

# MODULE 5

## Make-Ahead Meals

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The purpose of this module is to introduce participants to healthy meals that can be planned and prepared ahead. Participants will learn that make-ahead meals can save time and money. Participants will also discover how to plan and use leftovers wisely. Opportunities to practice simple cooking techniques for preparing make-ahead meals will be provided.

### Learning objectives

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By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Discuss the time and money saving benefits of preparing meals ahead.
- Discuss strategies for meal planning on a budget.
- Discuss strategies for planning for and using leftovers.
- Use a variety of cooking techniques to prepare make-ahead meals (e.g. preparing soups and stocks, cooking pasta, using canned beans, assembling wraps).
- Demonstrate safe use of knives and appliances.

### Suggested outline

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Make-Ahead Meals	Approximate Time
• Welcome and Introduction	5 min
• Meal planning on a budget	10 min
• Using leftovers	10 min
• Review of Recipes and techniques	10 min
• Hands on cooking	60 min
○ kitchen safety	
○ cooking techniques (preparing soups and stocks, cooking pasta, using canned beans, assembling wraps)	10-15 min
• Tasting	10-15 min
• Clean up	
	<b>2 hours</b>

## Organizing the hands-on cooking

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The modules are designed to provide hands-on cooking experience for participants. Each cooking session will require planning and preparation. Begin by reviewing the background information provided at the beginning of the module.

The optimal group size is 6-12 participants. Divide participants into three small groups. Each group will be responsible for the preparation of **one** recipe. For smaller groups or if your budget is limited, you may choose to divide participants into two groups. In this case, you will choose only two recipes for the groups to prepare.

Since participants will be preparing the recipes, there is no need to prepare anything in advance. However, unless you can purchase cooked turkey, you will need to cook turkey to make 2 cups diced cooked turkey for the cubed turkey for the *Turkey Pasta Soup* recipe.

You will need to prepare “stations” for each group. At each station, include the supplies, ingredients and equipment that will be needed for the preparation of the assigned recipe.

Ask groups to work together to prepare their assigned recipe. Encourage them to carefully read and follow the steps on the recipe. Check-in with each group throughout the session to provide guidance and demonstrate techniques as required.

A minimum of two facilitators is recommended. However, the overall skill level of participants will determine how many facilitators will be required to deliver this module. Groups with more advanced skills can work independently with less guidance from the facilitator(s).

Participants within the group will likely have varied skill levels. Try to include participants with fewer skills with a group of participants with more advanced skills.

## Preparation checklist

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### Handouts

- EatRight Ontario Menu Planning Form*
- Loving Your Leftovers*

### Recipes

- Turkey Pasta Soup
- Pasta with Fresh Garden Tomato Sauce
- Black Beans 10 Ways (Black Bean Wraps)

### Equipment and Supplies

#### *Turkey Pasta Soup:*

- large pot
- sharp knives
- cutting board
- vegetable peeler
- garlic press
- measuring cups and spoons
- large spoon
- soup ladle

#### *Pasta with Fresh Garden Tomato Sauce:*

- large bowl
- sharp knives
- cutting board
- garlic press
- measuring cups and spoons
- large pot
- colander
- large spoon
- cheese grater

#### *Black Beans 10 Ways:*

- large saucepan
- sharp knives
- cutting board
- measuring cups and spoons
- large spoon
- can opener

#### Other items required:

- serving and eating utensils
- plates

- napkins
- dish soap, dish cloths, and dish towels
- paper towel

## Ingredients

- salt and pepper
- vegetable oil

### *Turkey Pasta Soup:*

- small onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 parsnips
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 cup mushrooms
- 8 cups sodium-reduced chicken broth
- 2 cups diced cooked turkey
- 1 cup alphabet pasta or thin noodles
- dried thyme
- fresh parsley

### *Pasta with Fresh Garden Tomato Sauce:*

- 9 tomatoes
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 Jalapeno pepper
- 1 small green pepper
- 4 green onions, thinly sliced
- fresh basil or
- 1 ½ tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp sugar
- Parmesan cheese
- 1 package (450 g) spaghetti

### *Black Beans 10 Ways:*

- 1 small onion
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 cans (540 mL) black beans
- 1 can (540 mL) seasoned diced tomatoes (e.g. garlic or basil)
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp cumin
- 1 tsp oregano
- 2 bay leaves
- lemon
- hot sauce

*For wraps:*

whole wheat wraps

shredded cheese

lettuce

## Background information for the leader

### Meal Planning on a Budget

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Planning meals for the next few days or week ahead is a good way to save money on food. It takes a bit of time, but it will help save time and money later.

