



**COOKING  
MATTERS®**

**QUICK RECIPES, BUDGETING TIPS,  
& IDEAS FOR FEEDING KIDS HEALTHY FOODS.**

Cooking Matters helps families make healthy choices – on any budget. We want every parent and caregiver to have the skills they need to make healthy meals, and we’re building a world where healthy eating choices are available for everyone, with free, online digital tools and educational resources.



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# Build-Your-Own Grain Bowl

The amounts below make two grain bowls.  
Make more or less using the same proportions.

Choose ingredients and follow the directions on the back to make a tasty meal.



## Base Grain

2 cups  
cooked grains

+

## Fruits & Vegetables

Fresh/Frozen/Canned  
(Pick one from each category)

+

## Protein

1/2 cup, fully cooked

+

## Sauces

1/3 cup

+

## Toppings

Optional, to taste

Brown rice  
Whole wheat pasta  
Farro or quinoa  
Whole wheat couscous  
Wild rice  
Millet  
Polenta or oats

**Fruits (1/2 cup):** Apples, blueberries, strawberries, pineapple  
**Vegetables (1/2-1 cup):** Red peppers, mushrooms, carrots, broccoli, summer squash, zucchini, cucumbers, fennel, bok choy, roasted eggplant  
**Greens (1 cup):** Leaf lettuce, kale, arugula, spinach, mixed greens  
**Any leftovers in the fridge!**

Ground beef, chicken, or turkey (lean and drained of excess fat)  
Shrimp or fish  
Beans, lentils, pigeon peas, edamame, or tofu (drained and sautéed)  
Eggs (any style)

Low-sodium dressing or simple vinaigrette  
Salsa  
Low-fat yogurt

Low-fat shredded cheese  
Toasted almonds or cashews  
Pumpkin or sunflower seeds  
Avocado slices, olives, jalapenos, or salsa  
Chopped herbs (cilantro, parsley)  
Hot sauce

## Simple Vinaigrette



3 Tbsp olive oil  
2 Tbsp red wine vinegar  
1 tsp salt  
1/4 tsp pepper

Mix until incorporated.

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## Directions:

1. Cook grains according to the package instructions.
2. While grains are cooking, wash and cut up your fruit and vegetables. If using canned or thawed frozen vegetables, defrost and drain them well. If using raw fruits and vegetables, cut into small, bite-sized pieces or thin slices.
3. Prepare sauces. If you have leftovers, use as a sauce for stir-fry or salad dressing.
4. In a medium bowl, layer grains on the bottom, and top with fruits, vegetables and protein. Drizzle sauce and add toppings.

### Try These Combos

#### Taco bowl:

Brown rice / tomatoes +  
onions + peppers / ground  
beef or sliced chicken / olives  
+ jalapenos + low fat yogurt  
+ shredded cheese / hot sauce  
or salsa



#### Vegetarian bowl:

Lettuce + quinoa or couscous /  
your favorite cooked or raw  
vegetables + one new one  
(fennel, bok choy, roasted  
eggplant) / simple vinaigrette /  
sunflower seeds



#### Sunrise bowl:

Oatmeal / sliced strawberries  
+ canned peaches + frozen  
blueberries / dried cranberries  
or honey / chopped almonds

**Choosy eaters?** Grain bowls are customizable! Have kids help create their own bowl from a few different ingredients. Make them into fun faces or create designs on top.

**Crunched for time?** Use the same grains more than once, in different ways. Cook a large batch of rice or pasta, and use it in multiple meals. You can also eat bowls cold or hot – try hot pasta one night, then a cold noodle salad the next day.

#### Looking to save money?

Grain bowls are the perfect leftover lunch. Most grains are affordable, and a bulk package of rice or lentils will last a while in your pantry.

