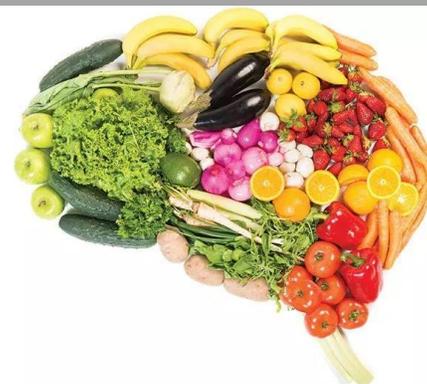


# MSU Cascade County Extension Homemakers Newsletter

Oct/Nov 2020



## What is happening!?

### *A Note and Update from Katrin*

Hello!

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the beautiful fall weather we have had the last few weeks!

The new Homemaker year has begun, clubs are meeting in a variety of ways, it is so great to see everyone still stay connected! If you are not sure of how to safely hold a meeting during COVID-19, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

As clubs continue to meet, transition, and find their footing in these new times, please let me know if there are any changes. Fall is a time of change, and there is one small but important change that has taken place. When writing checks to Extension office, **checks MUST be made out to "MSU Extension."** This makes the deposit process run smooth and allows them to be processed in a timely manner.

As for happenings in the office, I am holding some classes in person and some virtually. While COVID has posed many challenges, it has challenged me to think outside the box of my typical programming and there are exciting things to come! I will be holding a virtual electric pressure cooker class, family mealtime, cooking for one or two, and strong people class in the coming months! Stay tuned for updates and class information!

Please stay safe, stay warm as the weather changes, and don't be a stranger! I enjoy hearing from each of you.

Happiness and Health!

-Katrin Finch, MSU Extension Cascade County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

## Sew for a Cause



This month we will be making burp towels for the WIC program. Despite the happenings in the world, children are still being born and as a recent new momma, you can never have enough burp towels! We will be using up some extra flannel with kiddos in mind – if you have extra flannel please feel free to bring it for our sewing day.

Date: 10/15/20

Project: Baby Burp Towels

Donated to: Women, Infants, and Children Program

**See you on  
Thursday, October 15 at 9am**



Share your smile with the world! It is a symbol of friendship with peace!

-Christine Brinkley

## Homemaker Year 2020-2021 Packets

There are still a few packets left to be picked up!

\*\*\* When paying membership dues please make checks payable to "MSU Extension"\*\*\*

### Freezer Meals – Easy Recipes from Your Freezer

Written by: Katrin Finch, 10/2020; Additional Resources from: Alice Henneman, MS, RDN, University of Nebraska—Lincoln Lancaster County Extension Educator



As the seasons change, getting to the store can become challenging and with current shortages of common household items, we find ourselves purchasing more in bulk to ensure we have extra when we need it. Freezer meals is one way to make more than one meal at a time and save more for later. Cook once, eat twice; Freezer Casseroles, and many more meals can come from one batch of ground beef or other protein source.

#### Tips for Success

Ground beef may be browned ahead of time and frozen for quick and convenient use in spaghetti sauce, chili, sloppy joes, etc. Follow these tips for best flavor and quality.

When making beef crumbles for later use, if possible, avoid using iron or aluminum cooking utensils as these speed flavor changes.

Brown crumbles with onions or unroasted bell peppers which have antioxidant properties and slow flavor changes. OR, brown the meat, seasoned lightly, with one or more of these herbs and spices that have antioxidant properties: rosemary, sage, marjoram, thyme, mace, allspice and cloves.

Use the seasoning and amount that will be most suitable for the recipes you make. Add more seasoning when you prepare the food, if needed, as freezing may affect the intensity of the flavor of spices and herbs.

Do not use salt; add salt later when the meat is used in your recipe. Salt may hasten undesirable flavor changes in beef crumbles.

Freezing the crumbles as part of a sauce, such as spaghetti sauce, also helps preserve flavor. Make sure the sauce covers the entire meat surface.

Cool and refrigerate beef crumbles promptly in shallow containers. Containers may be placed in the refrigerator before beef has cooled entirely. Loosely cover refrigerated container until beef has cooled.

Promptly transfer the cooled beef crumbles to plastic "freezer," NOT "storage" bags. Eliminate air pockets. Freezer bags are thicker than storage bags and will keep the food fresh longer. Label and date packages; include amount of beef or number of servings.

Speed freezing and hasten thawing by freezing crumbles in a thinner, flattened shape in freezer bags. Do not stack packages -- the quality will be better if the beef freezes faster. A rounded shape takes longer to thaw through to the middle. Flattened packages also will stack better in your freezer. Place on a flat surface, such as a metal pan or cookie sheet until frozen. Then, remove and stack.

Use frozen beef crumbles within 2 to 3 months for best flavor and quality. Freeze at 0 degrees F or lower.

**IMPORTANT:** Unless you plan to use beef crumbles within a day or two, freeze crumbles promptly after cooling for best quality and safety. If stored in the refrigerator for a day or two, transfer to a tightly covered container after they have cooled.

## *Basic Directions*

Use 90% lean and higher ground beef for these directions; 16 ounces raw ground beef yields equally to 12 ounces fully cooked ground beef crumbles.