#### 10 Tips for Planning Meals on a Budget

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**1. Make a menu.**

Decide which recipes to make for lunch and dinner. Then write down a menu on a form such as the *EatRight Ontario Menu Planner Form* (handout provided at the end of this session). With a plan, there will be this less chance of spending money on fast food or convenience meals.

**2. Plan meals around foods that are on sale.**

Check store flyers, newspaper inserts and coupon sites online. There are often good buys available. Just be sure to buy and plan for foods that will actually be used so that they don't go to waste.

**3. Plan at least one meatless meal a week.**

Legumes (beans, lentils, dried peas), eggs, tofu, peanut butter and canned fish offer great tasting protein at a good price.

**4. Check the pantry, refrigerator and freezer.**

Look at the expiry dates of the foods and ingredients already on hand. Which ones need to be used up? Look for recipes that use those foods and ingredients.

**5. Enjoy grains more often.**

Grains such as rice, pasta, barley and couscous are inexpensive and can be used in many different recipes. Try them in soups, stews and salads.

**6. Avoid recipes that need a special ingredient.**

Some recipes call for a special ingredient that you may not have. How much does that ingredient cost? Does it come in a small or big package? Can it be used in other recipes before it goes bad? It may not be worth the money to buy an ingredient if it will only be used once. Leave the ingredient out or try the recipe with an ingredient on hand.

**7. Look for seasonal recipes.**

Vegetables and fruit are cheaper when they're in season. Try some of the delicious recipes from *Foodland Ontario*.

**8. Plan to use leftovers.**

Think about how leftovers can be used. For example, roast chicken with rice and vegetables cooked for Sunday night's supper can be used to make chicken sandwiches for Monday's lunch. On Tuesday, use the bones to make a chicken soup and toss in any leftover vegetables and rice.

### **9. Make extras.**

Don't let a big bunch of carrots or celery go to waste. Use it all up by making an extra big pot of soup. If ground beef is on sale, make two batches of lasagna instead of one. Serve one batch for dinner, and freeze the other batch in meal-sized portions for another time.

### **10. Know what your family likes to eat.**

Encourage your family to share their favourites and help with menu planning. That way you can look for favourite ingredients and foods when they go on sale.

## **Using Leftovers**

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Many people enjoy eating leftovers from last night's dinner or from a big restaurant meal. But, leftovers do not last forever. Here are some tips for safely storing the extra portions for quick and nutritious meals.

### **What to do with leftovers?**

Saving leftovers helps to avoid wasting food, saves money and makes quick future meals.

Some leftovers can be mixed with additional ingredients to make a whole new meal. This works best with single items such as cooked vegetables, potatoes, chicken or fish. For example:

- Toss vegetables into your omelette, sandwich or pasta
- Mash potatoes as Shepherd's pie topping
- Add chicken to low-sodium broth with noodles and carrots
- Combine fish with low-fat mayonnaise and celery and use in a sandwich.

There are many exciting ways to make tonight's dinner ingredients into a totally new meal tomorrow. Here are some more ideas:

### **Vegetables and Fruit**

- Cook a bunch of broccoli, a head of cauliflower or larger amounts of other vegetables. Eat one serving hot; marinate some in vegetable oil, vinegar and spices and add to a salad; use the rest in an omelette, pasta dish, soup or casserole.
- Top casseroles with slices of left-over cooked potatoes.
- Use cut-up fruit on cereal, to top pancakes or waffles, in fruit salad, mixed with yogurt or cottage cheese, or add it to baked goods such as muffins or sweet loaves.
- Freeze overripe bananas and use in loafs and muffins.
- If you bought too much fruit, use the leftovers to make jam, compote, chutney

or fruit sauces (like applesauce).

