QUICK & EASY WEEKNIGHT MEALS

spend with pennies
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Holly is the cook, photographer and writer behind the popular food blog Spend With Pennies.

Spend With Pennies began as a way to share shopping tips, but after countless recipe requests from friends and family, Holly began to share her kitchen adventures too. Believing that the kitchen table is a place for families to reconnect, she creates simple and approachable recipes for the everyday home cook.

In addition to cooking for her own family of six, Holly has completed several food and cooking courses including private cooking classes in Italy and a recent Culinary Boot Camp. Her recipes have been featured on Buzzfeed, MSN, All You, Food & Wine, InStyle, and Real Simple.

Holly loves all types of creating, crafting and traveling and most of all, spending time with her husband and four children.

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PARMESAN BROILED TILAPIA

yield: 4 servings

This is a great and quick recipe that my whole family loves! It’s so light and flaky and the best part is that it’s on the table in 10 minutes start to finish. This recipe does call for tilapia, but any white fish can easily be substituted in this recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 Tilapia Fillets (defrosted if frozen)
- 1/4 Cup Parmesan Cheese
- 1/8 Cup Butter
- 1 1/2 Tablespoons Mayo/Dressing (I use Hellmann’s Light)
- 1 Tablespoon Fresh Lemon Juice
- 1/2 Teaspoon Fresh Dill
- Pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Turn broiler onto high and adjust oven rack to the top.
2. In a small bowl, combine all ingredients except the tilapia. Set aside.
3. Place tilapia fillets on a foil lined pan.
4. Broil for 3 minutes.
5. Remove from the oven, flip over and divide the parmesan mixture over the uncooked sides of the tilapia.
6. Return to the oven and broil an additional 3-4 minutes, making sure not to over cook the fish.
GROUND BEEF STROGANOFF

This easy Ground Beef Stroganoff features lean hamburger and tender mushrooms cooked in a rich silky sauce. It’s quick and delicious, making it the perfect weeknight meal!

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3/4 lb fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 2 cups beef broth
- Salt & pepper, to taste
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Brown ground beef, onion and garlic (trying not to break it up too much) in a pan until no pink remains. Drain fat.

2. Add sliced mushrooms and cook 2-3 minutes. Stir in flour and cook 1 more minute.

3. Add broth, Worcestershire sauce, salt & pepper and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer on low 10 minutes. Cook egg noodles according to package directions.

4. Remove beef mixture from the heat, stir in sour cream and parsley.

5. Serve over egg noodles.
CHICKEN & MUSHROOMS WITH BACON

In this recipe, tender juicy chicken breasts are cooked in a rich and creamy mushroom & bacon sauce that rivals any restaurant dish! This easy weeknight recipe is ready in under 30 minutes and is perfect served over any type of pasta or rice.

yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1/2 cup flour
- 5 slices uncooked bacon, diced
- 1/2 small onion, diced
- 6 oz mushrooms
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon flour
- Salt & pepper, to taste
- 1 1/4 cup heavy cream

DIRECTIONS

1. Pound chicken to 1/4” thick between pieces of plastic wrap. Dredge chicken in flour.

2. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in a pan over medium heat. Add chicken and cook about 4 minutes per side until cooked through. Remove from pan and set aside to keep warm.

3. Cook bacon & onion over medium heat for about 5 minutes or until bacon starts to brown. Add mushrooms & garlic and cook until mushrooms are browned. Remove mushroom mixture, sprinkle with 1/2 tablespoon flour and set aside.

4. Pour wine and broth into the pan and turn on med-high. Let simmer until reduced by half (about 6 minutes). Stir in mushrooms & heavy cream. Add chicken and let simmer until heated through (about 1 minute).

5. Serve over pasta.
Broccoli Cheese Soup is one of our favorite quick and easy meals for any time of year! It’s perfect for lunch, or as an easy weeknight dinner with salad and a loaf of French bread. The best part is that it’s ready in 20 minutes start to finish!

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 3 cups fresh broccoli
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 teaspoon each: thyme and garlic powder
- Salt & pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 1/2 cups light cream
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/3 cup fresh parmesan cheese

**DIRECTIONS**

1. In a large saucepan, cook butter, onion and carrots over medium heat until onion softens (about 3 minutes). Add chicken broth, broccoli and seasonings. Simmer until broccoli is softened, about 8 minutes.

