



Love in ACTION

Cook Book

BUDGET
Friendly

Meals





love line

when you love first, life follows

Budget-Friendly Meals

To empower you to stay on budget and live free from debt.

Recipes compiled with love by
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Hamburger Meals

Chili

1lb hamburger (or ground turkey)

1 onion

1 bell pepper

2 cans diced tomatoes (or fresh diced)

2 cans tomato sauce

1 can of kidney beans

Chili packet, or spices (chili powder, garlic, cumin, salt) you have in your cupboard.

1. Brown hamburger, breaking it down. Drain and rinse if you have extra grease.
2. Add back into the skillet with chopped onion and bell pepper. Cook until tender.
3. Add cooked meat and veggies in a large stock pot with all canned ingredients and chili packet and cook on low for 30 min to meld flavors. OR put in your crockpot on low 4hrs, high 2hrs.

Save leftovers in the freezer for another week, or another day. This makes a big pot. Double for a guaranteed meal later.

Nachos

1lb ground beef (or turkey) Taco Seasoning

Can cheese sauce (look for the can in the Hispanic foods aisle)

Can refried beans

Sour cream (if you'd like)

Tomato- chopped

Tortilla chips

1. Brown your hamburger (or turkey), season with taco seasoning per package instructions, heat your beans and cheese... put on top of chips.

**If you ever have leftover taco meat, save it. It can freeze well. Add it to tacos next week or later in the week. Use only ½ pound of hamburger next time.

Meatloaf

1lb Ground beef

Box of Stuffing mix (buy generic!)

2 eggs

½ C Ketchup (Halved: ¼ C in mixture, save ¼ C for the top)

½ C Water

1. Mix all the ingredients (saving the ¼ C ketchup) until well blended.
2. Place in a loaf pan and top with remaining ketchup
3. Bake 350° 45-50 min or until it registers 160° in the middle.
4. Serve with a side of mashed potatoes.

Burgers (makes 4 small burgers)

1lb burger

Dry onion packet

Can of beef broth

Worcestershire sauce

Hamburger buns

*Burger toppings of your choice

1. Mix your burger with the dry onion packet, and beef broth (don't get it too wet)
2. Form into patties
3. Sprinkle Worcestershire sauce on each patty
4. Cook on high in a broiler, or in a skillet, flipping to cook on both sides.

Philly Cheese Steak Sloppy Joes

1lb ground beef

2 tbsp butter

Onion

Bell pepper

Mushrooms

2 tbsp ketchup

1tbsp Worcestershire sauce

½ tsp salt

½ tsp pepper

1 tbsp cornstarch

1 C beef broth

Cheese slices

Hamburger buns

1. Add the ground beef to a large skillet and brown until a deep brown crust appears before breaking the beef apart.
2. Stir the ground beef and brown until a deep crust appears on about 50 or so percent of the beef.
3. Remove the beef (you can leave the fat) and add the butter and the onions and bell peppers and mushrooms.
4. Let brown for 1-2 minutes before stirring, then let brown for another 1-2 minutes before stirring again.
5. Add the beef back into the pan.
6. In a small cup mix the beef broth and cornstarch together

7. Add the ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, salt, black pepper, beef broth/cornstarch mixture into the pan.
8. Cook until the mixture is only slightly liquidy (about 75% of the mixture is above liquid), 3-5 minutes.
9. Turn off the heat, and add in the provolone cheese.
10. Serve on Hamburger buns.

Foil Packet Dinner

1lb ground beef

1 packet of dry onion soup mix

4 small potatoes, peeled and sliced

2 C chopped carrots

A sliced onion

2 tbsp oil

1 tsp garlic powder

Salt & Pepper to taste

Condensed mushroom soup

Aluminum foil

1. Mix the ground beef and onion soup mix.
2. Break the ground beef mix into 4 patties, set aside.
3. Combine all your chopped veggies with the spices in a large bowl until well-mixed/coated.
4. Spoon veggie mix onto 4 separate foil squares, place one patty on each set of veggies, then top with a spoonful of mushroom soup
5. Fold up and seal the tinfoil (seal well), and place in the oven, keeping the patties side up.
6. Bake 375* for 35-40 min.

Meximelts

1lb ground beef

Can Diced tomatoes with chiles

Shredded cheese

Tortillas

Sour Cream (optional)

1. Cook the ground beef and drain.
2. Add back to the skillet with the diced tomatoes and chiles, cook off some of the water.
3. Put the mixture in a tortilla with shredded cheese and microwave 30 seconds or until the cheese is melty
4. Wrap the tortilla burrito-style

Two Taco-Themed Meals Plus One Pasta Meal

****Sometimes meat is cheaper when purchased in large quantities.**

3 lbs Ground Beef (Sometimes Ground Turkey is cheaper)

2 Taco Seasoning packets

2lb box Macaroni noodles Head of lettuce

Can Diced Tomatoes

Tomato

Spaghetti sauce (check cans, they're cheaper)

Shredded cheese

Mozzarella cheese (shredded)

Sour Cream

Garlic

Taco Shells

Add preferred toppings, keep it simple for a cheaper option.

Cook your ground beef/turkey, drain. Separate out $\frac{1}{3}$, and set aside. To the rest add in both taco packets as directed on the packaging. Divide the taco meat into 2 meals. (You should have 2 pounds of taco meat and one pound of plain hamburger.)

For Meal 1: Tacos

Make tacos with one pound of hamburger

For Meal 2: Taco Pasta

With the other pound of taco meat add it to 1 pound cooked macaroni noodles, diced tomatoes, and shredded cheese. Cook until the cheese is melted. Add sour cream if you'd like.

For Meal 3: Goulash (the budget-friendly way!)

Add Garlic to your plain pound of hamburger/turkey meat, cook until warm and aromatic. Add in 1 lb. cooked macaroni noodles and spaghetti sauce, stir in some mozzarella cheese.

Extra meal option for 5 lbs. of hamburger:

BBQ Sloppy Joe

**If you can find a good deal on 5 lbs. of hamburger.

Hamburger; Cook and drain... you can always freeze this for next week, or create more hamburger meals.

BBQ sauce Hamburger buns

Use your cooked Hamburger, Cover with BBQ sauce, as much as you like. Heat and serve like sloppy joes on hamburger buns.

