

Easy Summer Meal Ideas

Simple Recipes for Mom, Dad and the Kids &
Kid-Friendly Restaurant Suggestions



By

www.MenuPlanningCentral.com

Introduction

It's summer time and while I'm sure you're enjoying having the kids home more, this can also be one of the most stressful times of the year for Mom. The kids want to be entertained, taken places and of course they are always hungry.

To make things a little easier for you this summer and give you a chance to spent less time cooking and cleaning up and more time enjoying quality time with your family, we've put together some fun summer recipes that:

- Dad Can Cook
- The Kids Can Cook
- And Some Easy Recipes Mom Can Make

Plus we've put together a list of our favorite family friendly restaurants for you for those days when no one in the family feels like cooking.

We would also love to help you cook throughout the year. Just imagine how much faster and easier meal preparation would be if you had a list of what you would cook each week, along with a detailed recipe and a shopping list that included everything you needed to make all these mouthwatering dishes.

That's exactly what we'll do for you every single week ... in fact we give you 3 different menus to choose from (family-friendly, healthy and vegetarian) and our easy to use menu planning software allows you to mix and match to create a custom menu for your family.

Join us today at www.menuplanningcentral.com/main.html and let us take care of all the tedious meal planning for you.

5 Recipes Dad Can Make

Easy Fish 'N' Veggie Packets

Serves 4



4 mild-flavored fish fillets, such as cod filets, flounder, sole or walleye pike (about 4 ounces each)

1 (16-ounce) bag frozen broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots (or other combination), thawed and drained

1 tablespoon chopped fresh or teaspoon dried dill weed

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon pepper

1/4 cup chicken broth

1. Heat oven to 450°. Place each fish fillet on 12-inch square of aluminum foil. Top each fish fillet with one-fourth of the vegetables. Sprinkle with dill weed, salt and pepper. Drizzle 1 tablespoon broth over each mound of vegetables.
2. Fold foil over fish and vegetables so edges meet. Seal edges, making tight 1/2-inch fold; fold again. Allow space on sides for circulation and expansion. Place packets on ungreased cookie sheet.
3. Bake about 20 minutes or until vegetables are crisp-tender and fish flakes easily with fork. Place packets on plates. Cut large X across top of each packet; fold back foil.

Grilled Caesar Chicken and Veggies With Pasta

6 Servings

3 to 3 1/2 pounds cut-up broiler-fryer chicken
2/3 cup Caesar dressing
1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 medium zucchini or yellow summer squash, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 medium red onion, cut into wedges
3 cups uncooked rotelle pasta (8 ounces)
Salt or pepper to taste

1. Place chicken in resealable plastic food-storage bag or shallow glass or plastic dish. Pour 1/3 cup of the dressing over chicken; turn chicken to coat with dressing. Seal bag or cover dish and refrigerate at least 30 minutes but no longer than 24 hours, turning chicken occasionally.
2. Heat coals or gas grill for direct heat.
3. Remove chicken from dressing; reserve dressing. Cover and grill chicken, skin sides up, 4 to 5 inches from medium heat 15 to 20 minutes. Turn chicken. Cover and grill 20 to 40 minutes longer, turning and brushing 2 or 3 times with dressing, until juice of chicken is no longer pink when centers of thickest pieces are cut. While chicken is grilling, continue with step 4.
4. Thread bell pepper, zucchini and onion alternately on each of four 10-inch metal skewers, leaving 1/4-inch space between each piece. Brush with remaining 1/3 cup dressing. Cover and grill vegetables 4 to 5 inches from medium heat 15 to 20 minutes, turning and brushing twice with dressing, until vegetables are crisp-tender. Discard any remaining dressing. While chicken and vegetables are grilling, continue with step 5.
5. Cook and drain pasta as directed on package. Remove vegetables from skewers. Toss vegetables and pasta, adding additional fresh dressing (from the container, not the dressing the chicken marinated in) if desired. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Serve with chicken.

15 Minute Chicken Stuffing Skillet

4 servings



4 boneless skinless chicken breast halves (about 1 1/4 lb)
4 tablespoons butter or margarine, divided
1 package (6 oz) STOVE TOP Chicken seasoned stuffing mix
1 1/3 cups water

1. Brown chicken in 2 Tbsp of the butter/margarine in large nonstick skillet.
2. Add contents of vegetable/seasoning packet (from the Stove Top), water and remaining 2 Tbsp butter/margarine. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 5 minutes.
3. Stir stuffing crumbs into skillet; cover. Remove from heat. Let stand 5 minutes.

