



Explore a World of
Possibilities
in the Garden
and on
Your Plate

In This Guide, You'll Find:

Recipes

quick and simple
meals using the
fruits and vegetables
your child is learning
about at school

"Ask About..."

prompts to get your
child talking about
the lessons
learned in class

Fruit and Veggie Moments

tips from other
parents on ways to
use more fruits and
vegetables in meals
and snacks

Timesavers

ways to provide healthy
meals quickly for your family

Cost Savers

ways to eat more
fruits and veggies
without breaking
the bank

MyPlate Menu Planner

a tool to help you
plan meals, create
a shopping list,
and eat healthier
on a budget

Growing Tips

ideas for starting
a family garden

Dear Parents,

Your child will learn about fruits and vegetables in class as part
of an exciting unit called **Dig In!**

We will grow some foods in our "garden" and taste them in the classroom.
Together, we will engage in activities to learn more about how certain foods
are grown and why they are good for us. Your child will also use math, science,
and language skills during these activities.

We'll need your help for these lessons to take root. This guide offers some ideas
for talking with your child about what's happening in class. It also has some
simple and tasty ways families can eat more fruits and vegetables.

Please take a moment
to look through this
guide, and **Dig In!**



Find recipes and more at <http://teamnutation.usda.gov>

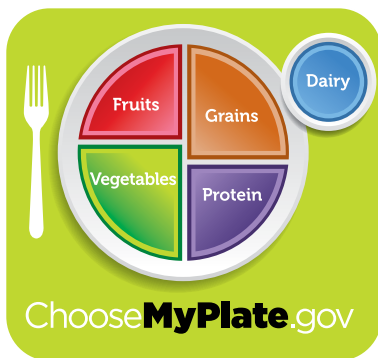




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Meet MyPlate

The **MyPlate** picture reminds us to eat foods from all five food groups for good health: Vegetables, Fruits, Grains, Protein, and Dairy. Foods from each of these groups provide nutrition the body needs.

Most people do not eat enough fruits and vegetables. The amount of fruits and vegetables a person needs to eat each day depends on age, gender, and physical activity level. A 10-year-old girl or boy who gets about 30–60 minutes of physical activity each day needs 2½ cups of vegetables and 1½ cups of fruit each day. An active 11-year-old girl or boy who gets more than 60 minutes of physical activity each day needs more: 2½ to 3 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit. You can learn about how much of each food group you or a family member needs at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>.

Children and adults need to eat many types of vegetables during the week. Eating a variety helps the body get the nutrition it needs for good health. Most people do not eat enough dark-green, red, and orange vegetables, and beans and peas. Has your family eaten any of these vegetables this week?

Dark-Green Vegetables

Broccoli
Collard greens
Kale
Leaf lettuce
Mustard greens
Romaine lettuce
Spinach

Red and Orange Vegetables

Acorn squash
Butternut squash
Carrots
Pumpkin
Red bell peppers
Sweet potatoes
Tomatoes

Beans and Peas

Black beans
Black-eyed peas
Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
Kidney beans
Lentils
Pinto beans
Soy beans
White beans

Making half your plate fruits and vegetables is an easy way to remember to include these foods at meals. Fruits and vegetables also make great snacks.



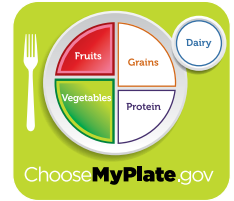
“I’m hungry.”

That’s the first thing my kids say when they come through the door. They go straight into the kitchen to get their own snacks. Whatever my kids see, they eat. So I keep cut-up veggies on a low shelf in the fridge and fresh fruit on the counter. If I don’t have fresh produce, I use canned or frozen. It takes a little planning, but it’s worth it.”



A Day of Fruits and Vegetables

Are you and your family eating enough fruits and vegetables? Here's what a day's worth of meals could look like.



Mix It Up!

You can combine food groups on your plate to make a great-tasting meal. Try this **Smokin' Powerhouse Chili** (recipe on page 11).