**This leaves one pound of hamburger to freeze for another week, or if you can handle 5 hamburger meals in one week...

One last hamburger meal option:

Cheeseburger Rice

Rice

Dry Onion Soup Mix

Beef broth

Shredded Cheddar

Using your extra cooked ground beef, add in ½ cup of beef broth and a packet of dry onion soup mix. Mix in some cheese & serve over cooked rice.

Chicken Meals

Chicken meals from a 3lb bag of frozen chicken

Throw all the chicken into a crock pot, and cook on low 8 hours or on high 4 hours. Shred it all and separate it into about *4 meals*.

Chicken Crack Sandwiches

1 lb. chicken (breast, thigh, or mixture)

½ cream cheese block Ranch packet mix

Shredded cheese

Bread or hamburger buns

1. Bake chicken until done (350° for 30 min for moist, 400° for 20 min for crispy outside layer... just make sure it's 165° when done).
2. Shred chicken using two forks by pulling it apart.
3. Add back into a pot with cream cheese (chunked up), ranch packet, and shredded cheese.
4. Heat and stir until it's thick and creamy, add chicken broth or water (or juices from the cooked chicken) if it's too thick.
5. Serve on hamburger buns.

Chicken Tacos

Frozen Chicken or precooked shredded chicken (a small breast or leg per person... half for small children)

Taco Seasoning

Jar of Salsa

Ranch seasoning

Tortillas (soft shell or hard shell)

Taco toppings as desired (Tomato, lettuce, shredded cheese, sour cream...)

Toss Chicken, Taco & Ranch seasoning, and a jar of salsa into a crock pot. Cook on high 4 hours, on low 8 hours. Shred chicken once cooked, stir back into the crock pot, and serve on taco shells.

****If using precooked chicken, change the cooking time to 2 hours on high, or 4 hours on low****

Chicken Nachos

Use your leftover shredded chicken from Chicken Tacos

Chips

Cheese

Nacho Toppings (lettuce, tomatoes, black beans, jalapenos, etc.)

Top the chips with your meat, cheese, and veggies (those that can be baked on). Either bake at 400° for 5 minutes or microwave for 1 minute. Top with your favorite toppings and enjoy

Chicken Salad Sandwiches

Shredded chicken

Hard-boiled egg

Pickles (or celery) (or both) dash of vinegar (small dash)

1 tsp mustard

¼ C mayo (more or less based on how creamy you want yours)

Sandwich bread or hamburger buns

1. Boil your egg for about 15-20 minutes, and place into an ice bath to stop the cooking. If you have an instant pot, 5 min cook, 5 min rest, 5 min in an ice bath.
2. Chop your egg and add to the shredded chicken and then add all the other ingredients (minus the bread).
3. Serve on bread. Save leftovers.

Chicken Quesadillas

Shredded chicken

Burrito size tortillas

Butter

Shredded cheese

Beans for additional protein: black, pinto, or kidney are excellent sources

Toppings of your choice (salsa, guacamole, sour cream, shredded lettuce, tomato)

1. Butter one side of two tortillas
2. Place one tortilla in the skillet, butter side down
3. Top with shredded cheese, shredded chicken, and a tad more shredded cheese
4. Place the other tortilla on top.
5. Cook until golden and flip (slowly so the insides don't come out)
6. Cook the other side until golden. Remove from the skillet.

Southwest Chicken Salad

Lettuce	Shredded Lettuce
Corn	Black beans
Avocado	Diced Tomato
Red Onion	Dressing of your choice (A southwest ranch is a great one)

Toss ingredients together on a bed of lettuce.

Honey Baked Chicken

4-6 chicken thighs or breast	1C Honey
½ C Mustard	2ts curry
Cooked rice	

1. Mix Mustard, Honey, and Curry all together
2. Pour over chicken thighs/breast
3. Bake 350° for 25 min, baste, and bake another 20 min. (or until chicken is 160°)
4. Serve over rice

Baked Chicken Thighs w/ Mashed Potatoes

Chicken thighs (1 for each person)

A little oil

Spices of your choice, (Salt, pepper, paprika, or even buy a chicken seasoning... generic brand of course) But use what you have, or what you have room for in a budget. Here's a great mix to keep handy:

- 4 Tbsp Smoked Paprika
- 3 Tbsp Garlic Powder
- 1 Tbsp Onion Powder
- 3 Tbsp Ground Black Pepper
- 1 tsp Cayenne Pepper
- 3 Tbsp Brown Sugar

5-6 potatoes

½ C Milk

Butter

1. Rub the chicken thighs with some oil, season with your blend of spices and bake 375° for 45min.
2. While it's baking, boil your potatoes (cube them first to speed up cooking time) until soft (about 15-20 min)
3. Remove potatoes from the water, add in ½ C milk, and butter to taste. Mash with a masher, mixer, or fork. Add in more milk if it's too thick. Salt and pepper to taste.
4. Serve with baked thighs.

Crockpot Chicken & Rice

2 boneless skinless chicken breasts (cut into 1-inch pieces)

1 teaspoon minced garlic

1 teaspoon black pepper 1 teaspoon salt

1/2 onion chopped

3 cups chicken broth

1 can cream of chicken soup (10.5 oz can)

1 1/2 cup brown rice (uncooked) (white is cheaper)

2 cups cheddar cheese (shredded)

1. Place the chicken, garlic, salt & pepper, onion, chicken broth, cream of chicken soup, and rice in a crock pot.
2. Stir, and cook on high for 4 hours
3. Top with cheddar cheese, cover to melt. Serve once melted.

Two Meals with One Whole Chicken:

Whole chicken

Tortillas (burrito size)

Onion

Caesar dressing (use ranch if cheaper or if you'd prefer)

1 C Mayo Romaine Lettuce

$\frac{3}{4}$ C Milk

Shredded Cheese

1 tsp salt

Cucumbers

1 tsp pepper

Tomato

2 C Shredded Cheese

Hamburger buns or toast

Whole Chickens can be baked for 20-25 min per pound at 350°. (So, an 8lb chicken will be about 2 hours). Or you can put it in a crock pot about 4 hours on high. (Check the temp and be sure it meets 165° before turning the oven off).

Pull the chicken off the bones, separate it for two meals

Meal 1: Chicken Caesar Wraps

1. Place chicken in the burrito-sized tortilla. Season with salt and pepper, or whatever chicken seasoning you have on hand.
2. Add in romaine lettuce, cut-up tomato, cucumbers, and shredded cheese.
3. Drizzle with salad dressing of your choice
4. Roll up burrito style (Bring the bottom of the tortilla up to meet the top, tuck the insides as you begin to tuck the top layer, and roll. With your pinkies tuck the sides in as you roll, once done, cut in half.

