

Basic Self-Sufficiency #1 - FOOD

By: CountryLady

A good way to be self-sufficient, stay prepared and save money, is to reduce the number of different products you use. This may seem to be a simplistic perspective, but open your mind a minute, and take a look at the following information.

What do you use to make meals for your family? Think of all the different products available for the convenience of today's cooks. The more convenience, the more it cost. But it is easy to make excellent meals with ingredients that are often already on hand for other things, such as...

Eggs

Yeast

Fat or Oil

Dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt, etc.)

Legumes (peas, beans, lentils, peanuts etc.)

Grains (corn, wheat, rice, rye, oats, etc.)

Sweeteners (sugar, honey, fructose, etc.)

Vegetables (carrot, green beans, potato, onion, etc.)

Fruits (melon, peach, apple, pear, grape, orange, etc.)

Meats (beef, pork, rabbit, deer, chicken, fish, etc.)

Sprouting Seed (clover, broccoli, radish, mung bean, etc.)

Plus Salt, Leavening, Herbs, Spices and Seasonings

Our family's favorite basic foods can be mixed, cooked, canned, frozen, dried, and stored fresh for use in a multitude of meals year-round. We can make our own convenience foods at home, from better ingredients, with less poisons and preservatives, and tailor them to our family's preferences. In the process, we will save money, and be healthier.

HOMEMADE 'CONVENIENCE' MIX RECIPES

Basic Biscuit Mix

10 cups flour (a mix of 8 cups white + 2 cups whole wheat is nice)

1/3 cup baking powder

1 tablespoon salt

2 cups solid vegetable shortening

Sift dry ingredients together in a large bowl. With two knives, a pastry blender, or food processor, add the shortening in spoonfuls and cut it in until the mixture is the texture of coarse cornmeal. If you are using a food processor, pulse it and watch closely.

Keep mix stored in a tightly closed container. It will keep on the shelf for 1 to 6 months in dry weather. In very hot and humid weather, keep the mix in the refrigerator.

Can be used for Biscuits, Dumplings, Shortcake, Pizza, Pancakes, Crepes and Waffles, etc. by adding milk, egg, oil, sweetener, herbs, fruit, vegetables, leavening, salt, seeds and seasonings.

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Cornmeal Mix

4 cups flour

4 cups cornmeal

1 1/2 cups nonfat dry milk

1/4 cup granulated sugar (optional)

1/4 cup baking powder

2 teaspoons salt

1 1/2 cups solid shortening

Sift dry ingredients together until well mixed. Cut in fat until well blended. Place in a glass jar. Keep tightly closed in a cool place. Mixture will keep for 1 to 6 months on the shelf in dry weather. In hot and humid weather, store in the refrigerator.

Cornmeal Muffins

Grease 8 medium-size muffin cups. Combine 2-1/4 cups Cornmeal Mix, 2/3 cup water and 1 beaten egg. Stir just enough to moisten dry ingredients. Fill muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake at 425 degrees F for about 20 minutes. Makes 8.

Cornmeal Biscuits

Add about 1/2 cup water to 2 cups Cornmeal Mix to make a soft dough. Drop by tablespoonfuls onto a greased baking sheet. Bake at 425 degrees F for 12 minutes. Makes 12 biscuits.

Cornbread

Combine 4 1/2 cups Cornmeal Mix, 2 beaten eggs and 1 1/3 cups water. Stir just enough to moisten dry ingredients. Pour into a greased pan, about 8 inches square. Bake at 425 degrees F for about 25 minutes. Serves 12.

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Herb Rice Mix

1 cup uncooked rice

2 beef bouillon cubes

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon EACH dried marjoram, thyme & rosemary

1 teaspoon dried scallion flakes

Store in airtight bags or container. To use, add Herb Rice Mix to 2 cups cold water and 1 tablespoon butter in a heavy saucepan. When mixture boils, stir once with fork; reduce heat to medium-low. Cover tightly and simmer 12 to 14 minutes, or until all liquid is absorbed. Serves 4.

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Frying Mix

2 cups flour

2 cups cracker meal

1 cup white cornmeal

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

6 tablespoons vegetable oil

1/2 cup powdered milk

Blend all dry ingredients together. Then mix in oil thoroughly. Mixture should resemble pie crust before liquid is added. One-fourth teaspoon garlic salt may be substituted for 1/4 teaspoon salt. One teaspoon poultry seasoning may be added, if desired. Store unused portion in a sealed container.

