



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service
scfcl website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

Leader Training Guide

Cooking for One or Two People

Objectives:

- Participants will learn how to shop and stock their kitchen wisely.
- Participants will be able to list ways to utilize freezer storage to cutback on leftovers and food waste.
- Participants will be able to modify recipes for one or two people.
- Participants will be able to list ways to use leftovers.

Lesson Overview/Introduction:

It may seem daunting or just a hassle to cook for one or two people. Most recipes are geared to feed a family of four, at the least, and many offer servings for up to eight or ten people. However, cooking at home is notably more cost effective and nutritionally beneficial. But, how does one make cooking for one or two as convenient as grabbing something to-go or heating up something pre-prepared. Begin by asking participants to introduce themselves and to consider how often they choose a convenience food in any given week. Then ask them if they can define "convenience food" and give examples.

Convenience food: a food, typically a complete meal that has been pre-prepared commercially and so requires little cooking by the consumer (Examples: fast food, frozen meals, canned soups, instant noodles, etc.)

Lesson:

Objective 1: Participants will learn how to shop and stock their kitchen wisely.

The key to cooking for one or two people is to have a well-stocked kitchen. Ask participants to raise their hands if they always make a shopping list before heading to the grocery store. Discuss the following ways to make a good grocery list.

- Have participants consider the items they consume most often or on a regular basis. For instance, if they eat cereal most mornings for breakfast

and sandwiches for lunch, their shopping list should include items, such as bread, bananas, milk, deli meat, cheese, etc., on their list.

- Have participants consider the building blocks of their favorite meals. These foods should be shelf stable, so they can last while also providing the foundation needed to make a quick meal. For instance, if spaghetti is a favorite, then pasta and sauce should be kept on hand. Canned tuna, canned beans, rice, and chicken stock are also good items to have in stock.
- Have participants think about the fresh produce they use most when making meals, such as lettuce, cucumber, and carrots for salads or bell peppers and onions for sautéing to makes soups and sauces. Also, frozen veggies are a good meal helper and can be added into a quick stir-fry, casserole, or soup.
- Remind participants of the importance of checking their refrigerator and pantry for the items on their list in order to avoid purchasing foods they already have.

Organizing grocery lists are just as important as making them. Having items listed by where they are located in the grocery store will help shopping go faster and smoother. On a white board or a large piece of paper, write the words “Bakery,” “Produce,” “Freezer,” “Refrigerator,” and “Pantry.” Next, have participants list foods that would fall into each of these categories when making a grocery list. Discuss the following things to consider when grocery shopping.

- Purchase pantry items in bulk since they will last longer.
- Shop more often and buy less. When shopping for one or two people, purchase perishable items, such as dairy, produce, and meats, that can be used within a few days, so as to not let things spoil quicker because they are forgotten.
- Buy sensible portions. For example, purchase individually wrapped chicken breasts that are four to five ounces and use what is needed, freezing the rest.
- Avoid buying pre-cut or bulk-packaged produce. Purchase just what is needed. For example, one large zucchini or sweet potato when sliced and cooked can serve up to two people.

Objective 2: Participants should be able to list ways to utilize freezer storage to cut back on leftovers and food waste.

- Ask participants to think of foods they normally freeze. Most ingredients are freezable, but a few are not freezable. Some things that are good to buy in bulk and freeze are bread, nuts, and cheese. Freezing sliced bread is a good way to keep bread longer since a couple slices can be taken out to make toast or a sandwich as needed.
- Ask participants some of their favorite meals to freeze. Soups, sauces, and casseroles freeze well. After they are initially prepared and eaten, the remainder can be placed in individual containers in the freezer. Then defrost and eat as desired.
- Discuss the importance of labeling foods in the freezer. Pass out the *HGIC Fact Sheet on Food Storage: Refrigerator & Freezer*. Always make sure to label items in the freezer with the name and the date of preparation and know when to throw it out.

Objective 3: Participants will be able to modify recipes for one or two people.

Hand out recipes, cookbooks, or cooking magazines, and have participants pick out a recipe. Then have them modify it to feed only two people by dividing the ingredients by halves or thirds, depending on the number of suggested servings. Lastly, go around and have them explain if their recipe would be an easy recipe to modify or if it would be difficult. For example, if a full recipe calls for three eggs and it's going to be halved, it would be difficult to use 1½ eggs. In other words, some recipes are easier to modify than others.

Objective 4: Participants will be able to list ways to use leftovers.

Discuss the following ways to enjoy leftovers.

- Make dishes that you don't mind eating as leftovers, reworking into something else or can freeze easily.
- Cook large batches of foods that can be easily used in other dishes such as roasted veggies, grilled chicken, and rice/pasta. Ask participants to think of dishes in which they could use the latter ingredients (i.e. wraps, salads, rice bowls, soups, etc.). Cooked chicken and other meats can be used atop salads or baked potatoes or in soups and sandwiches.
- Leftovers should be used within 3 to 7 days of preparation. For detail information on how long to keep leftovers, look at HGIC 3522

Lesson Summary:

When cooking for one or two people, there are several important things to keep in mind. First, keep a well-stocked kitchen with items on hand to create quick, nutritious meals. Also, remember the freezer is your friend and should be used to minimize food waste and maximize food dollars. Don't be afraid to modify recipes to cutback on the number of servings and potential leftovers. Lastly, be creative with leftovers.

Suggested Activities:

- Have participants create a grocery list, considering the meals and foods they normally eat on a weekly basis. Make sure they use the appropriate headings to organize their lists.
- Have participants choose a recipe that appeals to them and have them modify it for two servings.

Suggested Materials:

- Copy of food storage article for all participants found at http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food_safety/handling/hgic3522.html
- Pens/pencils and paper
- White board or easel pad of paper
- Markers to write on white board or easel pad
- Printed out recipes, cookbooks, or cooking magazines

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Sources/References:

HGIC 3522 -- Food Storage: Refrigerator & Freezer

http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/food_safety/handling/hgic3522.html