Extra Easy Lasagna

Makes 8 servings



3/4 pound lean ground beef
3 cups Prego Traditional spaghetti sauce
1 (15-ounce) container ricotta cheese
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese (8 oz)
6 uncooked lasagna noodles
1/4 cup water

1. In 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat, cook beef until browned, stirring to separate meat. Spoon off fat. Add spaghetti sauce; heat through, stirring occasionally.
2. In 2-qt oblong baking dish, spread 1 1/2 cups meat mixture. Top with 3 uncooked lasagna noodles, half of the ricotta cheese and half of the mozzarella cheese. Repeat layers. Top with remaining meat mixture.
3. Slowly pour water around inside edges of baking dish. Cover tightly with foil.
4. Bake at 375°F for 45 minutes. Uncover; bake 10 minutes more. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Breakfast Burritos

4 servings

4 eggs
1/4 cup sour cream
4 flour tortillas
1/2 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
4 slices bacon, thick sliced
1/2 cup onions, chopped
1/4 cup green peppers, diced
3/4 cup Mild Picante sauces

1. Fry bacon in a skillet/frying pan. Drain on paper towel (save drippings) and crumble, set aside.
2. Beat eggs together in a small bowl. Add sour cream and salt and pepper to taste. Pour egg mixture into skillet and cook for a few minutes. Then, stir with a spatula and cook more until well cooked.
3. Mix in peppers and onions.
4. Place scrambled eggs in the middle of the tortilla. Top with crumbled bacon, cheese, sour cream, and picante sauce.
5. Fold over and seal with a little sour cream

5 Recipes Kids Can Make

Kids Wraps

Makes 2 Servings

4 teaspoons Dijon honey mustard or ranch
2 (8-inch) flour tortillas
2 slices American cheese, cut in half
4 ounces thinly sliced oven-roasted turkey breast
½ cup shredded carrot (about 1 medium) (carrots can also be bought already shredded in a bag)
3 romaine lettuce leaves, washed and torn into bite-size pieces

1. Spread 2 teaspoons mustard/ranch evenly over 1 tortilla.
2. Top with 2 cheese halves, half of turkey, half of shredded carrot and half of torn lettuce.
3. Roll up tortilla; cut in half. Repeat with remaining ingredients.

Chicken Quesadillas

Makes 1 Serving

Two 8" Tortillas
1/2 C. Shredded Cheddar or Mexican Cheese
1/2 C. Sliced Boneless Skinless Chicken Breasts (could be leftover from a meal or can be bought pre-cooked and sliced at the grocery store in the deli meat area)

1. Place one tortilla on a microwave safe plate
2. Sprinkle with ½ C. cheese
3. Top with ½ C. Chicken Pieces
4. Top with remaining tortilla
5. Microwave for 30-40 seconds or until cheese is melted – careful removing plate it may be hot
6. Cut into pieces and enjoy

Banana Caterpillars

Makes 2 Servings

- 2 medium bananas
- ¼ cup peanut butter
- ¼ cup flaked coconut
- 4 raisins
- 6 thin pretzel sticks



1. Peel and slice each banana into 10 segments. Assemble "caterpillar" by spreading segments with peanut butter and pressing pieces together.
2. Sprinkle half of coconut over each "caterpillar" and press lightly with fingertips to coat. Use additional peanut butter to press raisins on one end to form "eyes." Break pretzel sticks into small pieces for "legs" and "antenna."

Tip: Kids can also be creative and add other types of sliced fruits (strawberries, apples, pears) to their caterpillars.

BLT Dip

- 6 slices bacon
- 1 Cup Sour cream
- 1 Cup mayonnaise-don't use miracle whip
- 1 Cup chopped tomatoes
- Crackers

1. Place a paper towel on a microwave safe plate. Lay bacon on top. Cook bacon in microwave 3-4 minutes or until bacon is crispy. Remove from microwave. Don't forget to use hot pads.
2. Once bacon has cooled, crumble bacon and set 1 teaspoon aside.
3. In bowl add together remaining bacon, sour cream, mayonnaise and tomatoes. Stir to blend together. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour up to 3 hours. Sprinkle reserved bacon on top. Serve with crackers.