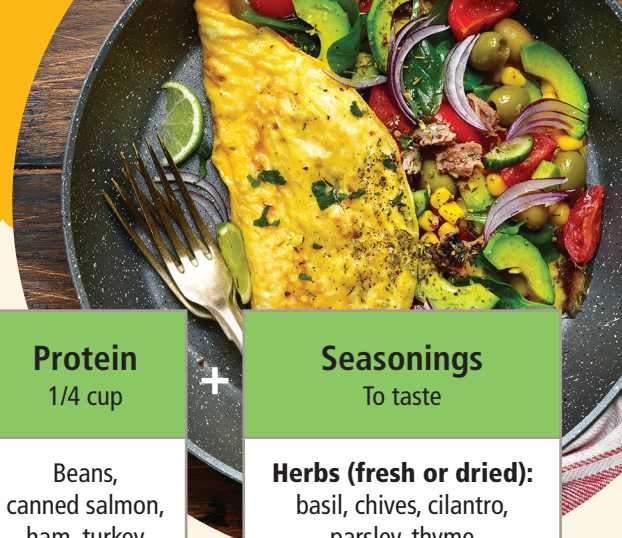
#### Still have leftover

**ingredients?** Make a grain bowl of savory ingredients, and add warmed vegetable broth for a quick and delicious soup!

# Build Your Own Omelets

The amounts listed below are for one adult serving.  
Use more if needed, and remember you may need to use a larger pan too.

**What you'll need:** Mixing bowl, fork, medium skillet, spatula, nonstick cooking spray



Base	+	Vegetables Fresh/Frozen/Canned 1/2 to 3/4 cup	+	Dairy (Optional) 1/8 cup	+	Protein 1/4 cup	+	Seasonings To taste
2 eggs 1 tablespoon of milk (optional) Salt and pepper to taste		<b>Precook:</b> Broccoli, frozen veggies, garlic, mushrooms, onions, peppers <b>Add at the end:</b> Canned veggies, corn, green onions, leftover veggies, peas, spinach, tomatoes  <b>...or use any of your favorite veggies!</b>		Cheddar, feta, provolone, queso fresco, ricotta, swiss		Beans, canned salmon, ham, turkey bacon, turkey sausage		<b>Herbs (fresh or dried):</b> basil, chives, cilantro, parsley, thyme <b>Spices:</b> Black pepper, garlic powder, paprika <b>Toppings:</b> Hot sauce, salsa, tajin  <b>...or your favorite herbs, spices, and toppings!</b>

## Did you know?

Cooking with eggs is common in a lot of different cultures.



You may be familiar with frittatas, shakshuka, tortilla española, chilaquiles, and omurice. These are just a few of the versions in which eggs are the main ingredient.

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## Directions:

1. Depending on the vegetables you're using, sauté them before adding to the omelet. If you'd eat it raw, you probably don't need to sauté. Set aside.
2. Add milk to the eggs if using. Beat eggs very thoroughly, until the mixture is perfectly smooth (no separation between yolks and white remains). Optional: mix fresh herbs and spices in here.
3. Pour egg mixture into the oiled pan on high to med-high heat. Once the eggs begin to cook, using the fork or spatula to lift the eggs away from the sides of the pan, allowing raw egg mixture to flow into the gap. Repeat this process until no raw egg mixture remains.
4. Depending on how you like your eggs cooked, you can flip the omelet over, as you would a pancake, to fully cook both sides, before adding your fillings. Otherwise, add fillings to one side of the omelet before folding the other half over the fillings.
5. Slide omelet out of the pan onto your plate. Top with any fresh herbs and spices you'd like.
6. Uh-oh... haven't quite mastered the omelet technique? That's ok – just turn your attempt into scrambled eggs by mixing the eggs and veggies all together in the pan!

**Choosy eaters?** Set up an omelet bar so everyone can choose their own toppings and flavorings.

**Crunched for time?** Make your omelet in the microwave. Pour your beaten egg mixture (using the milk is recommended for this technique) into an oiled coffee mug. Microwave for 30 seconds then stir the edges inward. Microwave again for 20 seconds, stir again. Continue to microwave in 10-20 second intervals until just cooked through. Add your favorite toppings and enjoy! This same technique could be used with a microwave-safe glass container to produce a wider, flatter egg that is perfect for a breakfast sandwich.

