

Sample Weekly Dinner Menu

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Pulled Pork Barbecue Sandwiches, potato chips, green salad, sliced watermelon	Roast chicken, boiled and buttered colored baby potatoes, salad, steamed broccoli	Chicken casserole, canned green beans, applesauce, green salad	Spaghetti and meatballs, garlic toast, green salad	Pan fried salmon, green salad, sliced fresh peaches	Ground Turkey Tacos, frozen peas for the children, sliced fresh strawberries	Bowls of home-made mac in cheese, sliced watermelon, green salad
<i>This is when a leftover from the freezer comes into play. Pulled pork freezes well once cooked. I can double bag it, thaw it in the fridge or crock the night before. Everything else can be prepared Saturday. Sometimes, I even set the table the night before in preparation for a day of rest.</i>	<i>If I am using a frozen chicken, I pull it out Friday evening or Saturday morning and pop it in the fridge to thaw gently. If I forget, second best is to put it in the sink with cold water and let it thaw.</i>	<i>I often make two small dishes instead of one large 13x9 pan of casseroles for our family. Someday the children will eat more and polish off an entire pan, but for now, it is too much. So, I split it. Cook one. And put the other one-uncooked in the freezer. I will use it for a Sunday dinner, or for another Tuesday dinner when we have no leftovers from Monday.</i>	<i>Spaghetti is super cheap and versatile. I have added parmesan cheese to the sauce for a creamier version. Meatballs, ground beef or ground turkey. Skip the meat altogether for a super cheap meal.</i>	<i>Salmon is not cheap, but it is excellent for the heart, brain, eyes, and overall health. I try to keep it on the menu as long as I can afford it. I purchase it frozen to cut the cost. It runs about \$7 for a pound of frozen Wild Atlantic salmon at Aldi. Frozen wild Atlantic Salmon is not my first choice, but it is the best I can afford at this point.</i>	<i>Tacos are a simple meal. All I do is cook a pound of ground or sliced meat. Venison is my favorite. Venison works perfectly with Mexican flavors, but it is not always easy to come by, so beef or ground turkey works.</i>	<i>I keep it very simple on Saturday and keep certain ingredients on hand to use.</i>

Meal Planning Health and Budget Tips:

Meat: Cutting out meat as much as possible makes a more reasonable grocery budget. I try to make 1-2 meals a week meat free for that reason.

Green Salads: Most Americans are malnourished. We eat a lot of food, but most of it is low in vitamins and minerals. So, in order to combat that deficiency in our home, I endeavor to have at least two sides of vegetables each meal. It is easy to tack on a green salad with spinach, kale, and leafy lettuce with each meal. Such a salad goes with everything and is nutrient dense.

Bread: We rarely eat bread with our evening meal. If I do have it with spaghetti, I don't partake. It is for the children and guests. Jim and I don't need the carbs. We tend to have bread more for lunch because Jim takes a sandwich to work every day and the children eat peanut butter on bread.

Desserts: We do not have desserts. They simply aren't necessary. Birthday's and days we are sharing in hospitality are the exception. Skipping a dessert after dinner is healthy and cheap, and saves time. I strongly recommend it.

Fruit: Like meat, I try to keep the cost under a dollar a pound. This means I buy fruit in season. I don't buy grapes much. But tropical fruit is usually cheap year round. Bananas, pineapples, kiwi, and mangoes are easy to find for less than a dollar a pound. Peaches, apples, strawberries, and melons we eat in season, and don't purchase out of season with the exception of apples which can be purchased reasonably year round. Berries and grapes are usually expensive even in season, so I tend to buy them frozen instead of fresh, but do splurge occasionally if the price is right.