

**Title:**

A Cook's Guide to Quick Meals and Desserts

**Word Count:**

688

**Summary:**

Learn how to spice up your family meals with quick and easy recipes. Introduce new foods without spending alot of time or money...

**Keywords:**

cooking, recipes, menus, food, beverages, desserts, mixes, spices, sourdough, bread, fruit, veggies

**Article Body:**

With cooking, creativity can be just as important as the ingredients. With our busy lives, we can all get in a rut sometimes when it comes to cooking. We want simple and quick meals that we've cooked hundreds of times - no surprises! We want our children to try new, healthier foods but aren't willing to be creative and try out some new recipes.

If you find yourself cooking the same old meals week in and week out, there's good news. Now you can try out new recipes using many of your handy ingredients and create new healthy meals easily. Here are some tips to get started.

### Buy an Easy Cooking Cookbook

This might sound obvious, but you should first find a cookbook with recipes your family will love that's very easy to follow. Many cookbooks today offer only "fancy" foods packed with bizarre ingredients you've never heard of. Often, the food in these books doesn't even look tasty in the photos! Shop around online to find a cookbook that makes cooking easy and uses many of the ingredients you already keep around the kitchen. Be sure the cookbook offers your basic types of recipes such as entrees, casserole dishes, breads, fruits, veggies, beverages, and desserts.

Cookbooks also tend to favor one style of cooking, such as Santa Fe style cooking or Southern cooking. Choose one that caters to your family's taste buds, but don't be afraid to try something new.

### Spice It Up

After buying a cookbook, go through the cookbook marking recipes you'd like to try for the month. You might try one or two new recipes a week just to add a little excitement to the dinner table. Write down the ingredients required, but don't forget the spices. Spices are usually what can make or break a meal. Buy spices that are required for the recipes and maybe a few extra spices for later. You can stock up on spices and keep them for a long time. When you become familiar with the new spices, you can test them in a variety of foods to enhance the flavor.

### Create Menus in Advance

Preparation is the key to saving time and sticking with a meal plan. Plan menus in advance so there are no surprises. Keep ingredients on-hand that you know you will need. Most recipes give a preparation and cooking time. Plan your meals according to your schedule. Check out the available time listed for cooking. On days that you get off work late and will be rushed, find simple meals that you can cook quickly.

### Prepare Mixes and Simple Foods in Advance

If you plan to make a dessert or a large meal, prepare your mixes and simple foods in advance to save time. For instance, if you plan to serve rice, potatoes, or macaroni with a meal prepare these the night or morning before and store them in the fridge. Then you'll only have to warm them up when needed.

Cake, cookie or brownie mixes for dessert can also be stored in the fridge for later cooking. Tip: To make your flour last for months and months, store the bag of flour in the freezer. The flour itself will not freeze, but it will last a very long time.

### Mix Old with the New Just to be Safe

When preparing a brand new dish, be sure to mix some old food items in the menu just in case your family dislikes the new dish. This will ensure that everyone has something to eat even if they don't like the new recipe. For example: Perhaps you're introducing sourdough bread for the first time. You can cook some regular bread along with it and present both types of bread for everyone to try. Some family members might like the new bread and some might not. At least they are trying new foods!

With any new cooking venture, you will need to take some extra time and effort to give it a try. Once you become familiar with some new recipes, you'll find

that it gets easier and easier to add new foods to your family meals.