



# Dining from the **Dollar Store**

Quick and Healthy Recipes  
that Fit your Family Budget

Healthy  
Habits **4**Life

UPMC | **CHILDREN'S**  
HOSPITAL OF PITTSBURGH

# Acknowledgements

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## Introduction

*Dining from the Dollar Store* was written to help you and your family discover creative, budget-friendly ways to make the most of family meals. If you think you can't do this while shopping at your local dollar store, we dare you to try!

Dollar stores have an amazing array of items at great prices, including food. Take some time to explore your local dollar store and see what food choices it offers. Then consider your family's unique needs, and you can create a dollar store dining experience that is sure to impress.

You can use these recipes as a starting point, but feel free to get creative and make up some recipes of your own as well. Good food does not have to be expensive; it just needs to be delicious and nutritious.

We hope *Dining from the Dollar Store* will help you enjoy more quality mealtime with your family and friends. Food is fun, so get cooking!

## Tips for Shopping at the Dollar Store

### **Be creative. Ask yourself: “Can I make this myself?”**

Consider buying items in a simpler form and build your own dish. Instead of 10-minute microwave rice, purchase a bulk bag of rice, spices, and stir in some vegetables to save money. Don't be afraid to explore – everyone can cook!

### **Look at labels.**

Let nutrition labels be your guide to choosing the best foods for your family. See the next page for nutrition label reading tips.

### **Go for whole grains.**

Buying whole grain products provides more fiber and vitamins for you and your family. Look for products labeled “100% Whole Wheat” or simply look on the ingredients list for whole wheat flour listed as the very first ingredient. Aim for half of your grain choices to be whole grain.

### **Spice it up!**

Dollar stores carry a wide array of spices at a very low cost. If you keep spices on hand, you may find yourself cooking more creatively.

### **Take advantage of budget-friendly frozen and canned fruits and vegetables.**

Frozen and canned produce are excellent alternatives to fresh. Choose options without added sugars (syrup), salt (sodium) or sauces.

### **Rinse and drain canned products.**

Whether or not the item is low-sodium, rinsing canned foods in water will decrease the sodium content.

# Nutrition Label Reading Tips

When it's time to grocery shop and pursue healthier options, the nutrition facts panel can be very helpful, but sometimes overwhelming. With some quick reading and checking the items described below, making healthier choices can be easy!

## Serving Size

- This is the recommended serving size. The amounts listed on the label are for this serving of food.
- If you consume twice the serving size, you consume double the amounts listed.

## Fats

- Total fat includes saturated, unsaturated (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated), and trans fats.
- Saturated fats and trans fats are linked to an increased risk of heart disease. Low percent daily values are recommended (5%DV or less).
- Healthier items have 5 or less grams of total fat per serving.

## Sodium

- High levels of sodium can add up to high blood pressure.
- Pre-packaged and processed foods contain a lot of sodium as a preservative.
- Low sodium is 140mg or less per serving.

## Fiber

- High fiber (20%DV or higher) promotes healthy bowel function and reduces the risk of heart disease.
- Recommended 38g/day for men and 25g/day for women.

## Sugar

- Healthier items have 10 or less grams of sugar per serving.
- Limit fat and sugar by using the 5/10 guideline for choosing healthy snacks.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
	<b>% Daily Value*</b>
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

\*Take this page to the store as a reminder to choose healthier options with these recommendations.

## Tips for Getting Kids Involved with Food

- **Play “I Spy”** in the grocery store.
- **Ask questions.** “Where did this come from?” or “Where did this grow?” Help kids understand that food comes from the earth and doesn’t come naturally from a can or a box.
- **Get kids in the kitchen!** Give them simple tasks such as pouring and mixing to get started.
- **Give them options.** Look at what you have in the kitchen and think of a few possible ideas for dinner. Then, let them choose between the options. If they come up with the meal they are more likely to eat it!
- **Consider growing your own food!** Herbs are fun to grow, and a great way to spice-up ordinary dishes. Some supplies such as pots and shovels are available at dollar stores. Seeds are cheap and directions for growing them are often included.
- **Grocery shop with your children.** Have them choose fruits and vegetables for meals and snacks, and cross off items on the grocery list.
- **Plan theme nights for dinner.** Decorate the kitchen or dress for the particular theme.
- **Remember to discuss kitchen safety.** When you involve your kids with food and cooking, discuss items that are hot, sharp, or that may require help from an adult.

