

## Food Preparation Day

Save a lot of food preparation time by scheduling one day a week as a food preparation day. The following foods can be prepared ahead of time and stored until needed for your meals:

### Baking Day

- Whole wheat bread – make and freeze
- Dinner Rolls – make, shape, and freeze
- Tortillas – make ahead and refrigerate
- Cookie dough - freeze
- Granola

### Meat and Bean Prep

- Chicken Breasts: Buy several. Bake, simmer, or cook in instant pot. Then cut in cubes and divide into meal portion Ziploc freezer bags. Freeze until needed.
- Hamburger can be browned ahead of time by putting ground beef in a steamer. The fat will drip into the water below the steaming basket and the ground beef can be stored in meal size portions in a freezer bag. Remember to stir the ground beef periodically through the steaming process.
- Soak and cook a variety of beans and store in the freezer until needed.
- Soup stock – use soup bones or cheaper cuts of meats to make your own soup stock. Stock can be frozen in ice cube trays to add a little extra flavor to foods or frozen in pint jars. (remember to put only 1 ½ cups of broth in your jar to allow room for expansion as the broth freezes).

### Dairy products and condiments

- Homemade yogurt is easy and a great way to use powdered milk storage. Make up to one gallon at a time (if your family will eat that much). Add fruits, maple or vanilla flavoring, concentrated fruit juice, sweeteners, or granola just prior to eating.
- Crème fraiche is France's favorite form of cream for cooking. With more body and complex flavors than fresh sweet cream, creme fraiche is a thick, rich, custard of a cream. It thickens without curdling, a little goes a long way in fast pan sauces, and blended with fresh herbs and a dash of fresh lemon, creme fraiche is splendid over seafoods and poultry. Dollop it over fresh fruit, or whip and lightly sweeten to frost or fill cakes. A homemade version can easily be made ahead of time. I like to use the same method as I do for making yogurt. I just use whipping cream instead of milk. You can use plain yogurt or 1-2 TB of cultured buttermilk for a starter.
- Homemade mayonnaise is surprisingly easy to make and allows you to select the type of oil for the base.
- Homemade ketchup is bursting with fresh tomato flavor and spices. It's easy to make and totally worth it! It is especially flavorful when fresh tomatoes are in season.

### Freezer Meals

- Prepare some of your favorite meals ahead of time and freeze them for later use. All you need to do is thaw and bake.