



Cost & Nutrition Analysis Convenience vs. Homemade Foods

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Audience:

Sponsors of Child and Adult Care Food Program, and home child care providers that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Nonparticipating providers of child care and those who train providers of home child care will also find this information useful.

Purpose:

Compare the cost and nutrition of using convenience (prepared) foods and homemade foods.

Advantages of cooking from Scratch

1. More creativity and freedom of ingredients in the dish
2. The quality and flavor can be improved by changing the ingredients
3. You know everything that is going into your dish
4. Usually ingredients from scratch are less expensive than mixes
5. You can make the meal more nutritious by reducing the amount of salt and fat in the dish

Advantages of Convenience foods

1. Takes less time to prepare the food
2. You know what to expect – flavor stays consistent
3. Preparation is usually easy
4. Less clean-up is usually involved
5. You can add extra things to make it taste better

Is it always cheaper to make things at home?

Some convenience foods and mixes are actually cheaper than what you can probably make from scratch. Let's look at some of these:

- It cost about **53¢** per serving to make a Hamburger Stroganoff type dish from scratch. It cost about **50¢** per serving to make it using a Hamburger Helper type mix.
- Depending on the brand you buy, it cost about the same to buy Chili from the can and to make it from scratch
- Making pizza from scratch will cost you about **75¢** a serving. Purchasing it ready to cook from the Deli case at the grocery store will actually cost you less, about **57¢** a serving. Depending on the brand, you can get it even cheaper in the frozen section for about **38¢** a serving. These are all much cheaper options than getting it from a fast-food place, which is about **\$1.23** a serving.
- It is also cheaper to buy your Macaroni & Cheese in the box. It cost about **19¢** a serving this way, and about **50¢** a serving to make from scratch

Just because some of these ways are cheaper, it does not mean they are **better**. Nothing beats the taste of homemade Macaroni & Cheese. Remember, those boxes of cheap Mac-n-cheese with powdered cheese do not meet the requirements of the food program.

Don't be surprised if you try to save a few pennies and end up with something that does not taste so great. Some of the items above may save you a little money, but at the cost of compromising taste. Sure you can get a frozen pizza for pretty cheap, but it has hardly any sauce or toppings on it. You can add something to them to make them taste a little better, but how much will that cost you? Add extra toppings or cheese to the pizza, add chicken to the Macaroni & Cheese to make it count as a bread and a meat serving. In the long run is it worth it to just make it from scratch?

\$ Convenience foods that are a complete waste of money \$

Now, let's talk about the other things you should not be purchasing, unless it is your "*broccoli*". Most of these things not only cost less when you do them yourself, they also have a better quality.

- Shredded cheese only cost about 11¢ more per 8 ounces of cheese than buying it in the block, but think about how quickly you can shred 8 ounces of cheese. It took me less than 2 minutes. If you were using a large amount of cheese, you would save a lot of money by shredding it yourself
- Pre-cooked chicken strips cost about \$1.33 more for 6 ounces of chicken than cooking raw boneless, skinless chicken strips. It took less than 3 minutes to warm up the cooked chicken and only about 10 minutes to cook the raw chicken. It took a little bit longer, but it was worth it. The pre-cooked chicken was way more expensive and could not come close to the taste of the homemade chicken
- How can carrots cut up in Matchstick size sticks cost about \$1.13 more for 10 ounces than carrots you shred yourself? It only took a couple minutes to shred the carrots, and they tasted better than the ones that were already cut up
- The bagged salads keeps growing in popularity even though they cost nearly 5 times as much as buying and washing your own head of lettuce. I know a bag of salad does not cost that much. Compare the volume in the bag that is edible to what you get in one head of lettuce, you are left with a price difference of about \$1.50 but about three times more edible lettuce from the head of lettuce
- Sliced and ready-to-eat fruit is very expensive. You pay about .75¢ per apple just to have it washed and cut for you, a task that would only take a minute.