For fish: Eliminate 1 cup cracker meal and the white corn meal. Add 2 cups yellow corn meal.

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Soup Mix

14 ounces dry split peas

12 ounces barley

1 1/2 cup white rice

14 ounces macaroni

12 ounces lentils

4 cups dried onions

Combine ingredients and store in jars.

To make soup, boil 2 quarts water. Add 1 1/3 cups dry Soup Mix. Salt to taste. Add 1 pound ground beef or leftover meat, celery, carrots. Simmer for 1 hour.

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Noodles Mix

1 cup instant nonfat dry milk

2 tablespoons grated Romano or Parmesan Cheese

1/3 cup dried minced onion

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon white pepper

Combine ingredients and store in an airtight container. This will keep for 4 months on the shelf.

To use, combine 1/4 cup Noodles Mix with 2 tablespoons melted butter and 1/4 cup milk. Toss with pasta.

For variety, add 1/4 cup grated Cheddar cheese in place of the Parmesan cheese for a different taste.

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Salad Seasoning Mix

This is great for sprinkling on a tossed green lettuce salad. It can also be a topping for baked potato or use as a garnish on potato or egg salad.

2 cups Parmesan cheese

2 teaspoons salt

1/2 cup sesame seeds

1/2 teaspoon garlic salt

1 tablespoon instant minced onion

2 tablespoons parsley flakes

1/2 teaspoon dried dill seed

2 tablespoons poppy seeds

3 tablespoons celery seeds

2 teaspoonspaprika

1/2 teaspoon pepper

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Mix until evenly distributed. Store in a 1-quart airtight container and label. Keep in a cool dry place on kitchen shelf. Use within 3 or 4 months.

Makes 3 cups.

Make sour cream dip by using 2 tablespoons of mix and 1 cup sour cream.

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White Sauce Mix

2 cups instant nonfat dry milk

1 cup flour

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1 cup butter, margarine or shortening

In a large bowl mix well dry milk, flour and salt. With pastry blender or 2 knives cut in butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Store in an airtight container. If using butter, store in the refrigerator. If using margarine or shortening, will keep on the shelf in dry weather for up to 6 months.

White Sauce

In a small saucepan combine 1/2 cup White Sauce Mix, 1 cup water, 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/8 teaspoon pepper. Stir over low heat until smooth and hot. Makes about 1 1/2 cups.

Cheese Sauce

Add 3/4 cup shredded cheese after White Sauce thickens.

Curry Sauce

Add 1 teaspoon curry powder to thickened White Sauce.

Alfredo Sauce

Make White Sauce from White Sauce Mix. To every 1/2 cup White Sauce add 2 to 4 cloves garlic, pressed, 1/2 cup grated Parmesan or Romano cheese and 1 cup light cream. To cooked and drained hot pasta, add Alfredo Sauce ingredients, one by one, mixing and tossing well after each addition. Serve immediately.

Mac and Cheese

Combine 1/2 cup White Sauce Mix, 1/2 cup grated Cheddar cheese and 1 cup milk. Pour over hot, drained, elbow macaroni. Toss well.

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Shake and Bake It

1 cup flour

1 cup cornmeal

2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1/4 teaspoon red pepper

Mix ingredients in a large bowl or bag. If desired, dip meat in beaten egg and milk mixture, or just dampen with water. Roll fish, pork, or chicken pieces in coating mix. Place in shallow pan and bake at 350 degrees F until done, about 1 hour. Will coat 7 pounds of meat. Store mix in airtight container.

For fish: Add a little dill weed.

For pork: Add a little sage.

For chicken: Add a little tarragon.

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Piecrust Mix

12 cups flour

5 cups shortening

2 tablespoons salt

Sift flour and salt together twice. Cut in shortening with a pastry blender until crumbs are coarse and granular. Store in a cool place until ready to use.

For a 2-crust pie, use 2 1/2 cups of Piecrust Mix and 5 to 7 tablespoons water.

For a 1-crust pie, use 1 1/2 cups of Piecrust Mix and 2 to 3 tablespoons water.

Stir water into Piecrust Mix with a fork until pastry holds together. Roll out on lightly floured surface. fit into pie pan and bake as directed in recipe. For 1-crust pie shell, prick sides and bottom of crust. Bake in a preheated 450 degree F oven for about 10 minutes or until golden.

