



Make Your Family Meal A Special Event

Special family celebrations are fun and create fond memories. Mealtime fun strengthens family bonds.

Birthday or Special Spotlight!

No time is more special than a birthday. Between birthdays, make family members feel special with a family-member spotlight night. Celebrate the person by focusing on their interests. Have a special plate that the V.I.P. (very important person) uses when they are in the spotlight. Let the VIP choose what to eat on their special night.

Restaurant Night

Pretend you are at a restaurant. One person serves the food. Kids often think it is fun to be the waitperson and serve adults. Turn the lights off and eat by candlelight. If you have flowers, put flowers on the table.

Alphabet Night

If your family has elementary age children, plan menus around a letter. For example, on "A" night feature asparagus, apples or avocado. Or use foods to help with reading. Write down all the foods used in the meal and use them as flashcards.

A "Once A Week Supper"

Sometimes families can eat together only once a week. Take time to make this meal extra special.

Family Night at the Movies

Get a video and plan dinner around the movie. Try these movie themes and food:

South of the Border Try kid-friendly Mexican foods: burritos, tacos, and chili.

Italian. Serve meatballs and spaghetti.

Asian. Have stir-fry vegetables, rice, soy sauce or sweet-sour sauce.

African. Try a bean dish. Africa has more types of beans than any other continent. Rice and bean dishes are used around the world.

Old-time American. Try old-time "American Diners" food: grilled cheese sandwiches, meat and potatoes, fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, Jell-O with fruit. Invite a grandparent or older neighbor for dinner at the "Diner." They can talk about food when they were kids.

Game night. Make individual pizzas using English muffins then play a game. Take turns choosing the game.

Make Soup with Your Family

Visit the grocery store or farmers market to see the variety of fruits and vegetables. Have children select a vegetable and use it in vegetable soup.

Company Chicken and Rice

(Makes 6 to 8 servings)

1½ cups rice
1 can cream of mushroom soup
2 cups water
¼ cup chopped onion
¼ teaspoon pepper
1 cut-up chicken (2-3 pounds)

1. Heat oven to 350°F.
2. Lightly grease baking dish
3. Stir together rice, soup, water, onion, and pepper into baking dish.
4. Place chicken on top of rice.
5. Cover pan and bake at 350°F for 1½ hours or until rice is tender.

Apple or Peach Crisp

(Makes one 8-inch square pan)

4-5 cups apples or peaches, (fresh or canned) peeled and sliced
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
¼ cup flour
½ cup oatmeal
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ cup (1/2 stick) butter or margarine

1. Place peaches in a greased 8-inch square-baking pan.
2. Mix together sugar, flour, oats and cinnamon.
3. Stir butter or margarine into dry ingredients until crumbly.
4. Sprinkle crumbly mixture over fruit.
5. Bake at 350 F about 30- 40 minutes or until fruit is tender and top browned.