****With convenience foods, you are mostly paying for the packaging and someone else doing the work****

Homemade Fish Sticks

Oil in spray bottle

½ cup plain bread crumbs

½ cup wheat germ

½ tsp. salt

½ tsp. paprika

¼ tsp. garlic powder

½ cup all-purpose flour

1 egg, beaten

1 lb. thick whitefish fillet (cod, scrod or halibut) cut into 3/4 X 2 inch pieces

1. Heat oven to 450°F. Line two baking sheets with foil then spray with cooking oil.
2. In a bowl combine bread crumbs, wheat germ, salt, paprika, and garlic powder.
3. Put the flour in a second bowl and the egg in a third bowl.
4. Dip each piece of fish individually, first into the flour, then into the egg, then into the crumb mixture. Gently press the crumbs onto the fish and arrange them on the baking sheet.
5. Lightly spray the fish with oil and bake for 5 minutes. Turn them over with a spatula and cook for 5 more minutes, or until cooked through. Carefully remove and let cool on wire rack. Pieces get firm as they cool.

Gorton's Fish Sticks

Homemade Fish Sticks

2 oz serving = 9 sticks Calories 375 Total Fat 21g Cholesterol 30mg Sodium 570mg Total Carbohydrate 30g Protein 16.5g	2 oz serving = 5 sticks Calories 280 Total Fat 7.5g Cholesterol 100mg Sodium 485mg Total Carbohydrate 26.5g Protein 27.5g
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prep time = 2 minutes• Bake time = 11 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prep time = 15 minutes• Bake time = 10 minutes
Cost to serve 4 (6-12 year olds) \$18.00	Cost to serve 4 (6-12 year olds) \$6.68
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too much breading• Tasted greasy• Could not eat 12• Felt hungry later	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Filling• Not greasy• Needed more flavor (lemon)• Left in oven about 10 minutes longer than recipe says

Crispy Homemade Chicken Nuggets

1lb boneless, skinless chicken breast, rinsed and patted dry with paper towels

1 ½ cups plain yogurt

3 cups crushed corn flakes

2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

1 Tsp. sea salt

½ Tsp. freshly ground white pepper

Vegetable or olive oil for spraying pan

Plastic or Paper bag

1. Pre-heat oven to 375° F
2. Slice chicken breasts into 2-inch strips. Marinate in the refrigerator in yogurt from 1 hour to 24 hours.
3. Combine corn flakes, parsley, salt and pepper in a bowl. Put mixture in plastic or paper bag and drop chicken in a few pieces at a time. Shake well to coat the chicken.
4. Remove the chicken pieces from the bag, shaking the extra coating off. Put them on a sheet pan lightly sprayed with oil.
5. Bake for 25 minutes, or until crunchy on the outside and cooked through on the inside.

Tyson Chicken Nuggets

Homemade Chicken Nuggets

<p>2 oz serving = 8 nuggets</p> <p>Calories 360</p> <p>Calories From Fat 252</p> <p>Total Fat 28g</p> <p>Saturated Fat 6g</p> <p>Cholesterol 60mg</p> <p>Sodium 760mg</p> <p>Total Carbohydrate 14.8g</p> <p>Protein 13.2g</p> <p>Fiber 1.2g</p>	<p>2 oz serving = 4-5 nuggets <i>(1/4 the recipe)</i></p> <p>Calories 260</p> <p>Calories From Fat 30</p> <p>Total Fat 3.5g</p> <p>Saturated Fat 1g</p> <p>Cholesterol 65mg</p> <p>Sodium 900mg</p> <p>Total Carbohydrate 26g</p> <p>Protein 30g</p> <p>Fiber 1g</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prep time = 2 minutes• Bake time = 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prep time = 15 minutes• Bake time = 25 minutes
<p>Cost to serve 4 (6-12 year olds)</p> <p>\$3.33</p>	<p>Cost to serve 4 (6-12 year olds)</p> <p>\$4.13</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was sick of them before eating all 8 nuggets• Low quality of chicken• Breadding tasted pretty good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chicken tasted good• Crunchy, but some of breadding came off

Blueberry Muffin Recipe

2 cups All- Purpose flour

1 1/3 cups whole-wheat flour

1 cup sugar

1 Tbsp, 2 tsp Baking powder

1 tsp salt

1 1/2 cup low-fat milk

2 large eggs

2/3 cup vegetable oil

1 1/2 cup fresh or (thawed) frozen blueberries

1. In a mixing bowl, mix on low speed to combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Mix for 1 minute.
2. Slowly add milk, eggs and oil. Mix on medium for 30 seconds or until smooth.
3. Gently fold blueberries into batter using spatula.
4. Portion batter into 25 lightly greased muffin tins or paper-lined muffin tins.
5. Bake in a conventional oven for 12 minutes at 425°F.

