



*Rebel With a Fork
Its Time to Bite Back!*

Volume 3

Speed Cooking

*How to always have something
for dinner*

Carole Stannard-Pagan

Carole Stannard-Pagan

©2017

Too Tired Not to Cook

I came home from work today dead tired and hungry.

Unfortunately, I hadn't planned anything for dinner. Nothing was defrosted. I hate when I do that!

I could have made tuna subs, but I just didn't have a taste for that.

So I started thinking about fast food or carry out.

Any of this sound familiar?

I didn't want McDonalds, Burger King, Subway or any of that kind of stuff.
Pizza? Na.

How about Ravioli, or a super beef sandwich? Na. I didn't feel like going to pick it up, and I hate having to pay a delivery fee and a tip. Yeah, I'm cheap.

There is a grocery store on the corner, and I did at least have salad fixings...
Pick up steak and sweet potato!

I know, I didn't feel like cooking. But I finally settled on something I would like to eat, that didn't take a lot of effort. It's a 15 minute dinner from start to finish. Steak, sweet potato and salad. Almost as good as any steak house. Topped it off with some orange juice and my vitamins.

Well after eating, I read a few pages of a book, did the dishes, walked the dog 2 miles, did a little cleaning, went to Walmart because I needed a birthday card for tomorrow and that was the closest place still open.

Now I'm going to have a glass of wine, do a facial, take a long shower, and pamper myself a little before hitting the sack.

"But Carole, I thought you said you were dead tired?"

I was. Before I ate a healthy energizing dinner. After I had refueled with nutritious food I had plenty of energy.

If you give in to the temptation to eat fast food, you won't have the energy to do anything. You'll have eaten 1,000 extra calories, and then done nothing to burn them off.

I hate that bloated feeling you get after eating fast food. Like you ate a boulder. It just zaps all of your energy.

If you really want to restore your energy, you have to fill your tank with premium fuel. Its the days when you least feel like it that you need it the most.

In this volume you will learn how to always have something you can throw together.

The Well Stocked Kitchen

In a perfect world, we would use everything 100% fresh. But, we can't. If you have these things on hand, you will always be able to whip up a delicious meals that will be better for you and your family without resorting to packaged garbage, or the drive-thru.

Seasonings

Do not be tempted to buy huge containers unless it is a seasoning that you really use a lot. They do lose potency and flavor over time. You want to buy the freshest and best quality that you can afford.

This covers the most used seasonings -

Basil

Black peppercorns for grinding, or bottle that has the grinder right on it.

Cayenne Pepper

Celery Seed

Cilantro

Cinnamon

Cumin

Coriander

Crushed Red Pepper

Curry Powder

Garlic Powder

Ginger

Oregano

Paprika

Salt

Thyme

Pantry Items

Your favorite vinegars -Balsamic, Wine, or Rice Vinegar (smoother taste)

Olive Oil

Italian Dressing

Soy Sauce (low sodium recommended)

Teriyaki Sauce
Worcestershire Sauce
Yellow Mustard
Dijon Mustard
Barbecue Sauce
Rice
Spaghetti and/or Mostaccioli
Real Maple Syrup
Honey
Peanut Butter
Pre-cooked Bacon (very handy!)
Chicken bullion cubes
Beef bullion cubes
Flour
Baking soda
Brown Sugar (make sure its pure cane sugar)
Sugar (again, pure cane sugar)
Chocolate Chips
Pure Vanilla Extract
Cornstarch
Lemon Juice
Lime Juice
Canned Petite Diced Tomatoes
Tomato Paste
Canned or jarred green chili peppers
Canned or jarred jalapeno peppers (I prefer jarred)
Refried beans

Fresh Foods-

Always have chicken breasts in the freezer. You can always make a quick dinner. Single wrapped chicken breasts will thaw quickly in cold water. Higher quality chicken will thaw quicker. If your chicken breasts are big and plump, they have been pumped with water and other stuff. Because of the high water content, they take a really long time to thaw. You'll notice that the more expensive chicken

breasts are smaller. Not because they are ripping you off, but because they are not artificially plumped up. Sometimes we have to do the best with what we can afford.

Fish and seafood also thaw quickly.

I also keep individually wrapped pork chops. Before wrapping, generously sprinkle with garlic powder. It will make them come out more tender when you do cook them.

Pre-make hamburger patties and individually wrap. I make 1/3 pound patties with 95% lean ground beef. Nothing else. You can season them when you cook them.

