Family Meals: More Than Just Eating Together


“One of the things I like to do during our family meals is teach my son how to serve himself so that he can learn good portion sizes and learn to become more independent. He likes to do things on his own now, and serving himself would be another important achievement in growing up.” — Anissa, Arizona Mom

How to Serve Family-Style Meals at Home

- It all begins at the table. Place food on the table in serving bowls, plates or baskets.
- Safety first. Use child-friendly serving utensils for meals.
- Sharing is caring. Pass the food from one person to another.
- Be independent. Everyone serves him/herself when possible. Children choose what to put on their plates and how much to eat.

Cooking and Eating Together

Make family meals and memories together. It takes a little work to bring everyone together for meals, but it’s worth it and the whole family eats better. It’s lessens your children will use for life.

- Start eating meals together as a family when your kids are young. This way, it becomes a habit.
- Plan when you will eat together as a family. Write it on your calendar.
- You may not be able to eat together every day. Try to have family meals at least four times a week.
- Focus on the meal and each other. Turn off the television.
- Encourage your child to try foods, but don’t force your child to eat.
- Talk about fun and happy things. Talk to your children about the food and encourage them to discuss the food texture, color, shape, size, quantity, and temperature.

Healthy Eating on a Budget

- Write down meals you want to make each week.
- Make a grocery list. Use your list of weekly meals to create a list of foods and drinks you will need to buy.
- Stretch your dollar with these helpful tips:
  - Read the sales flyer.
  - Use coupons.
  - Check for store brands.
  - Join your store’s loyalty program. Most stores offer a free loyalty program. Get special offers and discounts that non-members do not.

Summer Vegetable and Pasta Salad

Ingredients
- 2 cups whole wheat pasta, dry
- 3 cups mixed vegetables
- 1 cup red bell pepper, diced
- 1 cup broccoli, chopped
- 3 cups whole wheat pasta, dry
- 7 ounces ground turkey (half a 20 ounce package)
- 1 teaspoon Italian Seasoning (or substitute)
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 teaspoon oregano leaves
- Salt and pepper

Nutritional Facts
Serving size: 1 cup. Makes 6 servings
Calories 146
Calories from fat 28%
Total fat 2 mg
Saturated fat 0.01 mg
Trans fat 0 mg
Cholesterol 0 mg
Sodium 180 mg
Carbohydrates 3.12 gm
Dietary fiber 0.27 gm
Sugars 0.27 gm
Protein 32 mg

Stuffed Peppers with Turkey and Vegetables

Ingredients
- 6 small bell peppers (any color)
- 1 chopped zucchini (about 1 cup)
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 can (14.5 ounce) diced tomatoes with liquid
- 1 can (15 ounce) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- Salt and pepper

Nutritional Facts
Serving size: 1/2 pepper. Makes 6 servings
Calories 35 mg
Calories from fat 14%
Total fat 2 mg
Saturated fat 0 mg
Trans fat 0 mg
Cholesterol 0 mg
Sodium 61 mg
Carbohydrates 0.27 gm
Dietary fiber 0.27 gm
Sugars 0.01 gm
Protein 331 mg

Directions
1. Wash hands with warm water and soap. Rinse with cold water. Place in large bowl.
2. Cut the peppers in half from top to bottom. Remove the stem and seeds.
3. In a large skillet over medium heat (300 degrees), cook the turkey until no longer pink. Add seasonings during last few minutes.
4. Add onion, mushrooms, and zucchini to the skillet. Cook pasta according to package directions.
5. Cook the rice or prepare instant rice according to package directions. Cover the baking dish with foil. Bake 350 degrees for 40 to 50 minutes or until peppers are tender, When poked with a fork.
6. Fill the pepper halves with the skillet mixture. Mix in the tomatoes and rice. Remove from heat.
7. Mix in the tomatoes and rice. Remove from heat.
8. Fill the pepper halves with the stuffing mixture. Cover and refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

For more free recipes, visit EatWellBeWell.org or call 1-800-695-3335.