Bake in a convection oven for 13 minutes at 375°F

Or until Golden Brown

⇒ This recipe should yield 25 muffins

Spunkmeyer Muffins

Homemade Muffins

<p>1 serving = 1 muffin</p> <p>Calories 240</p> <p>Total Fat 12g</p> <p> Saturated Fat 2.5g</p> <p>Cholesterol 45mg</p> <p>Sodium 280mg</p> <p>Total Carbohydrate 29g</p> <p>Protein 3g</p> <p>Fiber <1g</p>	<p>1 serving = 1 muffin</p> <p>Calories 170</p> <p>Total Fat 6.6g</p> <p> Saturated Fat 1.1g</p> <p>Cholesterol 20mg</p> <p>Sodium 204mg</p> <p>Total Carbohydrate 25g</p> <p>Protein 3g</p> <p>Fiber 1g</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prep time = <1 minutes• Bake time = 0 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prep time = 10 minutes• Bake time = 12 minutes
<p>Cost to serve 4 (6-12 year olds)</p> <p>\$3.32</p>	<p>Cost to serve 4 (6-12 year olds)</p> <p>\$0.60</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crumbled apart, would be messy for kids• Tasted very buttery, good	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whole wheat flour made it more filling• Tasted really good

Let's say you chose to use *convenience foods* instead of the *homemade versions* as your *meat source* for *lunch* and your *bread source* for *breakfast*.

Look at how dramatically this would affect your budget and what goes into the children you are feeding.

By choosing:

- store bought muffin for breakfast each morning
- either fish sticks or chicken nuggets for lunch each day

In Five Days:

Spend **\$8.46** more for one child than if you had made the items from scratch

- Child gets **840** more **calories**
- Child gets **100.5** more grams of **fat**
- Child gets **22** more grams of **Saturated fat**

How to read the food label

Even if you decide to buy a convenience type product or a mix, you can still check the list of ingredients to try to find the healthiest product available. The food label lists the ingredients of a product in order of what the product has the most of to what is found in the least amounts in the product. Reading your labels will help you find the foods that are high in salt, fat and sugar.

If any of the **first three ingredients** contain the following, they are high in **sugar** and/or **fat**:

- | | | |
|------------|---------------|------------------------------|
| - Sugar | - Shortening | - Hydrogenated vegetable oil |
| - Fructose | - Corn Syrup | - Coconut oil |
| - Lard | - Dextrose | - Glucose |
| - Honey | - Beef Tallow | - Palm kernel oil |

Most products claim something now. Either they are “*low-fat*”, “*light*” or “*healthy*.”

What does all this mean?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration says the product has to meet certain requirements for the manufacturer to make certain claims.

- *Healthy* – the food is low in fat (especially saturated and/or trans fat) and has reduced amounts of sodium and cholesterol
- *Good Source* – one serving will provide 10-19% of your total daily value for the specified nutrient
- *Free* – it contains only tiny amounts of what is indicated (ex: fat free, sodium free, sugar free, cholesterol free)
- *Low sodium* – one serving has 140 mg or less
- *Low cholesterol* – one serving has 20 mg or less of cholesterol, or 2 grams or less of saturated fat
- *Low fat* – one serving has 3 grams or less of fat
- *Reduced* – one serving has 25% less of what is indicated than the regular version of the product (ex: reduced fat, reduced calories, reduced sodium)
- *Light (or Lite)* – one serving has 50% less fat, or 1/3 fewer calories than the regular version of the food.