**Looking to save money?** Eggs are an inexpensive protein that last quite a while in your fridge. For more cost savings, fill your omelet with any frozen or canned produce you find at a good price. Omelets are also a great way to use up leftover veggies that would otherwise go to waste!

### **Making this a breakfast-on-the-go?**

Wrap a whole-wheat tortilla around your omelet and you've got a portable meal.

### **Want to meal prep or "cook once eat twice"?**

A frittata is basically an extra-large omelet that can be baked in the oven or made on the stovetop. Leftovers can be stored in the fridge or frozen for later use, making this the perfect make-ahead meal. Prep is very similar to making an omelet, but on a larger scale. For full instructions, see our Cooking Matters Frittata recipe!

# Snack Time: Just Choose Two!

Choose from any two food groups (or more!) below for a balanced snack.  
Aim for a veggie or fruit to be one of the two food groups.



Veggies 1/2 cup	+	Fruits 1/2 cup	+	Protein	+	Dairy	+	Grain
Baby carrots or carrot sticks Celery sticks Sliced peppers or cucumbers Green beans or snap peas Sliced cherry or grape tomatoes Avocado Cooked sweet potato wedges or slices Tomato salsa		Sliced apples, oranges, melon, banana, grapes, or other fresh fruit Handful of cranberries, raisins, or other dried fruit (1/4 cup) Fresh or frozen berries (thawed) Canned mandarin oranges, pineapple, or peaches 100% fruit juice Applesauce		Handful of peanuts, almonds, walnuts, or other nuts 2 Tbsp. peanut butter or sunflower butter Handful of pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, or other seeds 1/2 cup fresh, frozen (thawed) or dried edamame One hard-boiled egg 1/4 cup hummus or bean dip		One low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce cubes, shredded or sliced cheese 4-6 ounces of low-fat yogurt Small glass of milk Low-fat cottage cheese		Handful of whole grain crackers 1/2 cup of whole grain cereal or granola 2 cups of popcorn One whole grain pita or slice of toast Handful of homemade tortillas chips (see recipe below)

## Homemade Tortillas Chips



To make homemade tortilla chips, cut corn tortillas into wedges, coat with cooking spray, and bake at 375°F for 8-10 minutes.

Add a sprinkle of cheese before baking for extra flavor.

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## Tips:

**Safety alert!** Make sure snacks are sliced and diced in ways that prevent choking. Cut round foods like cherry tomatoes and grapes into quarters, slice hard-to-chew foods like bagels and tough meats into small pieces, spread sticky food like peanut butter in thin layers, and cook or cut hard and crispy foods like baby carrots and pretzels into smaller pieces. Stay with children while they are eating.

### Try These Snack Combos

#### **Banana Sundaes:**

Banana, sliced lengthwise + low-fat yogurt + chopped peanuts + sliced strawberries + granola

#### **Nacho Nibbles:**

Homemade tortilla chips + cherry tomatoes and green peppers + black beans + salsa + shredded cheddar cheese

#### **Pepper Dippers:**

Mini bell peppers filled with hummus + whole grain crackers

#### **Snacking Skewers:**

(On a skewer or chopstick) sliced cucumber + cubed cheese + grapes + hard-boiled egg

#### **Pretzel Butterfly:**

Celery + cream cheese + pretzels (for the wings!) + raisins

**Choosy eaters?** Store snacks in their own drawer or bin in the fridge or pantry. Give kids the power to choose what they want from the special snack supply!

**Crunched for time?** Pre-pack snacks for the week in small baggies or reusable containers when you have more time. Grab and go when you head out the door!

#### **Looking to save money?**

Buy fruits and vegetables in whole forms and do the prep work yourself! Choose frozen and canned fruits and vegetables when your favorites are not in season.

#### **Making this a snack-on-the-go?**

Choose handheld foods like veggie sticks, fruit slices, and cheese sticks, or dry snacks like nuts, whole grain crackers and cereal. Make sure any dips or messy snacks are in a sealed container!

**Want to meal prep or “cook once eat twice?”** Make big batches of snack recipes like granola, hummus, or tortilla chips to have on hand as snacks throughout the week.