- Puree cooked vegetables with broth and/or milk for a quick soup.
- Add any combination of vegetables into a pasta dish, gratin, salad, lasagna or quiche.
- Place leftover tomato paste in a plastic bag, squeeze it flat and freeze. Break off the paste a bit at a time to enrich sauces.
- Use leftover stir-fried vegetables on a sandwich or in an omelette.
- Blend leftover fruit into a smoothie (blend milk and fruit).

### **Grain Products**

- Chill leftover pasta for pasta salad, soups or casseroles.
- Use rice in rice pudding, soups, casseroles.
- Make individual sized pizza crusts from tortillas, English muffins or pita breads.
- Crumble dried bread to crumbs to coat chicken or fish, or as casserole topping.
- Use dried bread in bread pudding or cube as croutons (sprinkle with spices and toast in oven) for salads or soups.

### **Meat and Alternatives**

- Serve tomato or meat sauce over noodles one day, then add beans, chopped vegetables (fresh, frozen or leftover) and chili seasoning for another meal.
- Sauté ground beef, use in a casserole and freeze the rest for chili or stuffed peppers.
- Bake larger pieces of meat such as whole chicken, ham or beef, serve hot and use the leftovers in stir-fries, hearty soups, casseroles, sandwiches or salads.
- Use chicken, tuna or egg salad in sandwich one day and stuff the extra into a tomato or a green, yellow or red pepper the next.
- Turn leftover roast and potatoes into tomorrow's shepherd's pie.
- Turn leftover salmon into salmon cakes or use as a filling for pita with sliced tomatoes, lettuce, red peppers and cucumber.
- Roasts can be minced and used as fillings for ravioli, burritos, crepes, stuffed vegetables, cannelloni and more.
- Add extra liquid and sautéed onions when making pot roast for tomorrow's French onion soup.
- Use leftover chicken or turkey in tomorrow's sandwich. Use whole slices or make chunky chicken salad by adding mayonnaise, celery, onion and other vegetables you enjoy.

## How can I safely store leftovers?

For large batches of foods like casseroles, lasagna and stew, store some in the fridge to eat over the next few days. Freeze the rest.

### Cool leftovers safely:

- Wait for hot food to stop steaming. Put food in a shallow dish so it cools more quickly.
- Once cooled, divide leftovers into single serving amounts and refrigerate.

### Storing food in the fridge:

- Store leftovers in covered containers with lids that snap shut. Or, use bowls covered with cling wrap or aluminum foil. Wrap foods tightly so that they will not dry out.
- Label each food with the name and date made.
- Most leftovers can stay in the fridge for two to three days.
- Storing food in the freezer:
  - Use containers that are specifically made for freezer use.
  - Or, wrap food in aluminum foil and place in re-sealable plastic bags.
  - Label each food with the name and date made.
  - Most leftovers can stay in the freezer for two to three months.

**Tip:** Keep foods out of the danger zone where bacteria grow. Foods need to be kept:

Cold: Below 4°C (40°F) or

Hot: Over 60°C (140°F)

Use a food thermometer to make sure food is safe.

## How should I reheat leftovers?

Thaw frozen foods in the fridge or use the “defrost” setting on the microwave. Then, safely reheat leftovers in the oven, microwave or on a stove top. Do not reheat leftovers in a slow cooker.

**Oven:** Use an oven-proof container. Cover food with a lid or foil so it does not dry out.

**Stovetop:** If reheating gravy, soup or sauce: bring to a full rolling boil while stirring.

**Microwave:** Use only containers made for microwave use. Loosen lids to let the steam escape. Stop the microwave midway through reheating and stir the food so that the heat is evenly distributed.

Whichever method, leftovers need to be reheated to 74° C (165°F). Use a food thermometer to make sure food is safe.

### **What if I'm not sure if leftovers are safe to eat?**

When in doubt, throw it out. Never rely on how a food smells, looks or tastes to decide if it has gone bad. Food that has been stored for too long can spoil and make you sick even if it looks or smells okay.

