

Return to Real Food

There is an increasing interest by the general public in the use of additives in our foods. In 2005 we were told that we are exposed to the potentially carcinogenic properties of food dye Sudan 1. This food dye is used in many ready made meals and processed foods. Delia Smith advocated a return to "basic, old-fashioned cooking" in the March 4, 2005 Daily Mail. In response to the information about possibly cancerous food dyes added to what we eat she said: "You do suddenly see the horror of what can happen through one little mistake...I believe that food is a wonderful gift and it is good to give it our full attention." However, Delia did acknowledge that ready made meals have their place in our busy lives. "I do know that time can play a part."

So, what do you think? Is it realistic to expect busy women and men to make every meal from scratch, or do we have to accept that not all of us have the time or energy to cook a full-blown meal every day? There is something you can do! Take time to plan your meals for the week. Before you panic and think "oh no, here's another thing to add into my hectic schedule" take a deep breath or two, and relax.

Planning the week's meals will save you money at the grocery store. To do this you first make a menu for the week and then you make your shopping list. Post the menu on the fridge and don't forget to include snacks. When you get home, or the kids get home, all anyone has to do is check the menu. You now spend no time standing in front of the fridge thinking "what shall we have for dinner tonight?" A little extra effort thinking before you go to get the groceries and zero effort each meal! See how you can begin to save some time and energy? And it's most likely you'll save money too.

When preparing meals make two or three extras and freeze them. You now have ready meals without the additives. Can't think of anything? How about:

- chili
 - pot-roast
 - shepherd's pie
 - lasagna
 - pasta and meatballs
 - rice and beans
 - soups
 - curries
 - casseroles
 - meatloaf
 - stew
 - muffins
 - cookies
 - pies
 - brown rice can be cooked on Sunday and warmed up all week without substantial loss of B vitamins
 - A favorite during the winter months is to roast root vegetables with a little olive oil and fresh herbs. All you have to do is warm them up as needed
 - Get the kids to grate a big bowl of cheese and keep it in the fridge
 - Peel and slice carrots and keep them in a bowl of water in the fridge
- We bet you can think of lots of ways to spend a little time in the kitchen and not eat so many ready meals and processed foods. Please share your ideas with us and we'll share them with others.

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