Meal 2: Cheesy Chicken Sandwich

1. Shred chicken
2. Place chopped onion, mayo, milk, salt, and pepper with the shredded chicken in the crock pot.
3. Mix and cook for 3-4 hours on low (you could simmer this on the stove on low for 30-40 min as well)
4. Before serving, sprinkle a tad more shredded cheese on top and put on hamburger buns, or toast.

Various Meats

Hot Ham & Cheese

Refrigerated Pizza Crust (like Pillsbury, but generic is cheaper)

Lunch meat ham (or chicken if you prefer)

Sliced cheese of choice

1. Unroll pizza crust, roll it out thinner with a rolling pin or glass.
2. Alternate layers of lunchmeat with sliced cheese (2-3 slices of meat, slice of cheese, meat, cheese) down the length of the dough.
3. Roll the dough like a cinnamon roll. Place the seam down in a sprayed pan and bake 350° for about 30 minutes (watch for a golden-brown color). Slice and serve.

Cabbage & Sausage

Sausage

Cabbage

1. Cut up the sausage & cook in a big skillet.
2. Cut the cabbage and add it to the skillet with a little water (you don't need much)
3. Add salt and pepper to taste
4. Cook for around 20 minutes until the cabbage is tender.

Variations:

Add mustard to taste.

Potatoes & Kielbasa

2-3 pounds of potatoes, washed and cut into cubes

24 ounces kielbasa, sliced, then halved

1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded

1 can (10.5 ounces) condensed cream of chicken soup

1 cup milk

1 tablespoon dried chives

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon ground black pepper

⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper

fresh parsley, for garnish (optional)

1. Spray the bowl of a 6-8 quart slow cooker with nonstick spray. Or, line the bowl with a liner.
2. To the slow cooker, add the diced potatoes, kielbasa, both kinds of cheese, cream of chicken soup, milk, chives, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper. Stir to combine.
3. Cover the slow cooker and cook on low for 5-6 hours. (Or, cook on high for 3-4 hours.)
4. When ready, stir and serve, garnished with fresh parsley.

Crock Pot Pork Chops

Pork Chops

2 Cans of cream of mushroom soup

Egg Noodles

1. Season the pork as desired. Layer in the crockpot and then cover with 2 cans of cream of mushroom soup and 3/4 cup water or broth.
2. Cook on low for 8-9 hours or on high for 4-5 hours.
3. Serve with a can of vegetables of your choice.

Goosey Ranch Pork Chops (Crock Pot)

Can of cream of chicken soup

Ranch seasoning packet

Pork Chops

1. Mix the soup and Ranch packet
2. Place the pork chops in the crock pot and cover with the soup mix.
3. Cook in the crock pot for 4 hours, stir the "gravy" about half way through.
4. Serve over mashed potatoes or rice.

Beef Stroganoff

Sirloin Tip Steak (if on sale, it can get pretty cheap. You can also substitute ground burger)

1 package of egg noodles

2 condensed cream of mushroom soup 1tbs garlic powder

1 C Sour Cream

1 C Milk

Salt and pepper to taste

1. Boil egg noodles, drain, and put them to the side.
2. In a separate large skillet, cook the steak until browned. Sliced into bite-sized pieces.
3. Add soup and garlic powder to the meat, let it simmer for 10 minutes, and stir occasionally.
4. Remove from heat and combine the meat mixture with the egg noodles. Add sour cream and milk, stir well, and use salt and pepper to taste.

Pizza Quesadillas

Tortillas (2 per person) Butter

Mozzarella cheese (shredded) Pizza sauce (can is cheap) Pepperoni (optional)

1. Butter one side of the tortillas, place 1 tortilla, butter side down in a skillet.
2. Top with mozzarella, pizza sauce, pepperoni, more mozzarella then top with remaining tortilla (butter side up).
3. When the bottom tortilla is golden, flip over to cook the second tortilla.

Rice-a-roni Kielbasa

2 boxes of Rice-a-roni (or generic)

Can of black beans

Can of corn Kielbasa

Shredded cheese

2 tbsp butter

2 C Water

1. Cut the kielbasa into bite-sized pieces
2. Melt 2 tbsp butter in a skillet
3. Pour rice over melted butter and brown (don't burn, only about 2-3 min, stir frequently)
4. Add in kielbasa, corn, beans and mix well.
5. Add in 2 cups water, stir.
6. Cover with a lid, stirring occasionally until rice is tender.
7. Add in Rice-a-roni seasoning packet, mix well
8. Add cheese and melt.

Meatless Meals

Baked Ravioli Lasagna

Bag of three cheese Frozen ravioli

Can of spaghetti sauce Mozzarella cheese

1. Make a lasagna layered dish by putting a small amount of sauce first in your casserole dish, top with frozen ravioli, sauce, cheese, ravioli, sauce cheese.
2. Bake 350° for 30 minutes uncovered, until hot and bubbly.
3. **You can add pepperoni or cooked Italian sausage if your budget allows.

Grilled Cheese & Tomato Soup

So easy, cheap, and good!!

Bread (2 pieces for each sandwich)

Butter

Cheese of your choice (American, Cheddar, or a mix)

Canned Tomato Soup

1. Butter the outer sides of the bread
2. Grill butter side down in a pan, cheese in the middle 😊
3. Dip in tomato soup

Mexican Macaroni & Cheese

2 boxes of Shells & Cheese (buy generic!)

Jar of Salsa

Can of Corn

Can of Black beans

Taco seasoning

1. Cook the shells & Cheese according to package directions.
2. Drain and add the cheese sauce, 1 cup of salsa, can of corn, and beans (drain both corn and beans before adding), add in taco seasoning
3. Stir until everything is well mixed.

Creamy Black Bean Burritos

Can of Black beans

Can of Corn

Can Diced Tomatoes

Taco Seasoning

Cream Cheese Brick

Mexican Shredded cheese

Tortillas

1. Drain the black beans, corn, and tomatoes and heat in a skillet over medium heat.
2. Add in taco seasoning and cream cheese
3. Mix until the cream cheese is melted and everything is evenly coated (It will thicken as it cools)
4. Place in a tortilla with some shredded cheese and roll burrito style.