### **Can I re-freeze leftovers that have already been reheated once?**

Do not re-freeze foods that have been defrosted or warmed in the microwave. If leftovers have been thawed in the fridge but have not been reheated, they can be refrozen within three to four days of being left in the fridge. However, refreezing foods may result in a loss of taste, texture and appearance.

*Adapted from materials produced by [www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca)*

## **Related CFA Presentation Kits**

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide (2008)

Food Safety (2009)

Menu Planning (2009)

Quick and Easy Meals (2009)

## LESSON

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Each cooking session will require planning and preparation. Begin by reviewing the background information provided at the beginning of the module. Depending on group size, organize participants into two or three small groups. Each group will be responsible for the preparation of **one** recipe. Choose the recipes and prepare “stations” for each group. At each station, include the supplies, ingredients and equipment that will be needed for the preparation of the assigned recipe(s).

### Welcome and Introduction

5 minutes

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- Begin this lesson by welcoming participants back. Ask if they tried any of the recipes or practiced any of the skills discussed in the previous module.

Review the objectives of this module:

*“This module will introduce you to healthy meals that can be planned and prepared ahead. Make-ahead meals help save time and money. Make ahead meals also help you plan to use leftovers wisely. We’ll practice cooking techniques as we prepare a variety of make-ahead meals together.”*

- Warm-Up

Ask participants to share ideas for saving money on their food budget. Ask the following:

- Share a tip that you use for saving money on food.
- Do you have a favourite low-cost meal?

Encourage participants to talk about home cooked, low-cost meals and tips that involve planning meals ahead and using leftovers.

### Meal Planning on a Budget

10 minutes

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- Build on the warm-up discussion by reviewing the following 10 Tips for Planning Meals on a Budget:
  1. Make a menu.
  2. Plan meals around foods that are on sale.
  3. Plan at least one meatless meal a week.
  4. Check the pantry, refrigerator and freezer.
  5. Enjoy grains more often.

6. Avoid recipes that need a special ingredient.
7. Look for seasonal recipes.
8. Plan to use leftovers.
9. Make extras.
10. Know what your family likes to eat.

- Distribute the *EatRight Ontario Menu Planner Form*. Quickly review how to complete it. Encourage participants to use it at home to plan a weekly menu that incorporates make-ahead meals and leftovers.

### **Using Leftovers**

**10 minutes**

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- Distribute the handout: *Loving Your Leftovers* to help you review the following discussion points about leftovers:
  - ideas for using leftovers
  - safe use of leftovers (cooling, storing, reheating)
- Show participants examples of how leftovers are used in the recipes that will be prepared in this session.
  - leftover turkey and vegetables in the *Turkey Pasta Soup*
  - Using leftover *Pasta with Fresh Garden Tomato Sauce* for next day lunch
  - Using leftover *Black Beans 10 Ways* for a variety of future meals (e.g. wraps, salads, soups, etc.)

### **Review of Recipes and Techniques**

**10 minutes**

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- Review safe food handling practices (e.g. frequent handwashing, sanitizing surfaces)
- Discuss the preparation and cooking techniques that will be used:
  - chopping fresh herbs
  - cutting vegetables (e.g. seeding and dicing tomatoes, chopping peppers, mincing garlic)
  - sautéing onions and garlic
  - draining and rinsing canned beans
  - assembling wraps
  - cooking spaghetti

- Introduce the recipes and review the following:
  - ingredients (explain anything unfamiliar)
  - steps involved in the recipes
  - alternate ingredients and/or cooking methods
  - helpful tips

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**Hands-on Cooking****60 minutes**

- If you have not already done so, organize participants into two or three small groups. Each group will be responsible for the preparation of **one** recipe.
- Review kitchen safety such as preventing cuts, burns, fires, electrical shocks and falls.
- Encourage participants to clean as they go to minimize clean-up at the end of the session.
- Visit each group throughout the hands-on cooking portion of this module. Help each group with the correct and safe preparation of the assigned recipes. Demonstrate skills and provide guidance as necessary. Some of the skills that you may need to review or demonstrate include:
  - safe food handling practices
  - safe handling of knives for chopping, dicing, mincing, etc.
  - chopping herbs
  - safe use of the blender or food processor
  - cooking spaghetti
  - grating Parmesan cheese
  - rinsing and draining canned beans
  - sautéing

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**Tasting****10-15 minutes**

- Encourage participants to taste the recipes that were prepared. Ask participants to share their experiences. What worked well? What were the challenges? Will they try the recipe at home?

