

# Bare Basics Cook Plan

## For People Who Do Not Know How to Cook

This is a plan to help people who do not know how to cook begin to buy and store "long shelf-life food" in their pantry... and actually start to cook with it once in a while. If you buy the items in the order suggested (porridge, then pasta, then tortillas, etc.) you will have items left over from the first section to use in the next.

### Porridge

**Porridge (Hot Cereal): Boil water; then simmer, cover with lid**

#### Shopping list:

\$ 3.00	5 pounds white rice
\$ 3.20	42 oz. can oatmeal
\$ 1.60	2 pound bag corn meal
\$ 5.00	25 oz box powdered milk
\$ 4.70	16 oz jar of honey
\$ 7.00	12 oz jar of maple syrup
\$ 3.50	24 oz. can raisins (other dried fruit, nuts, etc.)
\$28.00	TOTAL



#### **Oatmeal** (makes 2 hearty servings)

2 ¼ C water  
 Dash salt  
 1 C rolled oats  
 Butter to taste (optional)  
 Salt, sweetener, and or milk or cream as desired

Combine water salt and oats in a small saucepan and turn heat to high. When water boils, turn heat to low and cook stirring until water is just absorbed, about 5 minutes. Add butter if desired, cover the pan, and turn off the heat

5 minutes later, uncover the pan and stir. Add other ingredients as desired and serve.

Add powdered milk, almond meal, peanut butter, nuts, raisins or other dried fruit for more nutrition. Top with a little butter or yogurt if you have it. Sweeten with a little honey, maple syrup or brown sugar; season with cinnamon. You get the picture!

You can eat oatmeal raw; top with a little oil, lemon juice, and some fruit or nuts.



**Cornmeal Porridge / Cornmeal Mush**  
(makes 2 servings)

- 1 C cornmeal
- 1 C cold water
- 3 C boiling water
- 1 ½ t salt

Mix together cornmeal and cold water. Add to boiling salted water. Cover. Cook over medium heat about 10 - 15 minutes, stirring frequently, until mixture thickens. Spoon mush into bowls and serve with milk and sugar, if desired.



**Rice** (makes 4 servings as a side dish or 2 as part of main dish)

- 1 C white rice
- 2 C water
- Pinch salt

Put 2 cups water and 1 cup white rice and a pinch of salt in a pot and bring to a boil. When it boils, lower the heat to low and cover the pot, simmering for about 20 minutes until the rice is tender.

**Pasta**

**Pasta: Boil water, add ingredients, continue boiling with lid off; drain water off and top with sauce**

**Shopping list:**

\$ 5.00	5 pounds spaghetti, angel hair pasta, macaroni, egg noodles or other pasta.
\$ 5.00	5 jars of spaghetti sauce or cans of chopped tomatoes;
\$ 3.00	8 oz can grated parmesan cheese
\$10.00	1 gallon jug of olive oil
\$ 5.00	5 boxes of mac and cheese you like or other prepared noodle dish
\$ 5.00	(cans of tuna chicken or turkey, cans of peas and carrots, mushroom soup)
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\$33.00	TOTAL

Use this method to cook macaroni or spaghetti; add jar or can of ingredient

## **Pasta:**

Fill a big pot with water. (Read directions on box of pasta as to how much water to use!) Cover pot with lid to keep heat in, until the water is boiling. Remove lid, add pasta, and cook about 5 to 10 minutes (read box to see how long) at a rolling boil (keep water boiling so you see bubbles). Until the pasta is tender. Drain pasta into a strainer; add a little olive oil or butter if you like and top with a jar of sauce or a can of chopped tomatoes.

## **Pasta Toppings:**

Jarred spaghetti sauce

Jarred cheese sauce

Cheese powder mixed with oil and dried milk

Canned tuna, canned chicken or other meat

Add some pasta to a can of soup with some olive oil or parmesan cheese



## **Tuna Noodle Frying Pan "Casserole":**

This isn't a true casserole which would be baked in the oven with cheese. But you can take some egg noodles or spaghetti, cook and drain them. Put back into the pot and now add the toppings: Add a can of tuna, a can of cream of mushroom soup, and a can of mixed peas and carrots (drained) and stir till blended. Sprinkle parmesan cheese over the top.



## **Boxed Macaroni and Cheese:**

Read the directions on the box. Use powdered milk instead of milk and add a little extra water; use a little olive oil in place of butter. Add a can of tuna or chicken in the end.

## **Tortillas**



**Tortillas: Mix flour with water; roll thin and fry.** Use this method to make either flour or corn tortillas or Indian flatbread. Spread with peanut butter or jam; or eat with bean stews.

