

Food Preparation

Cooking for One or Two



Single-person households are on the rise. Grocery stores are taking notice and are catering more to single-person households. Every department offers plenty of choices for individual purchases.

The family dynamics of today are diverse, and the markets have adapted to offer many choices and sizes. Cooking for one can be creative and rewarding with or without leftovers. Indulge, choose what you like to cook, and get the good smells going in your kitchen!

The key to success is planning. Planning helps to minimize trips to the grocery store and decrease impulse purchases. With good planning, you can save time and money. It can also help reduce food waste. Cooking for one begins with making a plan to buy the right ingredients to make meals for a week. Take advantage of quality convenience products packaged for one or two persons.

Easily Cut Recipes in Half

Original Measurement	Half of the Measurement
¼ cup	2 Tablespoons
⅓ cup	2 Tablespoons and 2 teaspoons
½ cup	¼ cup
⅔ cup	⅓ cup
1 Tablespoon	1-½ teaspoons
1 teaspoon	½ teaspoon
½ teaspoon	¼ teaspoon
¼ teaspoon	⅛ teaspoon
⅛ teaspoon	A dash

Maximize Meals and Save Money

- Make a shopping list to plan out your menus for the week.
- Look for any sale items or coupons to save money.
- Try to buy only the amount of food you will eat in a week.
- Repackage, label, and freeze extra food in single servings.
- Cook once, eat twice. Label and freeze in heat-and-eat individual portions.



Shopping Tips

Fruits and Vegetables

Instead of purchasing larger amounts of prepackaged produce, buy it by the piece or buy a mixed bag. For example, choose three to five bananas and a bag of grapes (they are great frozen), two oranges and apples, add a bunch of carrots, a couple of onions, a zucchini, and some greens. You are good to go for a week. Add individual serving sizes of canned and frozen items which have extended shelf lives.

Proteins

Select meat and fish from the butcher counter to get what you like. For example, choose a pork chop, a chicken breast, and a salmon filet. They will wrap each piece individually with a label. Add six eggs for the week.

Grains

Buy smaller sized servings of rice, pasta, and cereals and enjoy the variety of smaller packages. Buy bread and freeze half for the next week.

Dairy

Choose single-serving cheese sticks and individual yogurts. Add shelf-stable milk instead of larger containers with quick expiration dates. Don't forget to refrigerate after opening.

Cook Quickly

- Use a toaster oven to broil, roast, or heat single servings of meat.
- Stir-fry small amounts of food at a time.
- Use a waffle maker or other kitchen equipment to make a panini-style sandwich.
- Air fry for healthier foods that taste delicious.
- Use pressure cookers to make easy-peel hardboiled eggs, rice, and soups.
- Experiment with new recipes and cooking techniques.
- Take pleasure in cooking and learn to maximize food and its health benefits.
- Treat yourself to occasional extravagances, such as expensive cuts of meat.

Store for Another Meal

- Invest in reusable, single-serving containers.
- Label, date, and freeze in individual servings. Place dissolvable label on the side of the package for easy identification.
- Package leftovers into multiple containers so they can be reheated in smaller quantities.

Condiments and Sauces

- Choose smaller bottles of condiments or sauces.
- Buy spice mixes instead of containers of single spices, e.g., Italian seasoning, taco seasoning, pumpkin pie spice, etc.

Convenience Foods

Use the market's deli or kitchen departments and select only what you need. Ask for a quarter pound of roasted poultry or two scoops of bean salad. Choose a couple of main entrées and side dishes for the days you may not feel like cooking.

- Break down bakery items and freeze them for later.
- Buy desserts in single servings, choose cake mixes for one, puddings, or frozen fruit bars.



References

- [One-Person Households Are on the Rise](#), U. S. Census Bureau
- [Planning Healthy Meals for One or Two](#), University of Nebraska Extension
- [MyPlate.gov](#), U. S. Department of Agriculture

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