

Value Meals for Busy Moms

By Marilyn Moll and Laura Coble

Easy, Economical, and Eatable!

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Author's Note

Eating Well on a Limited Budget

By Marilyn Moll

Ed Note: The below comment was originally posted to my blog by Jill Ferris. There is a great deal of wisdom here. Read on.

Many years ago when I was worrying about how to eat healthily on a very very limited budget I met a young mother who was raised in a poor family (12 children) who told me what they ate growing up.

Basically, they ate cooked dried beans, cornbread and some sort of cooked greens (like turnip greens) for at least two meals a day all year long. She said they got ice cream once a year for Christmas or Fourth of July. That was it.

When she married and moved across the country she went to a doctor and dentist for the first time in her life and was told that she was the healthiest person they had ever seen. The dentist had never seen teeth as strong as hers!!

I thought about her parents and wondered if they worried all those years about not really “providing” for their family and wondered if they realized what wonderful health their children had because of growing up without refined foods!

Meeting her was reassuring to me. I realized that good nutrition can be very simple and very plain. It can be very very inexpensive. It, of course, must be balanced (the beans and the corn bread compliment each other and the greens are a wonderful food if not overcooked).

I realized that we could get very, very poor and still afford GOOD nutritious food!

I think that a lot of times we feel like our food has to be really fancy, or that we have to have a lot of variety, or that it needs to be all organic in order to feed our families well. But as we can see, without a lot of variety, fancyness, or even necessarily organic ingredients, the lady in the story ate very well! This encourages me so that I don't feel like I have to perform to make each meal amazing. Simple ingredients, simple meals, simply makes for healthy families.

This little cookbook is the result of recipes people submitted to my blog, plus a few extras for some variety. Thanks to everyone who took the time to post a recipe! I hope that you will enjoy this collection of recipes. Whether you have been a long time bean user, or you are just getting started, you will find these family tested recipes easy, economical, and eatable!

Cooking with Dry Beans

Using dry beans may not seem as convenient as cooking with canned beans, but with a little bit of planning, using dry beans can be as simple as opening up a tin can. And of course, the greatest motivator is the pennies saved! One bag of dry beans costs about as much as a can of cooked beans. But a dry bag will produce about 4-5 times the amount found in a can of beans (one cup of dry beans equals about 2½ cups of cooked beans). You save about 4 dollars with the purchase of one bag of beans.

To use dry beans, there are just a few simple steps to follow.

Note: lentils, mung beans, and split peas don't need to be soaked.

1) Soak the beans. This restores the proper water content to the dry bean. There are two methods to soaking beans. The first is to soak them overnight. Simply place desired amount of dry beans in a bowl and add water, at a 2:1 ration, two cups of water for one cup of beans. You can add a tablespoon of vinegar to make the beans more easily digestible. If you forgot to soak the beans overnight, you can do a quick soak by placing the desired amount of beans in a pot, add water at a 2:1 ration, and bring to a boil for one minute. Remove pot from heat and allow the beans to sit for one hour. The benefit to a longer soaking is that

2) Cook the beans. Pour off the liquid used to soak the beans in and rinse the beans in fresh water. Place beans in a pot and add fresh water at a 2:1 ration. Bring to a boil, and boil uncovered for about 10 minutes. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 1-2 hours, or until tender. Or, cook in a pressure cooker by cooking the beans at pressure for about 10 minutes and then allow pressure to come down naturally.

3) Storing. Now that the beans are cooked, you can store them in the fridge for 2-3 days before using. Or, place equal portions in freezer bags and freeze. Don't forget to label the bags. Pull out a bag as needed the night before using them and allow to thaw. This is as easy as opening up a tin can!

The following recipes either ask for uncooked or cooked beans. Remember that 1 cup of dry beans equals about 2½ cups of cooked beans. You can easily convert a recipe that asks for 1 can of beans (about 2 cups of beans) to dry beans by soaking a little less than one cup of beans. Or, if you don't have dry beans on hand, convert a recipe that asks for 1 cup of dry beans to 1 can of cooked beans.

Note: some recipes call for dry beans and then give instructions for cooking the beans. In these recipes, follow the above directions for soaking the beans, but follow the recipe for cooking the beans.