In general, brown no more than 1 pound of ground beef at a time. As ground beef browns, some meat juices are released. If you overload the skillet, moisture is trapped, and meat is steamed rather than browned.

Brown lean ground beef in large nonstick skillet over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until beef is not pink, breaking beef up into 3/4-inch crumbles. Remove beef with slotted spoon.

Add one or more of the antioxidant foods and spices listed on page 2 under "Tips for Success" to the beef as it is browning to aid in flavor retention during freezing. Alice's Note: I find it most versatile and time-saving to add one chopped medium onion to the beef as it is browning. So many recipes call for both beef and onions; I've made my life twice as simple by combining them.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:** Information on making frozen beef crumbles provided in part by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association on behalf of The Beef Checkoff and by Kaiti Roeder, RD, Nebraska Beef.

Most of these recipes can be prepared either immediately after preparing the ground beef crumbles made with chopped onion and then frozen; OR you can prepare them by using the frozen crumbles directly from the freezer and then eat them. It depends on how much versatility you want:

Would you rather make the recipe you want when you want it with crumbles straight from the freezer?

Or would you like some recipes already prepared and waiting for you in the freezer?

Or you might just decide to make these recipes and eat them right away without freezing! If you're prediabetic — meaning you have high blood sugar but haven't been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes — studies show that regular exercise can actually prevent diabetes from developing.

## *Ground Beef Recipes*

- Coney Island Taters
- Sloppy Joes
- Chili with Beans and Beef
- Pasta with Meat Sauce

**MICROWAVE TIP:** Many of these foods can be heated in the microwave. Be careful when removing a lid or plastic wrap from a hot microwaved item. Hot steam escaping from the container as the covering is lifted could cause a burn.

If covering the microwave container with a microwave-safe plastic wrap, follow manufacturers' directions for venting the wrap. Directions usually recommend venting the wrap at a corner or side of the dish and leaving at least an inch of air space between the food and the wrap covering the dish. NOTE: Foods high in fat or sugar should not come into contact with plastic wrap as they may cause the wrap to melt.

### *Coney Island Taters (Makes 4 servings)*

Coney Island Taters Recipe Make quick work of this main dish by using one batch of frozen crumbled meat mixture, made with chopped onion, instead of preparing the ground beef and onion from scratch. You may need to heat frozen crumbles longer than the time cited in the recipe, heat until steamy hot throughout.



- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 cup prepared barbecue sauce
- 2 large all-purpose potatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup sliced green onions (optional)

In large skillet, brown ground beef and onion over medium heat 8 to 10 minutes or until beef is no longer pink, breaking up into 3/4-inch crumbles. Pour off drippings. Stir barbecue sauce into beef; cover and simmer over medium-low heat 10 minutes.

Meanwhile pierce potatoes in several places with fork. Place on paper towel in microwave oven. Microwave on HIGH 10 to 11 minutes or until tender, rearranging potatoes halfway. TIP: Some potatoes may become tender before this — start checking a few minutes before time is up.

Cut potatoes lengthwise into quarters. Cut each quarter crosswise in half. Arrange 4 pieces potato on each serving plate; top with beef mixture. Sprinkle with cheese; top with green onions, if desired.

Source: Recipe courtesy of National Cattlemen's Beef Association at [beefitswhatfordinner.com](http://beefitswhatfordinner.com)

## Sloppy Joes (Makes 4 to 6 servings)

Sloppy Joes Prepare this recipe for eating right away, using one batch of frozen crumbled meat mixture, made with chopped onion. OR make it right after preparing a fresh batch of the crumbled meat mixture and then freeze it. See tips following recipe for freezing prepared Sloppy Joes.

- 1 batch make-ahead crumbled beef made from 1-pound lean ground beef and 1 medium chopped onion (need not be thawed)
- 1 teaspoon prepared mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon powdered garlic or 1 small clove garlic, minced
- Salt (optional, according to taste)
- 1 cup of no-salt added ketchup (SUBSTITUTE: 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce plus 1 tablespoon vinegar, such as cider vinegar, plus 1 tablespoon brown or white sugar can be substituted for the ketchup)
- 1/4 cup water
- 4 to 6 hamburger buns



Place all ingredients in a saucepan and simmer, covered, until meat is thawed and heated throughout, about 20 minutes; simmering also allows flavors to develop. Stir occasionally. Stir occasionally and add more water if the mixture becomes too thick.

Spoon into buns and serve.

### Freezing Prepared Sloppy Joe Mixture

(suggested freezer storage time: 1 to 2 months for best quality) freezing in muffin cups

Refrigerate Sloppy Joe mixture in a shallow pan in the refrigerator until cool. Then, freeze the Sloppy Joes according to one of these methods:

To make individual servings: Use one of these methods and freeze portions until firm enough to retain their shape — about 1 to 2 hours. Then transfer to a re-sealable freezer bag and press out air. (1) Freeze in a muffin tin. You may find it easiest to "pop" the frozen meat mixture from a silicone muffin tin. (2) OR Freeze in stand-alone silicone baking cups.