Fresh Garlic

Red and/or Green Bell Peppers

Onions

Green Onions

Broccoli

Carrots

Lettuce

Tomatoes

Lemon

Lime

Selection of fruits

Butter

Eggs

Orange Juice

Mayonnaise

Cheese

Parmesan Cheese

Shredded Cheese (I keep mozzarella and Mexican on hand)

Flour Tortillas

Fresh Basil

Fresh Parsley
Fresh Cilantro
Fresh Dill

Frozen Items

Broccoli
Carrots
Corn
Green Beans
Raspberries
Blueberries
Strawberries

I buy fresh French bread and as soon as I get home - cut it into 6 inch pieces and put into freezer bags. Very handy.

If you really want to be prepared for anything- here are the most common liquors used in cooking-

Brandy
Cognac
Red Wine
Sherry
White Wine

The Art of Planning Ahead

I've had a real taste for chili. Or maybe meatloaf? I haven't had that in ages! Or stuffed cabbage? But all of those take time...chili has to be made the day before for best flavor.

But you can cook 2 dinners at once. Chili doesn't really take that much effort and the payoff will be dinner is already made for tomorrow. And when I make something with ground beef, I pick up an extra package and make patties to throw in the freezer. Individually wrap them for convenience. I make my burgers with lean ground beef and sprinkle with garlic powder. They are always juicy.

If I'm being really good, I'll have picked up chicken breasts and pork chops. I sprinkle them with garlic powder and individually wrap them.

Why individually wrap everything?

- 1.You can take out just what you need. No over cooking – and therefore, no over eating.
- 2.We're spoiled – we don't care for most leftovers. It just goes to waste. (Chili and spaghetti sauce are exceptions :)
- 3.Its easier to thaw quickly.

Do I really feel like doing this when I get home from the store? Of course not!

Do I appreciate having easy to grab solutions ready for me? You Bet!

Don't fall into the “I don't feel like it” trap. Just do it.

A lesson in planning ahead – the 4 Dinner Plan for a Busy Week

Got a really busy week ahead? Here's a plan that will get you through will flying colors. This strategy will take care of dinner for 4 days with just a little planning and preparation.

Night 1 - Seasoned chicken breasts with baked potato and salad
Night 2 – Spaghetti with salad and Italian or French bread
Night 3 - Killer chicken Parmesan Sandwiches
Night 4 – Chicken Wraps

The secret to this strategy is taking an extra half hour on Monday night to make the rest of the week a breeze.

So, here's what you do -

Monday night – cook up 3 skinless chicken breasts per person seasoned with garlic powder and your favorite seasonings. Organic would be best, but do the best that you can afford. Avoid Tyson and Perdue. They contain the most growth hormones, antibiotics, and nasty stuff.

Put enough butter, or olive oil, or coconut oil just to coat the pan. Don't be afraid of butter. You're not actually going to ingest much of it. Let's be real here. It takes about 5 minutes per side. I cook them covered and on medium low heat. Keeps them juicier, and they cook through faster.

(It takes about ½ of a chicken breast per sandwich and wrap that you'll be making Wednesday and Thursday.)

Serve one chicken breast, a baked potato and salad on Monday night. You can serve a baked potato, a baked sweet potato, green beans, fruit - like cantaloupe or fresh pineapple, broccoli, baby carrots, tossed salad, all easy stuff. Pick a couple things.

Slice, or shred the extra chicken breasts - Whichever you prefer - and throw it in the fridge.

Make [fresh spaghetti sauce](#) on Monday night for Tuesday dinner. Spaghetti sauce

is always better the next day you know - plus it will make Tuesday's dinner a breeze. No jar stuff! That stuff tastes nasty and has all kinds of things in it you don't want to eat, and you certainly don't want your kids to eat.

Reserve a cup of sauce before you add meat - if you're going to add meat. (I like to add some browned Italian sausage for flavor.) You'll need the reserved sauce for Wednesday's dinner.

Tuesday night, heat up the sauce, cook your pasta, throw together a salad and put out some sliced Italian bread with olive oil and Parmesan for dipping. Wa-la.

On Wednesday, you have the major ingredients ready for the [Killer Chicken Parmesan Sandwiches](#)

This sandwich is soooo good! And every ingredient has a health benefit.

I like to call them [Secretly Healthy Killer Chicken Parmesan Sandwiches](#)

French Bread (lower in fat)

Olive Oil (good for lowering cholesterol)

Garlic (numerous health benefits - used medicinally for centuries - also keeps vampires away)

Spaghetti Sauce (lycopene- cancer fighting - also antioxidants)

Skinless Chicken Breasts (low fat - protein)

Mozzarella Cheese (low fat - calcium)

Serve with a big tossed salad and a glass of red wine. You'll be stuffed and healthy!

