

Susan's 14 Simple, Economical and Nutritious Meal Ideas:

1. Frittata

Fry onion and vegetables (celery, capsicum, mushroom, corn, broccoli, carrot, pumpkin, zucchini, frozen peas, beans etc) in small amount of oil. Beat eggs (2 per person with a little water (1 tbsp per egg). Reduce heat and pour over vegetables. Cook until set. This is a simpler version of an omelette. Leftovers can be taken for lunch.

2. Soup

a. "Creamy soup" Fry an onion. Add vegetables (pumpkin or broccoli or cauliflower with some celery). Boil with chicken stock cube. Puree. Add milk, evaporated milk or skim milk powder for a low fat and higher protein "creamy" soup. Serve.

b. Minestrone Soup. Fry onion. Add tin of tomatoes, 1 tbsp tomato paste, chopped celery, carrots, tin of kidney beans, 2 cups chopped cabbage or zucchini, a handful of pasta and chopped bacon if desired. Cook until tender. Add chopped parsley & grated cheese to serve. Serve soup with grain toast or a crunchy bread roll.

3. Savoury mince

Cook an onion and 400g lean mince together with 2 sticks celery, 2 carrots. Add 1 tin of drained lentils. Add tomato paste and 2 tbsp worcestershire sauce to taste (herbs, curry powder, chilli etc can be added if preferred). Add mixed frozen vegetables. This makes a good base for potato pie or served with steamed rice, pasta or on toast. You can vary the mince – chicken, pork, veal, turkey. Can also make into low fat pies / strudels / sausage rolls using phyllo pastry.

4. Fishcakes

Steam potatoes and sweet potato. Mash then add one finely chopped one onion & parsley /coriander/ shallots if you have these. Add a 400g tin tuna / salmon & combine with lemon juice or dash of white vinegar to taste with pepper. Form into patties. Spray with cooking spray & gently bake / fry in non stick pan. Tastes great with salad.

Tip: Do not add milk or butter to the mashed potatoes to avoid mixture becoming too wet.

5. Stir fry

Chop vegetables or use frozen stir fry vegetables – whatever you have. Celery, capsicum, beans, corn, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, Asian greens, cabbage etc. Fry an onion in a little oil with garlic, chilli & ginger (if you like). Add beef or lamb or chicken or pork strips or mince. About 400g total. Tofu works well also. Add sauce eg sweet chilli, soy, oyster to suit your taste. Serve with Asian noodles or steamed rice.

Tip 1: This is a good way to clean out bits of left over vegetables in the vegetable drawer

Tip 2: Add a few nuts or seeds or tin of chickpeas.

Tip 3: This stir fry mix also works well rolled in spring roll wrappers, spray with cooking spray & baked in the oven.

6. Vegetable pasta bake

Fry onion & garlic. Add chopped eggplant, zucchini, capsicum. Cook until soft. Add tablespoon tomato paste & tin of tomatoes. Add to 300g cooked pasta & combine. Place in casserole dish. Top with grated cheese & bake until brown.

7. Chickpea & pumpkin curry
Fry onion & garlic. Saute with chopped pumpkin cubes. Add satchet of butter curry spices. Add one tin each of chickpeas & tomatoes. Top with chopped coriander or parsley if desired. Serve with steamed rice.
8. Pita pizzas
Spread wholemeal pizza base with tomato paste, pasta sauce or pesto. Top with a combination of vegetables: onion, mushrooms, capsicum, tomato, zucchini, eggplant, artichokes, celery, sweet potato, pumpkin. Chicken, ham, prawns, sardines, tofu or chickpeas, or other lean cooked meat. Top with grated cheese & bake until cooked.
9. Tuna pasta
Fry onion & garlic, stick of celery and 1 carrot. Add 1 tbsp of tomato paste, one tin each of tomatoes & tuna, then simmer. Add herbs & pepper to taste. Serve with pasta and salad.
10. Stuffed Potatoes or Baby Pumpkins
Microwave potatoes. Scoop out insides. Fill with baked beans / chilli beans / savoury mince / coleslaw. Top with grated cheese & some paprika or cayenne (if you like it spicy). Bake and serve with a dollop of yoghurt and salad.
11. Grilled Herb Salmon
Preheat asandwich press. Combine chopped herbs such as parsley, dill & grated lemon zest. Scatter over salmon fillet, then place on sandwich press between 2 sheets of no stick paper and grill approx 4-5 mins
12. Spinach & Ricotta Canneloni
Mix low fat ricotta cheese with shallots, mixed herbs, nutmeg and packet of defrosted frozen spinach. Rolled in fresh lasagna sheets (or a bit more fiddly, but you can use cannelloni tubes also). Place in greased casserole dish and pour over 1 bottle of tomato based pasta sauce. Sprinkle with grated cheese & bake. You can also replace spinach with grated zucchini or tinned tuna / salmon.
Tip: Mix also works well stirred through cooked pasta. No need to worry about the pasta sauce.
13. Zucchini Slice
An old favourite for good reasons!
Mix 3 grated zucchinis, 1 finely chopped onion, 1 cup SR flour, 4 chopped rashers of lean bacon, 1 cup grated cheese & 6 eggs. Pour into into a lamington size tray and bake for about 40 mins.
Variations: Use any grated / finely chopped vegetables. Top with pepitas before cooking.
14. Easy roast chicken pieces
Mix 6 thigh cutlets or with chopped rosemary (or any other herbs desired), crushed garlic, 1/2 lemon juiced (or balsamic vinegar) & 1 tbsp olive oil. Bake in oven or on bbq. Add other vegetables – pumpkin, zucchini, tomatoes, corn. Serve with steamed rice or bread roll.



