Now that the leftovers are gone, kids are back in school and we return to normal schedules, it is time to work on meal planning again. Here are a few options to change up your routine.

Hope you had a wonderful and healthy holiday!

Breakfast Casserole Supreme

Ready In:1hr 5 min
Yields: 9x13 inch casserole
Serves: 12

1/4 C. margarine
1 sm. sweet onion, chopped
1 sm. green pepper, chopped
2 -3 med tomatoes, chopped
1 (24 oz.) bag frozen hash brown potatoes
12 eggs, beaten
1/2 lb. cooked crumbled bacon or 1/2 to 1 lb. sausage
3 C. cheddar cheese, shredded

Melt margarine and place in the bottom of 9 x 13 baking pan.
Spread potatoes (still frozen is okay) in bottom of the pan.
Sprinkle chopped vegetables over potatoes.
Add salt and pepper to taste.
Sprinkle meat over potatoes and vegetables.
Note: At this point you may continue or casserole may be refrigerated overnight.
Pour beaten eggs over potatoes.
Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.
Remove from oven and sprinkle cheese evenly over top.
Bake another 5-10 minutes or until cheese is hot and bubbly.
Remove from oven and let set for approximately 5 minutes.
Cut into squares and serve with a spatula.

Best Easy Weeknight Beef and Broccoli Stir-Fry

Yield: 4 serving
Prep Time: 10 min
Cook Time: 10 min
Total Time: 20 min

1/3 C. chicken stock
1/4 C. soy sauce
1 T. plus 1 tsp. pure honey
1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
1 T. plus 1 tsp. cornstarch
12 oz. flank steak, thinly sliced
salt and black pepper
2 T. peanut or avocado oil
12 oz. broccoli florets, halved if large
1 one-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced
3 cloves garlic, minced
Hot cooked rice, toasted sesame seeds, sliced scallions, and lime wedges, for serving

Whisk together stock, soy sauce, honey, sesame oil, and cornstarch in a bowl until cornstarch is dissolved.

Season steak with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large skillet over high heat. Add steak and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes; transfer to a plate using tongs. Reduce heat to medium-high. Add broccoli and season with salt. Cook, stirring often, until broccoli is crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes (you can add a few T. of water if pan starts to get too dark). Add ginger and garlic. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, 30 seconds to 1 minute.

Whisk sauce and add to pan with steak and any accumulated juices. Cook, stirring, until sauce is thickened and steak is warm, about 1 minute.

Serve over rice topped with sesame seeds and scallions with lime wedges alongside.

Manicotti Italian Casserole

Prep Time: 10 min
Cook Time: 30 min
Total Time: 40 min
Servings: 8

1 lb. rigatoni pasta

1 lb. ground beef
1 lb.(ground) Italian sausage
1 (8 oz.) can mushrooms, drained (or 8 oz. fresh, chopped)
2 (32 oz.) jars spaghetti sauce
1-1/2 lbs. shredded mozzarella cheese
12-15 thinly sliced pepperoni

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to boil. Pour in rigatoni, and cook until al dente, about 8 to 10 minutes. Drain, and set pasta aside.

Meanwhile, brown ground beef and ground Italian sausage in a large skillet over medium heat. With a slotted spoon, remove beef and sausage to a rectangle baking dish. Stir mushrooms, spaghetti sauce, and cooked pasta into the baking dish. Sprinkle cheese and place pepperoni circles in even rows over the top.

Bake in preheated oven until the cheese is brown and bubbly, about 20 minutes.

3-Ingredient Baked Caesar Chicken

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 2 pounds total)
1 C. creamy Caesar dressing
1/2 C. Parmesan cheese, finely grated
2 T. coarsely chopped fresh parsley leaves (optional)

Arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat the oven to 400ºF.

Pound 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts one at a time: Place 1 chicken breast in a gallon-sized zip-top bag and pound with a rolling pin or the flat side of a meat mallet to an even 1/2-inch thickness. Set aside and repeat with the remaining breasts.

