freezes okay; when defrosted, water may separate and need to be mixed back in or dumped out.
Drinks	Fruit juice, lemonade, tea, and coffee all freeze well. Allow expansion room.
Eggs	Scramble raw eggs and freeze in small containers. Be sure to label how many eggs are in the container.

Flour, cornmeal, brown rice, sunflower and flax seeds	Freezing keeps these items from getting buggy or becoming rancid.
Fruit	We've frozen sliced peaches and nectarines without any cooking preparation. Use later in smoothies. Apples need to be cooked first, then frozen.
Green onions	We buy several bunches at a time and chop into small pieces, then store in a zippered bag. Cilantro and parsley can also be stored this way.
Lemons	We juice our lemons and freeze in ice cube trays, then remove from the tray and store in zippered bags. We haven't had any luck with freezing juiced oranges or grapefruits; the juice separates from the pulp and tends to get bitter when thawed.
Lunch meat	We find great bargains when items are a couple of days from going "out of code." Can be stored for months. Hot dogs also fit in this category.
Margarine/butter	Freeze as is—but don't drop it on your toes when it's frozen!
Meat	Be sure it is wrapped well—no ripped plastic. If you're going to store for longer than a few months, double wrap. Beef, pork, chicken, lamb, fish—all freeze well. Our best deals have been on meat that is close to code. According to experts, fish doesn't freeze well for long periods of time.
Milk	Tap off about 1 cup from a gallon jug to allow for expansion when it's frozen. To defrost in the winter, we place it in the sink overnight. In the summer, we place it in the sink, then shake it every hour and place in refrigerator when half-defrosted. For quick thawing, microwave for seven minutes or less; shake using a pot holder (the milk in the handle of a 1-gallon container can get hot). Repeat the previous step if necessary. Shake before serving to mix in separated fat.
Nuts	Store in sealed plastic bag or container. Keeps them from going rancid on the shelf. Test before including in recipes if stored for over six months.
Snickers bars	Frozen is the <i>only</i> way to eat 'em.
Turkeys	Since frozen ones come vacuum-sealed, they can be stored easily for a year and possibly longer.

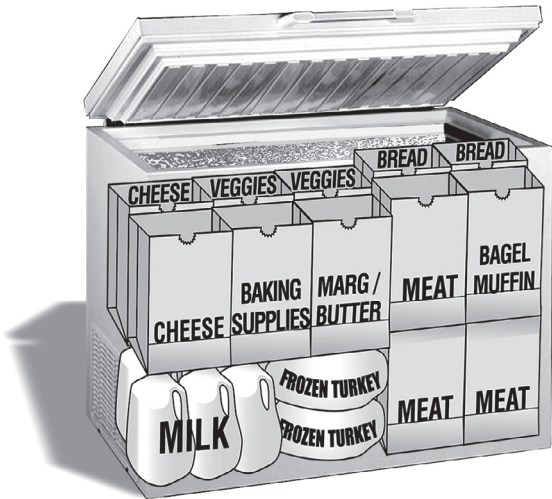
FREEZE AFTER COOKING

Mushrooms	If they're on sale, we buy several pounds, clean, slice, and cook in a wine and butter sauce. Then we store in smaller containers for later use.
Pasta	Must be undercooked. Store in zippered bag or plastic container.
Potatoes	Must be thoroughly cooked or else they'll turn black—we learned this the hard way.
Rice	Cooked, but not overcooked. Store in zippered bag or plastic container.
Soups	Cook it up, cool it down, ladle into a container, and leave some space for expansion.
Spaghetti sauce	Cook it up, cool it down, ladle into a container, and leave some space for expansion.
Veggies	Unless buying flash-frozen from the store, these must all be cooked first (i.e., blanched). Beets, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, celery, corn, green beans, spinach, and Swiss chard all freeze well.