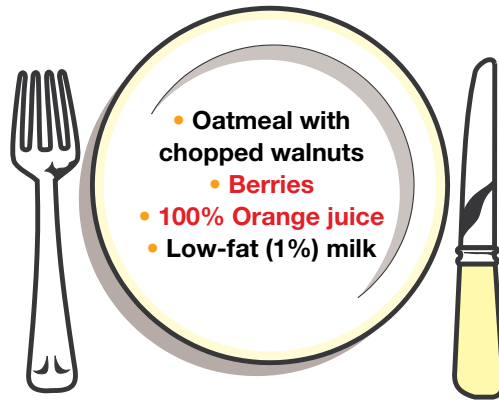


Good News!

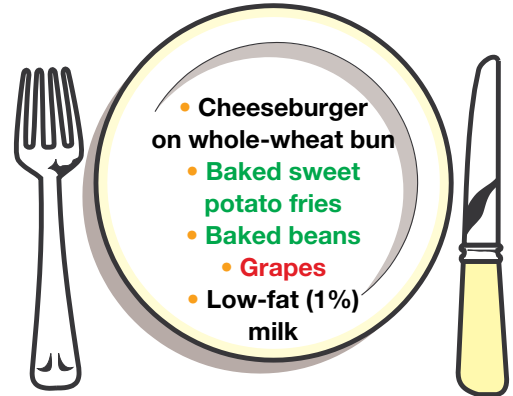
Schools are now required to offer at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of vegetables in school lunches.*

(*provided under the National School Lunch Program for grades K-8)

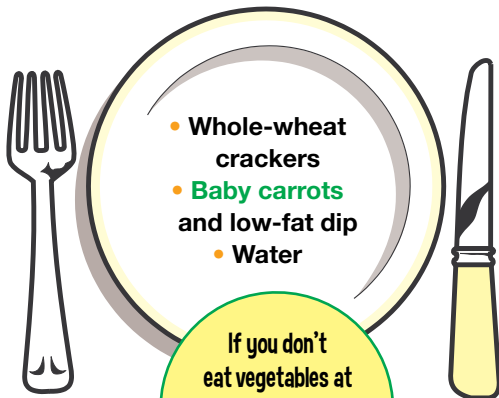
BREAKFAST



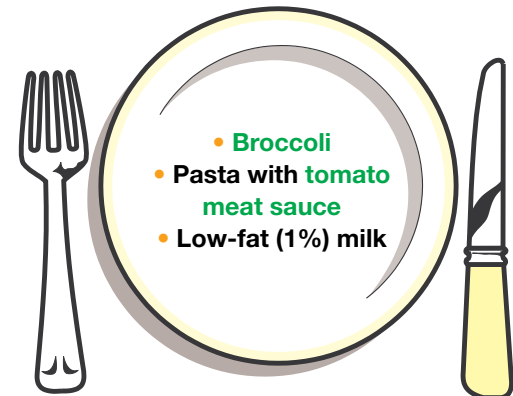
LUNCH



SNACK



DINNER

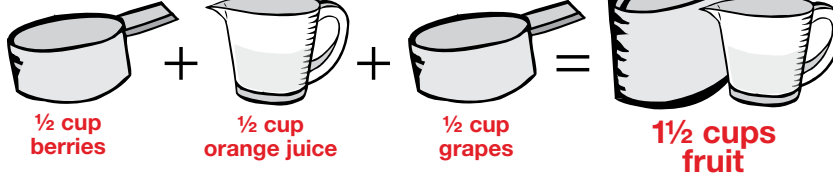


If you don't eat vegetables at breakfast, have them as an afterschool snack.

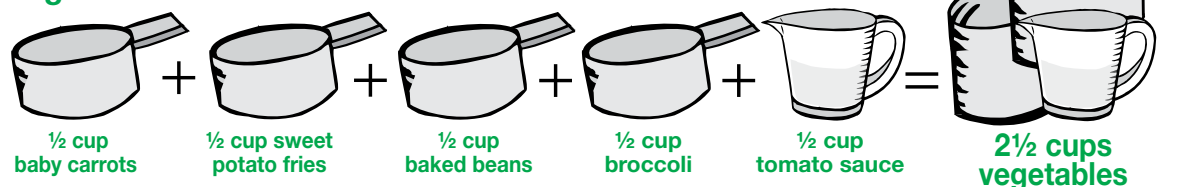
How do the fruits and vegetables in the meals add up?