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**Clean Up****10-15 minutes**

- Ensure that all participants help with washing dishes, cleaning the work surfaces and storing food in the proper locations.

## RECIPES

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### **Recipe #1: Turkey Pasta Soup**

### **Recipe #2: Pasta with Fresh Garden Tomato Sauce**

### **Recipe #3: Black Beans 10 Ways**

#### **Notes:**

#### **Turkey Pasta Soup**

*Unless you purchase cooked turkey, you will need to cook turkey in advance of the session.*

*The Helpful Tips on this recipe includes instructions for making homemade stock. Due to the time limitations of this module, use prepared stock or broth for this recipe. Take some time to explain how participants can prepare homemade stock at home.*

#### **Black Beans 10 Ways**

*Choose one of the meal ideas from the Black Beans 10 Ways to demonstrate how this recipe can be used. The Cheesy Black Bean Wraps are an easy idea to prepare and taste during this session.*

## RECIPE #1: Turkey Pasta Soup

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1 Tbsp	vegetable oil	15 mL
1	small onion, diced	1
2	carrots, peeled and thinly sliced	2
2	parsnips, peeled and thinly sliced	2
1	clove garlic, minced	1
1 cup	sliced mushrooms	250 mL
8 cups	sodium-reduced chicken broth	2 L
2 cups	cooked turkey, diced	500 mL
1 cup	alphabet pasta or thin noodles	250 mL
¼ tsp	dried thyme	1 mL
pinch	pepper	pinch
2 tbsp	finely chopped fresh parsley	25 mL

1. In a large pot, heat oil over medium-high heat. Stir in onion, carrots, parsnips and garlic; cook, stirring until vegetables are slightly softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in mushrooms for 1 minute.
2. Add broth, turkey, pasta, thyme and pepper; cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until pasta is tender, about 15 minutes. Serve sprinkled with parsley.

*Makes 6 servings.*

Adapted and reprinted with permission from Foodland Ontario  
[www.foodland.gov.on.ca](http://www.foodland.gov.on.ca)

## RECIPE #1: Helpful Tips

### How to Make Chicken or Turkey Stock

'Stock' up by keeping a sealable freezer bag in the freezer for chicken necks, backs, wings and trimmings that can be used for stock. Or once the turkey dinner is over, remove all the meat and break or cut the carcass into pieces.

#### What you will need:

- Large stockpot
- Large knife
- Cutting board
- Strainer

#### How to:

1. In a large stockpot, place about 4 lb (2 kg) chicken pieces or 1 turkey carcass, cut into pieces.
2. Roughly chop 2 onions, 2 carrots and 2 celery stalks. Add to pot.
3. Add 1 bay leaf, 1 tsp (5 mL) peppercorns and 1 tsp (5 mL) dried thyme leaves.
4. Add enough cold water to cover by an inch (2.5 cm). Bring to a boil and skim off any foam. Reduce heat and simmer gently for 1 ½ to 2 hours.
5. Strain and cool, Refrigerate until fat solidifies on the surface, 6 to 8 hours. Use a spoon to remove fat. Place the stock in airtight containers in amounts that you will use.
6. Refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months.

