

Healthful and great-tasting food preparation can be overwhelming if you are new to cooking or need a refresher. The Cooking Basics fact sheets will help you get organized and plan and prepare nutritious and great tasting meals.

Planning Meals

Spending a little bit of time each week planning your meals will save you time, money, and empty calories. Use MyPlate as a guide for planning meals and snacks. MyPlate helps you portion your plate so that you are getting all the food groups and the nutrients that you need each day. Here are some tips:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make half of your grain choices — about one-quarter of your plate whole grains.
- Vary your protein choices — about one-quarter of your plate meat, poultry, fish, eggs, or beans and legumes.
- Add in a dairy serving.
- Aim for three food groups at breakfast.
- Aim for all five food groups at lunch and dinner.
- Use snacks for food groups that you are short on such as a vegetable and a protein or a fruit and a dairy.

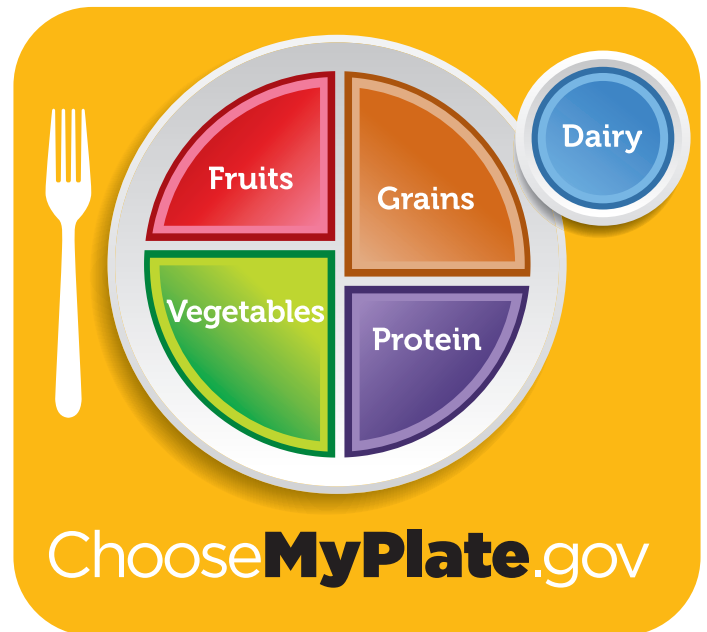
Choose MyPlate.gov has lots of tools like the Create a Grocery Game Plan Worksheet that will help you put meals and menus together:

https://choosemyplate-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/audiences/grocery_gameplan_interactive.pdf

Once you have your menu, make a list of the ingredients that you need. Check your cupboards, refrigerator, and freezer for foods that you need to use up. If you need some ideas on food selection, use MF3516, *The Well-Stocked Kitchen: Pantry and Non-Refrigerated Foods*, and MF3517, *The Well-Stocked Kitchen: Refrigerated and Frozen Foods*, shopping lists.

Choosing Recipes

Recipes are everywhere but sometimes they are confusing, time-consuming, and expensive. Here are some tips for choosing recipes:



- First look over the ingredients. Are they ingredients that you and your family eat?
- How many ingredients are there? More ingredients usually mean longer preparation and possible cooking time.
- Are there any ingredients that need preparation ahead of time? For example, some recipes may call for cooked meat or chopped vegetables. These tasks will need to be done before making the recipe.
- Look at the measurements. Do you have the right measuring tools? Our MF3518, *Cooking Basics: Measuring Tools and How to Use Them*, shows you how to measure accurately so your recipe turns out as expected.
- Look at the cooking terms. Are you familiar with what it means to boil, simmer, or whip? Our MF3533, *Cooking Basics: Basic Cooking Terms*, reviews cooking terms.
- How many servings does the recipe make? If you need only a few servings, use MF3531, *Cooking Basics: Reducing a Recipe*, to reduce the number of servings in the recipe.

Sometimes you may have several ingredients on hand but no recipe. You can pull together a number of great tasting meals by using MF3534, *Cooking Basics: Making a Meal from What's on Hand*.



Here are the links to the Cooking Basics Series as well as other helpful fact sheets and videos.