Remember that most moderately active 10-year-old children need $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of fruit and $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups of vegetables each day. Your child might need more or less.

Fruits:



Vegetables:



MyPlate Menu Planner

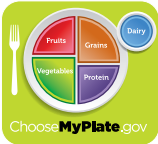
Use this page to come up with meals for your family. Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov> to learn what foods belong to each food group.

Adventure Night. Have your child pick a new fruit or vegetable for the family to taste. Ask your child to help prepare it, and he or she will be more likely to try it.

Make Your Own. Set up bowls of foods and have everyone make their own salad or tacos.

On the Go. Pack sandwiches, fruit, and raw vegetables in a cooler and enjoy dinner “picnic style” after your child’s school day, sporting event, or club meeting.

Breakfast for Dinner. Enjoy omelets filled with vegetables, or whole-grain bagels with low-fat cheese, sliced tomato, and leaf lettuce. You can even wear pajamas to the table!



**MEAL/
THEME**



Fruit



Vegetable



Grain



Protein Foods*



Dairy

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

* Beans, split peas, and black-eyed peas can count toward either the Protein Foods Group or the Vegetable Group.



A Word About These Recipes...

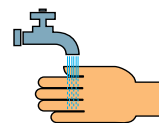
Make Meals and Memories Together. It's a lesson they'll use for life. Children learn about fruits and vegetables when they help prepare them. And all of that mixing, mashing, and measuring makes them want to taste what they are making. It's a great trick for helping your "picky eater" try fruits and vegetables. Look for the hand symbol throughout the recipes to see what preparation steps your child can do. 🖐️

Grow Some Flavor. Try growing some of the herbs, fruits, or vegetables used in these recipes. Herbs, such as basil and rosemary, are easy to grow in a flowerpot on a sunny windowsill. Using herbs to flavor foods instead of salt, sugars, or solid fats is also better for your health. Look for the leaf symbol 🌿 in the recipes for items that are easy to grow in a flowerpot or small garden.

Substitute. If you don't have some of the items needed to prepare the recipes in this booklet, try these substitutions:

- Instead of olive oil, use the same amount of vegetable oil.
- Instead of canned beans, use cooked dry beans ($\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{2}{3}$ cup dry beans makes $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups cooked beans, which is about the same as a 15 ounce (oz) can).
- Instead of fresh herbs, you can use dried herbs. The general rule is 1 tablespoon (Tbsp) of chopped fresh herbs equals 1 teaspoon (tsp) of dried herbs.
- Instead of balsamic vinegar, you can use cider vinegar or red wine vinegar and some sugar. Use 1 Tbsp of cider vinegar or red wine vinegar plus $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp of sugar which equals 1 Tbsp of balsamic vinegar.

Keep It Clean. Everyone should wash his or her hands before and after preparing food, and before eating food. Help your child follow these hand-washing steps:



- Wet hands with clean, running water. Use warm water if available.
- Apply soap.
- Rub hands together to make a lather, and scrub all parts of the hands for 20 seconds. Show your child how to wash the back of hands, between fingers, and under fingernails.
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands using a clean paper towel. If possible, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Rinse Fruits and Vegetables. Rinse produce under running water just before eating, cutting, peeling, or cooking. Do not use soap or detergent. Items that are prepackaged/precut (like baby carrots) and labeled as "prewashed" or "ready-to-eat" do not need further rinsing.

