Summer Theme Meals

The best way to save money is to make a plan.
Make life easy and fun this summer.

Plan some meals with a theme.
Mealtime will be like a party - relaxing and delicious.
You will know what is cooking for dinner,
and your family will love it!

Start with 2 or 3 Theme Meals:

**Meatless Monday** - serve tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches; bean burritos; eggplant parmesan; or grilled veggie tacos.

**Fiesta Tuesday** - serve tacos, enchiladas, fajitas, burritos, quesadillas, beans and rice, or Spanish rice.

**Lotsa Pasta Wednesday** - serve spaghetti and meatballs; chicken and penne; shrimp scampi or lasagna.

**Thursday Picnic** - pack a meal and visit the beautiful parks, zoos and beaches in your community. Bring along a sandwich, wrap, salad or finger foods.

**Seafood Friday** - try different kinds of fish or seafood - salmon, tilapia, cod, catfish, or shrimp. Grill or bake fish, salmon or shrimp, make a fish or shrimp taco, create a shrimp quesadilla. Go fishing and eat local fish.

**Saturday Cookout** - Grill marinated chicken, grilled chicken legs or pork chops, beef or shrimp kabobs. Try grilled fruits and veggies.

**Sunday Salad** - prepare the ingredients for a Grilled Chicken Salad. Let your family build their own salad - an easy meal for Sunday night.

Theme Meals are a fun way to try new foods.

What does it cost to feed a family?
The cost of feeding a healthy diet for a family of 4 can cost $146 to $289 a week.
That would be $21 to $41 each day.

This is based on all meals and snacks prepared at home for a couple with 2 school aged children.

- A thrifty food plan costs $146 a week.
- A low cost food plan costs $191 a week.
- A moderate cost plan costs $239 a week.
- A liberal plan costs $289 a week.

Source: USDA Food Costs 2013

Make a Plan
Make a shopping list.

Cook once and Eat twice
Eat leftovers for lunch.
Plan to eat leftovers for some dinners. Some dishes actually taste better when reheated. You will spend less time cooking, and less food will be thrown away.

Cook with less meat
Meat is the most expensive food to buy. Prepare meals with smaller amounts of meat. Use other protein foods such as beans, lentils, fish, eggs and peanut butter.

Share Meals
Get together once a week with family or friends. Bring your own meat or a dish to pass. It’s a fun way to try new dishes, and spend time with others.
Make half your plate
Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and Veggies are a good buy.
An apple can cost 40¢, whereas a candy bar can cost 95¢.

✓ Watch the prices - every fruit and vegetable has a season when they are cheap and taste their best. Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season.
✓ Buy fresh fruits and vegetables at your local farmers' markets, road stands or farms.
✓ Some vegetables are always a good buy - cabbage, potatoes and carrots. Cook with these vegetables often.
✓ Buy frozen vegetables. You can pour out an amount to cook and freeze the rest for later meals.

Keep Fruits and Vegetables Fresh.
✓ Stock your freezer with frozen fruits and veggies. Stock your cupboard with canned fruits and veggies.
✓ Plan to buy fresh fruits and veggies twice a week if you want to eat fresh produce during the entire week.
✓ Otherwise, plan to eat fresh produce at the beginning of the week, and eat canned or frozen produce at the end of the week.
✓ Buy only the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables that your family will eat. It is better to buy only 4 apples instead of the 5 pound bag of apples if your family will only eat 4 apples in a week.

Got a crowd?
Plan a Summer Party:

Build your own Quesadilla -
Make a platter of ingredients for quesadillas. Let your children build their own quesadillas. Heat it in a skillet or over the grill.

Sandwich or Wrap Buffet - Make a platter of meats, lettuce, sliced tomatoes, peppers, shredded carrots. Serve with tiny buns or small tortillas. Let everyone build their favorite sandwich.

Breakfast Bar -
Serve mini pancakes, waffles, scrambled eggs, small pieces of fried ham; cut up pieces of melon, strawberries, oranges, or blueberries. Serve Breakfast foods for Dinner.

Eating meals with your family
is the best way to promote healthy eating and healthy weights for children.

Most family meals only last 20 minutes.
This is a small investment in time that has a big impact on your family’s health.

What can you do?

☐ Plan some Summer Theme meals for my family.
☐ Eat meals with my family on most nights.
☐ Make half my plate Fruits and Vegetables.
☐ Other: ____________________________

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