Stir-fry Noodles

Ramen noodles

Frozen stir-fried veggies

¼ C soy sauce

1 tbsp brown sugar

1 tsp vinegar

½ tsp sesame Oil

1 tsp ground ginger

2 tsp minced garlic

1. Make a sauce using brown sugar, soy sauce, vinegar, sesame oil, ground ginger, and garlic.
2. Cook the vegetables in half the sauce, keep the rest for pouring over the noodles.
3. Make ramen noodles, drain off the water from the pasta.
4. Combine it all, pouring the remaining sauce over the noodles as desired. Toss to coat well.

SOUPS

Chicken Noodle Soup

8 cups Chicken Broth

3 cups cooked Rotisserie Chicken, shredded or cooked shredded chicken (even canned chicken will do)

1/3 lb. Linguine Noodles broken into quarters (Spaghetti noodles work, too)

1 chopped Yellow Onion

3 medium carrots; peeled and thinly sliced

1 ½ stalks of Celery; very thinly sliced

2 Tbsp Butter or Cooking Oil

3 Bay Leaves

1/2 tsp dried Thyme Leaves

1 tsp Pepper

add Salt to taste

1. Add cooking oil or butter to the stock pot. increase heat to medium/high, then add Onion, Carrots, and Celery and sauté for 5-6 minutes, or until fork tender.
2. Add Chicken Broth, shredded Chicken, Linguine Noodles, Bay Leaves, Thyme and Pepper, and stir.
3. Leaving heat at med-high, bring mixture to boil stirring occasionally, then reduce heat to med-low and cover for 20 minutes, or until noodles are soft.
4. Remove lid, remove Bay Leaves, Stir, and Serve. ENJOY!

Minestrone Soup

2 medium carrots (diced into small cubes) 2 small zucchinis (diced into small cubes) 1/2 large onion (diced into small cubes)

6 celery stalks (diced into small cubes) 2 TBSP minced garlic

28 oz canned diced tomatoes 32 oz vegetable broth

15 oz canned great Northern beans (drained) 15 oz canned Kidney beans (drained)

1 tbsp Italian seasoning 1 tbsp dry basil

1/2 cup noodles

1 tbsp oil

2 cups water

1. Preheat the pot with oil, add zucchini, carrots, celery, and onions. Sautee for about 10 minutes until vegetables soften.
2. add canned diced tomatoes. Season with Italian seasoning and dry basil.
3. Add vegetable broth, noodles, kidney, and Great Northern beans. Simmer for about 10 minutes. Depending on the thickness of the soup, you can add 2 more cups of water to the mix.
4. Add garlic to the mixture and let it simmer for about 10 minutes.
5. Serve warm
6. Freeze leftovers for another week.

7-Can Soup

2 cans no-bean chili

1 can cheddar cheese soup

1 can Rotel-style tomatoes with juice

1 can mixed vegetables

1 can Italian-style diced tomatoes

1 can whole kernel corn

Sour cream, shredded cheese, Fritos for optional toppings

1. Open all of the cans and pour them into a crockpot.
2. Mix the ingredients together until well combined.
3. Cook on high for 2 hours or on low for 4 hours.
4. Serve hot with your favorite toppings, such as shredded cheese or sour cream.

Lasagna Soup

½ pound hamburger

½ pound Italian sausage (go full pound of sausage if it's in your budget)

Onion

1 tbsp minced

Garlic

6 oz can tomato paste

2 Can diced tomatoes

6 C chicken broth Macaroni noodles

Salt/pepper

1. Cook your hamburger and sausage together in one skillet. Drain
2. Add in diced onion and cook until onion is tender.
3. Add in garlic
4. Stir in tomato paste and cook until it's a darker red color
5. Add in diced tomatoes and chicken broth.
6. Add in macaroni noodles (this can take away a lot of your broth, so feel free to add in more broth at the end if you want a soupier soup)
7. Salt and pepper to taste.

Vegetable Soup

2 lbs hamburger (or pot roast if you find it on sale!)

2 russet potatoes, chopped

1 chopped onion

1 bag frozen peas

1 bag frozen green beans

1 bag frozen corn

4 large carrots, chopped

1 (32 oz) container beef broth

2 (10.75 oz) cans tomato soup

1 can filled with water

Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Cook your hamburger, and drain (if using pot roast, cook overnight 12 hrs on low in a crockpot)
2. In a very large pot, saute carrots and onion in 1 tablespoon oil until tender.
3. Add beef, potatoes, remaining veggies, remaining beef broth, tomato soup, water, salt and pepper.

4. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, cover, and simmer for about an hour.
5. Add water as desired while it cooks.

Brinner (Breakfast for Dinner)

Biscuits and Sausage Gravy

Canned biscuits (Buy generic!)

2 ½ C Milk

¼ C Flour

Breakfast Sausage

1. Bake Biscuits as directed on packaging.
2. Cook the sausage in a skillet
3. Once the sausage is cooked, Stir in flour until well combined. Gradually add milk, stirring continuously, until the gravy thickens and comes to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer and stir for 2 more minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Pour on top of baked biscuits. YUM!

Breakfast Pizza

Refrigerated Pizza Crust (buy generic) Oil

8 Eggs

1/3 C Milk

6 pieces of bacon, cooked and chopped

2 C Shredded cheddar cheese

Salt/pepper to taste

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees.
2. Unroll the pizza crust into a 15x10x1 inch sheet cake pan, stretch to fill the pan and curl up the edges to form a crust.
3. Brush the crust with olive oil and prick with a fork to avoid bubbles.
4. Bake until lightly browned about 7-8 minutes.
5. In a medium size bowl whisk together the eggs, milk, salt, and pepper.
6. In a medium skillet, heat a little oil over medium heat. Add egg mixture and cook until soft and scrambled.
7. Spoon egg mixture over crust, add bacon and cheese. Bake for another 7 minutes or until the cheese is melted.

Baked Scrambled Eggs

18 eggs

½ stick butter/margarine

1 ¾ C milk

½ tsp salt

1. Place your butter in your casserole dish and place in the oven as the oven preheats to 350°, watching to not burn the butter.
2. Scramble your eggs with the milk and salt.
3. Pour into casserole dish over melted butter.
4. Bake for 10 min. Then open the oven, and using a spatula scrape the eggs away from the sides, gently. Scrape all along the bottom of the pan (this moves the cooked parts up and allows the liquids to move to the bottom)
5. Bake for another 10-15 min, scraping more and baking more until eggs are firm.
6. Serve with bacon or sausage or on toast, or bread for an egg sandwich.

