



## Nutritious Meal Ideas for Families ...on the Run

At a time when Canadian families are challenged to cope with the many demands of today's fast-paced lifestyle, Ontario Professional Home Economists are here to help with creative and time-saving meal solutions.

### **Need help?...Ask a Professional Home Economist (P.H.Ec.)**

***Smart ideas from Best-selling Cookbook Author and Food Expert, Anne Lindsay, P.H.Ec.***

- Schedule a time to do your food shopping so you can fit it into your busy week - the time can change week to week, but you must “plan to shop” to be prepared at home.
- Have 2-3 emergency dinner ingredients on hand for very quick meals, e.g. frozen tortellini, frozen mixed vegetables and Parmesan cheese to make into a soup (see pg. 60, *Anne Lindsay's New Light Cooking*, Ballantine Books) or into a pasta dish.

***Tips from the President of International Food Focus Ltd., Carol Culhane, P.H.Ec.***

- Buy large (deep and wide) cereal bowls to microwave single servings of hot cereal (regular, quick or instant varieties) without suffering “boil-over”. Fast, nutritious and economical!
- Find a simple salad dressing recipe (1/3 cup balsamic vinegar, 2 tbsp. orange juice, 1 tsp. Dijon mustard and 2/3 cup olive oil works well); prepare in see-through dressing bottle (twist top with a pop-up spout cover). Store in fridge. Bring to room temperature by placing in large bowl of hot water while preparing other salad ingredients (the large cereal bowls from breakfast work well). Economical, tasty and easy, and always ready when you need it!
- Freeze ripe, mashed bananas for later use in baking. Orange and lemon peel freeze, too. Defrost and re-freeze the unused portion with no reduction in quality.
- Use the heavy pink-coloured coated paper used to wrap raw meat purchased from the butcher to line a cutting board. Cut and prepare raw meat on the paper on top of the cutting board. When finished, carefully fold all ends of the paper inward and discard.

***Tricks from Cookbook Authors Donna Washburn, P.H.Ec. & Heather Butt, P.H.Ec.***

Look for their latest book, *125 Best Gluten-Free Recipes* (Robert Rose Inc.) 2003.

- To quickly prepare yeast breads, make mixes for several loaves at a time by measuring flour, seeds, grains and other dry ingredients into plastic bags. They are ready to later add the liquids and yeast. Use a bread machine to speed the process!
- Prepare your favourite quick bread loaf recipe and divide batter into 12 muffin cups. Takes just 15-20 min. to bake. More economical and nutritious than commercial muffins. Wrap and freeze individually for family members on the run.
- Freeze individual slices of a variety of whole grain yeast breads in sandwich bags, packed in a larger freezer bag. Remove 1 or 2 slices to make a sandwich to pack and “go”.

***Thoughts from Food Writer and Foodworx Owner, Jennifer MacKenzie, P.H.Ec.\****

\* Co-owner of *In a Nuttshell*, Lakefield, ON

- Buy bulk packs of meats (pork chops, beef marinating steaks or chicken pieces). Divide into dinner-sized portions in re-sealable plastic bags. Add your favourite marinade and freeze. Thawing in fridge overnight allows meat to marinate. A simple broil, stir-fry or grill and it's like having your own homemade convenience food.
- Make salad in a snap. Buy leaf or Romaine lettuce, tear off individual leaves and rinse under cold running water. Place leaves in a single layer on clean tea towels and roll up jelly-roll style. Store in a plastic bag (untied) and have crisp, clean lettuce ready to tear up for salad. Kids would like to help with this!
- Make "planned-overs". Cook double the amount of meat and veggies for one dinner. Refrigerate the extras separately and then use in a day or two to boost a store-bought pasta sauce. Serve over hot pasta or reheat in a stir-fry for a quick and nutritious meal.

***Clever Tips from Recipe Developer and V.P. of Cardinal Kitchens\*, Evelyn Hullah, P.H.Ec***

\* division of Cardinal Biologicals Ltd.

- Keep hearty soup or stew simmering on those nights when family members arrive home for dinner at staggered times. Add a generous amount of meat or poultry chunks, pasta and extra vegetables to make it a one-dish meal.
- Place washed carrot and celery sticks (prepared or purchased) in re-sealable bags on a highly visible fridge shelf that hungry kids will see first when they open the door - young snackers are often too rushed to search the crispers!
- When you buy take-out food, look for the healthiest choices. Avoid excess calories and round out the meal by making a quick salad at home.