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Lentil Cheese Casserole submitted by Jenny

2 ¾ cups chicken, beef, or vegetable broth
¾ cup lentils (uncooked)
1 chopped onion
2 Tbsp olive oil
½ cup brown rice (uncooked)
4 oz shredded Swiss cheese
2 tsp basil
1 tsp of each: salt, oregano, thyme, garlic powder
pepper to taste

Saute onion in olive oil, then add remaining ingredients except for the cheese and bring to a boil. Simmer for 45 minutes to an hour, adding extra water if necessary. Or, saute onion in olive oil, then add remaining ingredients except for the cheese and cook on medium high heat in a pressure cooker for 15 minutes. Add cheese and serve.

Ideas: Substitute Pepper Jack cheese for the Swiss cheese, serve with a green salad, and applesauce.

Italian Lentils submitted by Tami

3 Tbsp olive oil
1 cup shredded carrot
½ cup chopped celery
½ cup chopped green or red pepper
2 Tbsp minced garlic
½ tsp basil
3½ cups water
1½ cups lentils, uncooked
1 quart diced tomatoes
1 lb penne pasta
2 cups shredded colby or cheddar cheese

Quick Tip: Make this into a freezer meal by cooking the lentils, vegetables, and spices. Then place cooked lentils into a freezer bag and lay flat so as to conserve space. To serve, thaw lentils, warm over medium low heat, cook pasta and add shredded cheese.

Saute vegetables until wilted. Add garlic, basil, water and lentils. Cover and bring to a boil. Add tomatoes. Cover and simmer for one-hour. Mix in pasta and shredded cheese, or if your family prefers, serve lentils over pasta and allow family members to add their own cheese.

Ideas: This is a perfect meal to make a day ahead so that you have a prepared meal for a busy day. And by the next day the spices will have blended to perfection!

South of the Border Mexican Casserole submitted by Tami

1 packet taco seasoning
1 cup salsa
1½ cups cooked black beans
1½ cups cooked pinto beans
1 10 oz package frozen corn
1 cup Monterey Jack cheese (divided)

Quick Tip: Make this into a freezer meal by combining all ingredients and ½ cup of the cheese. To serve, thaw meal slightly, break into small pieces and scatter in a casserole pan. Bake for 20 minutes, add final ½ cup of cheese, and finish baking.

Preheat oven to 350°. In mixing bowl, combine taco seasoning and salsa. Blend well. Add both types of beans, corn and ½ cup of cheese. Place in a glass baking dish and cover with foil. Bake 20 minutes. Remove foil and stir. Top with remaining cheese and bake an additional 5-10 minutes uncovered.

***Ideas:** Serve the casserole as tacos by placing casserole mixture on small flour tortillas and top with lettuce, tomatoes, sour cream, avocado or guacamole. Or, serve as a dip for tortilla chips by adding sour cream, lettuce, tomato, avocado or guacamole to the baked casserole.*

Lentil Bacon Soup submitted by Sarah

2-4 strips of bacon
½ cup onion, chopped
½ cup celery, chopped
1 Tbsp oil
1/3 cup flour
7 cups of water (for extra flavor do half beef or chicken broth)
1 tsp salt
1½ tsp beef bouillon
1½ tsp dried thyme
1 tsp pepper
¾ cup lentils, uncooked
1 bay leaf
1 cup of diced potato
½ tsp nutmeg

In a soup pot, cook bacon, onion and celery in oil until vegetables are transparent. Add flour, stirring constantly. After the flour has blended in, slowly add water, stirring constantly. Add remaining ingredients and simmer for 2-3 hours. Remove bay leaf before serving.

***Ideas:** For a vegetarian meal, skip the bacon and substitute beef bouillon with vegetable stock instead. Serve with tortilla chips and salsa.*

Black Bean Soup submitted by Dawn

- 1 Tbsp olive oil**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 4 cloves of garlic, minced**
- 3 celery ribs, chopped**
- 1 cup chopped carrots**
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped**
- 1 Jalapeño pepper, chopped (remove seeds if you prefer the soup to be less spicy)**
- 1 15 oz jar of chopped tomatoes with chilies**
- 2 Tbsp cumin**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 1 quart vegetable stock (or water if you don't have vegetable stock handy)**
- 3 cans of black beans, drained and rinsed, mash one can's worth**

Quick Tip: Simmer the soup with a leftover ham bone for extra flavor.