HEALTHY TIP: Reduced fat cookies may not be as low in fat as they seem. They are just lower in fat than the original version of that cookie. Read the label, you may be able to find a better choice.

Why do we care about fat and sodium levels

It seems like all you hear about these days is saturated fats and Trans fats. What are they and why do we care about them so much?

- **Saturated Fat** – mainly found in animal products such as meat, dairy and eggs. Plant foods such as coconut and palm oil also have high levels of saturated fats.
- **Trans Fat** – this is something created by scientist to hydrogenate liquid oil. It is found in many commercially packaged foods like microwave popcorn, because it provides a better shelf life. It can also be found margarine and in fast food like French fries.

Consuming a lot of fat, in particular *saturated fat* can increase the levels of cholesterol in your body which has been associated with an increased risk of coronary heart disease. Cholesterol is only found in animal products, because only animals make cholesterol.

LDL is considered the “bad” cholesterol because it increases the amount of plaque that attaches to your blood vessels

HDL is considered the “good” cholesterol because it helps get rid of the cholesterol in the blood. The HDL picks the plaque and carries it away to the liver for excretion.

- **Monosaturated fats** – lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (bad) and raises HDL cholesterol (good). It can be found in nuts, canola and olive oils.
- **Polyunsaturated fats** – lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (bad). It can be found in fatty fish like salmon and fish oils, also corn, soy, safflower, flax seed and sunflower oils.

What should I do?

- Limit the amount of the following foods you eat because they are high in saturated and trans fat:
biscuits, cakes, pastries, chips, fried foods, sweets, chocolate, fatty meat (red meat & skin from chicken), full fat milk or cheese, butter, margarine, coconut oil, palm oil, vegetable shortening, commercially packaged foods
- Use oils like canola, olive, and flax seed.
- look for products that say they are “low” or “free” of fat, cholesterol, saturated fat or trans fat
- eat more lean meat and fish twice a week. Have beans instead of meat for a meal
- Eat at least 20-35 grams of fiber per day. Fiber helps lower blood cholesterol and control weight.

Good sources of fiber

- Bran cereal
- Popcorn
- Green peas
- Apple with the peel
- Berries
- Baked potato with skin
- Lentils
- Almonds

Sodium

The body does need some sodium each day in order to function properly. The recommended amount of sodium for an average person is 2400 mg/ day, but most people get almost three times this amount. Too much sodium in the body can cause you to feel thirsty and retain water. It has also been linked to shortness of breath, increased blood pressure, increased risk of stroke and heart attack.

It may take a while for your taste buds to get used to less salt in your food, but it is worth the health benefits.

How to save money at the Supermarket

Always make a list

- List the foods and the amounts you need
- If you are going to a grocery store you are familiar with, make your list in the order the store is organized. Ex: Your meat section may be right next to the produce.
- Avoid impulse buying (it helps if you do not go on an **empty stomach**)
- Try to make the menu and shopping list for at least a week at a time. Going to the store less often will help you stay within your budget.
- Be willing to change a recipe to save money. If a recipe calls for a vegetable that might be expensive, look around for cheaper alternatives. Ex: Could you use squash in your tortilla soup instead of avocado?

Check the Specials

- Just because something is listed as being on special for that week, does not mean it is a better deal than a different brand at regular price. Always compare, even if it is on sale.
- Store brands are often the same quality and provide the same nutrition as name brands at a much cheaper price
- Don't buy something just because it is on sale. It is only a good deal if you need it and your family will eat it. Consider if the other ingredients needed to make it are expensive.

Coupons

- Does the store accept coupons or have double or triple coupon days?
- If the coupon is for a name brand, can you get the same quality in a store brand for cheaper even after using the coupon?
- New products you might want to try often have coupons available. If you don't see them in your paper or circular, check the product's website.

General cost saving tips when shopping

- Compare prices of fresh and dried milk
- Compare prices of fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables. Fresh may be the most nutritious, but it will lose nutrients after time, so frozen may be a better option. Choose canned vegetables carefully because sodium levels may be high. A vegetable is only nutritious if eaten, buy what you will eat.
- Brown and white eggs taste the same and have the same nutritional value
- You can make a recipe with dry beans cheaper than canned
- Consider meatless meals – making beans your “meat” entrée can save lots of money
- Always make double and save for leftovers (only do the work once)
- Buying fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season can save you money.