## Shopping list:

\$ 2.20	5 pounds whole wheat flour;
\$ 2.20	4 pound bag Masa Harina;
\$10.00	1 gallon jug of canola oil
\$ 5.00	2 x 18 oz jar peanut butter;
\$ 5.00	3x 18 oz jar jam
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\$24.40	TOTAL



### Flour tortillas (makes 5)

Combine:

1 c. flour  
1/2 t. salt

Mix in with a fork:

3 T. oil

When particles are fine, add gradually

1/2 c. lukewarm water

Toss with a fork to make a stiff dough. Form into ball and knead thoroughly on a lightly floured board until smooth and flecked with air bubbles. Divide dough into 4 balls for large tortillas, 8 balls for small ones. Roll as thin as possible on lightly floured board or between two sheets of waxed paper. Drop onto a very hot griddle or frying pan. Bake about 20 seconds until freckled. Lift edge, turn, and bake on second side. Wrap in a clean cloth napkin or towel to keep warm.



### Corn Tortillas for technique see:

<http://www.texascooking.com/features/may98corntortillas.htm>

Mix 2 cups Masa Harina (corn flour not the cornmeal which is used for cornbread)

1 1/4 C. water (may add up to 4 T. water as needed to make a workable dough.

Mix the Masa Harina and the water to form dough. Pinch off a golf-ball sized piece of dough and roll into a ball. Set the ball between two pieces of plastic wrap or waxed paper and press into a flat circle. Cook on a hot, dry skillet (cast iron pan works best) for 30 seconds. Gently turn. Cook for 60 seconds

on the other side (it should puff slightly). Cook another 30 seconds on the first side. Remove tortilla and keep warm.



### **Indian Flat Bread (Chapatis)** (Makes 10)

Combine:  
2 c. whole wheat flour  
1 t. oil  
Pinch of salt

Gradually add  
½ c. (or more) lukewarm water

Knead dough until it is soft. Cover with a clean damp cloth and let rest 1 hour.

Divide dough into 10 pieces. On floured surface, roll each piece into a 4 inch circle. ¼-inch thick. Heat a heavy ungreased frypan. Cook each Chapati until it starts to bubble on the bottom, turn, fry on the other side, and remove. Stack in a tea towel to keep warm.

Variations: use white flour for half the whole wheat flour.

## **Stew**

### **Stew: Soak overnight, boil, add flavoring and simmer:**

Use this method to cook basic bean or lentil stews. There's no doubt, having fresh onions, garlic or celery will improve flavors a lot! Plenty of fresh and dried spices will also help a great deal. Or – you can buy canned beans or canned bean stews but they do cost more.

Spice as expensive at the grocery store; if you can find them or order them in bulk you will be able to afford far more. Spices are KEY to enjoying home cooked bean stews.

### **Shopping list:**

\$5.00	5 pound white beans
\$5.00	5 pounds pinto or black beans
\$5.00	lentils
\$4.20	.6 oz jar dried sage
\$3.50	.9 oz jar ground cumin
\$2.40	.75 oz jar oregano
\$3.00	fresh garlic, jarred garlic or garlic powder
\$28.10	TOTAL

### **Tuscan White Beans**



½ pound dried white beans (cannelloni, navy, or Great Northern – rinse them in water and pick out any stones or twigs)  
20 fresh sage leaves or 1 T dried sage  
Salt and pepper  
2 t minced garlic  
2 T olive oil

Place the beans in a pot with enough water to cover them. Turn the heat to high and bring to a boil. Add the sage; lower heat so beans simmer. Cover loosely (put the lid almost on top, letting a little steam out.)

Cook stirring occasionally, until the beans begin to soften. Add ½ t salt until the beans are very tender; add more liquid if beans dry out.

Drain cooking liquid if there is any left. Then add garlic, more salt and pepper if that tastes good to you; stir in olive oil and serve.

### **Basic Black or Pinto Beans (serves 8)**



4 cups water  
1 pound dried pinto or black beans (about 2 cups)  
1 medium onion, chopped (about 1/2 cup)  
1/4 cup vegetable oil  
2 cloves garlic (or garlic powder)  
1 slice bacon (ham, sausage if you have it – or a little salt)  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cumin seed

Mix water, beans and onion in 4-quart Dutch oven. Cover and heat to boiling; boil 2 minutes. Remove from heat; let stand 1 hour. Add just enough water to beans to cover. Stir in remaining ingredients. Heat to boiling; reduce heat. Cover and boil gently, stirring occasionally, until beans are very tender, about 2 hours. (Add water during cooking if necessary.) Drain; reserve broth for recipes calling for bean broth. Cover and refrigerate beans and broth separately; use within 10 days.