In a large soup pot cook onion, garlic and celery in olive oil until wilted. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 20-30 minutes. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Ideas: Serve with corn bread and honey.

Black Bean Enchilada Casserole submitted by Sonya

- 2 cups chopped onion**
- 1 ½ cups chopped red pepper**
- 2 garlic cloves, minced**
- ¾ cup salsa**
- 2 tsp ground cumin**
- 2 cans black beans, drained**
- 12 6-inch corn tortillas**
- 2 cups Monterey Jack and Cheddar blend cheese shredded, divided**
- 3 tomatoes, chopped (optional)**
- ½ cup sour cream (optional)**
- ½ cup sliced black olives (optional)**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine onion, pepper, garlic, salsa, cumin and black beans in a large skillet and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Simmer, stirring frequently for 3 minutes. Arrange 6 tortillas in the bottom of a 9x13 baking dish, overlapping them as necessary. Spread half of the bean mixture over the tortillas and sprinkle with half of the cheese. Repeat layering process with remaining tortillas, bean mixture and cheese. Cover dish with foil and bake for 15 minutes. Remove foil and serve. Garnish with tomatoes, sour cream and olives if desired.

Ideas: You can substitute leftover stale tortilla chips for the corn tortillas. Simply place tortilla chips in a ziplock bag and roll a rolling pin over the bag until the chips are crushed. Sprinkle the crushed chips in the place of the corn tortillas.

Lentil Baked Beans submitted by Hope

2 ½ cups of lentils, uncooked
1 small bay leaf
5 cups of water
2 tsp salt

Combine in a Dutch oven or saucepan and bring to a boil. Cover tightly and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove bay leaf at the end of the 30 minutes.

Combine separately and add to lentils:

1 tsp dry mustard (liquid mustard works too)

¼ tsp powdered ginger

1 Tbsp soy sauce

½ cup of chopped onions

1 cup of water

Cut into 1 inch pieces:

4 slices of bacon (precook before adding to soup), ½ cup diced ham, or ½ lb browned ground beef or sausage.

Stir most of the meat into the lentils and sprinkle the remainder on top.

Pour over all:

½ cup honey

Cover tightly. Bake 1 hour at 350 degrees. Uncover for the last 10 minutes.

***Ideas:** This is a very versatile meal! Have leftovers? Serve the next night as a burrito by placing beans on a tortilla and add your favorite burrito toppings! Or, make it vegetarian and serve on rice with soy sauce. Or, replace ginger, soy sauce, and 1 cup of water with 2 Tbsp sugar, 1 tsp oregano, 2 cups of tomato sauce and omit the honey.*

Three Bean Salad submitted by Hope

Cook different colors of beans, approximately ½ cup dry beans of each kind, or 1½ cups of cooked beans of each kind. Try garbanzos, navy, and kidney beans. It's the color variations you want. One or two kinds of beans would work just as well.

Dump beans in a BIG bowl. Add some canned veggies. Green beans and corn work well. Throw in some chopped garlic and chopped onion.

Add dressing:

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

¼ - ½ cup honey (depending on how sweet you want it)

¾ cup olive oil

2 Tbsp soy sauce

Whisk dressing together and add to salad. Marinate for 2 hours.

***Ideas:** This will last up to a week in the fridge and the flavor improves with time.*

Poor Man's Chickpea Soup submitted by Hope

1 carrot
1 white onion
1 stalk of celery
4 garlic cloves, minced
3 Tbsp olive oil
¼ tsp red pepper flakes (omit if your family doesn't like spicy)
1 bay leaf
1 sprig fresh Rosemary or ½ tsp dried
1 tsp thyme
1½ cups dry chickpeas or 3 (16 oz.) cans of chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1 smoked ham hock
5 cups chicken stock
1 cup tomato sauce
8 oz Arugula, mustard greens, or spinach, stems removed and chopped.