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Cookie Mix

5 cups flour

2 cups granulated sugar

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons packed light brown sugar

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon baking soda

2 cups vegetable shortening

In a large bowl mix well the flour, sugars, salt and baking soda. With a pastry blender or 2 knives cut shortening into flour mixture until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Store airtight in a cool, dry place. Use within 3 months. Makes about 10 cups.

Raisin-Oatmeal Cookies

In a large bowl mix well 2 cups Cookie Mix, 2 cups quick oats, 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar and chopped walnuts. Stir in 2 slightly beaten eggs and 2 teaspoons vanilla extract until well blended. Shape dough in 1-inch balls. Place 1 1/2 inches apart on greased baking sheets. Press flat with bottom of glass dipped in flour. Bake in a preheated 350 degree F oven for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove to racks to cool. Makes 66.

Spice Cookies

In a medium bowl mix well 2 cups Cookie Mix and 1 1/2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice. Stir in 1 slightly beaten egg, 1/4 cup molasses and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract until well blended. Drop by teaspoonfuls (dip spoon in water to prevent sticking) 2 inches apart on greased baking sheet. Press flat with bottom of glass dipped in granulated sugar (moisten glass to help sugar adhere if necessary). Bake in a preheated 375 degree F oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until edges are browned. Remove to racks to cool. Makes 36.

Peanut Butter Cookies

In a medium bowl mix well 2 cups Cookie Mix and 1/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar. Stir in 1 slightly beaten egg, 1/2 cup chunky peanut butter and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract until well blended. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Place 1 1/2 inches apart on greased baking sheet. Press

flat with fork tines dipped in water to prevent sticking. Bake in a preheated 375 degree F oven for 8 to 10 minutes or until edges are browned. Remove to racks to cool. Makes 40.

Fudgy Brownies

In a medium bowl mix well 2 cups Cookie Mix, 1 cup granulated sugar and 1/2 cup cocoa powder. Stir in 2 slightly beaten eggs, 2 tablespoons water and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract until well blended. Fold in 1/2 cup chopped walnuts. Spoon into greased 8-inch square baking pan; smooth top. Bake in a preheated 350 degree F oven for 30 to 35 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pan on rack. Cut into 2-inch squares. Dust with confectioners' sugar, if desired.

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Master Muffin Mix

5 cups unbleached all-purpose flour

1 cup nonfat dry milk powder

2 cups granulated sugar

3 tablespoons baking powder

2 teaspoons salt

Pour all the ingredients into a large zipper-style plastic bag. Seal top and shake well until mixed. Stores in refrigerator for 2 months.

Makes 8 cups mix.

Any-Flavor Yogurt Mini Muffins

1 egg

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 (8 ounce) carton yogurt, any flavor

1/4 cup jam or jelly, same or

complimentary flavor

2 teaspoons vanilla or almond extract

1 3/4 cups Master Muffin Mix

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. In a 2-quart or larger mixing bowl, whisk the egg. Add all the ingredients except Master Muffin Mix and whisk well. Add Master Muffin Mix and whisk until just combined. Spray 2 mini muffin tins with vegetable oil cooking spray. Use a cookie dough scoop or tablespoon to fill mini muffin tins three-quarters full. Bake for 11 to 13 minutes until tops just begin to brown and muffin springs back when touched. Do not overbake. Serve at once. (These muffins are best eaten warm.) Freeze any leftover muffins for best quality.

If you like a moister muffin and aren't worried about calories, increase the oil to 1/4 cup.

Makes 24 muffins.

Lemon Poppy Seed Muffins

1 egg

1/4 cup vegetable oil

1 serving (4 ounce) lemon or vanilla pudding

1/2 cup milk

1 tablespoon poppy seeds

2 teaspoons lemon extract

2 cups Master Muffin Mix

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. In a 2-quart or larger mixing bowl, whisk the egg. Whisk in the oil, pudding and milk. Stir in poppy seeds and lemon and almond extracts. Add Master Muffin Mix and stir until just combined. Spray 2 mini muffin tins with vegetable oil cooking spray. Use a cookie dough scoop or tablespoon to fill mini muffin tins three-quarters full. Bake for 11 to 13 minutes until tops just begin to brown and muffin springs back when touched. Do not overbake. Serve at once.

Makes 24 muffins.

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The Mixes above represent just a few of the many convenience foods you can make from basic ingredients we already have in our homes. In addition, many are excellent for camping, or stocking a retreat.

The next time you get ready to reach for that pricey brisket rub, or fancy cake mix, remember to "Just Say NO~!" to over-priced convenience foods. Then join me as we laugh all the way to the bank.