Makes 8 to 10 cups (2 to 2.5 L)

## RECIPE #2: Pasta with Fresh Garden Tomato Sauce

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9	tomatoes	9
1/3 cup	olive oil	75 mL
3	garlic cloves, minced	3
2 Tbsp	finely chopped Jalapeno pepper	25 mL
1	small green pepper	1
4	green onions, thinly sliced	4
¼ cup	finely chopped fresh basil	50 mL
	OR	
1 tsp	dried basil	5 mL
1 ½ tsp	dried oregano	7 mL
½ tsp	salt	2 mL
½ tsp	pepper	2 mL
½ tsp	sugar	2 mL
¾ cup	grated Parmesan cheese	175 mL
1	package (450 g) spaghetti	1

1. **Make Ahead:** Slice tomatoes in half. Squeeze out all juice and seeds. Chop and place in a large bowl. Add oil, garlic and Jalapeno pepper. Finely chop green pepper. Add to the bowl along with the onions, basil, oregano, salt, pepper and sugar.
2. Meanwhile, in a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta, stirring often, for about 10 minutes. Drain and turn into large pasta bowl. Immediately add tomato mixture and Parmesan cheese. Toss until evenly distributed. Serve right away.

*Makes 6 servings.*

This recipe is best used when tomatoes are in season (July-October). They taste better and are less expensive.

You can replace fresh tomatoes with 1 (796 ml) can of drained, diced tomatoes.

## RECIPE #2: Helpful Tips

### How to Cook Spaghetti

Spaghetti is an easy and low cost meal. It can be served with many different sauces and toppings.

#### What you will need:

- Large pot
- Dried spaghetti
- Salt
- Colander

#### How to:

1. Fill a large pot with water – about  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.
2. Cover the pot with a lid and place over high heat.
3. When the water comes to a rolling boil, remove the lid and add 1 tsp of salt.
4. Break the spaghetti in half so it will fit in the pot. If you choose not to break the spaghetti first, you will need to wait until it softens so you can bend it into the water. Make sure all of the spaghetti is covered with water.
5. Cook for about 10 minutes. Stir occasionally to keep it from sticking to the bottom of the pot. (Note: whole wheat pasta may need extra cooking time).
6. Check to see if it is done. When the pasta reaches al dente, it will be firm in the middle but chewy.
7. Empty the spaghetti and the water into the colander. Drain well.

### RECIPE #3: Black Beans 10 Ways

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1 tsp	vegetable oil	5 mL
1	small onion, chopped	1
2	garlic cloves, minced	2
2	cans (540 mL) black beans, rinsed and drained	2
1	can (540 mL) seasoned diced tomatoes (e.g. garlic or basil)	1
1 tsp	sugar	5 mL
1 Tbsp	cumin	15 mL
1 tsp	oregano	5 mL
2	bay leaves	2
	salt and pepper	
¼ cup	lemon juice	50 mL
	hot sauce to taste	

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan. Add onions and garlic. Sauté until tender.
2. Add black beans, diced tomatoes, sugar, cumin, oregano, bay leaves, salt and pepper and lemon juice. Add a few drops of hot sauce to taste.
3. Cook over medium heat for 20 minutes. Remove bay leaves before serving.

*Makes 6 servings.*

## RECIPE #3: Helpful Tips

### Black Beans 10 Ways

Here are just a few ways to use *Black Beans 10 Ways*:

**1. Cheesy Black Bean Wrap**

Fill a whole wheat wrap with *Black Beans 10 Ways*. Top with shredded cheese and lettuce.

**2. Black Beans and Rice**

Mix *Black Beans 10 Ways* with hot cooked rice. Top with a spoonful of salsa.

**3. Black Bean Soup**

Dilute *Black Beans 10 Ways* with water or chicken broth. Puree in a blender.

**4. Black Bean Dip**

Use *Black Beans 10 Ways* as a dip with low-fat tortilla chips or whole grain crackers.

**5. Taco Salad**

Top a green salad with a generous spoonful of *Black Beans 10 Ways*. Add shredded cheese, low-fat sour cream and salsa.

**6. Pasta, Corn and Black Beans**

Add *Black Beans 10 Ways* to your favourite cooked pasta. Add canned or frozen corn and heat thoroughly.

**7. Bean Pizza**

Spread tomato sauce on a whole wheat pizza crust. Add *Black Beans 10 Ways*, chopped green peppers and any other vegetables you choose. Top with grated mozzarella cheese. Put on a baking sheet and bake at 400 F for 15 minutes.

**8. Nachos**

Top low-fat tortilla chips with *Black Beans 10 Ways*, shredded cheese, chopped green onions and jalapeno peppers. Broil for 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with low-fat sour cream and salsa.