- The freshest item is not always in front. Check the expiration dates so you don't get home with an item that is about to go bad

Unit Pricing

Whether you are saving time and shopping for convenience foods or shopping for ingredients to make your foods from scratch, it is important to get the most for your money. Unit pricing allows you to find the best price of various sizes and brands yet eliminates difficult math at the supermarket.

Let's say you need to buy a can of beans. It is easy to compare the price of different brands if you can find an 8 oz jar of beans in each brand. It gets more difficult if an 8 oz jar is not available.

The unit price breaks it down for what the product cost per ounce. In an inexpensive product, the unit price may be a small number like $.08\text{¢}/\text{ounce}$. The unit price is often found on the shelf in the grocery store in small print underneath the price for the product.

It is usually cheaper to buy the larger size of what you need, but there are lots of times it is not. Even if the larger size is cheaper, it is still only a good deal if your family can use it or if you have the space to store it.

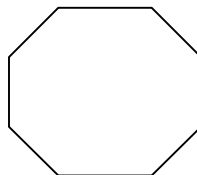
Saving Money by Food Group

Meat & Beans

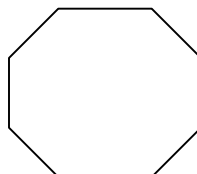
Meat is the food group that probably costs you the most amount of money in your food budget. Most people get plenty of protein in their diet. To save money consider cutting down on the amount of meat you eat and filling your plate with fruit, vegetables and whole grains.

Picture your plate and Split it in half:

This half is for fruits and
Vegetables →



Split it in half again:



← This $\frac{1}{4}$ is for **protein**

← This ¼ is for **whole grains**

- Combine peas and beans with leftover meats and fish. This will save money and combine different protein sources
- Consider using beans as your main entrée. Using dry beans will save lots of money
- Buy lean cuts of beef, you get more protein and less fat
- Cheaper cuts of meat often have less fat, but can be tough. You get more meat for your money, but they require a more moist cooking method like stewing or braising
- The larger the turkey or chicken, the better the deal. There is more meat to bone ratio
- Use less expensive pieces of the chicken. Replace chicken thighs in recipes that call for chicken breasts
- Buy the whole chicken and cut your own parts
- Frozen fish is cheaper than fresh fish and still heart healthy
- Chicken and turkey are not only less expensive than most red meats, they also have fewer calories and fat

Protein cost per serving

Pork Chops	.50¢
Lean Ground Beef	.42¢
Sausage	.40¢
Chicken Breast	.29¢
Hot Dogs	.28¢
Deli Sliced Ham	.27¢
Cheddar Cheese	.24¢
Boneless Stew Meat	.21¢
Whole Chicken	.18¢
Canned Tuna	.15¢
Chicken Thighs	.12¢
Turkey Breast	.12¢
Peanut Butter	.12¢
Eggs	.09¢
Dried Beans	.07¢

Fruits & Vegetables

- Instead of apple and grape juice, choose orange, grapefruit, pineapple or tomato juice. They are high in Vitamin C.
- Whole canned vegetables usually cost more than the cut or sliced versions
- Save leftover vegetables and the liquid from canned vegetables for soups and stews (you can freeze them if needed)
- Add your own sauces to vegetables. Bagged veggies with sauces are usually much more expensive and have lots of saturated fat
- Compare the cost of larger bags of frozen vegetables. They usually cost less and you only have to cook what you need
- Avoid any pre-cut or pre-washed vegetables or fruit. They are usually at least three times more expensive than doing the work yourself
- buy the fruits and vegetables that are in season

Dairy

- For all children over 2 years of age buy skim or low-fat milk. It is cheaper and older children and adults do not need the extra fat in whole milk
- Add fresh fruit to plain low-fat yogurt
- If a recipe calls for ricotta cheese, use cottage cheese instead, it cost almost 30¢ less per serving.

