

Getting Started with Your Once-A-Month Cooking Menu Sampler

This free, downloadable one-week sampler of the Once-A-Month Cooking technique will bring you the freedom and satisfaction of less hectic, more economical family meals. It will help you de-stress over having company because you'll have the entrée already on hand.

After you've sampled this technique, if you want to expand its value for your family, you'll find several month and two-week menus in the books *Once-A-Month Cooking* and *Once-A-Month Cooking Family Favorites* at <http://amzn.to/98TmVV>. These books contain the ultimate do-ahead dinner method, and include such helps as a kitchen equipment list, a freezing guide, a measurement conversion table, and even table conversation starters.

Here are some tips to get you started with your menu sampler:

- Set aside shopping time and cooking time; it's best, for your own energy, to shop one day or evening, and cook the next day. This cycle will take you about 3-4 hours to prepare by yourself: less time if you cook with a friend.
- Read through the cycle to acquaint yourself with the flow and the recipes you'll be preparing.
- Look at the pantry list provided and transfer any items you don't have to the shopping list.
- After you shop, prepare for cooking: Leave out on the counter items that don't need refrigeration. Get out the spices and dry ingredients on the pantry list. Clear the counter of décor and unnecessary items.
- Label the freezer containers that you'll use for each entrée (see bottom of Pantry List).
- Start cooking, using the Assembly Order to move you smoothly through the menu cycle.
- As you finish preparing a couple of entrees, squeeze the air out of the freezer bags, seal them, and put them into the freezer.

Once-A-Month Cooking One Week Menu Sampler 06

Pantry List

Bay leaf (2)
Brown sugar (1/2 cup)
Butter (2 T)
Cooking spray
Cornstarch (2 T)
Curry powder (1 T)
Fine, dry bread crumbs (1/2 cup)
Garlic (5 cloves)
Ginger, ground (1 tsp)
Gluten-free Tabasco sauce (2 dashes)**
Olive oil (1 T)
Orange juice (1 cup)
Pepper (1/4 tsp)
Quick-cooking tapioca (1/2 cup)
Salt (1 T, 1 tsp)
Soy sauce (1/2 cup)
Thyme, dried (2 tsp)
Vegetable oil (1 T)
White distilled vinegar (2 T)

Freezing Containers Needed

Sweet Mustard Grilled Pork: 1 gallon Ziploc freezer bag; 1 Ziploc sandwich bag
Texas-Style Lasagna: 1 13x9x2-inch baking dish; heavy-duty aluminum foil
Slow Cooker Artichoke, Chicken and Olives: 1 gallon Ziploc freezer bag
French Stew: 14-ounce freezer container
Chicken Naranja: 1 gallon Ziploc bag
Chicken and Dumplings: 1 10-cup freezer container
Penne in Cream Sauce with Sausage: 1 gallon Ziploc freezer bag; 1 Ziploc sandwich bag

Total Freezer Containers Needed

1 gallon Ziploc freezer bags: 4
Ziploc sandwich bags: 2
1 13x9x2-inch baking dish
Heavy-duty aluminum foil
1 10-cup freezer container
1 14-cup freezer container

**Can use regular product if you are not choosing gluten-free.

Once-A-Month Cooking One Week Menu Sampler 06

Grocery List

Meat, Poultry and Seafood

- 3 pounds pork loin roast
- 1.5 pounds lean ground beef
- 3 pounds beef stew meat
- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1 roasted (rotisserie) chicken
- 1 pound mild Italian sausage
- 1/2 pound hot Italian sausage

Canned Goods

- 4 14.5-ounce cans diced tomatoes
- 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 4-ounce can chopped green chilies
- 2 8-ounce cans mushroom pieces and stems
- 1 8-ounce can artichoke hearts
- 1 2.25-ounce can sliced pitted ripe olives
- 1 10.75-ounce can beef consommé
- 1 32-ounce carton chicken broth
- 1 14.5-ounce can gluten-free chicken broth**
- 1 14.5-ounce can whole green beans
- 1 15-ounce can small peas

Grain, Pasta and Rice

- 5 flour tortillas
- 1.5 cups uncooked brown rice
- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 1 16-ounce package mini penne pasta

Dairy

- 2 eggs
- 2 cups (16 ounces) small-curd cottage cheese
- Whipping cream (8 ounces)
- 1 12-ounce tube refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
- 4 cups (6 ounces) shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 cup (4 ounces) grated Parmesan cheese

Produce

- 2 large onions
- 6 large carrots
- 8 medium stalks celery
- 1 bunch fresh parsley

Frozen Foods

8 ounces frozen small onions
10-ounces frozen peas

Misc.