**9. Grilled Fish or Chicken with Black Beans**

Top grilled fish or chicken with a spoonful of *Black Beans 10 Ways*.

**10. Baked Potato with Black Beans**

Top a baked potato with a spoonful of *Black Beans 10 Ways* and a dollop of low-fat sour cream.

## HANDOUTS

# Menu Planning Form

## **Insert Handout:**

[http://www.eatrightontario.ca/CMSTemplates/EROWebsite/Templates/CentralAttachments/MenuPlanningTemplate\\_en.pdf](http://www.eatrightontario.ca/CMSTemplates/EROWebsite/Templates/CentralAttachments/MenuPlanningTemplate_en.pdf)

# Loving Your Leftovers

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Planning for leftovers is a great way to save money, reduce food waste and save time.

## Some ideas to get you started:

### Vegetables and Fruit

- Use cut-up fruit on cereal, to top pancakes or waffles, in fruit salad, mixed with yogurt or cottage cheese, or add it to baked goods such as muffins or sweet loafs.
- Freeze overripe bananas and use in loafs and muffins.
- Puree cooked vegetables with broth and/or milk for a quick soup.
- Add any combination of vegetables into a pasta dish, gratin, salad, soup, lasagna or quiche.
- Use leftover stir-fried vegetables on a sandwich or in an omelette.
- Blend leftover fruit into a smoothie (blend milk and fruit).

### Grain Products

- Chill leftover pasta for pasta salad, soups or casseroles.
- Use rice in rice pudding, soups, casseroles.
- Crumble dried bread to crumbs to coat chicken or fish, or as casserole topping.
- Use dried bread in bread pudding or cube as croutons (sprinkle with spices and toast in oven) for salads or soups.

### Meat and Alternatives

- Serve tomato or meat sauce over noodles one day, then add beans, chopped vegetables (fresh, frozen or leftover) and chili seasoning for another meal.
- Sauté ground beef, use in a casserole and freeze the rest for chili or stuffed peppers.
- Bake larger pieces of meat such as whole chicken, ham or beef, serve hot and use the leftovers in stir-fries, hearty soups, casseroles, sandwiches or salads.
- Turn leftover roast and potatoes into tomorrow's shepherd's pie.
- Turn leftover salmon into salmon cakes or use as a filling for pita with sliced tomatoes, lettuce, red peppers and cucumber.
- Use leftover chicken or turkey in tomorrow's sandwich. Use whole slices or make chunky chicken salad by adding mayonnaise, celery, onion and other vegetables you enjoy.

## **Safe Use of Leftovers**

### **Cool leftovers safely:**

- Wait for hot food to stop steaming. Put food in a shallow dish so it cools more quickly.
- Once cooled, divide leftovers into single serving amounts.

### **Storing food in the fridge:**

- Store leftovers in covered containers with lids that snap shut. Or, use bowls covered with cling wrap or aluminum foil. Wrap foods tightly so that they will not dry out.
- Label each food with the name and date made.
- Most leftovers can stay in the fridge for two to three days.

### **Storing food in the freezer:**

- Use containers that are specifically made for freezer use.
- Or, wrap food in aluminum foil and place in re-sealable plastic bags.
- Label each food with the name and date made.
- Most leftovers can stay in the freezer for two to three months.

### **Tip:**

Keep foods out of the danger zone where bacteria grow. Foods need to be kept:

Cold: Below 4°C (40°F) or  
Hot: Over 60°C (140°F)

Use a food thermometer to make sure food is safe.

### **Can I re-freeze leftovers that have already been reheated once?**

Do not re-freeze foods that have been defrosted or warmed in the microwave. If leftovers have been thawed in the fridge but have not been reheated, they can be refrozen within three to four days of being left in the fridge. However, refreezing foods may result in a loss of taste, texture and appearance.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*

[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)

*Foodland Ontario*

[www.foodland.gov.on.ca](http://www.foodland.gov.on.ca)

*EatRight Ontario – My Menu Planner*

[www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca)

or call toll-free to speak to a Registered Dietitian 1-877-510-510-2