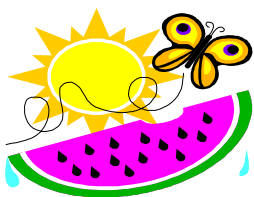


# SUMMERTIME FOOD: QUICK, COOL & EASY COOKING



**June:** The suggestions that follow may be prepared quickly and many are fit to eat on the run. Whether you don't want to spend lots of time in the kitchen or have limited cooking skills, this collection of ideas is

especially user-friendly. To shorten preparation time, you may wish to prepare a quantity of browned ground meat (beef, pork or turkey) and store in the refrigerator or freezer. (Tip: Rinse each pound of browned meat with 1 quart of hot water. This will wash away excess fat making the meat healthier and easier to use since the chilled meat will be loose.) It will also keep the kitchen much cooler, if you use a small toaster oven for baking rather than heating a big oven.

## Dads Involvement Makes A Difference

*Dads make a difference in how children develop. Here are some selected findings from research:*

- ◆ Boys show higher rates of aggressive behavior when fathers are absent.
- ◆ Girls display more sexually precocious behavior when fathers are absent.
- ◆ Children have higher IQ scores when fathers are more involved.
- ◆ Father involvement leads to higher self-esteem in both sons and daughters.
- ◆ Children are more motivated to learn when fathers take an active interest.

Food preparation is a great way to do some hands-on activities with children. While cooking, there is time to talk AND listen to one another. Try some of these ideas with the children in your life.



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## Burrito Bake

- 1 cup **baking mix** (ex. Bisquick)
- 1/4 cup **water**
- 1 (16 oz.) can **refried beans**
- 1 lb. **ground meat**
- 1/2 cup **salsa**
- 1 1/2 cup **reduced fat cheddar cheese**

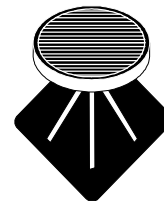
- Mix baking mix, water and beans.
- Spread this mixture in the bottom of a baking dish. This is the crust. Note: *Use a pan that will fit in a toaster oven to keep the kitchen cooler.*
- Brown meat, drain and rinse.
- Place meat on top of crust.
- Add salsa.
- Sprinkle cheese over top.
- Bake in 375 ° oven for 30 minutes.

## Low-Fat PBW (Peanut Butter Wrap)

- Mix 2 tablespoons **applesauce** with 1 tablespoon **peanut butter**.
- Spread mixture on a **flour tortilla**.
- Roll up tortilla. Serve.

## Chicken Packs

- Place 1 tablespoon **BBQ sauce** in the center of a square of heavy duty aluminum foil.
- Place a **skinless chicken breast** on top and add another tablespoon of BBQ sauce.
- Add slices of **green pepper**, **carrot strips**, and thin **potatoes** slices.
- Bring together corners of foil and crumple to seal.
- Bake about 35 minutes at 350°. (Keep the kitchen cool by using a toaster oven or try this one on the outdoor grill.)



## Taco Chicken Nuggets

- Mix 1 pkg. **taco seasoning** with 1/3 cup **seasoned bread crumbs** in a plastic bag.
- Add 2" pieces of **chicken breast** (cut from 4 breast halves, pounded slightly). Shake until coated.
- Spray cookie sheet with vegetable spray and arrange nuggets.
- Bake at 375 ° for 20 to 25 minutes.
- Serve with rice or taco shells.

## Whole Meal Pasta Salad

- Prepare a bag of **frozen pasta with vegetables** according to microwave directions on **the package**.
- **Add Italian** dressing and marinate for several hours or over night.
- Add 1 cup canned **black or red beans** (rinsed and drained).
- Add ½ cup **low fat shredded cheese**.
- Optional: add leftover meat, cubed.
- Serve with milk and fruit to have a complete meal. Serves 2-3.



## Easy Calzone

- Spread ¼ cup **shredded mozzarella** on a **flour tortilla**. DO get cheese to the edge.
- Bake at 425° F. until cheese melts.
- Put ¼ cup **browned, crumbled ground meat**, ¼ cup chopped **green pepper**, and ¼ cup sliced **mushrooms** onto tortilla.
- Fold tortilla in half forming a calzone. Using fork, crimp edges together. Bake until crisp, about 5-7 minutes.
- Top with purchased **pizza sauce**.

## Greek Pita

- Combine 2 fresh, chopped **spinach leaves** with 2 tablespoons of **feta cheese** and 2 tablespoons of grated **farmer cheese**.
- Put cheeses and spinach into a pita.
- Melt in the microwave.

## Easy Pizza

- Spread **soft cheese spread** on unopened **pita bread**, sliced bagel, OR English muffin.
- Sprinkle with **garlic powder**.
- Top with thin slices of **turkey or ham, black olives, and tomato**.
- Broil until hot.



## Traveling Taco

*(Great for the person who doesn't like to wash dishes and/or people on the move)*

- Brown, rinse and drain 1 lb. **ground meat**
- Open an individual size serving bag of **corn chips**, crush slightly
- Add ¼ cup ground beef to bag of chips
- Add the following to the bag in amounts that suit your preference and appetite:
  - **chopped lettuce**
  - **low-fat shredded cheddar cheese**
  - **chopped tomatoes**
  - **chili beans**
  - **chopped green onions**
  - **sliced ripe olives**
  - **low-fat sour cream**
  - **Western Dressing or Salsa**

## Colorful Cooler

- Add ½ cup **sugar** to 1 envelope of **unsweetened powdered drink mix**. Store in airtight container until ready to use.
- **To make a cooler:** In a blender or bowl, combine 1 cup of **low fat milk**, 1 scoop of **low fat vanilla ice cream**, and 1 to 1 1/2 Tablespoons of the powdered drink mixture. Blend until smooth. Serve.



Better Homes and Gardens, Kid's Snacks, 1985, Meredith Corporation.

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Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

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