Quick Tip: Cook in a crock pot on low for 7-8 hours or 4 hours on high. If you don't have a ham hock, substitute by adding chopped ham, bacon, or sausage.

Chop the carrot, onion, and celery into chunks. Transfer to a food processor, add the garlic, then process until finely chopped, but not smooth. Set aside. Heat the olive oil in a small stockpot or Dutch oven on high heat until sizzling. Add the chopped vegetables, red pepper flakes, bay leaf, rosemary, thyme, and pepper. Cook for 3-4 minutes, until the onion is soft and translucent. Add the chickpeas, ham hock, chicken stock, and tomato sauce and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 1 hour (if using canned beans, simmer for 30 minutes). Remove the ham hock, pull the meat from the bone and cut into ½ inch pieces. Set aside. Discard the bay leaf and rosemary if you used fresh rosemary.

Process ½ of the soup in a food processor or blender until smooth. Return mixture to the pot and add the reserved ham and the arugula, mustard greens, or spinach. Stir well.

***Ideas:** Sprinkle the soup with some chopped parsley and parmesan cheese. Serve with warmed French bread and garlic butter.*

Quick Tip: Soak and cook beans for future meals. Simply soak a pound of beans (whatever kind you desire, or multiple kinds) and cook them according to Marilyn's directions on page 3. Then divide the beans into two cup portions and place in plastic freezer bags. Lay bags flat and stack. Freeze up to 6 months.

My Grandma's Baked Beans submitted by Karen

1 lb dry beans, soaked and cooked (I use yellow eyes or kidney beans)
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup molasses
½ cup chopped bacon
¼ tsp dry mustard
1 tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
2 cups boiling water

Mix all ingredients together. Bake in a dutch oven or casserole dish in a preheated 350 oven for 3 hours, stirring occasionally. Or cook in a crock pot on high for 3-4 hours.

Ideas: Add partially cooked bacon pieces for extra flavor; or make into a meal by mixing in cut up hot dogs and serve with corn bread.

The Carnivore's Lentil Burger submitted by Hope

½ cup green lentils, uncooked
2 cups water
¼ cup bulgur wheat
½ tsp garlic powder
½ tsp celery seed
¼ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp cumin
¼ tsp sage
pinch cayenne (omit if your family doesn't like spicy)
1 medium onion, minced
2 eggs
3 Tbsp Nutritional yeast (optional, adds flavor)
1¼ cups whole wheat flour (more or less as needed)

In a large pot combine lentils and water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for 25 minutes. Add bulgur and seasonings. Simmer for another 5 minutes or until the water is absorbed and the lentils are tender. Remove from heat, stir in onion and allow to cool. When the mixture is cool enough to handle, mix in the eggs, then add flour a bit at a time, mixing to distribute flour evenly. Use just enough flour to enable mixture to be made into patties (its okay if they are a little sticky). Wet hands, and form into patties about ½ inch thick. Fry in lightly oiled skilled over medium heat until lightly browned on each side. Makes 10 burgers.

Ideas: Serve as regular hamburgers with hamburger buns, lettuce, tomatoes, and onion.

Gloria's Lentil Soup submitted by Ginny in honor of her mother-in-law, Gloria

1 16 oz bag of lentils or split peas, uncooked
½ cup onion, chopped
1 clove of garlic, minced
3 - 4 strips of bacon, cooked and cut up
1 small tomato, chopped
pinch of salt
2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into ½ inch cubes
1 bullion cube
oregano and cumin to taste
1 cup cooked rice (optional)

Quick Tip: Rice freezes well, so if you find yourself with left over rice, save yourself time by freezing in a freezer bag and adding to meals as desired.

Cook lentils in 6-8 cups of water, simmering gently for 20 minutes. While lentils cook, sauté the onion, garlic, bacon, tomato and salt in a frying pan. When onions look clear, add the potatoes, bullion cube, oregano, and cumin and enough water to cover. Cover and cook for 15 minutes. Add onion mixture to lentils and cook another 10 minutes.