To freeze a larger amount of meat mixture: Freeze in a freezer bag in the amount you wish to serve. Flatten the freezer bag and press out air. Spread out in your freezer in single layers on a flat surface until frozen. Then, stack together.

To thaw: Thaw mixture for about 24 hours in the refrigerator. Thaw individual servings in some type of covered container in refrigerator. OR, defrost mixture in your microwave, following manufacturer's directions. If the freezer bag manufacturer

doesn't provide specific instructions for defrosting food in their bags in the microwave, transfer the food to a microwave-safe container to thaw. Cook food immediately after microwave-defrosting.

To reheat: Reheat in a covered saucepan until meat is heated throughout (165 degrees F); stir occasionally. Or reheat, covered, in your microwave in a microwave safe container; stir occasionally. (See microwave Tip at beginning of recipe section.)

## *Chili with Beans and Beef (Makes 4 servings)*

Chili with Beans and Beef Recipe Prepare this recipe for eating right away, using 1/2 batch of frozen crumbled meat made with chopped onion (need not be thawed). OR make chili right after preparing a fresh batch of the crumbled meat; then freeze the chili. See freezer tips following the recipe.



- 1/2 batch make-ahead crumbled beef made with onion (equals 1/2 pound lean ground beef (need not be thawed — if the beef crumbles package is flattened when frozen, it's easy to break off about half the meat in the package for this recipe).
- 1 can (15.5 ounces) regular or no-salt-added kidney beans, drained OR 1-1/2 cups cooked dry kidney beans, red beans or other bean of your choice (cook beans as instructed on package)
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) regular or no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 1-1/2 tablespoons chili powder or to taste

Mix together all ingredients in a large pot. TIP: If your chili powder is a hotter variety, you may want to add less chili powder; you can always add more at the end of cooking.

Cover, and simmer for about 20 minutes, until heated throughout. Stir occasionally. Add a little water, if needed, to thin the broth.

Serve. May top with shredded cheese if desired.

### Freezing Chili with Beans and Beef

(suggested freezer storage time: 1 to 2 months for best quality)

To freeze chili: Freeze in a freezer bag in the amount you wish to serve. Flatten the freezer bag and press out the air. Spread out in your freezer in single layers on a flat surface, until frozen. Then, stack together.

To thaw: Thaw mixture for about 24 hours in the refrigerator — place freezer bag on a plate. OR, defrost mixture in your microwave, following manufacturer's directions. If the freezer bag manufacturer doesn't provide specific instructions for defrosting food in their bags in the microwave, transfer the food to a microwave-safe container to thaw. Cook food immediately after microwave-defrosting.

To reheat: Reheat in a covered saucepan over low to medium heat until chili is heated throughout (165 degrees F); stir occasionally. OR reheat, covered, in your microwave in a microwave safe container; stir occasionally. (See microwave tip at beginning of recipe section.)

## *Pasta with Meat Sauce (Makes 4 servings)*

Pasta with Meat Sauce Recipe Prepare this recipe for eating right away, using one batch of frozen crumbled meat made with chopped onion (need not be thawed). OR make the sauce right after preparing a fresh batch of the crumbled meat; then freeze the pasta meat sauce mixture. See freezer tips following the recipe for freezing prepared meat sauce for pasta.

- 1 batch make-ahead crumbled beef made from 1-pound lean ground beef and 1 medium chopped onion (need not be thawed)
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) regular or no-salt added diced tomatoes
- 1 can (8 ounces) regular or no-salt added tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon powdered garlic or 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- Salt (optional, according to taste)
- 8 ounces of pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, etc.)

Place all ingredients, EXCEPT pasta, in a saucepan and simmer, covered, over low heat until meat is thawed and heated throughout, about 20 to 30 minutes; simmering also allows flavors to develop. Stir occasionally. Add more water if the mixture becomes too thick.

While meat sauce is simmering, prepare 8 ounces of pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, etc.) according to package directions.

Drain pasta; serve topped with meat sauce or mix pasta together with meat sauce before serving.

#### Freezing Prepared Pasta Meat Sauce

(suggested freezer storage time: 1 to 2 months for best quality)

To freeze pasta meat sauce: Freeze in a freezer bag in the amount you wish to serve. Flatten the freezer bag and press out the air. Spread out in your freezer in single layers on a flat surface until frozen. Then, stack together

To thaw: Thaw mixture for about 24 hours in the refrigerator — place freezer bag on a plate. I OR, defrost mixture in your microwave, following manufacturer's directions. If the freezer bag manufacturer doesn't provide specific instructions for defrosting food in their bags in the microwave, transfer the food to a microwave-safe container to thaw. Cook food immediately after microwave-defrosting.

To reheat: Reheat in a covered saucepan until sauce is heated throughout (165 degrees F); stir occasionally. OR reheat, covered, in your microwave in a microwave safe container; stir occasionally. (See microwave tip at beginning of recipe section.)

NOTE: As you're reheating rather than cooking the pasta sauce in this case, you might start the process of cooking the spaghetti, macaroni, etc. before you begin heating the sauce.

<https://food.unl.edu/make-ahead-ground-beef-crumbles>



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