# Applesauce Oatmeal

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 10 minutes **Serving:** 1

## Ingredients

<b>½ cup</b>	Dry quick cook oats <i>(not individually packaged)</i>
<b>4 oz</b>	Applesauce
<b>¼ cup</b>	Nut mix, raisins, or trail mix <i>(based on availability)</i>
<b>Dash</b>	Cinnamon

## Instructions

- 1.** Pour oatmeal into cup with ¾ cup water; microwave according to instructions.
- 2.** Stir in applesauce, nut mix, and cinnamon.

## Helpful Hints

It is important for children to see where foods come from. It provides an opportunity to start teaching them which foods are processed vs. less processed.

- Pull a dry oat from the can and explain how similar it looks to wheat growing in a field.
- Allow children to be involved in preparing this easy meal by stirring the ingredients together and pressing the buttons on the microwave.
- If your children like apples, cut an apple into chunks and let them add in the extra fruit; talk to them about how adding extra fruits and vegetables is always a great thing.
- Remind them how happy you are when they try new foods.

# Hard-Boiled Eggs

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 15 minutes **Serving:** 1 egg = 1 serving

## Ingredient

Eggs

## Instructions

1. Place eggs in pot and cover with 1-2 inches of water.
2. Bring water to a rolling boil.
3. Remove pot from heat and let eggs sit in water for 10-12 minutes.
4. Run cold water over eggs.

## Helpful Hints

Eggs are a budget-friendly source of protein. Talk with your children about protein, an important nutrient for good health. This is an opportunity for children to learn about different food groups.



# Eggs and Salsa

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 15 minutes **Servings:** 2

## Ingredients

- 3** Eggs
- 2** Egg whites
- ½ cup** Salsa
- 1 cup** Frozen chopped spinach thawed, squeezed dry\*

*\*To thaw and dry spinach: Microwave for 1 minute, wrap in paper towel and squeeze tight until all liquid is removed.*

## Instructions

- 1.** Combine eggs and egg whites in small bowl, scramble with fork or whisk.
- 2.** Pour eggs into a non-stick pan. If you do not have a non-stick pan, spray or spread a small amount of olive oil into a pan.
- 3.** Stir in chopped spinach and cook ingredients in pan until no liquid is left.
- 4.** Remove from heat and stir in salsa.
- 5.** Serve immediately and sprinkle with just a little bit of cheese, if desired.

## Helpful Hints

- If you can't finish fresh spinach before it goes bad, adding it to eggs is a great way to use it.
- If children are resistant to tasting spinach, eggs are a good place to "hide" it because you can barely taste it.
- Salsa is a good alternative to ketchup for children because of ketchup's high sugar content. Describe mild salsa as ketchup's "Big Brother or Sister" and since the child is getting bigger, they can "graduate" to a newer, more exciting condiment.

# Beet Hummus

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 10 minutes **Servings:** 6

## Ingredients

- 1 can** (15 oz) Chickpeas or garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can** (15 oz) Sliced beets, drained and rinsed
- 3 tbsp** Olive or canola oil
- 1 tsp** Cumin (*optional*)
- ¼ tsp** Salt
- Black pepper to taste

## Instructions

1. Place all ingredients in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth.
2. Serve with crackers, pretzels, or vegetables.

## Helpful Hints

Beans are a wonderful way to get protein and veggies into your child's diet in a creative way.

- Rinse canned beans to reduce the sodium in canned beans by 40%. If you do not have a strainer, open the can and drain the liquid using the lid of the can. Then fill the can with water around the beans and drain the water again with the lid.
- Let kids pick the color of the dip. Canned vegetables are very soft and can be mashed easily and mixed into the recipe. Beets are a great way to add a purple color. If you want a green dip, add peas. If you want a traditional yellow dish, stick to chickpeas.
- If you do not have a food processor or blender, use a fork, potato masher, or appropriate utensil and blend all the ingredients together as best you can. Children can help out.

