

Freezer Cooking with Ground Beef (or Turkey)

Beef Base Recipe: 3 lbs 90% lean ground beef, 1 onion, 3 cloves garlic

Chop onions. Press garlic in garlic press. Place onions, beef and garlic into a 12 in skillet. Cook over medium-high heat 15-18 minutes or until beef is no longer pink.

Divide beef mixture into 3 portions as follows:

Easy Beef Stroganoff:

8 oz sliced mushrooms, 1 can cream mushroom soup, 1/4 cup water, 1 tsp ground paprika, 1/2 tsp salt, 1/4 tsp coarsely ground black pepper

Add this to one portion of the beef mixture, combine in large resealable plastic bag. Freeze for up to 3 months.

If cooking immediately.....combine ingredients in skillet and bring to simmer over medium heat. Stir 8 oz sour cream into beef mixture. Spoon stroganoff over 1lb of cooked egg noodles.

Beef Tacos:

1 cup Chunky salsa, 6 oz. tomato paste, 3/4 cup water (or chicken stock), 1 pkt taco seasoning mix**

Add this to one portion of beef mixture & combine in large resealable plastic bag. Freeze up to 3 months.

If cooking immediately.....serve with your favorite toppings and your choice of hard or soft shells.

**To avoid prepackaged stuff, I make my own: 1 Tb. cornstarch; 1 tsp. of each: garlic powder, cumin, paprika and chili powder; 1/2 tsp. onion powder; 1/4 tsp. cayenne; OR I use now: 2 Tb. chili powder, 1 tsp. cumin, 1 tsp. coriander, 1/2 tsp. dried oregano, 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper (or omit for kids), 1/2 tsp. salt and then I add 1 tsp. brown sugar and 2 tsp. cider vinegar at the end of cooking

BBQ Beef Sloppy Joes:

1 cup ketchup, 2 tbs Pampered Chef Smoky Barbeque Rub**, 2 tsp cider vinegar

Add this to one portion of beef mixture, combine in large resealable plastic bag. Freeze up to 3 months.

If cooking immediately.....combine ingredients in skillet and bring to a simmer over medium heat.

**I make my own: 1/2 cup chili powder, 1/4 cup brown sugar. 1/4 cup kosher salt, 2 Tb. black pepper, 2 tsp. cayenne pepper

Saucy Beef Chili – Add the following ingredients to one portion of the make-ahead beef: 1 can (16 ounce) chili beans in sauce, undrained; 1 can (14.5 ounce) petite diced tomatoes, undrained; 1 1/2 cups water; 1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste; 1 packet chili seasoning mix**. Freeze. When it's a chili night, just put the frozen mixture into a skillet over medium heat and cook until heated through. Once it's hot, the chili's ready for bowls and you can add your favorite toppings like shredded cheddar cheese, sliced green onions or sour cream.

Italian Beef Hoagies

1 red & 1 green bell pepper

1/4 C. water

2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 (1oz.) package onion soup mix

1 Tablespoon Italian Seasoning

Chop onion and garlic, then place in a large skillet and cook until onions are almost transparent. Add ground beef and cook until no longer pink. Drain off any grease from the ground beef. Add all other ingredients to the ground beef mixture and cook until heated all the way through. Serve on a hoagie roll and top with a slice of provolone cheese.

Thaw all recipes overnight in the refrigerator.

Freezer Cooking with Chicken

Chicken Base Recipe:

3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 Tb. olive oil
1 and ½ tsp. cumin
1 tsp. chili powder
½ tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. salt

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Mix cumin, chili pepper, garlic powder and salt. Drizzle 1T olive oil on chicken breasts, then sprinkle a small amount on the chicken. Keep the rest. Bake chicken for 25 minutes or until it reaches for 165 degrees.