# Every Day is Taco Tuesday!

Tacos are one of the best family meals because they can be made with a few affordable ingredients. And taco bars work for families with picky eaters!

Choose ingredients and follow the directions to make a tasty meal for four or two tacos each.



## Protein

16 oz. or 1 pound, fully cooked

+

## Vegetables

1-2 cups total

+

## Grains

8 total (1 per taco)

+

## Dairy

1/4 - 1/2 cup

+

## Toppings

Optional, to taste

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, sliced

Ground beef or steak, sliced

Refried beans, black beans, kidney beans or pinto beans

Slow-cooked meats like pernil or pot roast

Salmon fillet or canned salmon

Shrimp or white fish (tilapia, haddock, cod)

Roasted tofu slices or tempeh

Shredded carrots  
Thinly sliced cabbage or shredded lettuce  
Quartered tomatoes

Sautéed peppers, onions, spinach, or collard greens

Leftover potatoes

**Any seasonal or leftover veggies will work here!**

Corn tortillas  
Whole wheat tortillas

Shredded cheese  
Low-fat sour cream or plain yogurt

Fresh cilantro  
Chopped red onion  
Lime or lemon juice  
Guacamole or avocado slices  
Pickled onions or cucumbers  
Hot sauce

## Quick and Easy Pickled Veggies



Cover sliced veggies (try onions or cucumbers) with equal parts water and vinegar + 1 tsp salt, 1 bay leaf and whole peppercorns. Let sit for one hour!

**continued >**



## Directions:

1. Prepare your proteins and set aside. Wash and cut up your vegetables. If using canned or thawed frozen vegetables, defrost and drain them well. If using raw vegetables, cut into small, bite-sized pieces or thin slices.
2. Assemble tacos by placing meats first, veggie mixture, and top with dairy and toppings.

### Chef Tips:

- Soften up corn tortillas in a hot skillet for 1-2 minutes on each side or wrapped in a cloth towel and microwave for 1 minute.
- When in season, pico de gallo is a delicious topping. To make, chop 1 tomato, 1 onion, 1/2 jalapeno, juice from 1 lime, and a handful of cilantro and green onions and salt and pepper to taste.

**Choosy eaters?** Set up a taco bar to allow picky eaters to build their own taco.

**Crunched for time?** Keep the pantry stocked with tortillas, and make tacos with whatever ingredients you have in your pantry, fridge or freezer.

**Looking to save money?** Buy proteins when on sale and freeze. Use frozen and canned veggies, but take advantage of good prices on fresh especially when in season.

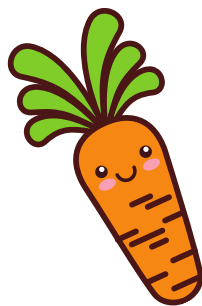
**Want to meal prep or “cook once, eat twice”?**

When making roasts, consider saving leftovers to use as your protein for tacos. Use leftover veggies, too!

**Still have leftovers?** Use a tortilla and fill it to make a burrito, or serve over greens for a taco salad.



# MAKE MEAL TIME FUN TIME!



Cut out each question with help from a grown-up & stick in a bowl. Everyone pull out one to ask at your next family meal! Add in more questions if you'd like, too!

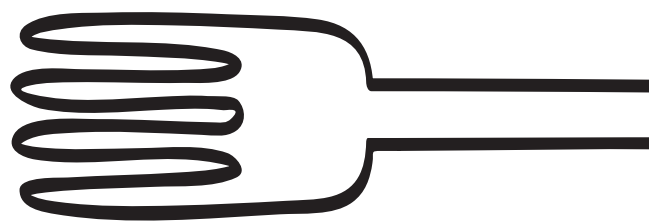
**What's the funniest face you can make?**

**Imagine the house is made of food!  
What food would it be made of?**

**What are you really good at?**

**What's your favorite song?  
Sing it!**

**Imagine you are a chef! What would you cook at your restaurant?**



**GROWN-UPS:**

Eating as a family can strengthen relationships, lead to healthier food choices, and build memories together. You might learn something new about your kiddos!  
#HomeTogether!