WON'T FREEZE WELL

Cream cheese	Doesn't freeze well because it gets lumpy, crumbly, and watery. You can reconstitute it by using a mixer, but it still won't be as good as fresh stuff.
Eggplant	Turns rubbery and leaks water even after it is cooked.
Melons	Don't know how they do it in the frozen food section (it must be flash frozen); it just hasn't worked for us.
Salad vegetables	Lettuce, cucumbers, radishes, and cabbage. Water in the cells of the vegetables expands when frozen and bursts the cell walls. When the food is thawed, the liquid seeps out and the food becomes limp. We've read of some people taking wilted lettuce and using it in a soup recipe.
Whipping cream	It gets grainy and won't whip up smooth after being frozen. Can be used in cooking recipes, but not for frosting and other whipped applications. If you must store, whip it first, then freeze in small quantities.

How We Organize Food in Our Freezer



Economizing Equipment— Powerful Money-Saving Tools

Liquid Dish Soap Comparison

PRODUCT	AMOUNT USED IN 1 WEEK	RETAIL PRICE	EFFICIENCY	ACTUAL COST PER OZ.
Dawn	100 ml.	38 oz. \$3.99 / 10.5¢ per oz.	100%	10.5¢ per oz.
Ajax	175 ml.	34 oz. \$2.99 / 8.8¢ per oz.	Used 75% more	15.4¢ per oz.
Generic store brand	262 ml.	25 oz. \$1.99 / 8¢ per oz.	Used 162 % more	20.96¢ per oz.

Recipes

There is something magical about having family favorite meals—the ones that you, your spouse, or your kids get excited about every time you serve them. This chapter is a small collection of some of the 100+ recipes that Annette has learned and our family has grown to love over the years. This sampling of recipes should just be a starting point to help you discover meals that will become favorites for your family.

Here's a list of what we've included in this Bonus section.

Chicken / Turkey Recipes

- Jane's Nacho Chicken / Turkey
- Dottie's Chicken Cashew
- Sesame Chicken

Beef Recipes

- Tagliarini
- Beef Brisket with Mustard and Onion
- Annette's Ground Beef Hash

Pork / Ham Recipes

- Aunt Harriet's Pork Chops and Rice

- Cheese Sausage Spinach Pie
- Split Pea Soup

Meatless Recipes

- Eggplant Parmesan
- Kathy's French Onion Soup
- Veggie Soup

Quick Breads

- Steve's Killer Pancakes
- Cheese Muffins
- Banana Bread
- Jennifer's Chocolate Chip Zucchini Bread

CHICKEN / TURKEY RECIPES

Because we stock up on inexpensive turkeys around Thanksgiving time, we often substitute turkey for chicken in these recipes. Using either type of meat in these recipes will turn out fine.

Jane's Nacho Chicken / Turkey

This is one of the recipes that Annette picked up from a friend during a group recipe swap the first year we were married. After twenty-eight years, it's still a favorite.

Ingredients

- 2 ½ to 3 pounds cooked chicken or turkey, diced or cubed
- 2 (10-ounce) cans cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 (4-ounce) can green chilies, mild to hot, you choose
- 1 (10- to 16-ounce) bag tortilla chips, broken up
- 1 to 2 pounds shredded Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese
- salsa

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°. Fill a 13 x 9-inch glass baking dish $\frac{3}{4}$ full with the chicken. Mix in the cream of mushroom soup, chicken broth, and green chilies. Layer the tortilla chips on top of the mixture, then cover with the shredded cheese. Bake for 30 to 45 minutes, until the cheese is melted and starting to brown. Mmmmm delicious! Have a bowl of salsa available for those who want to spoon some on top. Serves 8 to 10 people.

Dottie's Chicken Cashew Recipe

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 to 3 cups diced celery, including leaves
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cups cubed chicken or turkey, cooked or uncooked
- 1 or 2 (10-ounce) cans cream of mushroom soup (use 2 cans for a creamier sauce)
- 1 to 2 tablespoons soy sauce, to taste

1 cup chicken broth
¼ teaspoon black pepper
2 cups Rice cooked (Brown or White)
Cashews and crispy Chinese noodles to sprinkle on top
Optional: 1 (8-ounce) can sliced water chestnuts, drained

Directions

Melt the butter in an 8-quart pot. Add the celery and onion and cook until tender. Add the chicken or turkey, cream of mushroom soup, soy sauce, chicken broth, and pepper, and water chestnuts if desired. Bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and simmer on low for 20 minutes. Serve over cooked rice with Chinese noodles sprinkled on top for a delicious meal. Serves 6 to 8.