2. Remove 1 cup of vegetables, coarsely chop and set aside. Using an immersion blender, blend remaining vegetables and broth.

3. Place flour in a small bowl. Add in cream a little at a time, stirring until smooth. Bring blended vegetable mixture to a boil and whisk in cream mixture. Continue whisking until thick and bubbly, about 3-4 minutes.

4. Remove from heat, stir in cheeses & reserved chopped vegetables. Serve immediately.

**yield: 4 servings**
If you’ve never had carbonara before, it’s such a deliciously rich and creamy pasta... And SO easy to make! This delicious creamy dish is on the table in less than 15 minutes.

**LINGUINE CARBONARA**

**INGREDIENTS**
- 1 lb. fresh linguine
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 cup onion, finely diced
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 cups diced ham
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 cup parmesan cheese
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- Pepper, to taste

**DIRECTIONS**
1. Heat olive oil and cook ham, garlic and onions over medium heat until onion is translucent. Add wine and let reduce until almost evaporated.
2. Stir together egg yolks, eggs, and parmesan cheese. Set aside.
3. Cook pasta & peas together in a large pot of salted water just until pasta is al dente. Drain pasta, ensuring that you reserve 1 1/2 cups of the cooking liquid.
4. Immediately toss pasta with the egg mixture and ham (you must do this right away to ensure the hot pasta cooks the egg). Add reserved cooking liquid a little at a time to get desired consistency (I usually use about 3/4 cup). Stir in parsley and serve.

**yield: 4 servings**
WEEKNIGHT CHICKEN PARMESAN

I love serving a good hearty meal on a weeknight before activities, but time always seems to be an issue. If you’re looking for the perfect way to get a family dinner on the table without spending hours in the kitchen (and without a ton of dishes to wash), you’ll love this recipe!

yield: 6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- Lightly breaded chicken strips (24 ounces)
- 1 jar pasta sauce (28 oz)
- 2 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese, shredded
- 1 tablespoon fresh basil, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 lb thin spaghetti, cooked according to package
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Additional herbs, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Stir 1 tablespoon each fresh basil & parsley into pasta sauce. Heat sauce on low while chicken is cooking.
3. Place lightly breaded chicken strips on a baking pan and cook for 15 minutes.
4. Remove from oven and turn the oven up to 450 degrees.
5. Spoon about 1 tablespoon pasta sauce on each chicken strip. Divide cheeses over chicken and bake an additional 5 minutes or until cheese is melted.
6. Meanwhile, boil pasta in salted water according to package directions. Toss with olive oil.
7. To serve, place 1 serving of pasta on a plate, then top with 1 spoonful of pasta sauce and cheesy chicken breast strips.
OVEN FAJITAS

Oven Fajitas are a delicious and fresh meal that is easy to prep and loaded with flavor. Chicken, onion and bell peppers are seasoned with a simple spice mixture and cooked in the oven until the peppers are tender crisp!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts cut into strips (about 3 chicken breast halves)
- 1 onion, sliced
- 5-6 cups sliced bell peppers (about 3 peppers)
- 1 10 oz can of diced tomatoes with chilies (mild or hot)
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon seasoning salt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Black pepper, to taste
- Lime
- Flour or corn tortillas for serving

FOR SERVING (OPTIONAL): Cheese, sour cream, lettuce, cilantro, salsa, and jalapeño peppers

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Drain tomatoes well. Stir together chicken, onion, diced tomatoes, chili powder, cumin, seasoning salt, olive oil and pepper. Place in a 9×13 pan and bake 15 minutes.
3. Remove from oven and stir in bell peppers. Bake an additional 10 minutes. Remove from oven and squeeze lime over the mixture.
4. Meanwhile, heat tortillas according to package directions.
5. Serve chicken mixture in tortillas with desired toppings.
### ONE-POT CHEESEBURGER MACARONI

*Cheeseburger macaroni made on the stove top - you’ll never buy the boxed kind again! Plus, it only takes 20 minutes start to finish. Serve this with a fresh salad and some crusty bread for an easy meal!*

