



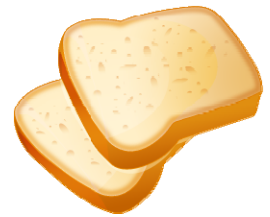
DINING ON A DIME

Eating Better for Less

July / August

New Life for Leftovers

Many people have a difficult relationship with leftover foods. Throwing away good food wastes the time, money and other resources spent to get it. (Note: If your leftovers have spoiled, discard them immediately, and remember the old adage, “When in doubt, throw it out.”) A great meal could be made from small amounts of this and that, but how? Read on for ideas on how to reincarnate yesterday’s best, and last night’s remainders, and to gain new love for your leftovers. Recipes for five of these ideas can be found on page 2.



- **Too-ripe fruits.** “Going bananas” with too many too-ripe bananas? Freeze then blend them with cocoa for a Chocolate Monkey Treat, which tastes amazingly like chocolate ice cream. Banana bread is a good stand-by, too. Cook over-ripe peaches, apples or pears with oatmeal. Just put the fruit in with the water and let apples boil for up to five minutes (less time for softer fruits). Then cook the oatmeal as normal.
- **Extra pasta, protein foods and vegetables.** Dice, label and freeze extra bits of cooked foods, such as pasta, vegetables, fish, poultry, pork and beef. When you have enough to feed the family, thaw them in the refrigerator and make a stir fry, pot pie, casserole or soup.
- **Stale bread.** You can make delicious French toast from stale bread. Less-than-fresh bread is also perfect for making breadcrumbs or croutons.
- **Leftover rice.** Reheated rice is never as good the second time around, so don’t just reheat it — reinvent it! Rice pudding makes an excellent breakfast food or dessert. Or, try a red beans and rice dish or a lentil and rice casserole for a nutritious and filling meatless meal. Or, combine leftover rice, cooked vegetables, low-sodium broth or vegetable juice, and chopped meat to make a comforting bowl of soup.

These ideas can help you get a second life for your leftovers. No matter how you plan to serve them, remember to use or freeze refrigerated leftovers within four days. Date foods before you stow them in the refrigerator, then follow a “first in, first out” rule. When reheating foods, heat them quickly to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F. Reheat only what you think your family will eat for that meal. Discard all leftover reheated leftovers.

***Dining on a Dime's* Cooks' Page: Day-Old "Do-Overs"**



Are you ready to transform over-ripe bananas, stale bread and leftover rice into make-over marvels? This issue of *Dining on a Dime* gives you five recipes to help you eat better for less money!

Chocolate Monkey Treat. For one serving, peel 1 over-ripe banana. Remove bad spots, break it into chunks, and freeze. Place frozen chunks in a food processor with 2 tablespoons unsweetened baking cocoa. Process on medium speed until no large chunks are present. Serve immediately. *Nutrition Facts per serving: 150 calories, 1.5 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 33 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mg sodium and 5 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 2% vitamin A, 15% vitamin C, 0% calcium, 10% iron.*

Croutons and Breadcrumbs. For six servings, cube 3 slices of stale whole wheat or white bread and place them in a baking pan. Add 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder, 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning herbs and 2 tablespoons cooking oil. Mix well to coat cubes. Bake at 325 degrees F. for 7 minutes. Stir and bake for 7 more minutes. Store in a covered container and use within 1 week. To make breadcrumbs, process croutons in a food processor on medium speed. Freeze in covered containers until ready to use. *Nutrition Facts per serving: 80 calories, 5 g fat, 0.5 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 6 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 0 mg cholesterol, 80 mg sodium and 1 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 0% vitamin A, 0% vitamin C, 2% calcium, 2% iron.*

French Toast. For one serving, beat together 1 raw egg and 1/4 cup fat-free milk. Add two slices of stale whole wheat or white bread and soak until thoroughly coated on each side. Spray a skillet with non-stick cooking spray. Cook over medium heat, turning until both sides are lightly browned. *Nutrition Facts per serving: 230 calories, 7 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 27 g carbohydrate, 16 g protein, 210 mg cholesterol, 370 mg sodium and 4 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 8% vitamin A, 0% vitamin C, 15% calcium, 15% iron.*

