

## **Cooking for 1 or 2 - Teacher's Guide**

Objective: Provide information on how to cook delicious and healthful meals for only one or two people (seniors, single mom with one child, etc.).

### **Introduction:**

You may want to start by sharing a statement similar to this: ***“Preparing a meal for a family or guests often brings a sense of accomplishment, but making a dinner you’ll be eating alone can seem like a big effort with small reward. It’s not always easy to come up with great tasting, healthy meals that don’t require a lot of work”.***

### **Sample ANCHOR questions for participants:**

1. ***“What do you find difficult about cooking for only 1 or 2 persons?”***
2. ***“Why is shopping for 1 or 2 difficult?”***
3. ***“What convenience foods are available to simplify food preparation?”***
4. ***“Do you tend to eat more or less when you are alone than when you are with others?”***
5. ***“Do you tend to eat healthier when you are alone or when you are with others?”***
6. ***“Are there alternatives to eating alone?”***

If during your discussion involving ANCHOR questions participants did not suggest topics they would like to learn about today you may want to ask:

***“What kind of information would be useful to you on cooking for one or two people?”***

**Background Information** - Choose the appropriate information below to **ADD** to your lesson.

### **Helpful Shopping Hints**

1. Keep a running list of things you need to buy including staple foods (milk, bread, eggs, flour, etc.).
2. Keep dry milk on hand. You can use it in cooking and for drinking; it is inexpensive and requires little storage space. If getting groceries home from the store is a problem, a package of dry milk is easier to carry than cartons of fresh milk. Nonfat dry milk contains the same protein, calcium and riboflavin as fresh milk and is low in calories and has no fat.
3. Shop during the week or during the day (10:00 am - 4:00 pm) when stores are less crowded. Try not to shop when you feel hungry.
4. Take your shopping list and coupons with you.
5. Comparison shop. Try different stores until you find one that has the items you like at the best prices.

6. Compare brands -- often store and generic brands are just as comparable as name brands.

Compare container sizes -- Large size, “get-more-for-your-money” packages, aren’t a good deal if the food can spoil. Do not buy more than you can store and use in a reasonable length of time.

- Dry foods like rice, and pasta, that have a long shelf-life, can be bought in large packages and will hold until needed.
- Frozen foods, like frozen vegetables, fruits and individual meat portions, can be bought in large package sizes and kept frozen until needed.
- Raw meats can be bought in large packages. Repackage the meats into individual serving sizes and freeze until needed.

### **Helpful Cooking Hints**

1. Cook a meal that will make several servings. Freeze the extra servings for another time.
2. Prepare one dish meals (soups, stews and casseroles) that have vegetables, meats and grains combined.
3. Use leftovers as ingredients for another meal. Leftover vegetables, meats and grains can be made into soups and casseroles.
4. If you tend to be tired in the evenings, prepare your meals that take longer at lunch time especially on days you do not work. Prepare your dishes that are quick to make for evening meals (dinner/supper).
5. Share food preparation and meals with a friend.
  - a. Share a meal with a friend.
  - b. Take turns cooking meals with friends.

**Convenience Foods** are “processed” foods that require less preparation time.

Some convenience foods are more expensive than making a meal from scratch.

Some convenience foods tend to be high in fat and salt.

Convenience foods can be bought as single servings or in family-size packaging.

#### **Examples of convenience foods:**

- Hot, ready-to-eat dishes - ex. rotisserie chicken, salad bar foods
- Room temperature, shelf-stable canned or boxed foods – ex. soups, macaroni and cheese dinners in a box, instant rice
- Refrigerated or frozen products that require only heating – refrigerated ready-to-eat macaroni and cheese, shredded cheese; frozen dinners

- Ready-to-eat vegetables

## ACTIVITIES (APPLY)

### DISCUSSION TOPICS for participants:

#### Shopping for 1 or 2

Be sure to address the following issues on shopping:

- Many package foods are too large for one meal.
- Large size food packages are often cheaper than small size packages.
- Plan meals for the week.

#### Cooking for 1 or 2

- Prepare extra meals; recipes are usually for 4 or more servings
- Prepare one-dish meals
- Economical and healthful convenience foods

#### Eating alone

- Planning to cook and eat meals with others may be the best motivation to plan and eat healthful meals.
- Make eating alone more interesting and fun.
- Do not get into the habit of eating the same foods because it is easy. Eating the same foods may lower the nutritional content of their diet -- variety is the spice of life!

### Handouts (AWAY)

“Planning Meals for One or Two”

“Cooking for 1 or 2” recipes

“Enjoyable Meals for One or Two”

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