☺☺ I add shredded carrots and zucchini to practically everything –
meatloaf, casseroles, soups, sauces, muffins,
quick breads – you name it! ☺☺

Recipe

Plant Part Salad

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: none

Serves: 8

Serving size: 1½ cups

Ingredients:

Seed: 1 15-oz can of chickpeas
(no salt added), drained and rinsed 🍽️

Flower: 1 small head of broccoli, cut into bite-size
florets (yielding about 2 cups) 🌿

Fruit: 1 medium zucchini, cut into half-moons 🌿

Stem: 2 stalks celery, heads and tails trimmed, sliced
in half vertically, then chopped into ½" pieces

Leaf: 1 small head of leaf lettuce, torn
into bite-size pieces 🍽️ 🌿

Root: 2 carrots, peeled and sliced into ½"-thick circles 🌿

Dressing:

- ½ cup olive oil or other vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- optional:** 1 Tbsp fresh herbs, chopped
(basil, mint, oregano, or thyme) 🌿

Directions:

1. Place all salad ingredients in a large bowl. 🍽️
2. In a small bowl, whisk together oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, and herbs. (You can also use 1 cup of your family's favorite prepared vinaigrette dressing [about 2 Tbsp of dressing per serving of salad].) 🍽️
3. Drizzle dressing over salad. Toss salad gently and serve. 🍽️

Your child learned that the fruits and vegetables we eat are parts of plants. They are seeds, leaves, fruits, stems, roots, or flowers. As you prepare this salad with your child, ask him/her to tell you what part of the plant each ingredient is.

\$ Cost Saver

Use fresh vegetables and fruits that are in season. They are easy to get, have more flavor, and are usually less expensive. Your local farmers market is a great source of seasonal produce.

? Ask About

- What did you learn about foods that come from plants?
- Did you try any new fruits and vegetables at school? Which ones?



👉 I always keep a bag of baby spinach in the fridge and will grab a handful – dice it up real quick – and toss it into soups, over pasta, on pizza, or in tacos. Half the time the kids don't even notice! 👉

Recipe



Cost Saver

Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables are all smart choices. Buy some of each to last until your next shopping trip. Compare canned and frozen fruits and vegetables and choose ones that are lower in added salt, sugar, and fat. Look for canned fruits packed in "100% fruit juice" or water.



Ask About

- What steps does a food take to get from the farm to the plate?
- Did you taste any dark-green leafy vegetables at school?

Want your kids to reach for a healthy snack? Put these tasty kale chips within reach.

Crispy Kale Chips

Preparation time: 8 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Serves: 6-8

Serving size: ½ cup

Ingredients:

- 1 pound kale (1-2 bunches) 🌿
- 2 Tbsp olive oil or other vegetable oil
- 1 tsp salt

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 °F.
2. Rinse kale leaves and pat dry with clean towel. 🧤
3. Remove tough rib (stem) from kale.
4. Tear leaves into smaller pieces (1½" - 2") and place on baking sheet. 🧤
5. Toss leaves with oil and sprinkle with salt. 🧤
6. Spread leaves in single layer and place baking sheet in oven for 5 minutes.
7. Remove baking sheet from oven, turn leaves, and cook for another 5 minutes. Watch closely.
8. Remove from oven and let cool.



👉 Canned beans are a great item to keep on hand for a quick and low-cost meal. You don't always think of them as 'kid-friendly,' but my kids love it when we have bean burritos or quesadillas. Veggie chili is also a hit at my house. 🍲

Recipe

Spanish Chickpea Stew

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 20-25 minutes

Serves: 6

Serving size: 1 cup

Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp olive oil or other vegetable oil
- 2 tsp fresh garlic, minced
- 2 cups fresh onions, peeled, diced
- 2 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- 3 cups frozen spinach, chopped 🌿
- 2 cups canned low-sodium garbanzo beans (chickpeas), drained, rinsed 🍽️
- ¾ cup golden raisins
- 1 cup canned low-sodium diced tomatoes
- 1½ cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 Tbsp red wine vinegar
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Heat oil over medium heat in a large pot.
2. Add garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add onions and continue to sauté for 2-3 minutes until onions smell sweet and are translucent.
3. Mix in paprika and cumin.
4. Add spinach and sauté for 7 minutes.
5. Add garbanzo beans (chickpeas), raisins, tomatoes, and chicken stock. Bring to a boil.
6. Reduce heat to low and simmer uncovered for 7-10 minutes, or until the raisins are plump.
7. Add vinegar, salt, and pepper. Mix well. Serve warm.

