

News Article for Week of: May 13, 2010

By: Janet H. Johnson  
County Extension Agent  
Family and Consumer Sciences

### **Add Up the Savings**

Eating “In” home, instead of a quick drive-thru, can help any family start adding up the savings! But what about the extra time it takes to prepare a meal? Taking the “Mix It Up” approach helps you put meals on the table in minutes. All you need are a few pantry or freezer items and flavor mixes that can be easily assembled into an assortment of quick and delicious meals.

Let’s start thinking; here are some sample foods and formulas that are very versatile and can turn a dinner dilemma into a daily delight. How about a “make your own casserole” that can easily be prepared ahead to bake when arriving at home or microwave quickly in about 15-30 minutes? What about a quick skillet dinner that can be prepared easily on a stove top? Each can be done using **Starches**, **Proteins**, **Vegetables** then mixing in **Flavor**, **Sauce**, and adding **Topping** after heating.

You can make your own casserole ahead for baking on home arrival or assemble a quick skillet dinner with three basic starts: Choose a **STARCH** (2 cups uncooked pasta, then cook to package instruction) or (1 cup uncooked long grain rice, cook to package instructions); Add a **PROTEIN** (2 cups browned ground beef) (2 cups cooked and diced chicken, ham or pork) or (2 – 8 oz. packets tuna); Select and add a **VEGETABLE** (1 10 oz. pkg. thawed and drained broccoli, green peas) (1 16 oz. can drained corn, carrots, green beans). Combine your choice of three starter ingredients with a **SAUCE** (1 can condensed soup – cream of mushroom, chicken, celery, tomato – mixed with milk to make 2 cups) or (1 16 oz. can diced tomatoes with juice) or (1 16 oz. bottle prepared sauce (stir-fry, etc.); Add a **FLAVOR** item (1/2 cup

chopped and sautéed celery, onion or green pepper) or (1 or 2 teaspoons mixed dried herbs of choice) and finally a **TOPPING** (buttered bread crumbs, toasted nuts, or grated cheese).

For a pre-assembled casserole, combine all ingredients except toppings in 2 ½ qt. buttered 9x13 oven dish; refrigerate or freeze. To cook, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cover and bake for approximately 35 minutes, until bubbly; add toppings and return to oven until melted or brown. For a skillet dinner, combine all ingredients except toppings in non-stick skillet coated with cooking spray; heat thoroughly until bubbly. Add topping of choice and serve. Here’s a recipe example using the formula in both ways.

**SPV Casserole or Skillet Dinner**

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|--|----|--|
| 2 cups uncooked bow tie pasta, cooked        | or | 1 cup uncooked rice, cooked            |
| 2 cups of diced chicken, turkey or ham       | or | 2 cups diced chicken                   |
| 1 10 ounce package frozen vegetables         | or | 1 10 ounce package stir fry vegetables |
| 1 can cheese soup                            | or | 1 bottle stir fry sauce                |
| ½ cup of flavor mix (onions, celery, pepper) | or | ½ cup of flavor mix (onions, etc.)     |
| ½ cup canned fried onion rings               | or | ¼ cup almonds                          |

Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees. Mix first five ingredients together. Add to a 2 ½ quart buttered dish, cover and back for 50 minutes to 1 hour at 350 degrees. Add topping and return to oven for 10 minutes.

Spray non stick skillet with cooking spray. Mix first five ingredients together, stir until heated thoroughly; toss in almonds, and serve.

**1, 2, 3 Salad**

Choose three fruits or a mixture of fruits and vegetables. They can be fresh, canned or frozen. Frozen fruit should be thawed and drained; canned fruit also needs to be drained. (If using pineapple, reserve juice to

use as an anti-darkening agent). Slice or chop fresh fruit or vegetable. Coat apples and bananas with pineapple juice or lemon juice to keep from turning brown. Add canned fruit or vegetable and mix the ingredients.

For more information and recipes and a chance to win a \$25.00 Dollar General Market Gift Certificate, stop by your Allen County Cooperative Extension Service at 200 East Main Street in downtown Scottsville! Also visit UK's Moneywise website link <http://ces.ca.uky.edu/moneywise/> for more ways to Add Up The Savings for your family!

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