

## MARTI'S MEGA-COOKING FAVORITES

How do I do what I do? Only three of five of our children still live at home, but one of my secret survival tools as a pastor's wife, homeschool mom, and book doctor/writer/editor is mega- or "once in a while" cooking. My kids and I take two or three days to prepare between forty and fifty main dish meals for the freezer. We make large recipes that we divide into several meals each.

Mega-cooking frees me for work and family time. It confines most of the mess and time to our cooking days. It also allows us to buy in bulk which reduces cost and waste.

Friends often ask for recipes, so here are a few of our favorites. Feel free to print on cardstock if you'd like. Various authors have published on this topic but two of my favorites are *Mega Cooking: A Revolutionary New Plan for Quantity Cooking* by Jill Bond (Cumberland House, 2000) and *The Freezer Cooking Manual from 30 Day Gourmet: A Month of Meals Made Easy* by Nancy Slagle (30 Day Gourmet Press, 2008).

Enjoy!

### BROCCOLI CHOWDER

2 quarts chicken broth	5 pounds fresh broccoli (or frozen)
Salt to taste	3 (12-ounce) cans evaporated milk
15 cups milk	10 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
1 ¼ cups margarine	6 cups chopped ham or chicken (opt.)

Clean and chop up broccoli; boil in chicken broth until tender and set aside. Combine milk, cream, salt, margarine, and cheese. Cook slowly until cheese is melted, then add broccoli, broth, and meat. Cool and divide into zip-top freezer bags.

To serve: thaw and simmer until heated through. DO NOT allow to boil.

**Yield:** 5 or 6 meals for a family of 5

### CHICKEN CHALUPA

12 cups chicken, boiled and deboned  
9 regular cans cream of mushroom soup (cheaper if you buy large cans or make a white sauce instead. I've also substituted creamed corn and evaporated milk for some of the soup; cream of chicken would also work well.)  
3 pounds sour cream  
6 small cans diced green chiles (more or less as desired)  
1 chopped onion (or equiv. dried)  
40 corn tortillas (more or less depending on thickness; flour tortillas will work, too)  
4 pounds grated cheddar cheese  
1 ½ cups yellow cornmeal

Cut or tear chicken into bite-sized pieces. Mix with sour cream, soup, chiles, and onion. Tear each tortilla into eight pieces.

In three 13 x 9" or larger casseroles, place a layer of tortillas, chicken/soup mixture, and cheese. Repeat until ingredients are used up; the last layer should be cheese topped with ½ cup cornmeal per casserole. Wrap tightly or cover and freeze or refrigerate for at least eight hours before baking at 350° for one hour. Uncover for the last fifteen minutes.

**Yield:** 3 large casseroles

## CREAMY HAMBURGER SOUP

3 pounds ground meat	6 tablespoons butter
3 cups onion, chopped (or equiv. dried)	3 cups carrots, sliced
1 cup green pepper, finely chopped	1 tablespoon salt
46 ounces tomato juice	2 teaspoons thyme
1/2 teaspoon pepper	1 cup flour
2 teaspoons marjoram	
2 quarts milk	

Brown ground meat in a large pot; drain fat and move meat to another container. Put butter, onion, pepper and carrots into pot and cook only until the onion is tender. Return meat to pot and add potatoes, tomato juice, and seasonings. Simmer for ten minutes; DO NOT overcook potatoes.

Blend flour thoroughly into about two cups of the milk; stir into the soup mixture. Add remaining milk and stir thoroughly. Cool and package in zip top freezer bags. Freeze.

Thaw and heat thoroughly; stirring frequently. Add more milk if desired.

**Yield:** about 5 meals for a family of five

## COMPANY POTATO CASSEROLE

*I've shared this recipe more than any other I make. Easy to divide in thirds if you're not ready to mega-cook, too.*

27 medium potatoes	1 ½ cups butter or margarine
1 onion, diced (or equiv. dried)	3 cans cream of chicken soup
3 pounds sour cream	4 ½ cups grated cheddar cheese
Salt and pepper to taste	

### **At serving time, per recipe:**

1 ½ cups crushed corn flakes  
¼ c. butter or margarine

**Yield:** Three 13 x 9" casseroles

Boil potatoes in jackets, cool, peel, and grate. Heat 1 ½ cups butter with soup and blend in onion, cheese and sour cream. Stir in grated potatoes. Divide into three gallon-size ziptop bags, smooth flat, and freeze.

To serve, thaw one bag and pour into a buttered 13 x 9" pan (I like to use glass or stoneware). Sprinkle crushed corn flakes on top. Melt butter and pour over corn flakes. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.