\$ Cost Saver

Check the local newspaper, Web sites, and stores for sales, coupons, and specials that will help you save money on food.

? Ask About

- What two food groups are beans in?
- Why are beans good for us?



Recipe from "Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Homes"

at http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/recipes_for_healthy_kids.html

☺☺ At least once a week, we have 'colorful pasta' night. We look at spaghetti like a big salad bowl – what veggies can we toss into it? Peas, fresh tomatoes, broccoli, asparagus. Anything works! ☺☺

Recipe



Time Saver

To get dinner on the table more quickly and with ease, do some tasks at breakfast or at night after the kids go to bed. Wash and cut vegetables, or make a fruit salad. Cook lean ground beef or turkey for burritos or chili. Store everything in the fridge until ready to use.

? Ask About

- What did you think of the broccoli?
- How could we eat more of it?
- What kind of maze did you build for the bean plant at school?



Recipe from "Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Homes" at http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/recipes_for_healthy_kids.html



Chic' Penne

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Serves: 6

Serving size: 1½ cups

Ingredients:

- 3 cups penne pasta, whole-wheat, dry (12 oz)
- 1 tsp granulated garlic, divided*
- 2 cups fresh broccoli florets
- 1 cup cooked, diced chicken, ½" pieces (4 oz)**
- 1½ cups fat-free half and half
- 1 Tbsp enriched all-purpose flour
- ⅓ cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper
- ½ cup reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded (2 oz)
- ½ cup low-fat mozzarella cheese, low-moisture, part-skim, shredded (2 oz)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. In a large pot, bring 2 quarts water to a boil. Gradually stir in pasta and return to a boil. Cook uncovered for 8-10 minutes or until tender. Do not overcook. Drain well.
3. Toss pasta with ½ tsp granulated garlic.
4. Fill a medium pot with water and bring to a boil. Add broccoli florets and boil for 5 minutes. Drain well. Sprinkle with remaining granulated garlic.
5. Transfer pasta and broccoli to a medium casserole dish (about 8" x 11") coated with nonstick cooking spray. Add chicken. Mix well.
6. In a small mixing bowl, mix ½ cup half and half with flour. Whisk to remove lumps. 🍴
7. In a medium skillet, heat chicken broth, salt, pepper, and remaining half and half. Stir constantly. Stir in half and half/flour mixture. Stir constantly and bring to a boil.
8. Reduce heat to low. Stir frequently for 5 minutes. Sauce will thicken. Add cheese and stir until cheese melts. Remove from heat. Pour sauce over broccoli/pasta mixture.
9. Cover casserole dish with lid or with foil. Bake at 350 °F for 8 minutes. Heat to an internal temperature of 165 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds. Remove from oven. Serve hot.

* If you don't have granulated garlic, you can add ½ tsp of garlic powder during step 7 instead. Note that garlic powder and granulated garlic are not the same as garlic salt.

** For information about safely preparing raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs, go to <http://www.foodsafety.gov>.

This pasta dish has almost every food group in it. Just serve fruit for dessert and you've got a MyPlate meal.

☞ You'd never expect peppers to be sweet, but they are. My daughter loves the crunch, so I keep sliced bell peppers in the fridge. I serve them with a little ranch dressing...so good and so easy! ☞

Recipe

Colorful Quesadillas

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Serves: 8

Serving size: 4 wedges or 1 quesadilla

Ingredients:

- 8 oz fat-free cream cheese
- ¼ tsp garlic powder
- 8 small whole-wheat tortillas
- 1 cup sweet red or green bell pepper, chopped 🌶️
- 1 cup shredded low-fat cheese
- 2 cups fresh spinach leaves 🌿
or 10 oz frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry

Directions:

1. In a small bowl, mix the cream cheese and garlic powder. 🤚
2. Spread about 2 Tbsp of the cheese mixture on each tortilla. 🤚
3. Sprinkle about 2 Tbsp bell pepper and 2 Tbsp shredded cheese on one half of each tortilla. 🤚
4. Add spinach: ¼ cup if using fresh leaves or 2 Tbsp if using frozen. Fold tortillas in half. 🤚
5. Heat a large skillet over medium heat until hot. Put 2 folded tortillas in skillet and heat for 1-2 minutes on each side or until golden brown.
6. Remove quesadillas from skillet, place on platter, and cover with foil to keep warm while cooking the remainder.
7. Cut each quesadilla into 4 wedges. Serve warm.



Time Saver

Cooking together is not only a great bonding experience, but it gives kids skills that they'll need for life. Even better, it helps get dinner on the table faster.



Ask About

- What are some ways we can use fruits and vegetables to add color to our meals at home?
- What are some examples of dark-green, red, and orange vegetables?

Make an assembly line and put the family to work. One child can spread the cheese mixture, another can sprinkle the veggies. Make sure an adult does the cooking, though!



☺☺ I feel like I'm always running with three kids playing three different sports. I want to offer healthy snacks on the go, and a little dried fruit mixed with nuts does the trick. It's sweet, so the kids think they're getting a dessert. I know they're getting nutrients they need. ☺☺

Recipe



Time Saver

Cook fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables in the microwave for a quick-and-easy side dish to add to any meal. Steam fresh or frozen vegetables in a bowl with a small amount of water.

? Ask About

- What region of the United States or world did you research?
- What is a fruit or vegetable eaten in that region?
- Did you learn about any new ways to prepare fruits and vegetables that you would like to try at home?

Happy Hummus

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: none

Serves: 24

Serving size: 2 tablespoons

Ingredients:

- 2 15-oz cans of chickpeas (garbanzo beans), rinsed and drained 🍷
- ½ cup water
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup tahini (sesame seed paste)
- 2 Tbsp olive oil or other vegetable oil
- 3-4 Tbsp lemon juice
- ¾ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp paprika
- 3 Tbsp fresh parsley, chopped 🌿

Directions:

1. Place chickpeas, water, garlic, tahini, oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper in food processor or blender. Process or blend until it forms a creamy paste.
2. Spoon hummus into a bowl and top with paprika or parsley. 🍷
3. Serve with whole-wheat pita bread for dipping, or with cut-up vegetables.

Here's a perfect snack to take on the go. Serve with whole-grain pita bread or baby carrots.



🥕🥕 My boys love baby carrots, so you can always find them in our fridge.
They make a great snack or easy side with dinner. 🥕🥕

Recipe

Smokin' Powerhouse Chili

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour, 25 minutes

Serves: 6

Serving size: 1 cup of chili and ¼ cup quinoa

Ingredients:

- ⅔ cup quinoa, dry (or 1½ cups cooked brown rice)
- 1 cup fresh onions, peeled, diced
- 2 tsp fresh garlic, minced
- ¾ cup low-sodium vegetable stock
- 1¼ cups fresh carrots, peeled, diced ½" 🥕
- ½ cup fresh red bell peppers, seeded, diced 🌶️
- ½ tsp ground chipotle pepper (optional)
- 1 cup fresh sweet potatoes, peeled, diced ½"
- 1¾ cups canned low-sodium diced tomatoes
- 1 cup canned low-sodium tomato sauce
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro, chopped 🌿
- 2½ tsp chili powder
- 2½ tsp ground cumin
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 cups canned low-sodium black beans, drained, rinsed 🍲
- ½ cup frozen corn



Directions:

1. To prepare quinoa (skip this step if using brown rice):
 - a. Rinse quinoa in a fine mesh strainer until water runs clear, not cloudy. 🍷
 - b. Combine quinoa and 1⅓ cups water in a small pot. Cover and bring to a boil. Turn heat down to low and simmer uncovered until water is completely absorbed, about 10-15 minutes. When done, quinoa will be soft and a white ring will pop out of the kernel. The white ring will appear only when it is fully cooked. Fluff with a fork and set aside.
2. In a large pot coated with nonstick cooking spray, cook onions and garlic over low-medium heat for 2 minutes. Add half of the vegetable stock and bring to a boil.
3. Add carrots, red bell pepper, and optional ground chipotle pepper. Cook uncovered over medium heat for 10 minutes.
4. Steam sweet potatoes in a steam basket over high heat. Cover and steam for 15 minutes or until fork-tender.
5. Add remaining vegetable stock to pot along with diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, cilantro, chili powder, cumin, and salt. Cook uncovered over medium heat, stirring occasionally, allowing mixture to thicken and flavors to blend for about 15 minutes.
6. Add black beans, corn, and steamed sweet potatoes. Cover and continue cooking over low heat for 10-15 minutes.
7. Serve ¼ cup quinoa or brown rice with 1 cup chili.



Time Saver

Invite a friend over for a “cooking date.” Prepare a large batch of your favorite meal – double or triple the recipe. Freeze in containers for a family meal. Use them throughout the week and you won’t have to spend money on take-out.



Ask About

- What did you learn about cooking and reading recipes?
- What kind of meal would you like to cook together?
- What fruits or vegetables can we add to it?

☞ Some families have pancakes on the weekend. We do 'Smoothie Sundays.' We toss whatever fruit is left in the house (frozen and fresh) into a blender along with 1½ cups of fat-free yogurt and ½ cup of 100% fruit juice. It's a perfect (and delicious) way to use up those bananas that are turning brown. ☞



Cost Saver

Frozen treats are a kid favorite in the warm months. Just put rinsed grapes or cut-up melon in the freezer. Or make "popsicles" by inserting sticks into peeled bananas and freezing. So cool!

? Ask About

- What fruits have you tasted in class?
- What types of fruits are growing in the school garden?

Recipe

Frozen Fruit Cups

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 3 hours (to freeze)

Serves: 18

Serving size: 1 muffin-tin cup

This is a dessert you'll be happy to serve after every meal.

Ingredients:

- 3 bananas
- 24 oz fat-free strawberry yogurt
- 10 oz frozen strawberries, thawed, with the juice
- 8 oz canned crushed pineapple with the juice

Directions:

1. Line 18 muffin-tin cups with paper baking cups. 🖐️
2. Dice or mash bananas and place in a large mixing bowl. 🖐️
3. Stir in remaining items. 🖐️
4. Spoon into muffin-tin cups and freeze for at least 3 hours or until firm. Remove frozen cups and store in a plastic bag in freezer.
5. Before serving, remove paper cups and let stand 10 minutes.



👂👂 Every weekend, I ask my kids to pick a dinner for the coming week. I figure if they have a hand in helping to plan the menu, they'll be more likely to eat what I cook.

And every dinner has to include a veggie. Sometimes they'll ask for a certain-color meal. That's always fun. 🍷🍷

Recipe

Eagle Pizza

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Serves: 6

Serving size: 1 tostada pizza



Ingredients:

- ½ cup fresh spinach, julienne-cut “shoestring strips” 🌿
- ½ cup fresh romaine lettuce, julienne-cut “shoestring strips” 🌿
- 2¼ tsp salt-free chili-lime seasoning blend*
- 1¼ cups canned low-sodium refried beans, fat-free
- ¾ cup fresh green bell pepper, seeded and diced 🌿
- ¾ cup fresh onions, peeled, diced
- 1¼ cups canned low-sodium corn, drained, rinsed
- 6 whole-grain tostada shells
- 6 Tbsp reduced-fat Mexican cheese blend, shredded (1½ oz)
- 1 cup fresh carrots, peeled, shredded 🌿
- ½ cup low-sodium salsa, mild
- ½ cup fat-free sour cream

