

As we finish our first week of the semester, some of you may be finding out that a breakfast burrito, Chick-fil-A for lunch, and door dash for dinner isn't the most sustainable meal plan for a college student. As a student, I find myself looking for meals that are budget friendly and easy to prepare. Instagram and tiktok have been great resources, but most of the recipes I find require much more time than I am willing to put into cooking, and/or the clean up afterwards. These are my favorite tried and true meals that have kept me alive for the last two and a half years.

**Three Cups of White Rice:** Measure out three cups of white rice into an instant pot or rice cooker. Pour three cups of water into your roommate's instant pot or rice cooker and select the "Rice" button. If further flavor is needed, try adding half a stick of butter to the rice with some salt and pepper. Soy sauce is always a good addition if you find any in your house. I like this meal because there are so few ingredients required, and it usually fills me up. If still hungry, cook one more cup of rice.

*Note: if cooking on a stovetop, use a regular pot and follow the instructions on the bag. Do not put the rice in the instant pot and try to cook that on the stove.*

**One Pound of Spaghetti:** Find out the capacity your stovetop pot has, subtract one cup from it, and add that amount of water to that pot. Cover it with a plate, a pan, or the lid if you have it. Let it boil and then add the entire box of spaghetti. After about 8 minutes the pasta should be soft enough to consume. Strain the water from the pot and melt in some butter. Similar to rice, you can cook another pound of pasta if still hungry.

*Note: you may substitute spaghetti with linguini, bowtie, angel hair, ditalini, fusilli, or any other of the 27 types of pasta.*

**Chicken:** For the college student who finds a little extra grocery money, chicken is a very inexpensive way to add protein into your diet. Add the desired quantity of chicken to a metal baking sheet (I find that 1.5-2 pounds usually is sufficient for a male adult measuring 6'5"). Preheat the oven to 350 degrees fahrenheit and leave the chicken in there for 30-35 minutes, or until you're sure it's not raw.

*Note: I find that chicken by itself is pretty bland. Try adding the spices or seasonings you find laying around the house to add a little surprise to your meal. Assign each spice to a piece of chicken or mix it all up, whatever your preference is.*

**Baked Potato:** Preheat the oven you cooked your chicken in to 400 F. Place three medium sized potatoes on a metal baking tray and put the tray in the oven for one hour. Once cooked, add butter, salt and pepper, and any of the other seasonings you liked from your chicken night. Any shredded cheese you find in the back of your fridge works really well on top of these potatoes.

*Note: You'll probably only eat two, but you can save the third for breakfast the next morning. Just cut it up into bite sized pieces and fry with lots of butter.*

I hope these budget-friendly recipes provide you with the nourishment required to successfully complete a semester.