

Food Preparation

Quick, Easy, Healthy: One-Pan Meals



One-container recipes are a great option for an easy, healthy dinner or a fun family project. Combine a protein, a starch, vegetables, and a tasty sauce in one pan to save cooking time and make clean up a breeze.

Choose Recipes Wisely

Look for recipes that line up with household needs as a good strategy for choosing one-pot or sheet pan recipes.

- What are your family's favorite foods?
- What do you have on hand?
- Is this for one meal or do you want to double the batch and freeze some for a future meal? Sauces, soups, and chili all hold up well in the freezer.

Mix and Match

Maximize meal options by using a combination of shelf-stable pantry foods and foods from the refrigerator and freezer. Use the "first in, first out" method for a home food supply by using older items first. Keep this in mind for fresh produce as well.

Check out this [do-it-yourself sheet pan meal guide](#) [DIY Casserole Basics](#).

Make It a Family Affair

All family members can help in the kitchen, making meal preparation a fun event. Planning and making family meals together build family bonds, cooking skills, and nutrition knowledge.

Younger children can measure or count ingredients, whisk or stir foods, and use a plastic knife to cut soft foods such as bananas.

Older youth can chop fruits and vegetables, practice with cooking on the stove, and measure temperatures with a food thermometer.

Keep It Safe and Prevent Waste

- Store opened, shelf-stable foods, such as salad dressing, sauces, or canned vegetables, in the refrigerator.
- Use leftover meals in 3 to 4 days.
- Plan to freeze half of a large batch recipe to use for a meal next week.





DIY Sheet Pan Meal Basics

Ingredients

- 1 pound of protein (chicken, tofu, pork, or beef).
- 2 cups of starchy vegetables (potato, corn, peas, or dry beans)
- 3 to 4 cups of non-starchy vegetables (broccoli, carrots, mushrooms, onion, celery, tomatoes and bell or spicy peppers)
- Favorite seasonings (rosemary, thyme, sage, red pepper, parsley, or garlic powder) seasoned to taste
- Vegetable oil or non-stick cooking spray

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 F. Cube starchier vegetables, toss them in 1 Tablespoon of vegetable oil, and sprinkle with two-thirds of mixed spices.
2. Slice or cube proteins. Keep in mind, the bigger the size, the more time needed to cook to the correct temperature.
3. Spray a pan with non-stick cooking spray, and fill two-thirds of the pan with the protein and the starchy vegetables. Bake for 20 minutes.
4. Chop non-starchy vegetables; toss in 1 Tablespoon of vegetable oil and remaining one-third of the spice mixture.
5. When the timer goes off, safely remove the pan from the oven and add the non-starchy, seasoned vegetables to the remaining one-third of the pan.
6. Bake an additional 15 minutes and use a meat thermometer to check if meat is thoroughly cooked.

References

Adapted from materials and recipes from [University of Illinois Extension and Illinois Nutrition Education Programs](#).

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