French Toast

Bread (if it's in your budget get Texas toast, or splurge and get cinnamon swirl bread or brioche)

Milk

Eggs

Ratio: 4 pieces of bread needs 1 egg and ¼ C Milk

1 tsp Vanilla

Cinnamon optional

Syrup (or even better, a cinnamon sugar blend)

1. Mix your eggs and milk together until well blended.
2. Add in vanilla and cinnamon if you desire
3. Dip your bread in your egg mixture and cook on medium heat in a skillet.
4. Cook on both sides until they are both golden brown
5. Serve with butter and syrup (or better yet, cinnamon sugar sprinkled on top)

Classic Egg Bake

6 slices of bread cut in cubes

2 cups cheddar cheese, shredded

1 cup cooked cubed ham (Ask the Deli for thicker cuts of ham)

1/4 cup chopped green or red pepper

¼ cup finely chopped onion

6 eggs

3 cups milk

1. Grease a 13×9-inch baking dish.
2. Mix the bread cubes, cheese, ham, peppers, and onions and pour into prepared pan.
3. Whisk eggs and milk in a mixing bowl and pour over the bread, ham, and cheese.
4. Bake at 375° for 45 minutes

*You can choose not to bake, and freeze for later, or refrigerate until the morning. Just thaw and bake when ready.

Casseroles (or Hotdish if you live in Minnesota)

Taco Casserole

1lb Hamburger

Taco Seasoning

Tortilla Chips

Diced Tomatoes or Rotel

Shredded cheese

*Optional toppings like salsa or sour cream

1. Cook burger, drain the grease
2. Add in taco seasoning based on the package instructions
3. Add in diced tomatoes or Rotel
4. In a casserole dish, layer hamburger mixture, then tortilla chips, then some cheese.
Repeat... meat, chips, cheese.
5. Cook in 350* for 20 min or until the cheese is brown.
6. Serve with the topping of your choice.

Mexican Casserole

Dry Pinto beans

2 slices of Bacon

2 Taco Seasoning packets

½ block of Velveeta queso Blanco

1lb hamburger

Flour Tortillas

Shredded cheese

Salsa and Sour cream for toppings

1. Make beans by following the directions on the packaging (or cover them in an instant pot and cook on high pressure for 45 min). Add the 2 strips of bacon to the cooking process.
2. Once the beans are cooked, puree them while adding some taco seasoning and the Velveeta.
3. Cook your hamburger, drain it, and add taco seasoning per package instructions.
4. In a casserole dish, layer flour tortillas, beans, burger, flour tortillas, beans, burger, then top with cheese. Cook until the cheese is melted.
5. Top with salsa, sour cream, or toppings of your choice.

Tater Tot Casserole

1 lb. Ground beef

1 small onion (diced)

Can condensed cream of mushroom soup

½ C Milk

1 Tbsp Worcestershire Sauce

2 C Shredded Cheddar Cheese

Bag of Tater Tots

1. Cook beef and diced onion in a skillet over medium-high heat, drain.
2. Stir in condensed soup, milk, 1 C cheese, salt & Pepper, and Worcestershire sauce into the skillet.
3. Spoon beef mixture into a 13x9-inch baking dish
4. Arrange tater tots in a single layer on top of the meat mixture, then top with remaining cup of cheese
5. Bake at 425° for 25 minutes or until the tater tots are crisp and cheese is slightly brown.

Chicken & Biscuit Casserole

1 Can Cream of Chicken soup
2 C cooked shredded chicken (rotisserie if on sale)
Ranch seasoning packet
1 C Shredded cheese
½ C cooked bacon crumbled
8 oz sour cream
Can refrigerated biscuits

1. You can make this directly in a 13x9-inch casserole pan. Spray pan first.
2. Dump all ingredients (minus the biscuits) in the pan, stir to mix
3. Cut each biscuit into fourths and put on top of the chicken mixture.
4. Bake on 350° for 25-30 minutes.

Crock Pot Taco Hash Brown Casserole

1lb Ground Beef
Taco Seasoning packet
1 Tbsp Minced Garlic
Can of Cheddar Cheese Soup
Can diced tomato with chiles
8 oz Sour Cream
Bag of Frozen Hash browns (Cheaper if you're willing to cut your own potatoes)
2C Taco Style shredded cheese (cheddar if cheaper)

1. Cook hamburger, drain and mix in taco seasoning.
2. Put cooked & seasoned burger with the rest of the ingredients in a crock pot.
3. Cook on high for 2 hours or low 4 hours.

Enchilada Casserole (adapted from Pampered Chef recipe)

1/4 cup lightly packed fresh cilantro leaves (Optional!)

1 pkg cream cheese

2 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided

1 medium onion (chopped)

1 can (28 oz) enchilada sauce

12 corn tortillas

3 cups diced or shredded cooked chicken (rotisserie if on sale)

Additional chopped fresh cilantro leaves (optional)

1. Soften the Cream cheese in the microwave.
2. Mix cream cheese with the chopped cilantro and 1 ½ C Shredded cheese.
3. Mix the chopped onion with the shredded chicken
4. Spread a little enchilada sauce on the bottom of your casserole dish, put the rest in a shallow bowl.
5. Dip the tortillas in the enchilada sauce and place one layer of them on the bottom of the casserole dish (about 4 tortillas).
6. Now layer ½ the cream cheese mixture, a cup of the chicken/onion mix, then ⅔ C cheese... repeat with 4 dipped tortillas, the other half of cream cheese mix, 1 C chicken mix, ⅔ C cheese, 4 dipped tortillas, the rest of the chicken mix, and ⅔ C cheese.
7. Cook until warm and bubbly about 20 min on 350°

Broccoli Bacon Salad

Broccoli

½ C Raisins

½ pound bacon, cooked & crumbled

1 C Mayo

¼ C sugar (or sugar substitute)

1 Tbsp Vinegar

1. Chop up the Broccoli in bite-size pieces
2. Mix with all the other ingredients and refrigerate for an hour to let flavors meld.

Oven Roasted Potatoes

2 lbs baby potatoes, rinsed, drained, and sliced in half

2 tbsp oil

1 tsp garlic powder (more if you like)

½ ground paprika

½ tsp salt or more to taste (and more for after)

Pepper to taste

1. Place a cookie sheet with a rim into the oven at 420° to heat up while you cut the baby potatoes in half.
2. In a large bowl, toss the cut potatoes in oil then garlic powder, paprika, salt and pepper to evenly coat.
3. Safely remove your hot pan from the oven, spray with nonstick spray and layer the potatoes on evenly.
4. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until tender on the inside and browned on the outside. Remove from the oven and flip potatoes to face cut side upwards. Finish under the broiler for 1-2 minutes to achieve a well-roasted, browned finish.