### Basic Cooked Lentils

- 1 lb brown or green lentils (about 2.5 cups)
- 8 c water
- 1/2 small onion
- 1 clove garlic, peeled
- 1 bay leaf or substitute oregano

Bring to boil, reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, until lentils are tender, about 20 to 30 minutes. Drain and let cool, remove onion, garlic, and bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper

**More Bean Recipes:** These are just a very few. Consult "SmallSpaces/Small Budgets" for more recipes, or any cookbook for more.

### Pilaf



**Pilaf: Heat fat (oil) in a pan, then fry whole grains; then add liquid and simmer with a top on the pan:**

Use this method to make basic whole grain pilaf with rice, barley, or small pasta such as cous-cous or orzo. It is a very fuel- and water- efficient way of cooking a meal.

### Shopping list:

\$ 5.00	5 pounds barley
\$ 5.60	2 cans bouillon cubes, about 3 oz. each (chicken, beef or veggie)
\$10.00	several (4?) cans of chicken, turkey or tuna
\$ 4.20	.6 oz jar dried rosemary
<u>\$ 2.40</u>	<u>2.5 oz jar chili powder</u>
\$27.20	TOTAL

### UNIVERSAL PILAF RECIPE (can be adapted for many ingredients)

This recipe is adapted from [The Tightwad Gazette III](#), by Amy Dacyczyn. It is a recipe template that can help you cook a simple main course using whatever ingredients you have on hand. This recipe makes 4 servings, or enough for 2 adults as a main dish!

**GRAIN:** One cup of uncooked grain. Choose from brown or white rice, bulgur, barley, or any whole grain. Small pasta s such as couscous or orzo would also work.

**FAT:** Two tablespoons fat, either olive or other vegetable oil or butter.

**BASE VEGETABLES (for flavor):**

Two or three cloves of garlic, minced and either one small onion or three shallots or one small leek, diced.

**LIQUID:** Two cups liquid: (choose from these possibilities)

Chicken, beef, vegetable, or mushroom stock or broth, (you can use water and bouillon cubes); cooking water from boiled vegetables; tomato juice or vegetable cocktail diluted with half water;

**PROTEIN:** 1/2 to 2/3 cup cubed cooked meat or other protein: chicken, turkey, roast beef, steak, pork chop, pork roast, ground beef, leftover ground beef seasoned for tacos, white, red or black beans, etc. You can mix half beans/half meat; or try canned meat or tuna.

**ADDITIONAL VEGETABLE:** 1/2 cup vegetable: Frozen or fresh peas, frozen corn, thinly sliced or grated carrot, green or red peppers, celery, etc. Even finely chopped fresh spinach is okay. Don't use potatoes.

**SEASONING:** Salt and pepper, any other herb or spice that goes well with your ingredients. Try parsley, rosemary, chili powder, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce, etc.

**DIRECTIONS:** Heat fat in large skillet. Add garlic and onion, shallots or leek; fry until tender. Add the grain to the skillet and fry until it just begins to brown. Pour in the liquid and bring to a boil. Add the cubed meat or beans, along with your chosen vegetables and seasonings; stir and return to a boil. Cover and cook until the grain is tender: about 15 minutes for white rice and up to 40 minutes for some of the whole grains. Check periodically to make sure you don't run out of liquid before the grain is tender. Stir and serve.

## **Bread & Muffins**

### **NO-KNEAD BREAD and BASIC MUFFINS:**

Shopping list:

\$ 8.00	4 oz. jar yeast (enough for more 192 loaves!)
\$ 2.80	2 16 oz boxes baking soda
\$ 6.00	2 10 oz cans baking powder

\$ 3.49      6 oz. bag dried apricots  
\$ 3.19      8 oz bag dried dates  
varies 8 oz dried egg or egg substitute or soy flour  
\$23.48+      TOTAL

**NOTE on these ingredients:**

You can substitute 1 T soy flour (found in health food stores) mixed with 1 T water for 1 egg in cooking. Or you can buy powdered eggs from a specialty on-line store. Dried fruits are expensive in the grocery store but you can buy them cheaper in bulk on-line or from specialty stores. You can also use canned fruit in muffins.



**No-Knead Bread**

Adapted from Jim Lahey, Sullivan Street Bakery

This is a great, cheap, easy to make bread that requires no eggs or milk, little kneading, and very little yeast. It just requires that you plan ahead so it can rise.

Time: About 1 1/2 hours (plus 14 to 20 hours' rising )

3 cups all-purpose or bread flour, more for dusting  
1/4 teaspoon instant yeast  
1 1/4 teaspoons salt  
Cornmeal or wheat bran as needed.