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 °F.
2. Combine spinach and lettuce in bowl and set aside. 🍷
3. In a medium mixing bowl, combine salt-free seasoning blend and refried beans. Set aside. 🍷
4. In a small skillet coated with nonstick cooking spray, cook green peppers, onions, and corn for 3-4 minutes. Set aside.
5. For each pizza, place ¼ cup of bean filling on tostada shell. Spread mixture evenly using the back of a spoon. Top with ⅓ cup sautéed vegetable mixture. Lightly sprinkle 1 Tbsp of cheese on top. 🍷
6. Place tostadas on a large baking sheet coated with nonstick cooking spray. Bake until cheese is melted, about 2 minutes.
7. Remove tostadas from oven. Top each tostada with: 🍷
About 1 Tbsp spinach/lettuce mixture
About 2½ Tbsp carrots
About 1 Tbsp salsa
About 1 Tbsp sour cream

*If desired, use 2¼ tsp Salt-Free Taco Seasoning Blend in place of salt-free chili-lime seasoning blend.

Enjoy this healthy pizza for dinner!



Time and Cost Saver

Plan out your meals ahead of time, and make a grocery list. You will save money by buying only what you need. Try to shop when you are not hungry; it's easier to make healthier choices. And that will leave more of your food budget for vegetables and fruits.



Ask About

- What did the Fruit Imposter activity at school teach you about reading Nutrition Facts labels?
- How can we make healthier choices at the grocery store?

Salt-Free Taco Seasoning Blend

- 1 tsp dried onion powder
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp crushed red pepper
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- ¼ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp cornstarch

Directions:

Combine all ingredients. If using immediately, do not add cornstarch. Store in an airtight container.

**Additional
Gardening
Resources from
the U.S. Department
of Agriculture
(USDA):**

- Healthy Meals and School Gardens – Team Nutrition:
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/resource-library/school-gardens>
- The People's Garden:
<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/peoplesgardengrantprogram.cfm>
- U.S. Plant Hardiness Zone: **<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/>**
- U.S. National Arboretum Gardening Tips:
<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/gardeningr.html>



Why Garden?

The **Dig In!** unit uses gardening to get kids interested in fruits and vegetables. They learn about where their food comes from and how to build a healthy plate at mealtime. When kids grow and prepare fruits and vegetables, they are also more likely to taste them. The garden also adds a fun, hands-on element to Math, Science, and English Language Arts lessons. Gardening can be a great way for your family to enjoy the outdoors, get physical activity, and grow fruits, vegetables, and fresh herbs.

Interested in starting a garden? First, think about the type of garden that's right for you and the space you have. Gardens can be outdoors in the ground, in raised beds, in containers, or indoors in small pots on windowsills.

Below is a list of some fruits and vegetables that are easy to grow. For more information on growing these fruits and vegetables, see the **Gardening Guide** on the Team Nutrition Web site at **http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/dig_in.html**.

Beets	Green beans	Peppers	Swiss chard
Broccoli	Green peas	Potatoes	Tomatoes
Cabbage	Kale	Radishes	Winter squash
Carrots	Leaf lettuce	Romaine lettuce	Zucchini
Collard greens	Melon	Spinach	
Cucumbers	Mustard greens	Strawberries	

Plant a Windowsill Herb Garden Together

Basil, dill, cilantro, oregano, sage, and thyme are tasty herbs and easy to grow on a sunny windowsill. All you need is the right amount of light, water, and fertilizer.

Here are some quick tips to get you started:

1. Select which herbs you want to grow.
2. Get a flowerpot for each herb. Make sure the pot has holes in the bottom for water to drain out. Place a plate or saucer under each pot to catch the extra water.
3. Plant seeds in potting soil or a seed-starting mix. Check the seed packet to see how deep to plant the seeds. Do not use garden soil, which may be too heavy.
4. Keep soil moist, but not soggy. Water when the soil is dry to the touch. Add water until it comes out of the bottom of the pot. Empty the extra water out of the saucers under the pot after watering.
5. Put the container in a sunny window. Most herbs need 5-6 hours of direct sunlight each day.
6. Arrange your pots so that they do not touch each other. Don't let the growing herbs touch cold windows.
7. Fertilize every 2 weeks with a half-strength solution of all-purpose plant fertilizer. Only fertilize when the soil is damp. Do not use pesticides.