# Corn and Bean Salad

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 25 minutes **Servings:** 4

## Ingredients

- 1 can** (15 oz) Black beans
- 1 can** (15 oz) Pinto beans
- 1 can** (15 oz) Corn or 1 bag frozen corn (10-12 oz), thawed
- ½ tsp** Salt
- 2 tsp** Cumin
- 1 tbsp** Hot sauce
- 2** Canned roasted red peppers, diced small

*\*Add 1 diced avocado if you have access to one, but you do not need to.*

## Instructions

- 1.** Rinse and drain all canned ingredients.
- 2.** Mix together all ingredients in a bowl, refrigerate, and serve chilled.

## Helpful Hints

Beans are a great way to get protein and veggies into your child's diet in a creative way.

Rinsing the beans before you use them can reduce the sodium in canned beans by 40%.

- If you do not have a strainer, open the can and drain the liquid using the lid of the can. Then fill the can with water around the beans and drain the water again with the lid in place.

Feel free to let your child help choose what goes into this recipe:

- If they like spicy, add more hot sauce, but if they don't, substitute with lime or lemon juice or leave it plain.
- If children like some beans, but won't try others use the preferred beans instead.
- Experiment with different vegetables, spices, or anything you can get your hands on that requires no cooking.

# Roasted Chickpeas

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 35-45 minutes **Servings:** 3.5/can

## Ingredients

**1 can** (15 oz) Chickpeas/Garbanzo beans

**1 tbsp** Olive oil  
(or enough to drizzle on chickpeas)

Spices of your choice  
(garlic powder, cumin, pepper, salt, etc.)

## Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Drain chickpeas in strainer and place on paper towel to dry.
3. Place chickpeas in large bowl and stir in olive oil and spices.
4. Spread chickpeas on baking sheet and bake until crisp, about 30 to 40 minutes.

## Helpful Hints

Roasted chickpeas are one of the best recipes to get your children involved with because you can make them in so many different ways.

- If you want crunchy chickpeas, the key is to leave them in long enough; if you taste one and they are not crunchy yet, place them back into the oven until they are.
- Try sweet, savory, or spicy toppings on your chickpeas and let your child help sprinkle on the spices. You can also use cinnamon sugar, salt and vinegar, Cajun, Italian, or anything you want.

Talk to your child about how chickpeas can be a snack just like chips or pretzels, and that they might be even tastier.

Roasted chickpeas are also a great topping for salads and other meals because they serve as a source of protein, fiber, and various other vitamins and minerals.

# Hawaiian Chicken and Rice

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 35 minutes **Servings:** 4

## Ingredients

- 4** Chicken breasts or thighs, cubed with skin and bones removed
- 1½ cups** Rice (*brown rice is preferred, if available*)
- 1 can** (15 oz) Pineapple chunks, drained
- 1 cup** Frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry and chopped\*

Cumin, red pepper flakes, or spices of your choice

*\*To thaw and dry spinach: Microwave for 1 minute, wrap in paper towel and squeeze tight until all liquid is removed.*

## Instructions

- 1.** Cook rice according to package in a separate pot.
- 2.** Place cubed chicken in a non-stick pan and heat until cooked through, about 5-7 minutes. If you do not have a non-stick pan, spray or spread a small amount of olive oil into a pan.
- 3.** Add in pineapple and spinach, heating until spinach is warmed and pineapple starts to brown.
- 4.** Add rice to pan with spices and remove from heat; stir until mixed thoroughly.

## Helpful Hints

- Make this dish fun by making it a Hawaiian night at your house. Cut flowers out of construction paper and string them to hang in your dining area. Put them in your children's (and your own) hair, and sprinkle them on the dinner table to make it a themed dinner.
- Hula dance around the room while you are cooking to make it a fun dinnertime for all.

# Lady Leah's Chicken

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 45 minutes **Servings:** 6-8

## Ingredients

- 8** Chicken breasts, thighs, or drumsticks
- 1 box** (6 oz) Stove Top stuffing mix for chicken
- 1 jar** (~9 oz) Jar chicken or other gravy sauce or can (~9 oz) cream of mushroom soup
- 1 bag** (10-12 oz) Frozen broccoli

## Instructions

- 1.** Preheat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.
- 2.** Place thawed chicken\* in a glass oven pan.  
*\*Thaw safely by placing chicken in refrigerator the morning or night before.*
- 3.** Layer uncooked stuffing mix first, then thawed broccoli, then gravy.
- 4.** Cook in oven for about 30 minutes until chicken is cooked through.