1. In a large bowl combine flour, yeast and salt. Add 1 5/8 cups water, and stir until blended; dough will be shaggy and sticky. Cover bowl with plastic wrap. Let dough rest at least 12 hours, preferably about 18, at warm room temperature, about 70 degrees.
2. Dough is ready when its surface is dotted with bubbles. Lightly flour a work surface and place dough on it; sprinkle it with a little more flour and fold it over on itself once or twice. Cover loosely with plastic wrap and let rest about 15 minutes.
3. Using just enough flour to keep dough from sticking to work surface or to your fingers, gently and quickly shape dough into a ball. Generously coat a cotton towel (not terry cloth) with flour, wheat bran or cornmeal; put dough seam side down on towel and dust with more flour, bran or cornmeal. Cover with another cotton towel and let rise for about 2 hours. When it is ready, dough will be more than double in size and will not readily spring back when poked with a finger.
4. At least a half-hour before dough is ready, heat oven to 450 degrees. Put a 6- to 8-quart heavy covered pot (cast iron, enamel, Pyrex or ceramic) in oven as it heats. When dough is ready, carefully remove pot from oven. Slide your hand under towel and turn dough over into pot, seam side up; it may

look like a mess, but that is O.K. Shake pan once or twice if dough is unevenly distributed; it will straighten out as it bakes. Cover with lid and bake 30 minutes, then remove lid and bake another 15 to 30 minutes, until loaf is beautifully browned. Cool on a rack. Yield: One 1 1/2-pound loaf.

**Universal Muffin Recipe** (from the Tightwad Gazette II by Amy Dacyczyn)



This recipe is good for using up any foods you happen to have!

**Grain**

2 - 2 1/2 cups white flour (may substitute 1 cup with oatmeal, cornmeal, wheat, rye flour, or flake cereal.) or may substitute 1 cup leftover cooked oatmeal -- rice or cornmeal for 1/2 of flour and decrease liquid to 1/2 cup.

Mix together these wet ingredients:

**Milk:** 1 cup milk, buttermilk or sour milk, or may substitute fruit juice for all or part.

**Fat:** 1/4 cup vegetable oil or 4 tbs melted butter, may substitute peanut butter for all or part of fat. **Note:** Fat may be reduced or omitted if using a "wet addition"

**Egg:** 1 egg or (1 T soy flour + 1 T water)

**Sweetener:** Varies depending on how sweet you like it! Either 2 T. - 1/2 cup sugar or up to 3/4 cup brown sugar or up to 1/2 cup honey or molasses and decrease milk to 3/4 cup.

**Baking Powder:** 2 teaspoons

If using whole or cooked grains -- 3 teaspoons.

If using buttermilk or sour milk -- 1 tsp. baking powder. and 1/2 tsp. baking soda.

**Salt:** up to 1/2 teaspoon

Optional ingredients: Additions can be used in any combination, up to 1 1/2 cups total. If using more than 1 cup wet additions, decrease milk to 1/2 cup.

**Dry Additions:** Nuts, sunflower seeds, raisins, coconut, etc.

**Moist Additions:** Blueberries, chopped apple, freshly shredded zucchini, shredded carrot, etc.

**Wet Additions:** Pumpkin puree, applesauce, mashed/cooked sweet potato, mashed banana, mashed/cooked carrot, etc.

If using ½ cup drained, canned fruit or thawed shredded zucchini, substitute the syrup or zucchini liquid for all or part of milk.

**Spices:** Any that will compliment additions. Ex: 1 t. cinnamon with ¼ t. cloves or nutmeg. 2 t. grated orange or lemon peel.

**Jellies or Jams:** Fill muffin cups halfway with plain batter. Add 1 tsp. jam and top with 2 Tbs. more batter.

**Topping:** Cinnamon sugar, chopped nuts, oatmeal, crushed corn flakes

**Non Sweet Combinations:**

Use only 2 T. sugar & omit fruit. Add combinations of the following:

½ cup shredded cheese  
3 strips cooked crumbled bacon  
2 T. grated onion  
½ cup shredded zucchini  
2 T. parmesan cheese  
1 t. parsley  
pinch of marjoram.

**Basic Muffin Cooking Directions:**

1. Preheat oven to 400.
2. Grease 12 muffin cups.
3. Combine dry ingredients, including dry additions and spices.
4. Combine wet ingredients
5. Gently mix the wet and dry until just moistened.
6. Spoon batter into muffin cups, filling about 2/3 full.
7. Bake for 18-20 minutes.