Printed Resources:

Cooking Basics:

MF3516, *The Well-Stocked Kitchen: Pantry and Nonrefrigerated Foods*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=22667>

MF3517, *The Well-Stocked Kitchen: Refrigerated and Frozen Foods*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=22680>

MF3518, *Cooking Basics: Measuring Tools and How to Use Them*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=22720>

MF3531, *Cooking Basics: Reducing a Recipe*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=22799>

MF3533, *Cooking Basics: Cooking Terms*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=22720>

MF3534, *Cooking Basics: Making a Meal from What's on Hand*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=22862>

Other Printed Resources:

MF2465, *At Home Safe Food Handling: It's in Your Hands*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=990>

MF3204, *Food Product Dating: What Do Those Dates Mean?* <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=201&pubId=18544>

L730, *Ingredient Substitutions*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=395>

MF3131, *Safe Food Storage: The Cupboard*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=201&pubId=17459>

MF3130, *Safe Food Storage: The Refrigerator and Freezer*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=17480>

MF3539, *Seasoning with Herbs and Spices*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=390&pubId=22959>

MF3207, *Tips for Storing Fresh Produce*. <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/Item.aspx?catId=201&pubId=18547>

Cooking Basics: Related Videos:

The Well-Stocked Kitchen: Pantry and Nonrefrigerated Items (MF3516)

The Well-Stocked Kitchen: Refrigerated and Frozen Foods (MF3517)

Cooking Local Foods: <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/local-food-nutrition-health/cooking-local-foods/getting-started-stocking-the-basics/>

Cooking Basics: Measuring Tools and How to Use Them (MF3518)

Kids a Cooking Videos: <https://www.kidsacookin.org/tips-and-techniques/how-to-techniques.html>

- Measuring Cut-up Ingredients
- How to Measure Sugar
- Measuring Margarine and Butter
- How to Measure Flour
- How to Measure Liquids in Recipes
- How to Measure Shortening

Cooking Basics: Cooking Terms (MF3533)

Utah FACS Education Core: Foods and Nutrition — Cooking Terms. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLY-a15CNpgU>

Cooking Local Foods. <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/local-food-nutrition-health/cooking-local-foods/>

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| • Knife Skills | • Cooking Eggs |
| • Chef's Knife | • Boiling and Blanching |

- Steaming
- Roasting
- Sautéing and Stir-Frying

Cooking Basics: Reducing a Recipe (MF3531)

Iowa Spend Smart. Eat Smart. — Use A Food Thermometer. https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/video/use-a-food-thermometer/#video_player

North Carolina Cooking Local Foods — Stocking a Basic Kitchen. <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/local-food-nutrition-health/cooking-local-foods/>

Cooking Basics: Making a Meal from What's on Hand (MF3534)

Iowa Spend Smart. Eat Smart. — Make a One Dish Meal on the Stove Top. <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/video-category/food-preparation/>

Extra Videos:

Iowa Spend Smart. Eat Smart. — How to Drain Ground Beef. <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/video-category/food-preparation/>

North Carolina Cooking Local Foods—Cooking Eggs. <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/local-food-nutrition-health/cooking-local-foods/>

Iowa Spend Smart. Eat Smart. <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/video-category/food-preparation/>

- Preparing asparagus, avocado, bell pepper, broccoli, cauliflower, kiwi, melon, roasted, vegetables, winter squash, zucchini
- How to drain ground beef
- How to make a one dish meal

Kids a Cookin-How To Techniques. <https://www.kidsacookin.org/tips-and-techniques/how-to-techniques.html>

- Dicing Onions
- Measuring Cut-up Ingredients
- How to Measure Sugar
- Measuring Margarine and Butter
- How to Measure Flour
- How to Measure Liquids in Recipes
- How to Measure Shortening

Utah FACS Education Core: Foods and Nutrition Cooking Terms. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLY-a15CNpgU>

North Carolina Cooking Local Foods. <https://localfood.ces.ncsu.edu/local-food-nutrition-health/cooking-local-foods/>

- Knife Skills
- Thermometer Basics
- Cooking Eggs
- Boiling and Blanching
- Steaming
- Sautéing and Stir-Frying
- Roasting
- Baking
- Dressings and Sauces
- Herbs and Seasonings

Publications from Kansas State University are available at:
www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu

Contents of this publication may be freely reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Lisa Martin, *Cooking Basics: Getting Started*, Kansas State University, September 2020

**Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station
and Cooperative Extension Service**

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director of K-State Research and Extension, Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts.

MF3543 September 2020