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UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Nutrition Connections:

A Link to Food, Fitness & Financial Health for Seniors

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Leftovers

There's nothing better than leftovers. They're tasty and convenient. You might think of them as "cook once, eat twice" foods. UNH Cooperative Extension writer/editor Peg Boyles says, "When I was growing up, New England boiled dinners appeared often on our family's menu. I hated the boiled dinner, with that slab of pot roast and plate of boiled onions, potatoes, beets, carrots and cabbage. But my all-time favorite food was the red flannel hash mom made from the leftovers. She ran them through a hand-cranked food grinder, mixed them together, added an egg, formed the mixture into patties and fried them in an iron skillet."

Whether you use your leftovers for hash or just heat them up as is, there's something about leftovers that conjures up fond memories for most of us. "I use leftovers almost every day as quick economical lunch fixings," says Peg. "I intentionally make extra steamed or roasted vegetables for supper and a little extra chicken or fish, then take the leftovers for lunch. Re-heating everything with a little grated cheese in the microwave makes a great lunch casserole," Peg says. "I top it off with an apple or some fruit for dessert."

Peg finds another use for leftover vegetables by pureeing them in a blender with milk and a little cheese, adding a few favorite herbs, then heating the mixture for a quick, hearty soup.

She also makes what she calls "fruit hash." She cuts up an apple and a pear (or a couple of peaches or nectarines) with their skins, adds a few chopped walnuts and a sprinkling of cinnamon, then cooks the fruit over medium heat with a bit of water until the fruit turns soft and all the water has boiled off. "It's a good way to use up fruit that might be a bit soft and less appealing if eaten fresh. Fruit hash works as either a side dish or a dessert."

One of Peg's favorite leftover dishes is a chicken enchilada bake. She layers whole wheat tortillas with a mixture of black beans, leftover chicken, and shredded low-fat cheese, pouring a little enchilada sauce over each layer, then topping off with cheese and baking at 350 degrees until the cheese bubbles and browns (about 25-30 minutes).

By using the "cook once, eat twice" method of eating, you'll save yourself lots of time, and money. "When you make your dinner at night, cook extra meat or poultry and steamed vegetables. You'll have tasty leftovers for the next day," Peg says.



Food Safety for Leftovers

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, you should eat refrigerated leftovers within four days to maintain food safety. If you don't anticipate being able to eat them within this period of time, freeze them immediately.

To help ensure food safety, refrigerate perishable foods quickly and don't let them sit for longer than two hours at room temperature, or for longer than one hour if the room temperature is above 90°F. Perishable foods include meat, poultry, dairy, fish, eggs, side dishes and casseroles.

Before eating leftovers, reheat them thoroughly. Reheat leftover sauces, soups and gravies to boiling. If you're using the oven to reheat leftovers, set the temperature to no lower than 325°F (163°C) to ensure they're reheated quickly. Because bacteria multiply between temperatures of 40°F (4°C) and 140°F (60°C), reheating in slow cookers or chafing dishes isn't recommended.



Do You Qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit?

The Earned Income Tax Credit for tax year 2008 lets some working families with children and some workers without children pay less federal income tax or get money back.

Two types of families can qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit:

- Workers between ages 25 and 65 with no children.
- Workers with qualifying children. This child can be a son, daughter, adopted child, grandchild, stepchild, your brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister whom you cared for as you would your own child; or a foster child placed by a government or private agency. The child had to live with you for more than six months in 2008. This child must be under age 19 or under age 24 and a full-time student, or any age if the child is permanently disabled.

The money you receive varies with your earnings in 2008, whether you have qualifying children, and how many qualified children you have.

Family Size (Age 25 to 65)	Single	Married filing jointly	Can receive up to
No children	\$12,880	\$15,880	\$438
One child	\$33,995	\$36,995	\$2,917
2 or more children	\$38,646	\$41,646	\$4,824

Your investment income during 2008 can't be more than \$2,950.

To get your earned income credit if you have a qualifying child, file Form 1040 or Form 1040A and attach Schedule EIC for the Earned Income Tax Credit.



Savory Turkey or Chicken Pot Pie

You can use any leftover vegetables in this recipe instead of the carrots, potatoes and mushrooms. Serves 6.

Ingredients:
 2 prepared pie crusts (or homemade if you have the time)
 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
 1 onion (sliced)
 ½ cup celery (diced)
 1 cup carrot (sliced)
 1 cup potatoes (diced)
 8 ounces fresh mushrooms (sliced)
 2 garlic cloves (minced)
 1 teaspoon thyme
 ¼ teaspoon ground sage
 salt and pepper (to taste)
 3 tablespoons flour
 2 cups chicken broth
 2 cups cooked chicken (diced)

1 Preheat the oven to 425 degrees and press one crust onto the bottom and up the sides of a 9" pie plate. **2** In a large pan melt butter and add celery, onion, carrots, potatoes, mushrooms, and garlic. **3** Stir fry for 5 minutes. **4** Add thyme, sage, salt and pepper to the pan. Mix well. **5** Sprinkle with flour and mix again. Add chicken stock and simmer for 5 minutes or until mixture is thickened. **6** Add chicken to the mixture and mix well. **7** Put chicken pot pie filling into pie pan, add crust to the top of the pie and crimp edges to seal. **8** Bake in the oven at 425 degrees and bake for 15 minutes. **9** After 15 minutes reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake for 45 minutes. **10** Remove from oven and let cool for 15 minutes before serving.

Nutrition information

(per serving):

Calories 250
Carbohydrate 16 milligrams
Cholesterol . . . 40 milligrams
Protein 9 grams
Fat 17 grams
 Saturated Fat . . . 6 grams
Sodium 320 milligrams
Fiber 2 grams



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