***Ideas:** Sauté cubed, whole wheat bread in olive oil and garlic to make yummy croutons to top soup.*

Meatless Lentil Chili submitted by Yolanda

5 cups water
2½ cups of lentils, uncooked
16 oz tomatoes (chunk or sauce)
1 pkg dry onion soup mix
1 - 2 tsp chili powder (depending on how spicy you like your chili)
½ tsp cumin

Bring water and lentils to a boil. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Do not drain leftover water. Add additional ingredients and simmer for 30 minutes more.

***Ideas:** To make this meal stretch a bit further, serve over a baked potato or mixed with rice and top with sour cream or cheese.*

Brazilian Beans and Rice submitted by Brenda

1 cup chopped onion
2 Tbsp olive oil
3-4 garlic cloves, minced
1 cup dry beans (any type)
1 tsp red pepper flakes (omit if your family doesn't like spicy)
2 cups cooked rice

In a pressure cooker, heat enough oil to sauté the chopped onion. When oil is sizzling, add onion and brown. Then add minced garlic and sauté for a short time as garlic can burn easily. Add 3 cups of dried beans and cover with approximately 2 quarts of water, it takes a lot of water so the beans will not be dry. Add about a tsp of red pepper flakes. Let beans come to a boil, then cover with the pressure cooker lid and cook under pressure for 35 min. Remove from heat and allow pressure to come down naturally. Then add salt, enough to season the beans well. If you have cooked beans on hand, use about 2½ cups of beans, add all ingredients except for the rice, and warm on the stove.

***Ideas:** For the carnivores among you, try adding diced polish sausage. Serve beans over rice. You can add a can of corn for flavor and color! If you don't have a pressure cooker, simply cook beans over medium low heat until the beans are soft, a couple of hours, or cook in a crock pot on low. Also, if you soak beans ahead of time, that helps make the beans more digestible and reduces flatulence.*

Homemade Bean Burrito Filling submitted by Shauna

3 Tbsp olive oil
¼ cup very finely chopped onion
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
1 28 oz can of plain pinto beans, rinsed and drained
½ cup of water, more or less as needed
1 4 oz can chopped green chilies (or 2 freshly chopped jalapenos)
½ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese
1 lb cooked taco meat, if desired
salt, to taste

Quick Tip: If possible, use a blender instead of a potato masher. Add water as necessary to ensure the beans blend smoothly.

Heat oil in a large saucepan or small stockpot. Saute onion and garlic until tender. Add beans to the pot and “fry” for a few minutes. Add water, a few tablespoons at a time, and mash with a potato masher to desired consistency. Stir in chilies, cheese and cooked taco meat (if desired). Season with salt.

***Ideas:** Serve with tortillas and favorite burrito toppings. For a freezer meal, triple the batch, divide into three parts and freeze.*

Black Eyed Pea Casserole submitted by Leann

2 cups of dry black eyed peas
8 cups of water or beef stock
1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
2 Tbsp olive oil
¼ cup of butter
1 chopped onion
1 chopped green pepper
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 can of diced tomatoes
1 cup of tomato juice
1 tsp Italian seasoning
½ tsp salt
1/3 cup parsley, chopped
1 tsp hot sauce (optional)

Quick Tip: Garlic and ginger are highly nutritious. I add at least a clove of crushed garlic and a tablespoon of finely chopped garlic to almost every dish I make. This helps fortify the immune system against colds and flues!

In a large pot, bring water or beef stock (or a mixture of both), peas, vinegar and Italian seasoning to a boil. Boil for 3 minutes and then reduce to a simmer. Simmer for 90 minutes. Meanwhile, in a pan, melt butter and olive oil at medium heat. Add onions, green peppers and garlic. Sauté until the onions and peppers are nearly soft. Add onion mixture to the peas (don't drain off the extra butter or oil). Add tomatoes, juice, and salt. Simmer for 30 minutes. In the last 15 minutes, add the chopped parsley and hot sauce.

Ideas: Top with grated cheese and serve with applesauce, canned peaches or pears.