Smashed Potatoes

1.5 lbs. Yukon gold potatoes

¼ C Oil

¼ C minced garlic

¼ C minced parsley (dried seasoning will work, too) 1 tsp salt

½ tsp pepper

1. Wash potatoes. Add to stock pot and top with water to bring to a boil
2. Boil the potatoes until fork tender, about 15-20 min or until easily pierced with a knife, drain and cool.
3. Preheat oven to 450°
4. Spray the large baking sheet with non-stick spray, set aside.
5. Mix the parsley and garlic with oil. Set aside
6. Once the potatoes are cool, press the potatoes and smash them until they are about ½ inch thick (bottom of a glass works well). Place on a baking pan.
7. Drizzle with the garlic/parsley oil and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper.
8. Bake for 15-20 min until edges are crispy and golden-brown for the best crunchiness.

Mashed Potatoes

2-3 pounds of your favorite potato (or whichever one is cheapest)

Butter

Milk

Garlic (optional)

1. Cut your potatoes into 2" x 2" cubes.
2. Place in a stock pot and cover in water, making sure they are fully covered.
3. Boil until the potatoes are tender and can be smashed easily with a fork.
4. Drain off the water, add butter
5. Add milk little by little until it reaches the consistency you prefer.
6. Mash by hand for lumpier potatoes, use a mixer for smoother, adding milk as you go along.
7. Salt to taste

Variations: Add minced garlic as you mash, and/or cheddar cheese for garlic cheddar mashed!

Homemade Steak Fries

6 baking potatoes cut into wedges

3-4 tbsp oil

Salt and pepper

1. Preheat oven to 450°.
2. Add oil to a large cookie sheet and put into the oven while it preheats.
3. Cut your potatoes into 8 long steak fries each.
4. Microwave for 5 minutes.
5. When oven is ready, swirl the melted oil in the pan and then add fries to cookie sheet.
Be careful because the oil will be very hot as will the cookie sheet.
6. Make sure the fries are well distributed and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
7. Cook for 30 minutes.
8. Flip and then raise the heat to 525° and cook for 10 more minutes or less.
9. Check to make sure your fries do not burn and are your desired crispiness.
10. Oven temperatures may vary so check your fries towards the end.

Splurge by adding cheddar cheese towards the end for some cheddar fries

Mashed Sweet Potatoes

1 ½ lbs sweet potatoes (about 4)

3 tbsp butter

¼ C brown sugar

¼ C Milk

2 tsp vanilla

1/2 tsp cinnamon

Dash of nutmeg

Butter for serving

1. Peel your sweet potatoes and cut into 1" x 1" cubes
2. Fill a large pot with sweet potatoes and water about an inch higher than the potatoes.
Bring to a boil over high heat. Cook until fork tender (about 15-20 min)
3. Drain potatoes and put back into the pot.
4. Using a mixer or hand masher, blend potatoes until smooth
5. Add butter, sugar, milk, vanilla, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Mix until well blended
6. Serve with butter.

Garlic Butter Rice

4 tbsp butter

Onion, chopped

1 tbsp minced garlic

2 Can of Chicken broth

1 ½ C rice

½ C water

1. Melt 1 Tbsp butter in a large saucepan over medium heat.
2. Add yellow onion and sauté until starting to deepen in color, about 3 minutes.
3. Add garlic and sauté until just barely starting to deepen in color (not browned), about 1 minute.
4. Pour in chicken broth and water, season with salt and pepper to taste and bring to a boil.
5. Add rice and stir once, cover with a snug lid then reduce heat to low. Let simmer until liquid has been absorbed, about 15 - 18 minutes.
6. Remove from heat and let rest 5 - 10 minutes.
7. Add remaining 3 Tbsp butter, toss and fluff with a fork.

Garlic Lime Baked Zucchini

Zucchini (cut any way you'd like, spears, slices, cubes)

2 tbsp oil

3 tbsp Minced garlic

Splash of lime juice (fresh or from a bottle)

1. Combine oil, garlic, and lime in a small dish.
2. Cut zucchini and place on a greased baking dish.
3. Brush with the oil mixture and salt and pepper to taste.
4. Bake at 450° for 8 min, stir and then another 8-10 min
- 5.

Variations: Grill on a grill, add grated parmesan for a nice crust.

****Don't forget that canned or frozen vegetables can be a great side to most meals. Cut up fruit, or even add a few canned fruits together for a fruit salad. Buttered bread also make a great side... see the 65c bread recipe.**

Parmesan Garlic Green Beans

Frozen or fresh green beans

Minced Garlic

Salt Oil

Grated Parmesan cheese

1. Heat oil in a skillet, add in green beans and cook until tender.
2. Add in garlic and salt for about 2 min.
3. Add parmesan and serve.

Glazed Carrots

2 lbs. peeled carrots

½ C Brown sugar

¼ C butter

½ tsp Salt

1 ½ C Water

1. Slice the carrots into ½ inch thick slices and place them in a large skillet. Add the water to the skillet. Cover on medium-high heat until the carrots are simmering.
2. Continue to cook over medium heat for approximately 8-10 minutes or until the carrots are tender.
3. Drain off any excess water.
4. Then stir in the brown sugar, butter and salt. Stir to coat the carrots in the butter and seasoning.
5. Cook for an additional 4-5 minutes until the sauce has formed and thickened some.

Veggie Rice

1 ½ C Rice

Bag of mixed veggies (or pick your favorites and cut into small pieces)

3 ¼ C Vegetable broth (you can use chicken broth if it's cheaper)

2 TBSP butter

1. Melt butter in a skillet.
2. Add in the vegetables and cook until tender, not mushy
3. Add in rice and vegetable broth, cover until rice is fully cooked.
4. Serve with your choice of spices, salt and pepper.

Lunch Ideas

- Lunch meat and cheese sandwiches
- Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
- Cheese and crackers, fruits and veggies
- Leftovers
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Egg Salad Sandwiches:
 - Hard boil 6 eggs, add in about ½ C Mayo, a dash of mustard, a small dash of vinegar, salt, and pepper to taste. Stir to your level of creaminess. Serve on bread or crackers.
- Tuna (or chicken) salad sandwiches:
 - Tuna, chopped celery, 1 hard-boiled egg, mayo, salt and pepper. Mix all together, make it as creamy as you like. Serve on bread or crackers... substitute canned chicken for a chicken salad.
- Make a salad with a hard-boiled egg and lunch meat as the protein.