## Helpful Hints

This dish is so yummy that it is easy to eat the broccoli without noticing. Plus, it contains three food groups: vegetable (broccoli), protein (chicken), and grain (stuffing). Add fruit for dessert and milk (dairy) as a drink and you will have covered them all.

- Having all the food groups in one meal is a great opportunity to talk about MyPlate.
- If you explain that half the plate should be fruits and veggies, your child may surprise you and be more inclined to load up on the broccoli.

# One-Pot Chicken and Rice

Estimated Preparation Time: 30 minutes Servings: 6

## Ingredients

- 3 cans** (5 oz/can) Chipotle white chicken or plain chicken
- ¾ cup** Chopped frozen onion or 1 fresh onion, diced
- 1 can** (14.5 oz) Diced tomatoes
- 2 cups** Chicken broth
- 1½ cups** Uncooked brown rice
- ½ can** (7.5 oz) Green beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ can** (7.5 oz) Carrots, drained and rinsed
- ½ can** (7.5 oz) Corn, drained and rinsed

## Instructions

1. Place chicken, onion, salt, and garlic powder in a deep 12-inch skillet; cook over medium-high heat until onion starts to turn clear.
2. Add all remaining ingredients to skillet. Stir to combine.
3. Bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to medium-low.
4. Cook 10 minutes or until rice is tender and mixture is desired consistency.

## Helpful Hints

Canned chicken is a budget-friendly protein; draining the chicken before eating will help to get rid of the “canned” taste, as well as the added salt content.

- Try brown rice instead of white for the whole grain benefits. If children grow up on brown rice they will prefer it.
- Add beans or other vegetables to this recipe; the more you add, the more volume the dish has and the longer it will last.
- Let your child “stir the pot” to be involved in the cooking process, but to avoid burns, make sure you are watching.
- Packed with protein, whole grains, and vegetables, this meal provides long-lasting energy. This is a great time to talk about how “food is fuel” for the body.

# Southwest Chicken Skillet

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 50 minutes **Servings:** 4

## Ingredients

<b>1 cup</b>	Uncooked brown rice
<b>1 cup</b>	Salsa
<b>1½-2 cups</b>	Diced chicken
<b>1 can</b> <small>(15 oz)</small>	Black beans
<b>1 tbsp</b>	Chili powder
<b>1 tbsp</b>	Onion powder
<b>2 cups</b>	Water or chicken broth
<b>1 cup</b>	Shredded cheese

## Instructions

- 1.** In a large skillet, combine the rice, salsa, chicken, black beans (drained), chili powder, and chicken broth. Stir until everything is evenly combined.
- 2.** Place a tight fitting lid on the skillet, turn the heat on to high, and let the skillet come to a full boil. As soon as the skillet comes to a boil, turn the heat down to low and let it simmer for 40 minutes. Make sure it is simmering the entire time, turning the heat up slightly if needed (you should be able to hear it simmer or bubble quietly).
- 3.** After 40 minutes, turn off the heat, remove the lid, and fluff the mixture with a fork. All of the liquid should be absorbed and the rice should be tender.
- 4.** Sprinkle 1 cup of shredded cheese over top, replace the lid, and let it sit for a few minutes, or until the cheese is melted.

**Add additional beans or vegetables. The more you add, the longer it will last.**

## Helpful Hints

This is a great recipe to get your kids excited about cooking.

- Ask, “What is boiling?” Let them see the boiling water while advising them to be careful around the hot steam.
- Ask, “What is simmering?” Let your kids see the simmering (slowly bubbling) water.
- Compare uncooked rice to cooked, fluffy rice. Explain that the liquids in the recipe were absorbed by the rice. This also happens in oatmeal and pasta—they get larger when cooked.



# Pasta with Turkey and Broccoli

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 25 minutes **Servings:** 4

## Ingredients

**¾ lb** Pasta, any shape  
*(whole wheat, if available)*

**1 bag** *(10-12 oz)* Frozen broccoli, thawed

**4** Turkey burgers, thawed

**1 tbsp** Minced garlic

**3 tbsp** Olive oil

Roasted red pepper flakes to taste

## Instructions

- 1.** Cook pasta according to package directions, add broccoli during the last minute; drain and return pasta and broccoli to pot.
- 2.** Heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil in pot and add turkey burgers; using edge of spatula, mash turkey burgers until they look like ground turkey; add red pepper flakes and cook until browned.
- 3.** Toss the turkey with the pasta and broccoli and add remaining 2 tablespoons of oil.