¼ cup Dijon mustard
½ cup molasses
1 1-ounce package taco seasoning mix
2 cups dry white wine
1 12-ounce jar turkey gravy

**May use regular product if not choosing gluten-free.

Once-A-Month Cooking One Week Menu Sampler 06

Assembly Order

Day/night before cooking day (optional – can be done on cooking day)

Debone and shred 1 roasted chicken. This is easiest done while it's still warm, if possible. Store chicken in refrigerator overnight in medium bowl. On cooking day you can add other ingredients for Chicken and Dumplings to this bowl.

Prepare vegetables and set aside in bowls:

Carrots: Peel and slice 3; Peel and chop 3

Celery: Chop 2-1/2 cups

Parsley: Chop 1/2 cup

Garlic: Chop 2-1/2 teaspoons

Onions: Chop 2 cups; Slice 2 cups

With kitchen shears or a sharp knife, cut the 5 flour tortillas into 1-inch strips.

Cut up chicken and store in refrigerator until needed:

Cube 2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (store in refrigerator in 1 gallon Ziploc freezer bag that you will freeze Chicken Naranja in)

Cut 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves into strips

In a Crock-Pot, prepare the **French Stew** and cook on low for 6 to 8 hours. Use this as dinner tonight, or freeze when it's done.

Prepare **Penne in Cream Sauce with Sausage**. While you sauté the onion and garlic, prepare the **Sweet Mustard Grilled Pork**, pour into the labeled freezer bags and freeze.

Then complete **Penne in Cream Sauce with Sausage**, pour into the labeled freezer bags and freeze.

Mix all ingredients for **Chicken and Dumplings** except water and biscuits, pour into labeled freezer container and freeze.

Combine the ingredients except brown rice for **Slow Cooker Artichoke, Chicken and Olives**, pour into labeled freezer bag and freeze.

Assemble **Chicken Naranja**, pour into labeled freezer bag and freeze.

Brown the ground beef and complete assembling **Texas-Style Lasagna**. Wrap baking dish in heavy-duty aluminum foil, label and freeze.

Once-A-Month Cooking One Week Menu Sampler 06

Recipes

French Stew

3 pounds beef stew meat
1 10.75-ounce can beef consommé
3 large peeled and sliced carrots
1 14.5-ounce can whole green beans, drained
8 ounces frozen small onions, separated
1 15-ounce can small peas, drained
1 14.5-ounce can peeled, diced tomatoes
1 cup dry white wine
1/4 cup quick-cooking tapioca
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1/2 cup fine, dry bread crumbs
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

Mix all the ingredients in Crock-Pot and cook for 6 to 8 hours on low. Allow to cool, and freeze.

To prepare for serving, thaw stew and heat until bubbly in a large pot, about 30 minutes.

Summary of processes: Peel and slice 3 carrots.

Serves: 8

Freeze in: 14-cup container

Penne in Cream Sauce with Sausage

1 tablespoon butter
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion (2 cups sliced)
5 cloves chopped garlic (2-1/2 teaspoons, chopped)
1 pound mild Italian sausage
1/2 pound hot Italian Sausage
2/3 cups dry white wine
1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
1 cup whipping cream
1 bunch fresh parsley (1/2 cup chopped)
Salt and pepper to taste

1 16-ounce package mini penne pasta*
4 ounces Parmesan cheese (1 cup grated)*

Melt butter with oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and garlic and sauté until golden brown and tender, about 7 minutes. Add sausage and sauté until golden brown and cooked through, breaking up the sausage as it cooks, about 7 minutes. Drain any excess drippings from the skillet.

Add wine to the skillet with drained meat and boil until almost all the liquid evaporates, about 2 minutes. Add diced tomatoes and simmer 3 minutes. Add cream and simmer until sauce thickens slightly, about 5 minutes. Stir in parsley and season to taste with salt and pepper. Cool, package in labeled gallon freezer container, and freeze with 1 cup Parmesan cheese in a sandwich bag attached.

To serve, thaw meat sauce and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Meanwhile, cook pasta in large pot of boiling, salted water until tender but still firm to bite.

Pour sauce over pasta and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Summary of Processes: Slice 2 cups onions; chop 1/2 cup fresh parsley; chop 2-1/2 teaspoons garlic

Serves: 6

Freeze in: 1 gallon Ziploc freezer bag; 1 Ziploc sandwich bag

Sweet Mustard Grilled Pork

½ cup molasses
¼ cup Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons white vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
3 pounds pork loin roast

Cooking spray*

Combine first four ingredients; brush half of mixture over pork loin. Put pork loin into a labeled gallon freezer bag. Pour the remaining marinade in a sandwich bag and slip the small bag inside the larger one. Freeze.

