



TIPS TO GET COOKIN' NOW!

JILLIAN GORE | nutrition X USC

Want to fuel your brain & body AND save money??? Use that apartment kitchen and learn how to cook! If you don't know how to cook, this is the perfect time in your life to learn. This important skill will benefit you now and for the rest of your life. Here are some tips to get cookin' now!

MEAL PREP

- Make a large meal at the beginning of the week and portion it into containers to eat whenever you need something during the week.
- Add leftovers to salads, burritos, and taco bowls.
- Go ahead and portion fresh fruits and vegetables into baggies or Tupperware. For an on the go snack. You are more likely to eat them when they are ready for you to pack in your bag.

CELEBRATE THE VEGETABLES RATHER THAN THE MEAT

- Start out with one day a week; for example, meatless Mondays.
- Meatless meals tend to be lower in fat, cholesterol and calories.
- Meat is one of the most expensive items on the grocery bill. Cutting down on the amount of meat you eat per week, also cuts the grocery bill down.

ADD VARIETY USING OLD STAPLES

- Keep your kitchen stocked with staples that you can build off in recipes. Things that can stay for a long time in your pantry like whole grains, 100% whole wheat bread, rice, pasta, rolled oats, dry beans or canned vegetables.
- Eggs, milk (dairy or non-dairy), plain yogurt, vinegar, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, condiments, and cheese are good refrigerated items to keep on hand.
- Potatoes store good for a couple weeks and can be used different ways for different dishes including breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

SHOP OFTEN TO ENSURE FRESH FOOD: THINK WEEKLY

- Go to farmers' markets and vegetable stands
- Stick to your list. Plan out meals ahead of time and make a grocery list.
- Some fresh fruits and vegetables don't last long. Buy small amounts more often so you aren't throwing any away because they went bad.
- Learn and follow the sales cycle and ad from your local grocery store.

FOLLOW THE SEASONS

- Get fruits and vegetables fresh during their season. They will be cheaper and tastier than outside the season.

Fresh, Frozen or Canned

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables during their season
- Compare prices of fresh, frozen and canned to see what is best for you.
- Frozen fruits are great to keep on hand for smoothies and desserts.
- Frozen vegetables are great in soups, casseroles, or any dishes.
- Canned goods are extremely convenient and inexpensive.
- Canned vegetables are great to keep on hand for a quick meal. Just rinse before you use them to reduce the sodium.

SPICES AND EXTRACTS

- Change up boring meals by adding dried spices to add lots of taste without extra salt or fat.
- Spices and extracts are relatively cheap. You only have to add a little amount to create a lot of added flavor
- One small bottle lasts many meals and has a long shelf life
- Bouillon cubes chicken, beef, or vegetable are great to have on hand to add extra depth and flavor. You can make broth at any time for soups, casseroles, meats or side dishes.
- Popular seasonings to have include salt, pepper, Italian seasonings, cumin, smoked paprika, cinnamon, chili powder, and garlic powder. These allow you to have the start to many flavors of foods right in your pantry.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE MICROWAVE

- Look up and follow dorm friendly recipes. They are quick and portioned size just for you.
- Less to clean up.
- You can cook almost anything in the microwave, you just have to figure out cooking times and have the right microwave safe containers.
- Homemade Mac and First, combine 1/2 cup macaroni and 1/2 cup water in a microwave-safe bowl. Heat it for two minutes on high, stopping to stir it if the water starts to boil over. Continue cooking in two-minute bursts, stirring each time, until the noodles are tender. Then stir in 1/4 cup shredded cheese and 1/4 cup milk and zap it in 30-second bursts until the cheese melts into a creamy sauce. Top with barbeque chicken, bacon bits, steamed broccoli and more.

RESOURCES

- A great resource is Good and Cheap : Eat Well on \$4/day. The entire book is available for free in the pdf link <https://cookbooks.leannebrown.com/good-and-cheap.pdf>
- Pinterest is your friend for ideas, tips, and recipes.
- <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/19-ways-to-eat-healthy-on-a-budget#section19>