Sesame Chicken

This recipe always gets rave reviews from family and friends—hardly ever any leftovers.

Ingredients

juice from 6 lemons
¼ cup teriyaki or soy sauce
½ cup chopped green onions
3 cloves garlic, chopped
¼ cup peanut butter
15 ginger crystals or 1 tablespoon ginger powder
1 tablespoon to ¼ cup honey, depending on taste
All-purpose flour or cornstarch for thickening
2 to 3 cups diced cooked chicken or turkey
½ to ¾ cup sesame seeds, toasted

Directions

In a 10-inch skillet heat the lemon juice and teriyaki or soy sauce with the onions and garlic until tender, about 10 minutes. Add the peanut butter, ginger, and honey, and bring to a boil. Thicken with flour or cornstarch and pour over the cooked chicken. Sprinkle with toasted sesame seeds. Serves 6 to 8.

BEEF RECIPES

Tagliarini

This is another family favorite. Annette prepares everything but the noodles and cheese on once-a-month cooking day, then freezes the meal. When she wants to cook it, she defrosts it, heats it up, and adds the noodles and cheese as indicated below in the directions.

Ingredients

- 1 to 2 pounds ground beef
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 medium to large onion, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped, or 1 heaping teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons chili powder, or more depending on your taste
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 2 cups water
- ½ pound dry noodles (we like twirls)
- 2 cups shredded cheese, cheddar or a combination of other cheeses your family likes

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°. In a 10-inch skillet mix the ground beef with the diced bell pepper, onion, and garlic and steam to cook. Drain off fat and scoop the meat mixture into a 13 x 9-inch (or larger) baking pan. Stir in the salt, chili powder, and honey. Add the tomatoes and water. Bake in 350° oven for 30 to 45 minutes. When the liquid is boiling, stir in the noodles and top with the cheese. Cook 30 minutes longer. It is delicious! Serves 6 to 8.

Beef Brisket with Mustard and Onion

The name of this recipe is accurately descriptive, but it does not do justice to how delicious it is. We serve it over noodles or with baked potatoes. Plus this is a slow-cooker meal that can be started in the morning and waiting for you when you get home from errands or work.

Ingredients

- 1 (4 to 6-pound) brisket
- yellow mustard
- 1 (1.25-ounce) package dried onion soup mix
- 1 to 2 cups beef broth
- 1 tablespoon granulated lecithin
- cornstarch

Directions

In a slow cooker place the brisket fat side up. Cover with mustard (about ¼-inch thick coating) and sprinkle the onion soup onto the mustard. Cook on low, starting first thing in the morning to serve that night.

When it is cooked, scoop off the mustard and onion soup mix “goop” and put in a small saucepan to make the gravy. Peel or scrape off and discard the fat layer. Slice the meat into ¼-inch slices. To make the gravy, pour liquid from the slow cooker into the saucepan containing the mustard and onion soup “goop.” Add the beef broth. Blend well and add the lecithin to break up any remaining fat in the juices. Thicken with cornstarch. Serves 6 to 8.

Annette's Ground Beef Hash

This is an easy one-dish meal that satisfies our family every time.

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 (1-pound) chub breakfast sausage
- 4 carrots, sliced
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 potatoes, cubed
- 2 (10-ounce) cans cream of mushroom soup
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder or 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°. Brown the ground beef and sausage. Let cool. In a 15 x 11-inch baking pan combine the meat mixture with the carrots, onion, potatoes, cream of mushroom soup, garlic powder, and salt and pepper to taste. Cover with foil. Cook for 1 hour. This recipe is very flexible and vegetables can be increased or decreased as desired. It has a family rating of 9 on a 10-point scale and there are rarely any leftovers. Serves 6 to 8.

