

Cream Of The Crop

Speed-Scratch Cooking

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At the Meat Counter...

• Meat and poultry cut into cubes or thin slices, some pre-seasoned, ready for kebabs, stir-frying or grilling. (The thinner the cut the quicker it cooks.)

In the Freezer Case...

• Endless combinations of frozen vegetables cut into chunks, ready for steaming, stir-frying and quick casseroles.

• Veggies in sauces. Try them tossed with pasta.

• Frozen shrimp for salads and stir-frys.

In the Produce Department...

• Ready-to-serve bags of salad greens and coleslaw.

• Packaged pre-cut vegetables like broccoli, celery and carrots. And don't forget...

• The washed and sliced vegetables and fruits at the salad bar, as well as the hardcooked eggs, cooked beans, sprouts and olives.

• Tortillas, Italian bread shells and egg roll wrappers.

Here are some ways to put delicious home-cooked meals on the table in less time with less fuss:

• Use shredded cheeses for instant "sauces" on veggies, casseroles, meat and poultry (if using cheese as a topping on a baked dish, add at the last minute.)

• Use salsa as an instant cooking

sauce for chicken, ground beef and fish, or stir into pastas, rice and beans.

• Go "one-pot" and save on clean-up. When serving pasta and vegetables, add vegetables to the pasta pot during the last few minutes of cooking.

• To shorten marinating time, pierce meat and poultry with fork tines.

• Fill ready-to-bake pie shells with thin slices of unpeeled peaches or pears; sprinkle with sugar and chopped nuts, dot with butter and bake.

• Make a 10-minute chili with canned beans, chili-style stewed tomatoes and browned ground beef. Top with shredded hot-pepper Jack cheese.

• Stir chunks of creamy herbed cheese into hot pasta to make a rich, delicious sauce instantly.

• No need to peel carrots, potatoes and asparagus before cooking; just trim then scrub with a vegetable brush.

• Sprinkle bottled salad dressing and a shake of Parmesan cheese over hot cooked vegetables.

• Use melted jam or jelly as a no-work dessert sauce on fruit, pudding, ice cream or pound cake.

• Stir cut-up fruits and chopped nuts into fruited yogurt for a time-saving dessert.

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SHORTCAKE

- 2 cups flour
- 1½ tablespoon sugar
- ½ cup butter
- 1 egg
- ½ cup milk
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- Pinch of salt

Use any fruit topping. We like it best with fresh strawberries.

Cindy Eshleman
Jonestown

BACON CHEESE DIP

- 2 packages cream cheese
 - ½ cup Miracle Whip
 - ½ cup parmesan cheese
 - 10 slices bacon
 - ½ cup green onion (diced)
- Mix and enjoy on crackers, with pretzels, carrots, celery, or other vegetables.

Hi! My name is Jalisa Musser. I'm 14 years old and in the eighth grade at Springville Mennonite School. My parents are Marlin and Mary Jane Musser and I have two brothers and one sister. We live on a farmette in Stevens. Right now, we are raising a steer, nine chickens, two cats, and three adorable kittens. Some things I enjoy are biking, sewing, drawing, cross-stitching, baking, typing, crafts, and reading (especially Lancaster Farming!) We all love this dip, and it never lasts long!

Jalisa Musser
Stevens

CRACKER DIP

- 8-ounce package cream cheese
 - 1 package George Washington Seasoning
 - 1 small carrot, grated
 - 1 small onion, diced
- Mix all ingredients together. Add 2 tablespoons milk or until smooth enough. Chill overnight.

This is a favorite recipe in our family. I am 11 years old. I have five brothers and five sisters. We live on a dairy farm. I like to plant flowers and work in the yard and fields.

Linda Fisher
Christiana

CHOCOLATE LAYER BARS

- First Layer:
- ½ cup butter, softened
 - 2 cups sugar
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 cup water
 - ½ cup vegetable oil
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - 2 cups flour
 - 3 tablespoons cocoa
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Cream sugar and butter. Add eggs, water, oil, and vanilla. Beat well. Add flour, cocoa, and soda. Pour in 15-inch by 10-inch by 1-inch greased pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes. Cool.

- Second Layer:
- 1 cup shortening
 - 1 cup sugar
 - ½ cup milk
 - 1 tablespoon water
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- Mix well for five minutes. Spread over cooled cake.

- Frosting:
- 1 cup sugar
 - 6 tablespoons butter
 - 6 tablespoons milk
 - 1½ cup semisweet chocolate chips
- Melt in microwave for two minutes. Frost cake.

No one can eat just one of these bars, with chocolate lovers in the family like we have. We live on a dairy farm with our four boys and two girls. It's a busy life, but we enjoy the "country living."

Mrs. Leon Musser
Manheim

ICEBOX SANDWICHES

- 1 package (3.4 ounces) of instant vanilla pudding mix
 - 2 cups cold milk
 - 2 cups whipped cream topping
 - 1 cup (6 ounces) of miniature semisweet chocolate chips
 - 48 graham cracker squares
- Mix pudding and milk according to package directions and refrigerate until set. Fold in whipped cream topping and chocolate chips. Place 24 graham crackers on a baking sheet; top each with about 3 tablespoons of filling. Place another graham cracker on top. Freeze for one hour or until firm. Wrap individually in plastic wrap and freeze. Serve sandwiches frozen. Yield is two dozen.

My family loves these cool, creamy treats. They make nice snacks when friends are over.

Janet Stauffer
Elverson

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