Snack Ideas

- Using leftover cereals and small crackers, add in raisins and chocolate chips, and maybe marshmallows and create a “trail mix” of sorts.
- Hand-held fruits and vegetables make great snacks. Add a salad dressing for the vegetables.
- Cheese and crackers
- Energy balls
 - Mix 3 C quick oats, 1 C peanut butter, ½ C Mini chocolate chips, ½ C Honey in a bowl until well mixed, then roll them into balls. Refrigerate to make them solid.
- Tortilla Chips & Salsa
 - To make your own salsa, put a tomato, onion, jalapeno, garlic, salt, and cilantro (to taste) in a food processor. **be sure to remove the seeds and membranes of the pepper**
- Celery stalks with peanut butter or cream cheese
- Peanuts, raisins, and chocolate chips are cheaper than trail mix... mix the three together for a cheaper blend.

Desserts

Monster Apple Slices

Apples sliced from top to bottom (so they are still circular)

Peanut butter

Mini chocolate chips

Granola

Mini M&Ms

1. Slice your apples sideways, so they are circular
2. Smear peanut butter on top
3. Sprinkle remaining ingredients on each piece.

Deconstructed Caramel Apple

****Way less messy than the traditional****

Apple wedges

Caramel

Mini M&Ms

1. Slice Apples into wedges
2. Dip in caramel then into Mini M&Ms

Zech's Favorite Chocolate Chip Cookies

Count yourself blessed... this recipe has never been published! My son's absolute favorite! He loves me more because of these cookies!

2 ¼ C Flour
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp Salt
2 tsp vanilla
1 C butter (2 full sticks)
¾ C Brown sugar
½ C Sugar
1 egg
1 16 oz. bag chocolate chips

1. Cream together brown sugar and sugar with softened butter.
2. Add in vanilla and egg
3. Mix flour, baking soda, and salt in a separate bowl
4. Add in flour mixture little by little as you mix
5. Add in chocolate chips
6. If you have stoneware, these cook best on stones. A cookie pan will be fine.
7. Bake for 9-12 min on 375°

**Tip: take them out when they look doughy, but not wet. Let them sit on the cookie sheet 2-3 min to finish cooking (this is why a stone is so good). **

S'mores Treats

Golden Graham Cereal (buy the generic!)

10oz bag of marshmallows

3 Tbsp butter

Bag of Chocolate chips

1. Melt butter and marshmallows in the microwave until melted, stir to combine
2. Mix in 5-6 C golden Graham cereal
3. Let cool for 2 min then stir in the chocolate chips
4. Press into a 13x9-inch baking dish
5. Cool to set.

Rice Krispie Treats

Rice Krispies (buy generic)

10oz bag of marshmallows

3 Tbsp Butter

1. Melt butter and marshmallows in the microwave and mix well.
2. Add in 6 cups of rice krispies, stir well to coat
3. Press into a 9x13 pan to cool

Variation worth trying: Add ½ C crushed graham crackers to the mix, roll out on a cookie sheet instead of 9x13 pan, place chocolate chips on top and heat in a 200° oven for 5 minutes or until chocolate chips will melt when spread. Spread the chocolate, place in the fridge for 10 minutes, then roll up along the long side, cut into spiral slices. S'MORES Crispy treats.

No-Bake Chocolate Pie

Pie Crust

6 Hershey's bars

8 oz. whipped cream tub (GENERIC)

1. Melt candy bars in the microwave, heat/stir, heat/stir, until fully melted (don't over heat)
2. Lightly fold in the whip cream, mixing until smooth
3. Pour into prepared pie pan, and refrigerate for a couple of hours or until set.

No-Bake Cookies

2 C Sugar
½ C Milk
½ C butter
¼ C cocoa powder
3 C quick oats
1 C Creamy peanut butter
1 tbsp vanilla extract

1. In a saucepan, heat sugar, milk, butter, and cocoa powder, mixing until smooth.
2. Bring to a boil. Once it's bubbling, let boil for 1 min.
3. Remove from heat and add in peanut butter and vanilla, stir until creamy.
4. Add in quick oats.
5. Drop by spoonful onto wax paper and allow to cool completely.

Any Cake/Soda combo

Pick a cake mix and soda, Mix the two and bake for the time instructed on the cake box.
That's it... 2 ingredients!

Here's what the internet says to combine. Add whatever icing you see fit.

Cola & Chocolate cake mix
Ginger Ale & Carrot Cake Mix
Root Beer & Spice Cake Mix
Sprite & Yellow Cake Mix
Dr. Pepper & Red Velvet Cake Mix
Cream Soda & White Cake Mix
Mountain Dew & Lemon Cake Mix
Strawberry Fanta & Strawberry Cake Mix
Mr. Pibb & Devil's Food Cake Mix

Easy Add-Ons to Box Cake Mixes

1. Add mini chocolate chips to either chocolate cake mixes or white cake mixes, also add mini chocolate chips to the icing.
2. To White cake mixes, add in a box of vanilla pudding mix. Add any can of frosting.
NEW level!

Apple Cake:

Yellow cake mix

Apple pie filling

4 eggs

2 Tbsp flour

3 Tbsp butter melted

½ C brown sugar

½ c sugar

1 tsp cinnamon

1. Mix the cake mix, apple pie filling, and eggs in a mixer. Pour in a 9x13 baking dish.
2. Combine the remaining ingredients and crumble on top of the cake mix.
3. Bake 30-40 min at 350°

Chocolate Cherry Cake:

1 box Devil's Food Cake Mix Cherry Pie Filling

3 large eggs-slightly beaten

½ tsp almond extract (optional, but makes the cake!)