PORK / HAM RECIPES

Aunt Harriet's Pork Chops and Rice

Pork tends to go on sale regularly in our area with sale prices around 99 cents per pound. We thought you'd enjoy a tasty recipe for pork chops and rice.

Ingredients

- 1 (10-ounce) can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 (10-ounce) can cream of chicken soup
- 1 (1.25-ounce) package dried onion soup mix
- 1 (10-ounce) can of water
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup wild rice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white rice (You can substitute brown rice, but it must be soaked in water for a couple of hours—this softens the rice so it cooks faster.)
- 6 pork chops
- applesauce to serve alongside

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°. In a 15 x 11-inch baking pan mix the cream of mushroom, cream of chicken, and dried onion soup with the water and wild rice. Lay the pork chops on top of the rice and cover with foil. Bake for 1 ½ hours.

Serve with applesauce. The best part of the meal, according to Steve, is the crispy rice that sticks to the sides of the baking pan. This meal is an Economides family favorite. Serves 6.

Cheese Sausage Spinach Pie

This is super-delicious dinner. Annette discovered this recipe as a result of a “bad ad day” back in 1982 when not much was on sale—except Italian sausage.

Ingredients

- 1 pound sweet Italian sausage, chopped, or sliced links
- 5 eggs, optional: 1 additional egg for brushing on top crust
- 2 (10-ounce) packages frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained
- 1 (16-ounce) package shredded Mozzarella cheese (pronounced “moot-za-rrrrrel”—roll your r’s)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup ricotta cheese (“rrri-gotah”—put your fingers together on your thumb, hold at eye level, and shake back and forth—for some reason this improves the flavor of the cheese)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon black pepper
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- pastry for 2-crust 9-inch pie
- 1 tablespoon water

Directions

Preheat the oven to 375°. Cook the sausage and drain on paper towels. In a large bowl combine the sausage, eggs, spinach, Mozzarella, ricotta, salt, pepper, and garlic powder. Prepare 2 piecrusts. Line a 9-inch pie pan with a crust and fill with the prepared sausage mixture. Cover with the remaining crust and cut 1/2-inch slits in the top. Brush with water or an additional beaten egg. Bake for 90 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes. Serve and enjoy. Serves 8.

Split Pea Soup

Winter is a great time for hot soup. Soup is inexpensive to make and very filling. Even in Arizona's mild winter, we have soup once each week.

Ingredients

- 8-quart pot filled $\frac{2}{3}$ full of chicken broth or water with 8 bouillon cubes
- 1 large ham bone (saved in the freezer from when we cook a shank ham)
- 3 cups split peas
- 4 carrots, sliced
- 4 stalks celery, sliced
- 2 onions, diced
- 2 cups diced cooked ham
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon peppercorns
- 3 bay leaves
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions

In the 8-quart pot $\frac{3}{4}$ filled with broth, place the ham bone, split peas, carrots, celery, onions, and diced ham. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for at least 2 hours.

In a cheesecloth "ball" or tea ball, place the allspice, peppercorns, bay leaves, and salt and pepper. (If using cheesecloth, tie with string to form a ball.) Add the spice ball to the soup after it has simmered for at least 2 hours and continue simmering for 1 hour more. Remove the bone and dice any meat still clinging to it. Add the diced meat to the soup. Serve with muffins, biscuits, or cornbread for a delicious meal. Serves 10 to 12.

MEATLESS RECIPES

Eggplant Parmesan

Our whole family loves this recipe—it's delish!

Ingredients

- 1 to 3 cups peanut oil, other oils can be substituted, but peanut oil handles high heat better and may lower cholesterol
- 1 to 2 eggs, mixed with a little water
- 1 (16-ounce) container Italian seasoned bread crumbs
- 2 to 3 eggplants
- 2 to 6 cups spaghetti sauce
- 1 pound shredded Mozzarella cheese
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese

Directions

Pour ½ inch of peanut oil in a 10-inch skillet and heat on low.