Sweet Potato Lentil Stew submitted by Mrs. Angie Hepp

4 cups of vegetable broth
3 cups of sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed (about 1 ¼ lbs)
1½ cups of lentils, uncooked
3 medium carrots, diced
1 cup of chopped onion
4 cloves of garlic, minced
½ tsp ground cumin
¼ tsp ground ginger
¼ tsp cayenne pepper (or red pepper flakes), omit if desired
Salt to taste
2 cups of rice

Place first nine ingredients in a crock pot and cook on low 5-6 hours or until vegetables are tender. Salt to taste. Serve over cooked rice.

Ideas: If you don't have vegetable broth, substitute 4 cups of water and 4 teaspoons chicken or beef bouillon.

Haitian Beans and Rice submitted by Katie

5 cups cooked beans, any kind
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup chopped onion
1 Tbsp olive oil
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp ground cloves
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp fresh grated ginger or $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp powdered ginger
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp black pepper
1 clove of garlic, minced
1 can of diced tomatoes, drained
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of milk
Salt and cayenne pepper to taste
2 cups of cooked rice

In a fry pan, sauté onion in olive oil. Add ground cloves, ginger, pepper, and garlic and sauté briefly. In a food processor or blender, pulse all but 1 cup of the beans until mixture becomes a chunky paste, adding water or milk if the mixture becomes too thick (if you don't have a food processor or blender, mash bean mixture with a potato masher). Add blended mixture and the remaining whole beans to pan, and stir in tomatoes and milk. Cook on low heat, stirring occasionally until desired thickness is reached (should be fairly thick). Add salt and cayenne pepper to taste.
Serve over rice.

***Ideas:** Substitute the milk with coconut milk for added flavor and nutrition. You can find coconut milk in the ethnic department of the grocery store.*

Dressed Up Ramen-while Ramen is not especially healthy, it is cheap and by adding a few extras, you can make Ramen into a more nutritious and enjoyable meal!

1 package of Ramen
3 eggs
Dash of cayenne pepper

Cook Ramen according to package directions. However, when you add the Ramen to the boiling water, also add the spice package and a dash of cayenne pepper. Also, break three eggs and drop the egg into the boiling water. Reduce heat to medium and cover. Allow to cook for about one minute, or until egg yolks are cooked through. Divide Ramen into three portions, with one egg in each portion. If you prefer, cook six eggs and add two eggs to each portion.

***Ideas:** Asian grocery stores carry their own version of Ramen and often have much better flavor than traditional Ramen. For a change, pick out a few flavors at your local Asian grocery store.*

Huevos Rancheros

1 onion, chopped
1 tsp crushed garlic
1 tsp chopped ginger
1 can undrained diced tomatoes
1 tsp red pepper flakes
½ tsp basil
1 Tbsp powdered chicken stock
1 can refry beans
8 eggs
Tortillas

Quick Tip: If you already have pre-cooked black or pinto beans in the freezer, substitute them for canned refry beans by simply thawing the beans and throwing them in a blender along with the red pepper flakes, butter, and tomato mixture. Add salt to taste and then warm the refries on the stove.

Dice onion and sauté briefly in a skillet. Add tomatoes, garlic, ginger, basil and chicken stock. Cook over medium low heat until thickened, about 15 minutes. Meanwhile, warm refry beans in a sauce pan over medium heat and add red pepper flakes, ¼ cup of the tomato mixture, and one Tbsp of butter (if desired, adds extra flavor). Cook eggs sunny side up.

To serve: place a warmed tortilla on a plate and spread a portion of the refry beans all over the tortilla, add a portion of the tomato mixture, and top with one or two cooked eggs. Serve with shredded cheddar cheese, diced avocado, and chopped cilantro if desired.

***Ideas:** While Huevos Rancheros is normally served as a breakfast dish, this makes a fantastic dinner meal as well. This is also a delicious and economical dish to feed a crowd.*

Taco Soup submitted by Hannah

½ lb ground meat
1 package taco seasoning
1 can undrained corn
1 can undrained kidney beans
28 oz. can pureed or diced tomatoes
2 cups of water
1 onion, chopped

Quick Tip: Forgot to buy taco seasoning? Don't worry, simply add 1 Tbsp chili powder, 1½ tsp cumin, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp pepper, and if you have some garlic powder, onion powder, and red pepper flakes on hand, add ¼ tsp of each.