To serve, thaw ingredients. Coat grill rack with cooking spray. Place pork loin on grill over medium-hot coals (350-400°F). Cover with grill lid and cook 25-30 minutes or until a thermometer inserted into thickest portion registers 160°F, turning once and basting with reserved molasses glaze during the last 8 minutes. If you would rather, place roast on a rack in a shallow roasting pan and roast in a 325-degree oven for 2 hours or until meat thermometer registers 160°F.

Serves: 8

Freeze in: 1 gallon Ziploc freezer bag; 1 Ziploc sandwich bag

Chicken and Dumplings

1 roasted (rotisserie) chicken, deboned and shredded
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 tablespoon butter, melted
3 medium carrots (1.5 cups chopped)
5 stalks celery (1.5 cups chopped)
½ onion (1 cup chopped)
1 32-ounce carton chicken broth
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 bay leaf
1 12-ounce jar of turkey gravy
¼ cup frozen peas (do not defrost)

4 cups of water*
1 12-ounce tube refrigerated buttermilk biscuits*

Mix all ingredients except water and biscuits in a large bowl. Pour into freezer container, label and freeze. Mark the tube of biscuits and store in the refrigerator.

To serve, thaw ingredients. In a large saucepan add the 4 cups water and warm over medium heat until hot and bubbling. While the meat mixture is heating, unroll biscuits and cut each into four pieces. Push the biscuit pieces into the hot bubbling liquid with a wooden spoon a few at a time until they are all in. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

Summary of processes: Debone and shred roasted rotisserie chicken; Chop 1-1/2 cups carrots and 1-1/2 cups celery; Chop 1 cup onion

Serves: 6

Freeze in: 1 10-cup freezer container

Slow Cooker Artichoke, Chicken and Olives (This recipe is gluten-free)

2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, cubed
2 8-ounce cans mushroom pieces and stems, drained
1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 8-ounce can artichoke hearts
1 14.5-ounce can gluten-free chicken broth**
½ onion (1 cup chopped)
2 dashes gluten-free Tabasco sauce**
1 2.25-ounce can sliced pitted ripe olives
¼ cup dry white wine
3 tablespoons quick-cooking tapioca
1 tablespoon curry powder
¾ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
Salt and pepper to taste

1-1/2 cups uncooked brown rice*

Combine all ingredients except the brown rice in a large mixing bowl, then pour them into a labeled gallon freezer bag and freeze.

To serve, thaw ingredients and pour into a 3-1/2-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 7-8 hours or on high for 3.5-4 hours. Before serving, cook the rice according to package directions. Serve with cooked rice.

Summary of Processes: Cube 2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves; chop 1-1/2 cups onion.

Serve: 6

Freeze in: 1 gallon Ziploc freezer bag

**May use regular ingredients if prefer not to make this gluten-free.

Chicken Naranja

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves, cut into strips
1 teaspoon ground ginger
3 medium stalks celery (1 cup chopped)
1 cup orange juice
1/2 cup soy sauce
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
1/2 cup water

1 cup uncooked rice*

Place chicken, ginger, and celery in labeled 1-gallon freezer bag. Mix the orange juice, soy sauce, brown sugar, cornstarch and water in a Pyrex measuring cup and pour over other ingredients. Freeze.

To serve, thaw the ingredients. Preheat oven to 350°F. Bake, uncovered, for 60 minutes. Cook rice according to package directions. Serve over cooked rice.

Summary of Processes: Cut 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves into strips, chop 1 cup celery

Serves: 4

Freeze in: 1 gallon Ziploc freezer bag

Texas-Style Lasagna

1.5 pounds lean ground beef
2 cups (16 ounces) small-curd cottage cheese
2 eggs
1 1-ounce package taco seasoning mix
1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
1 4-ounce can chopped green chilies
5 flour tortillas
4 cups (16 ounces) shredded Monterey Jack cheese

In a large skillet, brown meat. Cut the flour tortillas into 1-inch strips. Combine cottage cheese and eggs in small bowl. Drain the browned meat and add taco seasoning, tomatoes, tomato sauce and chilies; mix well. Simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes.

In a 13x9x2-inch baking dish treated with non-stick spray, layer half of the meat sauce, half of the tortilla strips, half of the cottage cheese mixture, and half of the Monterey Jack cheese. Repeat layers. Cover with heavy-duty aluminum foil, label and freeze.

To serve, thaw and bake, uncovered, in preheated 350-degree oven for 40 minutes or until bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Summary of Processes: Cut 5 tortillas into 1-inch strips

Serves: 8

Freeze in: 13x9x2-inch baking dish; heavy-duty aluminum foil