



MONDAY



TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY



FRIDAY



Meal Planning

...the process of building a weekly menu to best suit your nutritional needs.

TIPS AND TRICKS

- Make a list of entrees that you frequently make - organizes them into themes such as Comfort food, Mexican, Italian/Pasta, Soup, Sandwiches, Breakfast, Chinese/Indian, Fish/Seafood, On the Grill, Meatless. This will be very helpful when creating weekly and monthly meal plans.
- Create lists of side dishes and desserts as well.
- Decide one of these themes for each night of the week. As you plan think about what your schedule for the week looks like are you very busy one day, make it a quick and easy meal. Will you be eating out a night? Plan for that. Can you use leftovers for another meal, plan for that.
- Try to add variety to your meal plan. If you have something with pasta one night, have something with rice or potatoes the next. Vary your main protein from night to night as well.
- Plan healthy meals that contain all food groups.
- Make a grocery list - check for what you may already have and add what you need to get.
- Grocery shop once a week. Try to keep a regular day to shop.
- To save time, order groceries online and pick them up or have them delivered.
- Check the store ads and plan meals around what is on sale and in season.
- Try out new Recipes once a week (make a list of what you would like to try). Add meals you like to your theme list.
- Keep a well stocked pantry/refrigerator/freezer.
- Keep frozen or canned fruits and vegetables on hand for a healthy side dish.
- Make several weekly or monthly meal plans and then rotate them.
- Organize recipes.

Wasatch County Cooking Class, October 2023

Tricia Mathis, FCS/4-H Educator

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Creamy Cajun Pasta

Yield: 8 servings Time: 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 pound Italian pork sausage, halved and cut into 1/4" slices
- 1 small red onion, halved and sliced
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 colored bell peppers, large dice
- 1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 1/2 cups water (high elevations increase to 1 3/4)
- 8 ounces pasta (I used trottie)
- 2 cups 1% milk
- 3 ounces low-fat cream cheese
- 1 teaspoon Cajun or Creole seasoning (like Tony Chachere's)
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 cup (4 ounces) freshly grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the sausage and cook 2-3 minutes or until it starts to release oil and is browning.
2. Add the onions and cook until fragrant. Add the garlic and sliced bell peppers and cook until the peppers are tender-crisp. Remove from heat and transfer the sausage and peppers to a large plate. Set aside.
3. Return the pan to heat and add the tomatoes and water. Bring to a boil over high heat, then quickly add the pasta, reduce heat to medium-low, and cover. Cook until the pasta is al dente and the liquid is absorbed.
4. While the pasta is cooking, place the milk, cream cheese, Cajun seasoning, smoked paprika, and flour in the jar of a blender and blend until smooth.
5. Heat the butter over medium heat in a medium saucepan. When melted, add the garlic and cook 1-2 minutes or until tender and fragrant.
6. Add the mixture from the blender and cook until smooth and thickened to where if the back of a spoon is dipped into the sauce, you can trace your finger down the back of the spoon and that spot will stay clean.
7. Remove the sauce from heat and add the Parmesan cheese. Stir until melted and smooth.
8. Add the peppers and sausage to the pasta/tomato mixture and stir to combine. Add the garlic sauce and combine.

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Soft Breadsticks

Yield: 12 servings Time: 2 - 2 1/2 hours

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups warm water
- 1 Tablespoon yeast
- 2 Tablespoons sugar
- 4-5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 Tablespoon salt
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup additional butter for top of breadsticks
- garlic powder, Italian herbs, grated parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

1. Place warm water, yeast and sugar in a bowl of a stand mixer.
2. Let stand until yeast bubbles, about 5-10 minutes.
3. Add 2 cups bread flour, 2 cups all-purpose flour, salt and 1/2 cup butter. Mix on low until blended.
4. Add more all-purpose flour if the dough is too sticky.
5. Knead for 5 minutes on low speed.
6. Cover and let rise in a warm place for about an hour.
7. Flour pastry mat and roll dough into a rectangle, about the size of a jelly roll pan, 10" x 15".
8. Brush with butter.
9. Using a pizza cutter, cut the dough into strips. About 3/4" - 1" wide.
10. Fold each strip in half and twist ends in opposite directions.
11. Place on buttered sheet pan.
12. Let rise for 45 minutes.
13. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and bake for 12-15 minutes or until golden.
14. Remove from oven and brush with melted butter and sprinkle with garlic powder, herbs and parmesan cheese.
15. Serve warm.

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Ricotta Pie

Yield: 8-12 servings Time: 2 hours

INGREDIENTS

Pasta Frolla:

- 3 cups (360 grams) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (60 grams) powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup (226 grams) unsalted butter
- 2 large eggs

Ricotta Filling:

- 32 ounces (905 grams) whole-milk ricotta, strained if very watery (see notes)
- ¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- Egg wash, for assembling

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F
2. Add the flour, powdered sugar, baking powder, lemon zest and salt to the bowl of a food processor, and pulse until well combined.
3. Add in the butter and pulse 5-7 times, or until the butter is broken down into tiny pebbles.
4. With the motor running, add in the eggs and let the dough process until it forms together into a cohesive ball around the blade, about 1 minute.
5. Transfer the dough to a work surface dusted with flour. Divide the dough in half.
6. Roll out half of the dough to a rough 11" circle and place inside of a 9" deep-dish pie plate, tucking the ends of the pastry underneath themselves to form an edge. Pierce the bottom of the pastry multiple times with a fork to allow the steam to escape when baking. Place the pastry in the freezer to chill while the oven preheats, or at least 10 minutes.
7. Roll out the other half of the dough to a rough 10-inch circle. Place the pie dough on a flat surface (such as a sheet pan) that can fit in your refrigerator. Cover, and transfer to the refrigerator to chill.
8. Remove the bottom crust from the freezer and line the pastry with a round piece of parchment paper and then add pie weights to fill (or dry rice or beans or lentils), making sure to push pie weights up against the edges. Bake for 20 minutes on the lower rack, then remove from the oven and remove the parchment and pie weights. Return to the oven and bake for an additional 5 minutes.
9. Remove from the oven and let cool for about 15 minutes.
10. Meanwhile, make the filling: Add the (strained) ricotta to a large bowl. Whip it with a whisk for 30 seconds until lightened. Add the sugar, eggs, lemon juice, lemon zest, and almond extract and whisk together until well combined.
11. Transfer the filling to the slightly cooled pie shell.
12. Whisk together an egg with a bit of water to make an egg wash.
13. Remove the rolled-out top crust from the refrigerator. Score the top crust with the fork in a lattice pattern by evenly pressing and dragging the fork on the pastry. You want to get a good score on it, but make sure not to cut through the pastry.
14. Brush the egg wash on the top crust as well as on the edges of the baked bottom pie crust (this will help the top crust seal to the edges). Transfer the top crust pastry on top of the ricotta filling. Seal the top crust into the edges, and cut off any excess dough.
15. Bake the pie on a rimmed baking sheet in the middle part of the oven for 40-50 minutes, or until the top is golden and shiny and the filling has just nearly puffed up throughout, leaving just a small portion in the middle that has not risen.
16. Let cool for at least 2 hours. Serve at room temperature or cold.

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