**Yield:** 3 large casseroles

## MOM'S MEAT LOAF

(credit to my mom, Rosemary Surface)

9 pounds ground meat	6 cups Saltine cracker crumbs
3 tablespoons salt	4 ½ cups milk
6 eggs	

Beat eggs slightly with fork. Add ground meat; mix well. Stir in salt and gradually add cracker crumbs. Mix thoroughly with fork. Add milk to make moist loaf. Divide evenly, flatten, and store in six zip-top bags. To cook, thaw, shape into loaf with hands and press in lightly-greased loaf pan or casserole. Cover and bake: 400°F. for 45 minutes; 275° for three hours; or as meatloaf muffins, 30-45 minutes at 325°.

**Yield:** 6 large loaves

## SLOPPY JOES

(credit to my friend Sue Ferguson)

6 pounds ground meat  
3/8 teaspoon garlic powder  
½ teaspoon pepper  
¼ cup chopped green pepper  
1 ½ cups brown sugar  
6 tablespoons prepared mustard

3 cups chopped onion (or equiv. dried)  
1 tablespoon salt  
2 ¾ cups catsup  
3 tablespoons sugar  
6 tablespoons vinegar  
3 pounds tomato sauce

Brown the ground meat with the onions. Drain. Add remaining ingredients and simmer ten minutes. Freeze in desired portions. Thaw; heat the mixture and serve warm on buns.

**Yield:** approximately 36 sandwiches

## SUPER SPAGHETTI SAUCE

6 pounds hot or Italian sausage, ground  
2-- 6 pound, 10 oz. cans tomato sauce  
2 quarts water  
½ cup parsley flakes  
½ cup Italian seasoning  
¼ cup thyme  
to taste

4 pounds ground meat  
8 pounds canned tomatoes  
1 cup chopped green pepper  
2 chopped onions (or equiv. dried)  
2 tablespoons pepper  
1 tablespoon garlic powder or minced garlic

Sauté meat with onions and peppers, drain. Add all remaining ingredients. Boil, then reduce heat and simmer for a while. Divide sauce among the desired number of freezer bags (I use about 3 cups of sauce per 1 pound of spaghetti noodles). May halve this recipe if desired and will still make a lot.

**Yield:** 5 meals of spaghetti sauce for a family of five + 3 large pans of lasagne or manicotti + about 10 2-cup bags to use as pizza sauce

**EASY LASAGNE:** Spread about 1 cup of this sauce on the bottom of a 13 x 9" pan. Top with a layer of uncooked lasagna noodles. Add a layer of 1 cup cottage cheese topped by a layer of 1 cup mozzarella and/or cheddar. Repeat, ending with a layer of sauce. Wrap and freeze. Thaw and bake at 350° until bubbling, approximately one hour. May add more cheese on top just before removing from oven.

## STROGANOFF

(credit to my friend Sue Ferguson)

2 pounds beef sirloin or round steak, cut into strips  
(I've also used ground turkey or stew beef)  
4 tablespoons butter  
1 onion, finely chopped (or equiv. dried)  
1 tablespoon soy sauce mixed with  
¼ tsp. garlic powder  
2 tablespoons ketchup  
½ cup water

1 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced  
1 cup water  
  
1 tsp. salt  
2 tablespoons flour

sour cream (added when you heat to serve)

Melt butter in skillet; cook and stir mushrooms and onion until onion is tender. Remove vegetables from skillet. In the same skillet, brown meat over medium heat. Stir in water, soy sauce, garlic powder, ketchup and salt. Let simmer 20-30 minutes. Mix flour and water; stir into meat mixture. Add mushrooms and onion, Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute. Place in two zip-top freezer bags.

To serve: thaw, heat, and add ½ cup of sour cream to each meal. Serve over noodles or rice.

**Yield:** 2 meals for a family of five.

## QUAKERS

Old Sturbridge Village, MA

(BONUS: not a mega-cooking recipe  
but a favorite nonetheless)

2 cups brown sugar  
2 eggs, beaten  
3 cups quick oats  
1 teaspoon salt

1 cup butter or margarine  
2 cups sifted flour  
1 teaspoon soda  
2 teaspoons vanilla

Cream together the sugar and the butter. Add beaten eggs and vanilla. Sift flour with soda and salt, stir in oats and other dry ingredients. Beat well.

Put  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar into bowl. Dip fingers in sugar, then pinch of a bit of dough and roll it to the size and shape of a walnut.

Place balls on a cookie sheet about 3 inches apart. Bake at 375° for 12-15 minutes.

**Yield:** Four dozen large soft cookies or it may be rolled, chilled, and sliced to make 6 dozen thinner crisp cookies.