## Helpful Hints

- Use pasta to teach children about portion sizes; one portion of pasta is about the size of a fist.
- Adding turkey and broccoli adds volume to the pasta, so it seems like more noodles when actually it's full of protein and vegetables.
- Olive oil is a good way to make pasta moist and flavorful without adding saturated fat.

# Turkey and Rice Vegetable Soup

Estimated Preparation Time: 45 minutes Servings: 4

## Ingredients

4	Turkey burgers, thawed
1 cup	Frozen onion
1 can (14.5 oz)	Diced carrots, drained and rinsed
1 can (14.5 oz)	Green beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup	Frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry
6 cups	Chicken broth
½ cup	Brown rice, uncooked
1 tbsp	Olive oil or cooking oil

## Instructions

1. Heat oil in large pan on medium-high heat. Add turkey burgers and cook, breaking up with a spoon until browned, 5-7 minutes; transfer to a plate.
2. Add onion to saucepan until it starts to turn clear, about 3-5 minutes.
3. Return turkey to saucepan and add carrots, green beans, broth and rice; cook 25-30 minutes or until rice is tender.
4. Stir in spinach.
5. Season with any spices\* you like; the more spices, the more flavorful it will be.

*\*Using spices gives food flavor without the added salt content.*

## Helpful Hints

- Soup is often considered a side dish instead of a meal, but if you add protein it becomes a budget-friendly meal. It is also an easy way to hide vegetables.
- Eating soup helps younger children practice motor skills at the dinner table by eating the soup with a spoon. Be careful it's not too hot, in case they spill.

# Creamy Salmon Pasta

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 25 minutes **Servings:** 6

## Ingredients

- 1 pkg** (16 oz) Pasta, any type  
*(preferably whole grain)*
- 2 tbsp** Butter
- 2 tbsp** All-purpose flour
- 2 tsp** Garlic powder
- 2 cups** Skim milk
- 1 pkg** (8 oz) Shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup** Canned green peas, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup** Canned mushrooms, drained
- 10 oz** Canned salmon, drained  
*(bones removed, if needed)*

## Instructions

- 1.** Cook pasta according to package directions.
- 2.** Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat.
- 3.** Stir flour and garlic powder into the butter. Gradually stir in milk. Heat to just below boiling, and gradually stir in cheese until the sauce is smooth.
- 4.** Stir in peas and mushrooms, and cook over low heat for 4 minutes.
- 5.** Toss in salmon (remove bones, if required), and cook for 2 more minutes. Serve over pasta.

## Helpful Hints

- Canned fish is nothing to be afraid of. When possible, look for options packed in water or low in sodium. Just be sure to drain any liquid out of the can before adding it to the recipe.
- Salmon is a fatty fish, but the good kind. It is full of omega-3 fatty acids that are critical for both children and adults.

# Salmon Burgers

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 10 minutes **Serving:** 1

## Ingredients

<b>14 oz</b>	Canned salmon <i>(bones removed, if needed)</i>
<b>1 cup</b>	Quick oats
<b>1 tsp</b>	Dried dill
<b>1</b>	Egg, lightly beaten
<b>2 tbsp</b>	Low-fat milk
<b>¼ tsp</b>	Salt
<b>2-4 tbsp</b>	Canola oil
	Black pepper to taste

## Instructions

- 1.** Drain salmon. Remove bones, if required.
- 2.** Combine salmon, oats, dill, egg, milk, salt, and pepper in a medium bowl. Mix thoroughly.
- 3.** Shape into 5 patties.
- 4.** Cook in a small amount of oil in a hot pan.
- 5.** Flip when the first side has cooked to golden brown. Serve immediately when second side is done cooking (approximately 7 minutes per side).

## Helpful Hints

- Allow your kids to make a “fancy” dinner tonight.
- Have them take your order, set the table and pour the water or milk you ordered. Set out all of the ingredients for the burgers in bowls on the counter and allow them to pour them all into one big bowl. Let them use their hands to mix up and form the patties (after washing their hands, of course).
- Assist them in cooking the salmon burgers while encouraging them to arrange the plate and serve it to you.

