



Nutrition Education with Seniors

News You Can Use



Making the Most of Your Freezer 2.0

Last month, we began a discussion on boosting freezer skills to help maximize savings, reduce food waste, and decrease meal preparation stress. Check out our continued tips below.

Packing Freezer Space

- When placing foods in the freezer, ensure they are first chilled and then provide enough space for air to circulate.
 - ⇒ Once food is completely frozen, foods can be packed closer to optimize space.
- First in, first out!
 - ⇒ Store oldest items at the front to ensure use. Make an inventory to keep track of what's in your freezer.

Freezer Care

Clean the freezer at least once per year to maximize space and eliminate odors. Visit the resource at the end of this article for helpful defrosting and cleaning tips!

Estimated Shelf-Life of Frozen Foods

Produce	8-12 months
Poultry	6-9 months
Fish	3-6 months
Ground Meat	3-4 months
Processed Meat	1-2 months

Resource: http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/gen_freeze.html

Make This Pasta Your Daily Rotini!

Selection:

- Choose a package without rips and tears. Rips and tears could mean the **rotini noodles** are unsafe to eat.
- Check the “Best by” or “Best if used by” date on the package.

Storage:

- Store packages of **dry rotini** in a cool, dry place for up to three years.
- After cooking, keep **rotini** in a tightly covered glass or plastic container for up to four days in the refrigerator or up to two months in the freezer.

Nutrition:

A 1/2 cup serving of **whole wheat rotini**

- Provides 90 calories, 24g carbohydrates, 4g protein, 2g fiber, and is naturally sodium free.
- Counts as a 1 oz equivalent from the MyPlate Grain group.

Uses:

- Pasta can be added as a fuel boosting base to soups, casseroles, and salads.
- Combine with eggs, fish, vegetables, meat, or cheese to create a balanced meal!





Reduce Food Waste and Save Money

Preparing meals should be *enjoyable*, *stress free*, and *budget friendly*. One way to maximize savings is to reduce the amount of food wasted each week. This can be challenging when meals and recipes provide large serving sizes, especially when we're cooking for one or two people.

Two simple methods for reducing food waste are utilizing semi-homemade meals and planned-overs.

Semi-homemade meals

"Semi-homemade" simply means using a combination of convenient foods (e.g. frozen vegetables, boxed rice, canned chicken) with fresh foods (e.g. eggs, cheese, salad) to downsize ingredients and control portion sizes.

Example: boxed macaroni and cheese with added frozen vegetables topped with fresh or canned chicken

Planned-overs

Tired of eating the same meal multiple days in a row? Plan to use leftover ingredients to make new meals! Check out this resource from Utah State University that includes unique ways to re-vamp your leftovers:

http://extension.usu.edu/fscreate/creates_curriculum_and_handouts

Slow Cooker Pasta Bean Soup

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 medium chopped onion
 1 chopped celery stalk
 1 peeled and chopped carrot
 2 cloves minced garlic
 8 cups low sodium chicken broth
 1 cup canned lima beans
 1/2 cup canned red lentils
 1 cup uncooked rotini
 1 bay leaf

Adapted from: <https://www.culinaryhill.com/slow-cooker-pasta-and-bean-soup>

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oil in a large sauce pan over medium heat. Add chopped onion, celery, and carrot. Cook until vegetables are soft, around 5 to 7 minutes.
2. Stir in minced garlic until fragrant, around 30 seconds.
3. Stir in broth, beans (drained), lentils, and bay leaf. Cover and bring to a boil; pour all prepared ingredients (except pasta) into slow cooker.
4. Cover and cook on HIGH 3-4 hours or LOW 7-8 hours.
5. Add pasta to slow cooker. Cover and cook about 10 minutes, until pasta is tender. Remove bay leaf.

Nutritional analysis (1 serving): 211 calories, 25g carbohydrates, 11g protein, 7g fat, 7g dietary fiber, 1g saturated fat, 178mg sodium, 678mg potassium

SERVES: 6 | SERVING SIZE: 2 cups

Contact your region's nutrition and wellness specialist:

Ann Heuer, MHS, RD, LD
aeheuer@iastate.edu
 515-204-3397

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
 Extension and Outreach

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or status as a U.S. veteran. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to Ross Wilburn, Diversity Officer, 2150 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, 515-294-1482, wilburn@iastate.edu.