

OTHER *Stuff*



SUPPORTING THE “OTHER” CONCERNS OF OUR RYAN WHITE FAMILY

MEAL PLANNING & MAXIMIZING RESOURCES

TOOLKIT



LAS VEGAS TGA | RYAN WHITE PART A



LET'S DO SOME PLANNING!

Use the following as foundational definitions to complete the **PATHWAY WORKSHEET** located on the last page of the toolkit. The auto-fill form will help you to document your monthly expenditures, begin identifying how your money is spent and where adjustments can be made. Take a few minutes to start planning for your future. We suggest you download the form directly to your devices, so that you are able to save your input.

If you are one who already uses a budget in your shopping endeavors, then it may be old news, but for those of us who are looking for different ways to stretch the budget maybe should consider the following...

I have always enjoyed grocery shopping, well almost. Particularly when I have a special meal or gathering in mind, cooking and shopping for ingredients is a lot less stressful.

It is the intermittent, "what's for dinner" shopping that drives me crazy. This typically is the case when the meal has not been thought about in advance, and no one has taken anything out the freezer to defrost, I call it panic shopping, and it usually results in a \$20-30 spend, to make sure "I didn't forget anything".

In the Las Vegas TGA, there are roughly seven major supermarket chains. Taking the time to look at the ads that come in your mailbox can be well worth it.

So for the first suggestion....

1. THE FREEZER IS YOUR FRIEND

Did you know that the two major big box membership stores accept food stamps. This promotes great opportunity for you to manage your food budget. Now there are definitely some products in that may offer better deals than your neighborhood grocery take up

Buy and Freeze. If you are a big cilantro fan, this and other leafy greens are excellent when freezing. Whether selecting Fresh Spinach, Cilantro, Kale or other leafy green

If they are going in a dip, soup, or sauce, freezing

them will preserve their freshness, and give you staples for your salsas, soups and salads.

Cilantro, Leafy Greens, Spinach, Peppers - If they are going into a soup, dip or sauce or salsa the freezer is your friend. I like to rinse/sit them in a large bowl of cold water, and add a tiny bit of vinegar. Swish them around, and let everything stand for about 5 minutes. As the silt and dirt fall to the bottom, grab them out do a quick rinse, drop them into a ziplock bag and throw them in the freezer.

2. BUY BULK WHEN YOU CAN

Did you know that Costco, Sams Club and many other big box membership stores accept food stamps. This promotes great opportunity for you to manage your food budget. Now there are definitely some products that may offer better deals going to your neighborhood grocery, but a handful of items, can save **SIGNIFICANT** time and money.



Memberships at such places must be paid for, but depending on your need this may be able to be balanced out, or you can share membership with a trusted friend.

Consider the following, and determine whether or not these items would be beneficial in your meal prep process...

CHEESE...If you are of the mindset, that cheese goes with everything and are not lactose intolerant, then I'm with you and VOTE yes!. Although at the big C they offer gourmet cheeses, with Garlic, Espresso, Wine and varied other flavors, I tend to leave those for special occasions such as Holidays.

On the norm, I drive my happy little cart right on down to the Eggs, Cheese, Sandwich Meat refrigerated section. No doubt the staples are there.

~ MONTEREY JACK ~ MILD CHEDDAR ~
~ SHARP CHEDDAR ~ MOZZERELLA ~

These selections all come in a 2 lb. block for anywhere from \$4.79 - \$5.99 / ea. Now if you do a great deal of holiday cooking with home made macaroni & cheese, for some other cheese richen this is a time & money saver. Whether you need a single slice for a sandwich or you are shredding for inclusion in a dish, this is a go to.

SEASONINGS... Another great opportunity to maximize your food dollars are in bulk seasonings. Again, at many of the traditional grocers as well as big box stores, you can purchase either industrial size containers, or loose bulk portions of your favorite seasoning.

Items such as vegetable soup mix, taco seasoning, gravy, cereals, rice and even pastas are commonly available.

The vegetable soup mix, for many, is a regular go to. It not only serves well to season a chicken or pork stock, with the dehydrated vegetables, but think about a spinach dip, fondue, or other spread, that needs some robust seasonings to complete it.

Taco seasoning is an excellent input, for the obvious, but how about throwing a smidgen in the crock pot, with a roast or other meat. Sptinkle a bit when your putting chicken or fish on the grill.

CANDY...Now, proceed on this one with caution, because buying in bulk here isnt always the healthiest. But, if you are responsible for a party or fun filled

gathering.... this is the place to buy bulk. If you need to fill up a bunch of party favors, or even cook/bake with candies, the bulk route can be very beneficial. In most instances, you can access both wrapped and loose favorites, from chocolates to hard candies.

For those highly decorated gingerbread houses, you can find a variety of colors, textures and tastes to make wonderfully sweet treats.

MEALS ON A BUDGET

There are a couple of strategies when considering your monthly meal planning activities.