Beat the egg in a medium bowl and add 1 tablespoon of water.

Pour the bread crumbs onto a plate.

Cut the eggplant into ½-inch slices and poke several times with a fork on each side to help absorb the egg and bread crumbs.

Dip each eggplant slice in egg bowl and coat both sides. Then move eggplant slices to the dish with bread crumbs and flip slices to cover both sides.

Place breaded eggplant slices on another plate until you have enough to fill the skillet. Turn heat on the skillet to medium and place eggplants into the skillet. Fry until golden brown and a fork easily goes through the slice.

Preheat the oven to 350°. While the eggplant is frying, prepare two to three 13 x 9-inch baking dishes by coating the bottoms with spaghetti sauce.

Lay the cooked eggplant slices in the prepared baking dish and add a blob of spaghetti sauce to the top of each slice. Lightly cover the eggplant with the shredded Mozzarella cheese and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese.

Bake uncovered for 45 minutes or until the cheese is browned. Makes two to three 13 x 9-inch baking pans. Serves 6 to 8.

Kathy's French Onion Soup

This is a great recipe to prepare in a slow cooker. It will warm up a cold winter night.

Ingredients

- 6 to 8 onions, sliced into rings
- ½ gallon water with 8 beef bouillon cubes, or use beef stock
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 8 to 10 slices of bread
- 8 to 10 slices Swiss cheese

Directions

In a slow cooker or an 8-quart saucepan add the onions, water with bouillon, Worcestershire sauce, and pepper. Cook on low all day. Ladle into ceramic bowls or very large ceramic tea mugs. Place the bowls on a cookie sheet for ease in getting them in and out of the oven. Top each bowl with a piece of bread and a slice of Swiss cheese. Slide the cookie sheet with bowls into the oven. Set oven to broil and cook until the cheese starts to turn golden brown. Serve with baked potatoes for a more substantial meal. Serves 8 to 10.

Veggie Soup

Soup recipes are very forgiving. If you don't measure the ingredients exactly right it will still turn out fine. Also, leftover veggies are a fine addition to the recipe and taste great. When we make soup, we make a huge pot, eat some, and freeze the rest.

This recipe will feed your family for pennies. If you are single, make a large pot and then freeze it in smaller containers. Annette always serves a quick bread with this meal and our house rule is that when your bowl is half-empty, then you can have your bread.

Ingredients

6 quarts chicken broth, Annette uses broth from boiling a turkey carcass. She refrigerates it overnight and removes the fat.
2 cups sliced carrots, sliced in rounds
2 cups chopped celery
4 cloves garlic or 2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 large onion, diced
1 to 2 cups miscellaneous leftover veggies from the refrigerator—broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, corn, and peas all work great
salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Start with an 8-quart stock or sauce pot. Add all ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 2 hours

Serves 10 to 12.

Options:

- Add 2 cups of cooked, diced chicken.
- Add brown rice into the simmering soup mixture at least 2 hours before serving (don't use white rice since it will turn to mush).
- Add 1 to 2 cups of beans (be sure to soak in water for 2 hours, dump the water and rinse, then repeat the process a second time to reduce the gassiness of your beans and ease digestion) into simmering soup mixture at least 2 hours before serving.
- Add 1 to 2 cups of noodles to simmering soup ½ hour before serving.

QUICK BREADS

Steve's Killer Pancakes

This is our all-time favorite scratch pancake recipe.

We always make a huge batch, eat some that morning, and freeze the rest. We stack the leftovers in 4 stacks, 5 pancakes high in a 1-gallon zippered bag, and pop them in the freezer. They pull apart easily and can be reheated in the microwave or toaster oven.