- Use low-fat yogurt in recipes instead of sour cream, it is cheaper and better for you

Grains

- Brands of bread can vary greatly in price. Compare cost carefully because the size of the loaf can be different
- Find whole-grain bread (whole-wheat must be the first ingredient)
- Save bread that may be getting old to make your own bread crumbs and croutons
- Baked goods are usually more expensive to buy at the store. Double the recipe when making them from scratch and freeze the leftovers
- Rice mixes like Rice-A-Roni usually cost more than flavoring your own rice
- Fancy shaped pasta usually cost more than spaghetti and macaroni
- Hot cereals usually cost less than cold cereals and have less sugars
Quick-cooking oats **.05¢/oz** vs. Cornflakes **.14¢/oz**
- Compare *unit price* to find the best deal on cold cereal
- Buy plain, generic cereal with low or no added sugar and add your own raisins, nuts or whatever you like
- Muffins can be a healthy breakfast and easy because you can make them ahead of time
Homemade oatmeal muffin **.04¢** vs. Bakery prepared muffin **.70¢**

Oatmeal Muffins

1 egg

½ cup milk

3 cups oatmeal mix

1. Beat egg, add milk and mix well.
2. Pour into oatmeal and stir just enough to moisten
3. Fill greased muffin pans 2/3 full and bake at 425° for 20 minutes

One muffin counts as bread serving at breakfast or snack

Make cooking time more efficient

Make the most out of your cooking time by getting organized. Try to do as much cooking at once and save some to warm-up later in the week. This will conserve your energy and energy in your home by heating your house up less often.

Store equipment and supplies where you use them:

- Soap and cleaning supplies should be near the sink
- Hot pads near the oven
- Set up a cutting station with space to cut. Keep your cutting boards and good knives here
- Set up a mixing station with mixing bowls, whisk, spatula, measuring cups and mixer. If you have room this would also be a good place to keep baking pans, sheets, flour, sugar, oil, soda, salt and any other spices needed in baking.
- Keep stuff you don't use very often down low or up high in cabinets so stuff you use often is easy to get to
- Keep canned goods in order. Put similar vegetables together, ect. It will make them much easier to find
- Organize your freezer by types of food and first to use so nothing will get freezer burn
- Make sure everyone in the house is going to help keep you organized by returning things where they go

🕒 It is important to plan out your meals and shopping list so you can make the most of your time and money. You can use the same menu every couple of weeks to save time. 🕒

Breakfast ideas under 39¢ (Tier II rate)

MILK ORANGE FRENCH TOAST	MILK BANANA ENGLISH MUFFIN	MILK BANANA TORTILLA
MILK BANANA OATMEAL	MILK ORANGE CORNBREAD	MILK MELON CREAM OF WHEAT
MILK APPLE RICE	MILK APPLESAUCE HOMEMADE BISCUITS	MILK HASH BROWNS TORTILLA
MILK ORANGE OATMEAL MUFFIN	MILK GRAPEFRUIT PANCAKE	MILK MELON TOAST
MILK APPLESAUCE CREPE	MILK MELON SHREDDED WHEAT	MILK PEARS WAFFLE

Snack ideas under .16¢ (Tier II rate)

WHEAT BREAD CHEESE	EGG TOAST	YOGURT TOAST
COTTAGE CHEESE ORANGE	OATMEAL MILK	TORTILLA REFRIED BEANS
“ORANGE JUICE POPSICLE” HOMEMADE MUFFIN	GRAHAM CRACKER ORANGE JUICE	TORTILLA CHEESE
TUNA FISH BREAD	TOMATO SOUP MACARONI PASTA	OATMEAL MUFFINS PINEAPPLE JUICE
CINNAMON TOAST MELON	EGG SALAD CRACKERS	YOGURT GRAHAM CRACKERS

BAKED APPLE MILK	HOMEMADE COOKIES MILK	RICE KRISPIES ORANGE JUICE
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Lunch and Dinner ideas under \$1.18 (Tier II rate)