The first is determining how much time you realistically to have to cook a daily meal. For some of us, a 8-9 hour work day combined with a timely bi-directional communitie, with expecting of preparing a full course or even a balanced meal, becomes a significant challenge.

The other obstacle is grounded at ensuring you have all of the ingredients necessary to cook the meals that most please you and your loved ones.

Granted, we dont have to create extraordinary fanciful meals like we see on those Food channels, but most of us do desire to create a meal that is not only pleasing to the eye, but is a winner for those whom we break bread with.



Truthfully, although fast food is a frequenter for those who are constantly running to and fro, the nutritional benefits are likely

Creamy Corn Chowder



Why not make a soothing warm chowder, full of nutrients, yet satisfying for the chilly evenings. Although you can use a dutch oven, think about the savory aroma this will create as it simmers in your traditional slow cooker device.

- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 4 cups corn kernels (from 4-5 ears corn) reserve cobs for stock

Cut the corn from the stalk setting kernals aside, Begin by bringing to a boil, your stock, the cobs, milk, and cream.

- 4 oz (4 slices) bacon, cooked
- 1 large onion finely diced (1 1/2 cup)
- 1 large carrot cut into 1/4" dice (1 cup)
- 3 stalks celery finely diced (1 cup)
- 1 lb Yukon potatoes 3 medium, peeled and cut into 1/4" thick pieces
- 2-3 tsp sea salt or to taste
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper or to taste
- 2 Tbsp Chives chopped, to garnish

Once your stock mixture has boiled, transfer to you slow cooker or dutch oven. Gradually stir in the bacon (crumbled), onion, carrots, celery, salt, and black pepper. Let simmer for 4-5 minutes.

Place potatoes into stock, periodically checking for thier tenderness. until you are able to cut them easily with the fork.

Serve with a nice garlic or cheese toast.

Pico de Gallo

(Salsa Mexicana)

Who doesnt love a fresh juicy salsa to go with fish, chicken, seafood or just by itself?

Filled with nutrients, this quick fix, can add googobs of flavor to just about anything. Whether you enjoy desire something spicy or prefer to leave the heat to others, a few basic ingredients are key to quck flavor and healthy eating. The best thing about it, is there are no official measurements required.



- 5 - 7 Roma Tomatoes (any type of Tomato will do)
- 1 Bunch of Cilantro
- 1 - 2 tsp Garlic
- 1 small-medium Onion
- 1/4 tsp Salt
- 1/4 tsp Pepper

Option 1: Chunky Salsa

This once is a great substitute or addition to a salad. Chop the vegetables, and simply toss, as you would any other salad. If you like jalepeno's or other chilis, through a few in. Throw it on top of your morning eggs, noon-day quesadilla, an evening mix with some grilled chicken or just as a quick snack.

This can easily last a few days in the fridge.

Option 2: Saucy Salsa

I enjoy using the food processor to help make the kitchen/cooking plight easier. By taking the same ingredients and doing a bit more of a puree, I am able to freeze the mixture in single service plastic bags, and use at my leisure. HOWEVER, when making the pureed version, I use considerably less (if any onion), for fear of the overpowering flavor dominating the freezing process. I will add a bit more garlic, and whatever other complementary seasonings I have in the pantry.



Nothing Like a Good Hearty

Home Made Tacos

The beauty of tacos, is that you can fill them with just about anything, and they can be very healthy.

Break up the monotony and throw in some chicken, shrimp, scallops or your traditional meat.

Maybe you have a holiday turkey sitting in the deep freezer. Whether you roast it or put it in a large stock pot, through in some taco seasoning and boil until it falls off of the bone.

We like to make rolled tacos with the shredded turkey.

Rolling them in softened corn shells, toothpick to secure, and into the gallon size freezer bag they go. Pull out a few for a quick fix dinner, or have them easily available when running to a pot luck.

If you are accustomed to fried corn shells, try pan searing instead. Nothing but a little cooking spray and throw those babies on the pan. They soften up, but still offer a little texture for your taste buds.

Garnish with your favorite salsa, cheese, avocado, cabbage or whatever and enjoy.



As the weather finally cools down, we may find a need for a timely yet hearty meal.

Soups and stews are wonderful meal options that can stretch for multiple meals or occasions and please the masses.

Whether your grandma's old fashion chicken soup or a thicker option such as chili, many of the options freeze well and taste even better a day or two after cooking.

LIMITED IN YOUR FREEZING CAPACITY?

Rather than storing in traditional hard plastic containers, use a gallon size freezer bag. Fill and lay flat. Multiple bags can lay on top of one another to maximize freezer space, This is a great trick for pasta as well.



WHAT'S NEXT?

KEEPING UP DURING THE HOLIDAYS



As we approach the holidays, consider your plan to stay on top of your health. This includes physical, mental, emotional and spiritual.

What can you do to ensure that you enjoy the time spent with family and friends without over-burdening your own capacity.

Whether you celebrate a special religious day or merely find this the season to spend with your loved ones, create a plan to enjoy the time WITHOUT overwhelm.