On Thursday night - make creative [Chicken Wraps](#). Yes, it's chicken again, but it tastes totally different from everything else you've had this week and they're casual and fun.

Well, that will get you through most of the week without tearing your hair out.

Think of other ways that you can create more than one dinner at a time.

If you're having chili one night, you can mix in macaroni to stretch it for another night, or you could have chili dogs with chopped onion and grated cheddar cheese.

Always, always have salad fixings on hand.

In the time it takes your meat to cook, you can make a great salad and have a decent dinner ready in about 15 minutes. All you have to do is remember to take meat out of the freezer and put it in the fridge the night before.

If you forgot to take something out, individually wrapped chicken breasts or fish thaw quickly in a bowl of cold water. Make sure to always have stuff like that on hand.

I know you think you couldn't possibly be motivated enough to plan ahead, but when you have good food waiting for you at home you will be less likely to opt for fast junk. Make a commitment to feed you and your family better. It gets to be habit after a little while, and its the best gift you can give yourself.

How to always have something on hand for dinner

It happens to all of us – you forget to take something out of the freezer for dinner. Heck, I'm not a morning person. It's hard enough for me to get my butt out the door on time – let alone be thinking about dinner first thing in the morning. Yeah, me! Fresh food fanatic.

So what's the first thing you do?

Most people start planning which fast food joint they'll stop at.

Aren't you sick of that?

Not to mention that it's expensive, tastes bad, is boring, is keeping you fat, is robbing you of your energy, is making your health problems worse (which is costing you even more money), make hot flashes worse, adds to ED problems, keeps you feeling depressed, ... shall I go on?

But you feel kind of helpless, don't you? The thought of planning dinner after a long day at work is not top on your hit list, is it?

I know how you feel. I used to feel that way too. Boy, when I decided that I was going to try to correct my daughter's health problems through diet – it was a challenge. After all, you kind of get used to your cooking habits, don't you? You always fall back on the same old thing over and over again. Everyone does it.

Over the years, I've found that cooking fresh can be really fast and easy. I like to think I'm the Queen of the Quick Dinner. If it takes longer than a half hour to get on the table, I rarely make it. I just don't have the time, or the motivation to spend hours cooking.

But we do like to eat great tasting fresh food.

I do have some secrets for making sure I don't have any real excuses for not cooking a fresh meal. If I have certain staples in the house, I can always whip up a great meal fast -

Eggs, cheese, salsa – Spanish omelets are great for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Add a salad and some biscuits or toast – and you've got a great healthy meal.

Boneless, skinless chicken breasts or tenders. Even if they're frozen, you can thaw them quickly in a bowl of cold water. The meals you can make with chicken are endless. Some of our favorites are -

Seasoned or teriyaki grilled chicken breast with fresh green beans, buttered noodles and fresh fruit, or

Chicken wraps with cheese, refried beans, lettuce, tomato, and fresh fruit on the side, or

Barbecued chicken sandwiches with a big tossed salad.

If you have some left over spaghetti sauce, you can make chicken Parmesan sandwiches.

Tuna salad on either Italian bread or a kaiser roll with cheese, lettuce and tomato is a great fast meal too.

You can whip up fresh spaghetti sauce pretty quickly too, but it tastes better if you make it the night before. And if you happen to have spaghetti sauce on hand, and some mozzarella on hand – you can make baked mostaccolli.

So what do you need to keep in the house to make sure you have quick dinner options on hand?

Chicken breasts or tenderloins

Eggs

Cheeses

Lettuce, tomato and other salad fixin's

Fresh fruits like cantaloupe, watermelon, grapes, pineapple...

Low fat refried beans

Salsa

Your favorite seasonings

Tuna

Canned petite diced tomatoes

Tomato paste

Spaghetti noodles or mostacolli noodles

Package of egg noodles

Italian mini loaves cut into 5 or 6 inch pieces. Keep in a freezer bag in the freezer.

Kaiser rolls (keep a package in the freezer)

Flour tortillas

Baking potatoes, sweet potatoes, and even an occasional bag of French fries make handy side dishes too.

Try fresh lemonade, orange juice, V8 juices, or water with lemon instead of pop and you'll have made a lot of headway in your new healthier eating habits!