MILK SCRAMBLED EGGS GREEN BEANS PEARS TOAST	MILK GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH PEACHES CARROT STICKS	MILK HOMEMADE CHILI GREEN BEANS APPLE RICE
MILK BAKED CHICKEN FRUIT SALAD POTATOES MUFFINS	MILK TUNA (CREAM SAUCE) PEAS CARROTS NOODLES	MILK HAMBURGER W/GRAVY BROCCOLI PINEAPPLE NOODLES
MILK BLACK BEANS APPLES LETTUCE/TOMATOES CORN BREAD	MILK HOMEMADE TURKEY SOUP POTATOES/CARROTS FRUIT SALAD HOMEMADE BISCUITS	MILK EGG SALAD ORANGE HASH BROWNS BREAD
MILK TUNA SALAD CELERY STICKS APPLES BREAD	MILK ROAST MASHED POTATOES CORN BISCUITS	MILK HAMBURGER LETTUCE/TOMATOES STRAWBERRIES BUN
MILK HAMBURGER TOMATO SAUCE ORANGE PIZZA DOUGH	MILK BEAN SOUP SQUASH TOMATOES RICE	MILK HOMEMADE CHICKEN SOUP CARROTS/CELERY BANANA NOODLES

* These may not be low-fat, but they are inexpensive to make and do have less additives than the store bought brands. *

Homemade Chewy Granola Bars

1 cup honey

2/3 cup smooth peanut butter (can use low-fat)

2 2/3 cups rolled oats (old fashioned kind works best)

1 cup whole wheat flour

1 tsp cinnamon

½ tsp cloves

½ tsp nutmeg

1/3 cup wheat germ

2 cups of any combination of the following:

Chocolate chips, peanut butter chips, butterscotch chips, unsalted peanuts, coconut, dates, raisins, apricots, anything else you like

1. Mix honey and peanut butter until blended together (warming the honey in the microwave for about 20 seconds might help)
2. Stir in oats, flour, wheat germ and mix-ins (add water 1 tbsp. at a time if too dry or oats 1 tbsp at a time if too sticky)
3. Press into a 9X13 pan that was lightly greased (mixture should be fairly easy to spread with greased fingers)
4. Bake at 350° until barely browned
5. Cut while warm into the size you want, and then remove from pan when completely cooled
6. When you are able to pick them up without them falling apart, you can wrap them in plastic wrap or put them in sandwich bags. They will freeze well.

Pizza Crust

- 1 pkg. active dry yeast
- 1 1/4 cups warm water (110 to 115 degrees)
- 3 1/2 to 4 cups sifted flour, divided (Try replacing 1/2 with whole-wheat flour)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar

Sprinkle yeast over warm water; stir to dissolve. Add 2 cups flour, salt and sugar. Beat thoroughly, then stir in remaining flour. Turn onto lightly floured board and knead until smooth elastic, about 10 minutes, adding more flour as needed to keep dough from sticking.

Place in greased bowl and turn dough over to grease top. Cover and let rise in warm place until doubled, about 30 minutes. Punch down, turn onto board and knead just long enough to force out bubbles. Divide in half. Roll each half; pat and stretch over an oiled 12-inch round pizza pan. Add your favorite pizza toppings and cheese.

Bake pizza in 450° oven about 15 minutes or until cheese topping has melted and crust edges have browned.

Whole Wheat Tortillas

These tortillas are lower in saturated fat, with no cholesterol and higher in fiber than traditional tortillas prepared with lard and white flour. Cornstarch, for dusting the tortillas (Makes 12 Tortillas)

1 1/2 c Unbleached All-Purpose Flour

1 1/2 c Whole Wheat Flour

1/4 tsp Baking Powder

1 c Warm Water (110 F)

2 tsp Vegetable Oil

1/4 tsp Salt

1. Stir together the first 6 ingredients.
2. On a floured board knead until smooth.
3. Divide dough into 12 equal balls. Dust lightly with cornstarch.
4. Roll into a circle as thin as possible on a lightly- floured board. Drop onto a very hot ungreased griddle.

5. Cook until brown spots appear on one side. Turn and cook on second side.

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