Brown ground meat and onion in a skillet. Meanwhile, bring water to a boil. Add cooked meat, corn, beans, tomatoes, and taco seasoning. Stir and bring back up to a boil. Adjust seasonings if necessary.

***Ideas:** Add cooked pasta or rice to make this meal stretch further. To add flavor, serve with shredded cheese.*

Potato Cauliflower Soup

4 medium potatoes, quartered
2 onions, quartered
1 head cauliflower, cut up
2 cups water or chicken broth
2 cups milk
1 Tbsp Spike or salt and pepper to taste
8 oz cream cheese, diced
¼ - ½ cup butter

Quick Tip: To save time, pressure cook the potatoes, onions, and cauliflower for 5 minutes and allow pressure to drop naturally. Finish cooking according to directions below.

Combine vegetables with water or chicken broth in an 8 quart stock pot. Bring to a boil and simmer vegetables until potatoes are soft, about 15-20 minutes. Add milk, diced cream cheese and butter and cook over medium heat until cheese is melted. Add seasonings and enjoy!

***Ideas:** If your family likes a smoother consistency, mash potatoes, onions, and cauliflower with a potato masher or blend in a blender.*

Hash Brown Quiche

3 cups frozen shredded hash browns, thawed (or grate your own)
½ cup butter
1 cup diced ham, crumbled cooked sausage, or any leftover meat
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
¼ cup diced green pepper
2 eggs
½ cup milk
½ tsp salt
¼ tsp pepper
½ of a small can of green chilies, optional

Press hash browns between paper towels to remove excess moisture (if grating your own). Press onto the bottom and sides of an ungreased 9" pie plate to form a crust. Drizzle with butter. Bake uncovered at 425° for 25 minutes, or until the crust is crispy. In a separate bowl combine ham or sausage, cheese, green pepper and chilies and place on the crust. In a small bowl, beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper. Pour over all. Reduce heat to 350° and bake uncovered for 25-30 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Allow to stand for 10 minutes before cutting.

***Ideas:** This is a great way to use up little extras that may be in your fridge, such as bits of meat from other meals, bits of veggies that haven't been quite used up, or ends of various kinds of cheeses you may have.*

Cornbread corn protein is a great compliment to beans!

1 cup buttermilk or plain yogurt
2 eggs
1/3 cup honey or maple syrup
¼ cup melted butter or olive oil
2 cups cornmeal
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt

Blend together the buttermilk, eggs, honey, and melted butter or olive oil. Combine dry ingredients in a separate bowl and mix. Whisk together the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients until evenly mixed. Be careful to not over mix. Pour into a greased 8"x 8" baking pan. Bake at 350 for 25-35 minutes until nicely browned and a knife inserted into the center comes out clean.

***Ideas:** Blend 4 Tbsp of butter with ½ cup honey to make a delicious honey butter sauce to spread on hot cornbread!*

Buttermilk Drop Biscuits

2 cups flour
1 Tbsp baking powder
¼ tsp baking soda
2 tsp sugar
½ tsp cream of tartar
¼ tsp salt
½ cup softened butter
1¼ cups buttermilk

Quick Tip: If you don't have buttermilk on hand, use plain milk and add 1 tsp vinegar for each cup of milk used.

Mix together all dry ingredients. With a fork, mix in the butter until evenly mixed. Add the buttermilk and mix just until blended. Be careful to not over mix. Drop dough into greased muffin tins, fill about ¾ full. Bake at 15-18 minutes at 450.

***Ideas:** For creamier biscuits, substitute half of the milk with sour cream.*

One Week of Menu Ideas:

Monday:

Potato Cauliflower Soup
Carrot and celery sticks
Muffins

Tuesday:

Black Bean Enchilada Casserole
Salsa and Chips

Wednesday:

My Grandma's Baked Beans with hot dogs (simply cut up the hot dogs and toss in with the baked beans)
Corn Bread
Leaf Salad

Thursday:

Hashbrown Quiche
Three Bean Salad

Friday:

Dressed-Up Ramen
Coleslaw
Or any other leftovers that need to be used up!