***Hot Hints from the Owner of Savour the Flavour, Kathleen Mackintosh, P.H.Ec.***

- Store cooked ground beef in the freezer. It will be ready to add to a spaghetti sauce, chili, crockpot or stew. Or reheat, add some salsa and cheese and you have a great nacho dip for a quick, fun meal.
- Rice freezes wonderfully well. Cook extra and freeze. Simply reheat in the microwave to add to a quick meal. The best part - fewer dishes!
- Who says dinner vegetables need to be cooked? Kids love to dip! Provide a variety of different coloured raw vegetables with a dip to encourage family members to eat their 5-10 servings per day.

***Planning Ideas from Best-selling Cookbook Author Donna-Marie Pye, P.H.Ec.***  
(*Canada's Best Slow Cooker Recipes & The Best Family Slow Cooker Recipes, Sept.03, R. Rose*)

- Make a meal plan for the week and purchase groceries according to the meal plan. Include 1 roast meal (plan to make another meal with the leftovers), 1 homemade soup (it's a great way to get the kids to eat vegetables they might not otherwise like on their plate) and one fun-food night (pizza, tacos or chicken fingers/fries). This method of organizing saves time and money. Purchase what you need rather than just picking up groceries.
- Plan to use your crockpot at least once a week or at least on the busiest night, especially if the family is eating at different times. A stew or casserole is great way to get an all-in-one meal including meat and vegetables. Pre-chop and organize ingredients the night before so that you just have to assemble the dish the next morning. Cooking happens while you are at work, so when you return a hot, tasty meal is ready and waiting.

***Solutions from the President of Mary's Gourmet, Mary Bewick-Clowater, P.H.Ec.\****

\* Creator of *Mary's Chocolate Florentynes & Almondynes*

- When adding carrots to a recipe, cut extras to serve as a snack the next day.
- No time to eat breakfast? Make egg and bacon sandwiches to take in the car.
- When preparing a casserole, make three and freeze two. Choose a recipe that includes all four food groups.

***Practical Ideas from Teacher, Author and Cooking School\* Owner, Jan Main, P.H.Ec.***

\* Jan Main's Kitchen

- Start with a roast on Sunday. And, immediately, you have another meal planned for later in the week with leftovers.
- Be sure your freezer earns its keep. Freeze leftovers to make soup or stew for another meal. Double a recipe and freeze the extras for emergency use. Frozen vegetables are considered a healthy choice as they were picked and frozen at their peak of freshness.

- Make an entire loaf of bread into sandwiches on the weekend. Wrap and freeze in single servings, ready for kids to pack their own lunches on school mornings. Sandwiches will thaw by lunchtime. Choose lean beef, pork, or chicken with mustard for best results. Lettuce and tomato can be wrapped and packed separately in re-sealable bags.

***Hints from Cookbook Author and Certified Culinary Professional, Ellie Topp, P.H.Ec.***

- Keep large flour tortillas in the freezer. For a fast meal, sauté a variety of cut-up or sliced veggies such as red peppers, broccoli florets, red onion. Spread each tortilla with pizza sauce, add sautéed vegetables and top with shredded mozzarella cheese. Bake at 400°F until cheese is well melted, about 15 minutes.
- Keep eggs and old Cheddar or Swiss cheese on hand for making omelets. For a complete meal, serve with whole wheat toast and a large tossed salad.

## **Salmon Cups**

**Recipe adapted from *Savoury Wisdom, Delicious Recipes for Two*  
by Ellie Topp, P.H.Ec., and Suzanne Hendricks, RD (Firefly 2001)**

Salmon cups can be ready for a family of four in less than ten minutes. Serve with cooked rice and steamed fresh or frozen broccoli.

2 tsp. vegetable oil (10 mL)  
 1/4 cup finely chopped onion (50 mL)  
 2 cans (7.5 oz/213 g) salmon, undrained (2)  
 12 saltine crackers, crushed (12)  
 1 egg (1)  
 2 tbsp. milk (25 mL)  
 Chopped parsley (optional)

1. In a small microwaveable container combine oil and onion; microwave on 100% power for 1 minute or until soft.
2. Remove bones from salmon and crush with a fork. Stir bones, salmon and liquid into onion mixture. Mix in crackers, egg white and milk; pack into 4 (4 oz/170 mL) custard cups. Microwave on 100% power for 3 minutes or until salmon mixture puffs slightly and is set.
3. Invert salmon cups on serving plate to remove if desired. Garnish with chopped parsley. Makes 4 servings.

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*The Ontario Home Economics Association, a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.*

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