Free Frugal Menu Plan: 10 Days of Budget Dinners

How to Use This Menu

Bookmark this easy-to-use ten day menu plan of frugal family dinners. Try to stick to this sequence of meals; it provides variety and allows you to prepare extras and make use of leftovers later in the week to minimize cooking time and maximize savings.

Click on the links for menu item recipes.

Day 1:
- Dinner Ham
- Mashed Sweet Potatoes
- Boiled or steamed green peas

Notes: If white or yellow potatoes are on sale, make a double batch of Garlic Mashed Potatoes instead. Serve half today and use the remainder as the topping for Day 3’s Hamburger Mashed Potato Casserole.

Day 2:
- Homemade Macaroni and Cheese
- Mixed vegetables

Notes: Stir in one 28 ounce can of drained plum tomatoes to the macaroni mixture before baking to boost your family’s vegetable intake. Buy frozen mixed vegetables when they are on sale to serve as a side dish for casseroles or meat-based meals, or freeze your own home-grown veggies to use throughout the winter.

Day 3:
- Hamburger Mashed Potato Casserole
- Tossed Salad

Variation: Reduce ground beef to ½ pound. Add two cups frozen mixed vegetables, 1 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce, 1 tsp. dried basil and and 1 can concentrated cream of tomato soup. This stretches your ground beef even further, and is a good way to increase your vegetable intake inexpensively.

Day 4:
- Ham and Bean Soup
- Homemade Cornbread
Though the recipe calls for Great Northern beans, this is just as good with kidney or black beans. For an even heartier meal, add one cup cooked rice to the soup ingredients.

Day 5:
- Cabbage Rolls
- Fresh veggie sticks such as carrots, celery, red peppers or green peppers.

Variation: Reduce the ground beef in the recipe from 1 ½ pounds to ½ pound, and increase the rice to two cups. Add a glass of milk to make this a healthy and cheap meal.

Day 6:
- Barbecued Slow Cooker Chicken on Hamburger Buns
- Steamed Mixed Vegetables

Notes: Serve the chicken over toasted hamburger buns, mashed potatoes, rice or noodles. This is a great way to use up those hamburger buns sitting in the bottom of your freezer. Buy inexpensive chicken thighs or breasts when they're on sale. Cook extra chicken to use in chicken pot pie later in the week.

Day 7:
- Canned Soup
- Grilled Cheese Sandwiches
- Carrot Sticks

Notes: Stock up on canned soup and processed cheese slices during sales so you can throw together a quick and easy frugal meal on days when you don't have time to cook. This is a cheap and nutritious family meal.

Day 8:
- Chicken Enchilada Casserole – Use up the cooked chicken from Day 6. Make tortillas from scratch or buy them on sale and freeze them. Black beans and salsa add inexpensive protein and flavor.
- Celery and carrot sticks with an easy dip recipe.

Day 9:
- Tuna Pasta Salad
- Tossed Salad or Veggie Sticks with Dip

Notes: Make this with any short pasta such as macaroni, penne, or even the tri-colored spiral pasta.

Day 10:
- **Scrambled Eggs** with a Side of Salsa
- Toast
- Cheese slices and celery

Eggs are not only inexpensive and quick to cook; they are an excellent source of protein. Scrambled eggs can also be a good way to use up leftover small amounts of vegetables by adding chopped onions, green peppers, red peppers, broccoli, cherry tomatoes, or even small amounts of bacon, ham or sausage. Add a dollop of salsa and toast to each serving for a filling meal, and include cheese slices and celery for calcium and crunch!