Microwave Chocolate Crisp Bars



- 1 (12-ounce) package semisweet chocolate chips, divided
- 1 (10-ounce) package large marshmallows
- 1/4 cup butter
- 5 cups cocoa flavored crisp rice cereal
- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips
- 1/3 cup peanut butter (can be omitted if there is an allergy)

1. Grease a 13" x 9" pan with butter or non-stick spray and set aside. In large microwave-safe bowl, place 1/2 cup of the semisweet chocolate chips. Microwave on 50% power for 1 minute. With oven mitts on, remove bowl from microwave and add large marshmallows and butter. Microwave on high for 1 minute, then remove, with oven mitts on, and stir. Continue microwaving for 1 minute intervals, stirring between each interval, until the mixture is melted and smooth.

2. Stir in the rice cereal until well blended. Then stir in the mini marshmallows and milk chocolate chips just until blended. Using a greased rubber spatula, spread and press into prepared pan.

3. In small microwave-safe bowl, combine remaining 1-1/2 cups semisweet chocolate chips with the peanut butter. Microwave on 50% power for 1 minute; remove, with oven mitts on, and stir until smooth, microwaving for 30 second intervals if necessary. Pour melted chocolate over cereal mixture and spread to cover. Let stand until cool, then cut into bars. Makes 48 bars

5 Recipes Mom Can Make

Beef Nacho Casserole



1 pound ground beef
1-1/2 cups chunky salsa
1 (10 ounce) can whole kernel corn, drained
3/4 cup creamy salad dressing (e.g. Miracle Whip or 1000 Island)
1 teaspoon chili powder
2 cups crushed tortilla chips
2 cups Colby cheese

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
2. Place ground beef in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring to crumble, until evenly browned. Drain grease. Remove from the heat, and stir the salsa, corn, salad dressing and chili powder into the beef. In a 2 quart casserole dish, layer the ground beef mixture, tortilla chips and cheese twice, ending with cheese on top.
3. Bake for 20 minutes uncovered, in the preheated oven, until cheese is melted and dish is thoroughly heated.

Makes 4 servings

Sloppy Toms



1 cup onions chopped
1/2 cup green bell peppers chopped
2 tablespoons butter or margarine
1 pound ground turkey
1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
1 1/2 teaspoons poultry seasoning
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
4 hamburger buns
Butter or margarine

1. In a 10-inch non-stick skillet over medium-high heat, sauté onion and green pepper in butter or margarine for 4 minutes or until onion is transparent.
2. Add turkey and cook for 5 minutes or until no longer pink, breaking up meat as it cooks.
3. Meanwhile, in a small bowl, stir tomato sauce, poultry seasoning, Worcestershire sauce, salt, lemon juice, pepper and garlic powder.
4. When turkey is cooked, stir sauce into skillet; reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, preheat broiler. Split buns. Spread lightly with butter or margarine and toast 6 inches from heat source.
6. Spoon turkey mixture over bottom half of buns. Place top half over meat mixture.

Herbed Chicken Bites

1/4 cup plain dried bread crumbs
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon dried basil
1/8 teaspoon ground white pepper
2 tablespoons low-fat (1%) milk
1 1/4 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or spray with nonstick cooking spray.
2. In a quart-sized zippered plastic bag, add the bread crumbs, cheese, flour, oregano, basil, and pepper; shake to mix.
3. In a medium bowl, add the milk and chicken pieces, stirring to coat. Place 4-5 chicken pieces in the bag and shake gently until lightly coated. Place on the prepared baking sheet, then repeat with the remaining chicken.
4. Bake until golden brown, about 25-30 minutes.

Pizza Turnovers

1 (10-ounce) package refrigerated pizza crust dough
1/2 cup pizza sauce
1/2 cup finely shredded carrots (optional - great way to sneak in some veggies)
24 slices pepperoni (1 to 1 1/4 inches in diameter)
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1 C. shredded mozzarella cheese

1. Heat oven to 400°. Roll pizza crust dough on lightly floured surface into 12-inch square. Cut dough into four 6-inch squares.
2. Spread about 2 tablespoons pizza sauce on each square to within 1/2 inch of edges. Top with carrot, pepperoni and cheeses. Fold each square in half over filling; press edges to seal. Place on ungreased cookie sheet.
3. Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until light golden brown.

Mom's Macaroni and Cheese



3 cups macaroni (or pasta of choice - shells, spirals etc.)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup flour
1 3/4 cups milk
6 ounces sharp american cheese cubed
8 ounces cheddar cheese cubed

- 1.) Heat oven to 375 degrees.
- 2.) Cook pasta as directed. Drain.
- 3.) Melt butter in saucepan. Add Salt & Pepper.
- 4.) Mix Flour and Milk in a small bowl until smooth. Add to butter mixture. Heat to boiling - stirring constantly. Reduce heat to low after milk mixture thickens (approx 1. min after boiling).
- 5.) Stir in cheese until melted.
- 6.) Combine Cheese sauce and pasta in a casserole dish.
- 7.) Bake uncovered for 30 minutes.