Pour 1 C. creamy Caesar dressing in a baking dish large enough to fit the chicken in a single layer. Place the chicken breasts in the baking dish, then flip them so that they are evenly coated with dressing.

Bake until the chicken is golden-brown, cooked through, and registers 165°F on an instant-read thermometer, 20 to 25 minutes.

Heat the broiler to high. Remove the baking dish from the oven. Sprinkle the Parmesan over the chicken in an even layer. Broil until the cheese is melted and lightly browned, 3 to 4 minutes. Serve the chicken garnished with the parsley if using.

Garlic Mashed Red Potatoes

6 servings

8 med. red potatoes, quartered
3 garlic cloves, peeled
2 T. butter
1/2 C. fat-free milk, warmed
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 C. grated Parmesan cheese

Place potatoes and garlic in a large saucepan; cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 15-20 minutes or until potatoes are very tender.

Drain well. Add the butter, milk and salt; mash. Stir in cheese.

Egg Macaroni Pasta Salad

Prep Time: 15 min.
Cook Time: 10 min.
Total Time: 25 min.
Yield: 8 Cups

2-1/2 C. macaroni pasta,
6 hard-boiled eggs
1/2 C. plain Greek yogurt
1/4 C. mayonnaise
1 T. Dijon mustard
1 sm. red onion, diced
2 ribs celery, washed and chopped
1-2 T. chopped fresh chives
1/2 tsp. paprika, more as desired
salt and pepper, to taste

Cook macaroni in boiling water for 8-10 minutes (or per package instructions). Drain and rinse and set aside in large bowl.

Cut the hard-boiled eggs in half, remove the yolks, and place the yolks in a small bowl. Chop the whites and add to the pasta bowl.

Mash the egg yolks with a fork. Stir in Greek yogurt, mayonnaise, and mustard.

Add the chopped onion and celery to the pasta bowl and stir in egg yolk mixture until combined.

Top with fresh chives, paprika, and salt and pepper as desired. Can be eaten immediately, but best served after being chilled in refrigerator for at least 1 hour. Add more mayo or yogurt, if needed, or when re-serving leftovers.

Frosted Banana Bars

Prep: 15 min.
Bake: 20 min. + cooling
Makes: 3 dozen

1/2 C. butter, softened
2 C. sugar
3 lg. eggs, room temperature
1-1/2 C. mashed ripe bananas (about 3 medium)
1 tsp. vanilla extract
2 C. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
Dash salt
Frosting:
1 pkg. (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
1/2 C. butter, softened
4 C. confectioners' sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy, 5-7 minutes. Beat in the eggs, bananas and vanilla. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; stir into creamed mixture just until blended.

Transfer batter to a greased 15x10x1-in. baking pan. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pan on a wire rack.

For frosting, in a small bowl, beat cream cheese and butter until fluffy. Add confectioners' sugar and vanilla; beat until smooth. Frost bars.

Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip Cake

Cook Time: 40 min
Prep Time: 5 min
Servings: 12

1 pkg. chocolate cake mix
1 C. smooth peanut butter
1-3/4 C. whole milk
3 eggs
1 C. chocolate chips

Mix together cake mix, peanut butter, milk and eggs in an electric mixing bowl and, with the whisk attachment, mix on low for 1 minute.

Scrape the sides of the bowl with a spatula. Mix again on medium-high for 3 minutes, until the batter looks luscious and smooth. Gently stir in the chocolate chips.

Pour batter into two (9-inch) greased cake pans or 24 cupcake tins. Bake at 350° F for 40 to 45 minutes.

Remove from oven and allow to cool. Frost with chocolate frosting or Cool Whip.

Tip: Be exact with the peanut butter. Any little bit more than 1 C. will make the cake dry. To frost the cake, use your favorite store-bought chocolate frosting or Cool Whip.

Option: Instead of chocolate chips, go for peanut butter, butterscotch or white chocolate chips or a mix. You can use yellow or white cake mix instead of chocolate if you prefer more of the peanut butter flavor.

Quote of the Week:

"Politeness and consideration for others is like investing pennies and getting dollars back."

~ Thomas Sowell