**INGREDIENTS**

- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 cup chicken broth (or water)
- 2 cups milk
- 1 1/2 cups uncooked macaroni noodles
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 1/2 cups sharp cheddar cheese

**DIRECTIONS**

1. In a small bowl, combine cornstarch, garlic powder, sugar, pepper and paprika. Set aside.

2. Brown ground beef & onion in a pan until no pink remains. Drain any fat.

3. Add milk, broth and macaroni to beef. Stir in cornstarch and spices. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer covered for 9-12 minutes or until noodles are cooked.

4. Remove from heat and stir in cheese until melted. Serve hot.

*yield: 4 servings*
HAM & CHEESE SLIDER BAKE

These are perfect for brunch, lunch or for a quick weeknight dinner on the go! My kids absolutely LOVE these. You can use any type of cheese in these - we’ve used mozzarella and cheddar as well as Swiss, and all were wonderful!

INGREDIENTS

- 12 dinner rolls
- 8 oz ham, thinly sliced
- 8 oz swiss cheese (it tastes great with any cheese)
- 4 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 1/2 teaspoons grainy mustard
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon poppy seeds
- 1 teaspoon dried minced onion

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a bowl, combine butter, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, poppy seeds, and dried onion.
3. Cut the rolls in half, separating the top and bottom. (If they are attached you don’t need to separate each roll).
4. Place the bottom in a 9×13 pan. Layer about half the ham onto the rolls and top with the cheese and the remaining ham.
5. Top with the other half of the roll and gently spoon the butter mixture over the top.
6. Bake about 20 minutes or until the cheese has melted and the tops are lightly browned. Serve warm.
If you're looking for a super simple healthy dish to feed your family, this sweet and tangy One-Pan Sesame Ginger Salmon and Broccoli is your answer!

**INGREDIENTS**

- 4 salmon fillets
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon ginger, grated (I like to buy the tube of paste)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 pound broccoli, cut into florets

**FOR THE GLAZE:**

- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon grated ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds
- 2 tablespoons green onions, chopped

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Mix the marinade ingredients together and place in a bag with the salmon to marinate for at least an hour.
2. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
3. Place salmon on a greased pan and discard excess marinade. Arrange broccoli around the salmon and season with salt and pepper.
4. Bake for 12-14 minutes, or until it flakes (145 degrees).
5. Spoon the glaze on the salmon and sprinkle with sesame seeds and green onions.

yield: 4 servings
SOUR CREAM NOODLE BAKE

If you are a cheese lover, look no further than this Sour Cream Noodle Bake recipe! This recipe is loaded with ground beef, smothered with 3 different types of cheese, and baked together with pasta sauce to create a delicious combination that may just top your favorite lasagna recipe.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground beef or ground turkey
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 24 oz can or jar of your favorite pasta sauce
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 8 oz sour cream
- 1 lb rotini pasta cooked, drained
- 16 oz shredded mozzarella, divided

DIRECTIONS

2. Stir in pasta sauce and Italian seasoning. Simmer about 5-10 minutes.
3. With a mixer, combine cream cheese and sour cream. Stir in garlic powder, parmesan cheese, 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella and garlic powder.
4. Spread half of the meat sauce in a 9 x 13 pan. Top with rotini. Spread the cream cheese mixture evenly over the pasta layer.
5. Spread remaining sauce on top of the cream cheese mixture. Top with mozzarella.
6. Cover with foil and bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake until cheese is slightly browned and bubbly.
SWEET GARLIC CHICKEN

Sweet Garlic Chicken is so tender with a sweet caramelized garlic crust baked up juicy in the oven! The high oven temperature used in this recipe creates the most juicy chicken you’ve ever had.

INGREDIENTS

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon chili flakes

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 450°F
2. Cook garlic with the oil on medium heat until softened and fragrant (do not brown). Remove from heat and add in brown sugar, soy sauce and chili flakes.
3. Put chicken breasts on a foil lined pan and top with the garlic brown sugar mixture.
4. Bake uncovered for 18-22 minutes, or until juices run clear.
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