



Cooking for One or Two People: Meal Preparation Made Easy

Cooking meals for one or two people can be a challenge, particularly if you are used to cooking for a large family or have never cooked at all. Cooking for one or two people doesn't mean sacrificing nutrition or eating the same thing five days in a row. There are many options; with a little planning, you can enjoy a variety of foods every day!

Getting started

- Plan your menu using *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*. To obtain a copy of the guide, call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232) or visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.
- Find recipes that serve one or two, or revise your favourite recipes to make smaller portions. Cut recipes in half.
- Check your local bookstore or library for cookbooks that feature small portions.
- Collect simple recipes that use few ingredients and are fast to make.

- Equip yourself with small pots, ovenproof dishes and mini loaf pans, to cook smaller quantities and make cleanup easier.
- When cutting up vegetables, chop twice the amount you need so you have some ready to toss into a soup or salad.
- Use a slow cooker or microwave for ease and to save time.
- Share the cooking with a friend. It's faster – and more enjoyable.
- Exchange frozen portions with friends.
- If making a larger recipe on your own, divide the food into portions, eat one portion immediately and freeze the rest. Meat loaf, casseroles, soups, stews and vegetable pies freeze well. Store in containers or freezer bags. Label packages, noting both contents and date. The nutritional value

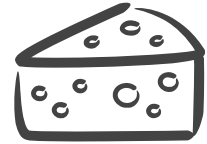
of frozen foods will decline in two to three months, so don't freeze more than you can eat in that time.





Time and energy saving ideas

- Prepare meals when you have the most energy; perhaps that means eating your main meal at noon.
- Use a blender, chopper or food processor if you have one.
- Make one-pot meals such as: chili, lentil soup, hamburger stew, stir-fries or shepherd's pie.
- Try a no-cook meal such as a peanut butter sandwich, cereal with milk and fruit or a salad with tuna and cheese.
- Plan for leftovers. For example, boil two potatoes with skins:
 - ✓ Eat one with low fat sour cream and chives.
 - ✓ Use one to make a potato-cheese casserole the next day.
- Meals don't have to be a major undertaking. Mini meals and snacks made from food choices from the four food groups can meet your nutrient needs. Try quick, nourishing foods such as cheddar cheese, cottage cheese, eggs,



canned fish, peanut butter, hearty soups, canned beans, yogurt, pudding and fruit or vegetable juice.

- Muffin, biscuit and pudding mixes can often be made easily and in small amounts.
- Keep frozen or canned entrees and soups on hand. Use the Nutrition Facts table on packaged foods to help you choose products that have no trans fat and are lower in sodium. Good choices are seasoned chicken breasts, lasagna, fish fillets, canned chili, stews and pizza. To make a complete meal, add milk and fresh fruit or vegetables. If you have difficulty handling equipment due to arthritis or other conditions, see your physician or health unit/centre, who can refer you to an occupational therapist for help.

For more ideas, see other pages in the **Cooking for One or Two** series:

- ✓ Easy Meals to Make #8
- ✓ Creative Use of Leftovers #9
- ✓ Ready-Made Meals #10

Dietitians provide food and nutrition information you can trust. Find a dietitian in your area at www.dietitians.ca/find or call 1-888-901-7776.

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