Chicken Tortilla Soup

Chicken Recipe

1 Tablespoon Olive Oil
1 cup Diced Onion
¼ cups Diced Green Bell Pepper
¼ cups Red Bell Pepper
3 cloves Garlic, Minced
1 can (10 Oz. Can) Rotel Tomatoes And Green Chilies
32 ounces Low Sodium Chicken Stock (least expensive I found was at Aldi)
3 Tablespoons Tomato Paste
2 cans (15 Oz. Can) Black Beans, Drained
3 Tbs. cornmeal

1. Shred chicken.
2. Heat 1T olive oil in a pot over medium high. Add onions, red pepper, green pepper and minced garlic. Stir and add rest of spice mix. Add shredded chicken.
3. Pour in Rotel, chicken stock, tomato paste, and black beans. Bring to a boil, then reduce to simmer. Simmer 45 minutes uncovered.
4. Mix cornmeal with a little water. Pour into soup and simmer 30 minutes.
5. When serving, garnish with red onions, cheddar cheese, salsa and tortilla chips

Chicken Fajitas

Chicken Recipe	1 Tb. olive oil	
1 green bell pepper	1 red bell pepper	1 medium yellow onion

1. Slice chicken into strips.
2. Core and slice green bell pepper and red bell pepper and onion. Cook in skillet over medium heat with 1 Tb. olive oil and remaining seasoning until tender - about 10 minutes.
3. Add chicken with the pepper mixture and toss to reheat. Roll up a portion of the mixture into a tortilla.

Food You Can Freeze

- bananas
- meat and fish
- chicken and turkey
- cheese, block and/or shredded (like Cheddar, Mozzarella, Monterey Jack, Colby)
- vegetables, pre-chopped (like green bell peppers, onions, carrots, etc.); but not scallions
- cookie dough
- already baked muffins, cake, pancakes, waffles, brownies, cupcakes, bread, cookies etc.
- pureed pumpkin, carrot, squash
- butter
- soups and chili (with no potatoes)
- meatloaf, meatballs
- buttercream frosting
- oatmeal

Do Not Freeze

- potatoes (unless they are already baked and cooked like twice baked potatoes, or mashed)
- eggs (unless already baked)
- mayonnaise
- royal icing

Storing Freezer Food

1. Bag Method: Keep everything air tight. Sometimes I even use a straw to suck out the remaining air in a ziplock bag. Great for soups, and flash frozen cookie dough.
2. Foil and Wrap Method: Line a baking dish with foil. Put food in it. Wrap and freeze. Then once frozen solid you can remove the food from the dish, and wrap in saran wrap.
3. Double Wrap Method: Once baked good is cool, wrap baked goods in saran wrap and then stash in a freezer bag.

Flash Freezing:

Lay out your cookie dough balls on a lined cookie sheet. I use silicone. You can use parchment or grease a cookie sheet. Put in the freezer for at least 2 hours. Then drop the frozen dough into a ziplock bag. Bake as many or as few as you want. You can also freeze baked cookies as well.

Organizing:

1. Plan the meals you want to make. List all of the ingredients you have on hand and add what you don't have to your shopping list.
2. Make several similar meal steps at the same time. If three recipes require sauteed onion, then saute all 3 onions at the same time.
3. Don't overload. Start by freezing food in 1 hour, or half a day or a full day.
4. You don't need to freeze an entire meal. Freeze some chicken, some veggies and put it all together later. Use little steps. If chicken is on sale at Schnucks for \$1.89/lb. I take one night that week to divide that chicken into 4 different baggies with four different marinades.

More recipes and ideas at: WhiskTogether.Wordpress.com under "Recipes - Freezer Meals"

Copyright 2012 Mary Ellen Riley/ WhiskTogether.Wordpress.com

Stock Up Ideas for Meals

1. Meatballs
2. Taco meat
3. Lasagna
4. Pot Roast
5. BBQ Pulled Pork
6. Chicken Noodle Soup
7. Chicken strips
8. Chili
9. Pancakes, waffles, morning muffins
10. Breakfast burritos
11. Breakfast Casserole
12. Stuffed French Toast
13. Marinated or Rubbed Pork
14. Marinated or rubbed chicken
15. Chocolate chip cookies
16. Chopped veggies: bell peppers, onions, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, etc.
17. Calzones