Rice Pudding. For four servings, bring 2 cups water to a boil. Remove from heat. Whisk in 2/3 cup non-fat dry milk powder and stir for 2 minutes. Stir in 1 cup plain cooked leftover white or brown rice, 1/4 cup granulated sugar, 1/4 cup (packed) seedless raisins, 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon and 1/2 teaspoon vanilla flavoring. Slowly stir in 1 raw beaten egg. Spray a 2-quart baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Pour mixture into the dish. Bake at 350 degrees F. for 20 minutes. Stir and bake for 20 more minutes. Pudding will thicken as it cools. Serve warm or cold. *Nutrition Facts per serving: 200 calories, 1.5 g fat, 0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 41 g carbohydrate, 7 g protein, 55 mg cholesterol, 85 mg sodium and 1 g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 6% vitamin A, 2% vitamin C, 15% calcium, 6% iron.*

Condiment Confidence



As a busy cook, do you rely on some ready-made dips, sauces and condiments when preparing meals? If so, are you aware of how long ago you opened and began storing each of these foods?

A good habit to get into is to write the date on the label when you open a food. Although the shelf life of these commercial products is often longer than home-prepared versions, food safety is still a concern. Some frequently-asked questions, and answers, regarding the safe handling of these types of products follows.

Is refrigeration needed, or not?

In general, most opened containers of condiments and sauces need to be refrigerated. Read the labels on each of your specific products. If a label states “refrigerate after opening,” be sure to do that. For example, cover and refrigerate opened mayonnaise, jams, jellies, salad dressings, dips, sauces and soft margarines promptly.

On the other hand, some condiments are shelf-stable for an extended period. Catsup can be stored for up to one month without refrigeration once opened, and mustard for up to one year. Refrigerate all condiments for longer freshness.

For information about specific products, contact the manufacturer.

What do the packaging dates mean?

The “*sell-by*” and “*use-by*” dates apply only to unopened packages. The *sell-by* date shows how long the unopened product can be displayed at a store before it is sold. The *use-by* date is the last date recommended for the use of an unopened product at home for peak quality.

How long can I refrigerate opened condiments and sauces?

Check the label, or use the guidelines below, for how quickly you should serve, freeze or discard several popular food items that may be lingering opened in your refrigerator. For safe storage guidelines for many food products, visit www.shelflifeadvice.com

Opened Commercial Food Item	Safe Refrigerated Storage Time
Meat- or cheese-based pasta sauces	Up to 4 days
Tomato-based pasta sauces	Up to 1 week
Hummus / Creamy snack dips	Up to 1 week
Salsa	Up to 1 month
Catsup, Chili sauce	Up to 6 months

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



Wondering about Fresh *versus* Frozen?

In the spirit of saving you time and money, *Dining on a Dime* often mentions keeping a supply of frozen fruits and vegetables on hand. But is frozen produce as nutritious as fresh?

In general, yes. Frozen fruits and vegetables are usually picked and preserved at their peak of ripeness and nutrition. The most nutritious kinds have no added sugars, fats, salt or sauces.

Some nutrient loss occurs during the days of shipping and storage before fresh produce is eaten. Also, fresh fruits and vegetables that must be shipped typically are picked before they are ripe, so they don't develop their full nutrient potential. The shipping process exposes produce to heat, air and light, too, which degrade certain nutrients. Produce that is grown and purchased locally is much fresher, however, and is usually picked when ripe.



To reduce nutrient losses in your fruits and vegetables:

- Cook produce — or serve it fresh — as soon as possible after cutting it up. Cover and store leftovers promptly.
- When cooking fresh or frozen vegetables, avoid overcooking them. How? Remove them from the heat just as soon as they're tender.
- Steaming retains more nutrients than boiling, but if you boil vegetables in just a small amount of water, and then add the cooking water to another dish, such as soup, you'll benefit.

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