Ingredients

- 5 ¼ cups flour (mix 3 cups all-purpose flour with 2 ¼ cups whole wheat flour)
- 8 tablespoons brown sugar
- 8 teaspoons double-acting baking powder
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 4 eggs
- 5 ⅓ cups milk (or substitute fruit juice for some of the milk to add sweetness and flavor)
- ¼ cup salad oil
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon almond extract

Directions

In a large bowl mix the flour, brown sugar, baking powder, and salt. In a small bowl whip the eggs until fluffy to help offset the density of the whole wheat flour. Add the milk, oil, vanilla, and almond extracts. Then add the liquid mixture to the dry mixture and beat until “lumpless.” Cook on a griddle until golden brown. Makes about 48 pancakes.

Options:

- Mix in 1 can of cherry pie filling or 2 overripe bananas—reduce liquid content slightly.
- Drop 5 chocolate chips onto each pancake—slightly cover chips with batter to avoid a messy griddle.

Cheese Muffins

These muffins are light and fluffy and are extra delicious when you eat them still warm out of the oven. Never worry about having leftovers of these wonderful muffins.

Ingredients

- ¾ cup whole wheat flour
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ¾ cup grated cheddar cheese
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup oil
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup honey
- Parmesan cheese to sprinkle on top

Preheat the oven to 400°. Grease 12 muffin cups. Don't use paper liners for this recipe. Stir together the whole wheat and all-purpose flour, salt, baking powder, and cheddar cheese in a large bowl. In a separate bowl combine the eggs, oil, milk, and honey. Stir together the liquid and dry ingredients. The mixture will be lumpy, but that's okay. Fill the prepared muffin cups ¾ full. Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese on top. Bake 20 minutes or until golden brown. Recipe can easily be doubled or tripled for large families or to store in the freezer—package carefully, so they don't get crushed. Makes 12 muffins.

Banana Bread

This recipe is a great way to use overripe bananas. We store the bananas in a zippered plastic bag in the freezer until we have enough to make several loaves.

Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup vegetable oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 cups mashed ripe bananas (about 6 or 7)
- 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour (or 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose and 1 cup whole wheat)
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water
- 1 cup chopped nuts (we like walnuts, but you can use your favorite)
- 1 cup mini chocolate chips

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°. Grease bottom of two 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans or 24 muffin cups.

Mix the eggs, oil, and sugar together. Add the bananas. Add the flour, baking soda, salt, baking powder, and water. Mix and blend until smooth. Finally, add the nuts and chocolate chips, but don't beat too much after adding them.

Pour the mixture into the prepared loaf pans or muffin cups.

Bake the loaves for 1 hour and 15 minutes or the muffins for 20 to 30 minutes. Insert a toothpick into the center. The banana bread is done if toothpick comes out clean. Cool muffins for 10 minutes and loaves for 45 minutes and then remove from the pan/muffin cups.

Makes 2 loaves or 24 muffins.

Jennifer's Chocolate Chip Zucchini Bread

If you're going to plant a garden and grow zucchini, you'll need a great recipe to use up the bumper crop that you'll inevitably have. This is a delicious recipe.

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup oil
- ½ cup sour cream or plain yogurt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 cups shredded zucchini
- 3 cups all-purpose flour (or 2 cups all-purpose and 1 cup whole wheat)
- ⅓ to ⅔ cup water
- 1 cup mini chocolate chips (don't mix too long or chips will get crushed)

Directions

Preheat the oven to 350°. Mix the eggs, sugar, oil, sour cream or yogurt, vanilla, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, zucchini, flour, water, and chocolate chips (in that order). Pour into two greased 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaf pans or three 8-cup muffin tins. Bake approximately 45 minutes for the bread and 25 minutes for the muffins. Poke a toothpick into the bread to check if it is fully cooked. It's done when the toothpick comes out clean. Makes two 9 x 5 x 3-inch loaves or 24 muffins.

The meals listed in this chapter are easy to create and are just the start for you to develop your own list of family favorites. Invest some time at your public library checking out their cookbooks and talk with your friends. Picking up a few new recipes each year will soon add up to an amazing repertoire. You don't have to do it all at once, but one meal at a time, you can do it!