

Getting the most for your meat dollar

As we face the current economic situation, people are adjusting their spending to get the maximum from each dollar of income.

This is especially true with family grocery shopping. Many families have treated food budgets almost as discretionary income, pinching pennies on food if other expenses were high and buying extra or special food items when money wasn't as tight.

Now many of us are looking for ways to maintain a healthy diet while adjusting to less purchasing power.

Meat — or more specifically the meat group — is a major expense in the family food budget. Savings realized in this area of food costs can be a real help. The meat group, including meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts, is valued most highly for protein, iron and some B vitamins.

Protein is vital to every body cell. The body uses protein to build and maintain tissues. But it is not required by the body in large amounts. This is why food plans suggest only two small servings each day. Excess protein is used for fuel (calories) or is converted to fat for energy use later. It's not stored as protein.

What does this mean in food buying?

It may mean changing some great American eating habits.

Instead of the "all you can eat" attitude, you can save on meat. Provide enough for each person's share and hold the rest for other meals.

Take pot roast for instance. Americans are fond of fixing this tender, delicious beef dinner and eating big servings until they are stuffed. A less expensive attitude is to have one medium serving of meat, providing the rest of the calories needed for energy by serving vegetables and breads.

The meat that's saved can then be used for additional meals. This makes the meat cost for each meal much lower. You can use a small amount of meat and stretch it with breads, cereals, fruits and/or vegetables.

These stretchers can be very creative. Soups, pastas, rice dishes and other types of casseroles all serve to make a small amount of meat go a long way.

Many people worry that carbohydrate stretchers are too high in calories and therefore fattening. They have the idea meat is low in calories and not fattening. However, carbohydrates and proteins are equal in calories per ounce; fats have approximately double that calorie count.

Although steak is often recommended in diets, on the calorie charts it has 230 calories in 4 oz. of the lean only.

If you cut down on meat, you can use those extra calories for a cup of pasta or rice (about 200 calories each), two or three cups of vegetables or many bread items, including dumplings, biscuits or bread and meat combinations such as meat balls.

In this way, your calorie needs are satisfied and your cost for meat for that meal is lower.

The Oregon State University Extension Service office near you has a variety of publications with specific food buying information. That's a good source of ideas for getting more for your food dollar.

Both of these recipes use a little meat or cheese and eggs, a lot of vegetables and some form of bread as stretchers. The soup features a light, tasty dumpling "like grandma used to make." The vegetable pie uses biscuit mix to create a delightful and unique main dish.

VEGETABLE BEEF SOUP WITH DUMPLINGS

- 2 cups cooked beef in chunks or 1 pound ground beef, browned
- 1 large onion (diced)
- 4 sliced carrots
- 4 stalks celery, sliced
- 4 potatoes (diced)
- 1 quart canned tomatoes
- 1/2 head cabbage
- 1/4 cup rice
- 1 quart water
- bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon basil
- 1/4 teaspoon dill weed
- 4 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

Combine meat, vegetables (except cabbage), rice, herbs, and water.

Bring to a boil; simmer 30 minutes, then add cabbage. Mix up dumplings, drop by tablespoonfuls into boiling soup. Turn heat to simmer, cover tightly, cook 20 minutes. Don't lift lid.

DUMPLINGS

- 1 cup flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon parsley flakes

- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup milk

Sift together flour, baking powder, salt and sugar. Stir in parsley flakes. Beat egg, add milk, add to dry ingredients and mix just until moistened.

FRONTIER FILBERT VEGETABLE PIE

- 1 cup fresh broccoli, chopped*
- 1 cup fresh cauliflower, sliced*
- 2 cups fresh spinach, chopped*

- 1 small onion, diced
- 1/2 green pepper, diced
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 cup chopped roasted filberts
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 cup biscuit mix
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

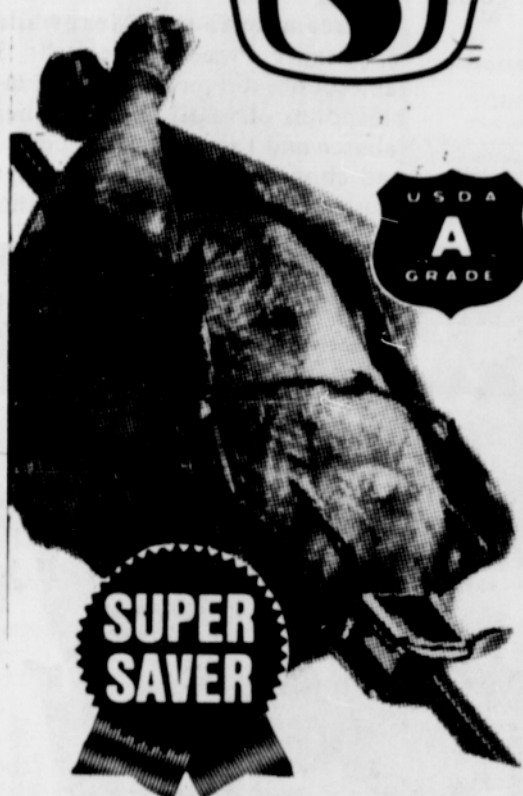
Pre-cook broccoli and cauliflower until almost tender (about 5 minutes). Drain well. Mix broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, onion, green pep-

per and cheese and put into a well-greased 10-inch pie plate. Top with nuts. Beat together the milk, biscuit mix, eggs, garlic salt and pepper; pour over nuts and vegetables. Bake at 400° for 35 to 40 minutes, let pie stand 5 minutes before cutting.

* Ten-ounce packages of frozen, chopped broccoli, cauliflower and spinach may be substituted for fresh. Thaw and drain well. Do not pre-cook.



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