Kid Friendly Restaurants



Souplantation/Sweet Tomatoes

Buffets are a godsend when your kids won't sit still for long.

This chain, known as Souplantation in Southern California and Sweet Tomatoes in the rest of the country, is particularly wonderful because it's cheap (less than \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids 3 and over), fast, and focused on healthy food. It features a pasta station, eight soups, a 55-foot salad bar with plenty of fruits and vegetables, a bakery section with focaccia pizza and low-fat muffins, and a soft-serve "fro yo" machine. But it's also a great place for picky eaters to try new foods -- like banana squash -- because they can take just a little from the buffet.



Mimi's Café

This chain's got just the thing to settle down hungry, antsy kids -- a free appetizer plate filled with Cheerios, oranges, and crackers. Kids' menu options include a turkey dinner, soup and salad, and spaghetti; all come with a choice of sides such as fresh veggies, fruit, mashed potatoes, and

applesauce. Mimi's also has one of the widest range of beverages of any restaurant in the survey; for instance, whole, reduced-fat, and fat-free milk are available in both plain and chocolate. And it's a safe bet that the powers that be at this place are parents: Bibs and hand wipes are given to all families with young kids, and there are changing tables in all restrooms.



Red Robin

With a wacky mascot that makes special appearances, a children's birthday club, and balloons galore, Red Robin has long been a fun place to take the family. Now, thanks to a new kids' menu that started rolling out in February and should be chainwide this month, it can be a healthy one

too. Grilled chicken with Parmesan noodles, veggie burgers, and five side choices, including cantaloupe wedges, carrots with dip, and apple slices, are new to the menu. For families with food allergies, Red Robin offers a detailed yet easy-to-understand ingredient guide. It also sponsors a recipe contest every year for 6- to 12-year-olds.



Chili's Grill & Bar

The kids' menu keeps growing: The chain recently added three more sides -- corn, mandarin oranges, and pineapple -- to the seven options it already had. Entrees range from grilled chicken to pasta to pizza. While many restaurant chains support charities, Chili's is exceptional, raising more than \$8 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital last year.

P.F. Chang's China Bistro

The food at this chain is meant to be served family-style -- where everyone eats a little of this and a little of that -- so there isn't a separate menu for children. But there are plenty of kids' favorites, including the ginger chicken with broccoli, chow mein, and crab wontons. If you have a picky eater, chefs will toss noodles in butter and serve steamed veggies on the side with dip. Kids get special easier-to-use chopsticks and a toy to play with while they're waiting at the table.



Denny's

There's no denying that the children's menu at this chain is far out: While your kids are waiting for their star-shaped chicken nuggets, anti-gravity grapes, astronaut applesauce, or any of the other space-themed fare to arrive, they get to sip their milk or juice from a rocket-shaped cup. On the serious side, the chain puts complete nutrition and allergy info for all its dishes, including its healthy Fit Fare items, online. Trans fat is out of most dishes -- and the chain should be completely free of this unhealthy fat by this fall. Many locations also offer a "kids eat free night" with the purchase of an adult meal once per week. Check with your local restaurant to determine the scheduled night.]



Claim Jumper

The only chain on the ten-best list to have separate menu options for younger and older kids, Claim Jumper's choices are extensive -- 15 entrees and 10 sides. While

you'll find some typical fare, the build-your-own pizza, frozen grapes, bean-and-cheese burrito, and barbecued chicken breast are more fun options. And there's even a healthy dessert for kids: frozen chocolate-banana bites. Children 2 and under get a free plate with turkey, cheese, applesauce, and mandarin orange slices since the chain thinks that even the smaller kids' meal is too big for toddlers. Other thoughtful features: changing tables in the women's and men's restrooms and a chainwide no-smoking policy.



Chick-Fil-A

Toddler section in play area with hand wipes to use before you eat, real chicken in the nuggets, toddler toy available in the kids meal along with toys kids may actually keep such as little books. Kids love the fruit and bendy straw that comes with the meals.

They also provide stick on place mats and a basket with little bags of cheerios for the little tikes. If you have little ones with you they will carry your tray to the table for you. You will find that they are closed on Sunday's so that their staff can

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