See – it's not that hard! :)

Make Delicious Dinners Appear Like Magic

If you have fresh fruits and vegetables on hand, you can make great dinners appear like magic.

Like tonight - I had a chicken breast cooked. I had planned to make chicken wraps. Shred the chicken, put out refried beans, cheese, lettuce, tomato, and finish off with cool, sweet cantaloupe.

At the last minute we decided to have barbecued chicken sandwiches with melted mozzarella instead. I made a kitchen sink salad - green leaf lettuce, tomatoes, broccoli, carrots, green onions and Crasiens with a red wine vinaigrette dressing - and we still topped it off with the cool, sweet cantaloupe.

Either way - it's good eating!

You can even make a cheese omelet, or a Spanish omelet with a great salad and some fruit.

Baked sweet potato, or baked potato (OK, micro - baked) with a salad or fresh green beans, and a piece of chicken, or tuna, or steak - TA DA! Dinner's ready!

One pan, few dishes, quick & easy - and you'll feel great after you eat it. Can you beat that?

It's cheaper than fast food.

And - you'll save money on sick days, drugs, doctors and such. You'll have lower blood pressure, your skin will look great, you'll lose weight, you'll have more energy, you'll think more clearly, and you'll be more productive.

Not to mention that you'll cut your risk of diabetes, heart disease, cancer and other not so nice diseases.

It really is a good deal - wouldn't you say?

Make it a point to keep fresh fruits and vegetables on hand and you'll never be at a loss for a quick dinner.

Making great meat fast -

Cooking dinner fast is super easy when you know these secrets for making great tasting meat fast. While the meat is cooking, pop potatoes in the microwave and cut up your salad and you can have dinner on the table in as little as 15 minutes.

Fast gourmet results when cooking meats like chicken, pork chops or steaks—stove top. Fish actually takes a little less time.

Using a sauté or similar pan –

Simply place meat in hot pan – grilling until browned on one side – 2-3 minutes. Lower heat and cover, cook 6-7 minutes.

Chicken and pork chops need to be cooked thoroughly and take about 10 – 12 minutes total depending on thickness.

Steaks take 8-9 minutes total to come out medium.

Based on one inch thick meats – adjust times accordingly. Less time for thinner cuts.

More tips from Carole's Kitchen -

I personally use coconut oil when cooking chicken. Nothing when I'm cooking steak or hamburgers. A little butter when I'm cooking pork chops.

When I buy packages of meat, I wrap each piece individually, and place the wrapped pieces in a zip-lock freezer bag. It's easier to grab just what you need.

Individual chicken breast will thaw quickly in cool water. Do not use hot as it will actually start cooking it.

You can preseason meats before you wrap them. Sprinkling pork chops and steaks with garlic powder before freezing will them tender and tasty when you cook them.

How's that for some tasty fast cooking?

Sale Paper Menu Planning

This will save you money and keep variety in your menus.

It's really simple. Sit down with your sale paper and plan your menus trying to only buy what is on sale.

Then you head over to the [recipe section](#) to find ideas. Finish making your shopping list.

Be sure to do an inventory of food and household items and get the things you need on that list.

If I open the last bottle or package of something, I put it on the list right way. I keep a running list. Make it a point to put things on the list as soon as you notice you will be needing it. Don't leave it to memory.

When you shop, buy only what is on the list. Try not to be tempted to throw extra packages of "Oh, that's sounds good" in your cart. You'll save money, and your waistline.

Support -

If you have any questions or need help, you can email me at Carole@CommonSenseLiving.com, or find me on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/CommonSenseLivingPage/>

Eat well. Feed your family well. The pay-offs are worth it -

- reduce your chances of many horrible diseases
- reduce sick days

- feel great
- look great
- have tons of energy
- be more productive
- think more clearly
- kids do better in school and have fewer behavior problems

Whineitis and Chronic Excuse Disease (CED)

If you have read all of the books, you have discovered that your success depends on staying organized, and doing what needs to be done.

You will be surrounded by whiners and chronic excuse makes. Everyone seems to be carrying the "But I don't feel like it" flag.

Here's the truth – you will rarely feel like it.

Not very comforting, is it? But you will be much happier once you've done what needs to be done.

You know what I say to myself when "I don't feel like it?"

TOUGH - Do it anyway.

You've got to be tough with yourself sometimes.

If you really want the life you say you want, you've got to take action. It's not going to happen by magic. I try to make it as easy as possible for you, but you have to do it.

And always remember that you are a Super Woman - You are organized, beautiful, strong, and in control!

With Love,

Carole