1. Mix Cake and pie filling and eggs and almond extract until well mixed and pour into a greased 13x9-inch pan.
2. Bake 350° for 25 min.
3. Top with can of chocolate icing (Ice when cake is fairly warm so it melts into the cake)

Tried & True Tips for Staying on Budget:

- Stick to a meal plan.
- Buy Generic! Unless you have a coupon that brings it cheaper than the generic, always buy generic!
- Buy ingredients to make what you are making for the week or 2 weeks.
- Many times, meat bought in bulk is cheaper. If you have the storage space, buy hamburger in 5 lbs. or even 10lb tubes. Separate and freeze in 1-2 lb. baggies.
- You can brown 10 lbs. of hamburger in under 30 minutes. Cook it all and separate it into 10 baggies and freeze. When it's time to use it, all you have to do is heat it up.
- ^^Same with chicken^^
- Check to see if ground turkey is cheaper than hamburger. To up the flavor value, cook alongside the beef, cutting in the ground turkey.
- Buy chicken in bigger bags, or whole and try stretching it over many meals.
- Rotisserie chickens are sometimes on sale and can be used for many meals.
- Frozen whole chickens can be cooked, pulled, and separated for much cheaper than individually packaged chicken breasts.
- Some grocery stores (such as Kroger) offer sales and coupons. They also have promotions such as buy 5 and get \$1 off each item and let you use a coupon 5 times in a single transaction. If you can utilize these options, you can save a lot of money.
- If you can revamp your leftovers into new meals, you can eliminate waste and stretch your budget much further.
- When making a meal plan use a pattern (pick your own, here is an example)
 - Meatless Mondays
 - Taco Tuesdays
 - Easy Wednesdays
 - Chicken Thursdays
 - Frozen pizzas (or other fun treat that you can make at home cheaper than eating out)
 - Souper Saturdays
 - Brinner Sundays (or leftover day... use up the week's leftovers)
- Find recipes online for your favorite meal that you eat out. By cooking that meal at home, you can save more than half the money... Plus it's fun to play chef... including the whole family.
- Build your spices & sauces collections by adding in a spice/sauce each week. Some common ones to have on hand are
 - Salt/Pepper

- Smoked Paprika
- Italian seasoning
- Garlic powder
- Onion Powder
- Chili powder
- Soy Sauce
- Oils
- Vinegar
- Cinnamon
- Always look for deals FIRST, then build your meal plan.
- Aldi **IS** cheaper. If you have one, shop there. Whatever you can't get there, get at Walmart. Research has been done, and Aldi **IS** cheaper... The only exception is if you have coupons or find a great sale elsewhere, but for everyday shopping, choose Aldi.
- Save your leftovers. Freeze them if you can. It tastes MUCH better reheated than being in debt does.
- Revamp your leftovers into another meal; i.e., Taco meat can make good chili, or dip for later.
- If you have time, make your own bread. It'll make a delicious side to all meals, or make a fabulous sandwich. Here is a recipe for making a loaf for roughly 65 cents:

65 Cent Bread

1 cup hot water

2 Tbsp Sugar

2-3/4 tsp yeast (1 packet + 1/2 tsp)

3 cups all-purpose flour OR bread flour 1/4 cup vegetable oil

1-1/2 tsp salt

1. Mix together the hot water (not scalding, but hot from the tap), sugar and yeast and stir. Let sit for about 10 minutes, allowing the yeast to "bloom"
2. Dump this mixture into a stand mixer and mix in the vegetable oil, salt, and flour, one cup at a time, using your dough hook. Alternatively, you can use a hand mixer to combine the ingredients and then knead it by hand
3. Continue mixing for a few minutes until dough clings to the bread hook and doesn't stick to the bowl. Mix another 3-4 minutes after the non-sticky dough is formed.
4. Remove dough from hook, place dough ball in a bowl and cover with a light kitchen towel. Let rise in a draft-free area for approximately 1.5 hours or until the dough doubles in size.
5. Punch down, shape into an oval loaf-like shape and turn the seams under.
6. Place in a greased loaf pan; cover loosely with plastic wrap (spray it with cooking oil first if you're worried about it sticking).
7. Let dough rise a second time until almost doubled - approximately one hour.
8. Bake in a loaf pan for approximately 25 minutes at 350°, or until internal temperature reaches about 190° with an instant-read thermometer.

Sample 2-Week Meal Plan (Family of 4)

It is always cheaper to take the time to plan out your meals. This way you can choose how to use larger quantities of meat, how to reuse ingredients, or revamp leftovers. Plan even the breakfasts, even if you only eat cereal. This allows you to buy just what you need. It also eliminates the desperation moments that push you to eat out. Display your plan so you know what meat to thaw for each day. This can be removed from the freezer the night before, or even the morning of.

Knowing what you plan to fix for meals, removes the temptation to eat out, doubling your food budget.

Reward yourself as your budget allows. If you can stick to your meal plan, the next week you can plan in a night out for dinner.

*Working on a 3 lb. bag of chicken & 5 lb. tube of hamburger and 2 homemade loaves of bread**

Two-Week Meal Plan

Week 1	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday	Cereal	Lunch Meat Sandwich, Fruit	Baked Ravioli Lasagna
Tuesday	Yogurt & Granola	Cheese & Crackers, Veggies & Fruit	Tacos
Wednesday	Oatmeal	Hard-boiled eggs and Toast	Chicken Crack Sandwiches
Thursday	Toast & Fruit	Tuna Salad (or Chicken) Sandwich	Southwest Chicken Salad
Friday	Cereal	Left overs	Frozen Pizzas (take and bake from grocery store)
Saturday	Eggs & Toast	Egg Salad Sandwich	Minestrone soup
Sunday	Muffins	Salad (use lunchmeat, and hard-boiled eggs)	Eggs & bacon (Make extra for breakfast)

Week 2	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday	Leftover eggs from last night & Toast	Cheese & Crackers, lunchmeat, w/fruit	Stir Fry Ramen Noodles
Tuesday	Cereal	Lunch meat sandwich and minestrone soup left overs	Chicken Nachos
Wednesday	Oatmeal	Chicken Salad Sandwich	Tomato Soup & Grilled Cheese sandwiches (using homemade bread)
Thursday	Cereal	Chicken Salad (lettuce, egg, shred chicken)	Baked Chicken Thighs
Friday	Toast & Bacon	Left-overs	Burgers
Saturday	Oatmeal w/ fruit	Grilled Lunchmeat sandwich	Chili
Sunday	Pancakes from scratch.	Peanut butter sandwich with homemade bread.	Leftovers

Take inventory of what you already have. Incorporate that into your meal plan. Once your meal plan is made, make a grocery list. List everything you'll need to prepare these meals for your family. Include snacks that aren't listed. Shop Generic, test coupons to see if the price beats generic. Save your leftovers. These can be another FREE meal.

When the budget is tight, incorporate more rice, fresh veggies, and homemade meals.

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