

COOL COOKIN' IN THE KITCHEN

by Jan Temple, ISU Extension Nutrition Field Specialist housed in Johnson County

With the current economy, no one wants to spend extra energy dollars cooling a hot kitchen. But what can you fix for dinner without using the oven? Plenty! Here are some suggestions to get you thinking.

Equipment: Use these appliances instead of the oven to keep your kitchen cool. Remember that rice and pasta may be cooked in the microwave rather than heating a large pot of water on top of the stove.

- Microwave
- Slow Cooker
- Outdoor BBQ Grill
- Toaster Oven
- Clam Shell Grill
- Stove Top for quick items
- Other – waffle iron; electric fry pan

Ingredients:

- **Fruits and Vegetables** – in the summer we eat many of these raw or with minimal cooking. They are both refreshing and nutritious.
- **Protein** – There are many choices for protein.
 - ✓ **Canned chicken, meat, or fish** require no heating
 - ✓ **Canned beans** – drained and rinsed (add to a lettuce or pasta salad to stretch or substitute for other protein); hummus; nut butters (i.e. peanut, hazelnut) are great if allergies aren't an issue).
 - ✓ **Eggs** – cook on top of the stove, in an egg cooker or even in the microwave. If they will be added to a salad they would be chopped up anyway so just scramble and cook in the microwave.
 - ✓ **Dairy products** – Cottage cheese, yogurt, and aged cheese are cool and quick. Cottage cheese and yogurt pair well with fruits or vegetables to make a quick meal. Just combine cheese and fruit with whole grain crackers or bread and a green salad and you have a meal!

Cooking Method:

- **Cook once; serve twice.** Cook extra pasta, rice or potatoes - enjoy hot the first day and make the leftover into a salad. Roast or grill extra meat or chicken one night; enjoy the leftovers in a salad or sandwiches another night; OR freeze for later use.

WHOLE MEAL PASTA SALAD - MAKES 4 SERVINGS

This is quick, colorful flavorful and cool – a real summer winner!

1 16 oz. package Pasta Primavera frozen veggies	1 15 oz. can black beans, rinsed and drained
2 Tablespoons water	1/2 cup low fat shredded cheese
1/3 cup reduced fat Italian dressing	Optional: Leftover cold, meat, cubed

Combine Primavera with water in a microwave safe container. Cook at full power for 7 minutes. Drain. Stir in dressing and drained beans. Chill several hours. Before serving, stir in cheese and cubed meat if desired.

Each 1 cup serving without meat: 214 calories, 6 g fat, 2.3 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 10.3 mg cholesterol, 472 mg sodium, 30.6 g carbohydrate, 6 g fiber, 10.5 g protein. Cost/svg = \$.81

CHICKEN PACKS – 4 SERVINGS

Assemble up to a day in advance; refrigerate until ready to heat. Beef or pork burgers and assorted vegetables may also be used.

1 boneless, skinless chicken breast	1 cup carrot sticks
1/4 cup barbeque sauce	1 cup thin potato slices
1 cup green pepper strips	1 cup thin onion slices

Place 1 Tablespoon sauce in the center of each of 4 squares of heavy duty aluminum foil. Top the sauce with 1/4 chicken breast, and 1/4 cup of each vegetable. Bring together corners of foil; crumple to seal. Bake in 350°F toaster oven for 35 minutes OR cook on the outdoor grill or campfire.

Each pack: 265 calories, 4.3 g fat, 1.2 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 96 mg cholesterol, 278 mg sodium, 18 g carbohydrate, 3.3 g fiber, 37 g protein. Cost/svg = \$.83