# Microwaved Mac & Cheese

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 10 minutes **Serving:** 1

## Ingredients

½ cup	Elbow macaroni pasta
½ cup	Water
½ tsp	Salt
¼ cup	Low-fat milk
¼- ½ cup	Shredded low-fat cheddar cheese
¼ cup	Canned peas, drained and rinsed

## Instructions

1. Combine the pasta, water, and salt in a microwave-safe bowl.
2. Microwave on HIGH in 2-minute intervals until the pasta is al dente (not quite soft), stirring between each interval. This should take about 6-8 minutes total\*.  
*\*If the pasta absorbs all of the water before the pasta is cooked, add another 2 tablespoons of water.*
3. Stir in the milk and the cheddar cheese.
4. Microwave on HIGH in 30-second intervals until the cheese has melted into a creamy sauce\*, stirring between each interval, 1-1.5 minutes total.
5. When the cheese is almost completely melted, add the peas and cook until finished.  
*\*For a creamier sauce, add an extra tablespoon or two of milk and cheese.*

## Helpful Hints

- Because macaroni and cheese is a kid favorite, it is a good time to introduce vegetables. By stirring in a small amount of vegetables, kids may find a new favorite recipe and be more willing to try new vegetables.
- Got milk? Milk and cheese are part of the dairy group. Whole-fat milk is appropriate for children under the age of two. When choosing milk for children 2 years and older, low-fat or skim milk is recommended.
- Speaking of milk...chocolate milk often draws in kids of all ages. Make water and plain milk the beverages of choice since chocolate milk contains extra sugar, flavoring, and calories.

# Peanut Noodles

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 10 minutes **Servings:** 2

## Ingredients

- 1 cup** Dry pasta noodles
- 1 tbsp** Soy sauce (*low-sodium, if available*)
- 2 tbsp** Chunky peanut butter
- 2 tsp** Hot sauce (*optional*)
- Vegetable of choice

## Instructions

1. Boil noodles according to package instructions and drain off and set aside most liquid.
2. Toss with soy sauce, peanut butter, and hot sauce.
3. Add boiled pasta water as needed to achieve desired consistency.

## Helpful Hints

Peanut Noodles are a great alternative to Asian takeout. Talk with your children about eating at home versus eating out and the benefits of homemade food. Not only is a homemade meal likely to be lower in sodium, calories, and fat, as well as higher in nutrients, it saves money.

# Tomato Pasta with White Beans

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 25 minutes **Servings:** 4

## Ingredients

<b>6 oz</b>	Spaghetti or other pasta
<b>2 cans</b> (14.5 oz each)	Diced tomatoes
<b>1 can</b> (15 oz)	White beans, rinsed and drained
<b>1 can</b> (15 oz)	Spinach, rinsed, drained, and dried
<b>½ cup</b>	Shredded mozzarella cheese

## Instructions

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. In a large skillet, bring the tomatoes and beans to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes.
4. Add spinach; simmer for 2 minutes, stirring occasionally. Drain pasta.
5. Top with tomato/bean mixture and cheese.

## Helpful Hints

- “Hiding” spinach and tomatoes in pasta is an effective way to encourage kids to eat vegetables. Beans are also a great way to add calories, protein, and fiber.
- One of the best ways to involve children in cooking is pouring and mixing. Let your children help with this step by letting them pour all of the ingredients into a big bowl and mixing it before you serve the dish.
- Start this meal with a fresh green salad.

# Peach Muesli Crunch

**Estimated Preparation Time:** 8-10 minutes (plus 8 hours refrigeration) **Servings:** 6

## Ingredients

1 cup	Uncooked oats
1 cup	Canned peaches, drained and coarsely chopped
¾ cup	Apple juice
½ cup	Low-fat vanilla or peach yogurt
¼ tsp	Vanilla
½ cup	Trail mix or dried fruit

## Instructions

1. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients except trail mix or dried fruit.
2. Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours, or overnight.
3. Serve muesli cold topped with trail mix or dried fruit.
4. Store covered in refrigerator up to 4 days.

## Helpful Hints

- Make this dish the night before to reduce the morning rush. Invite your child to help and talk about what looks and feels different about the food.
- Muesli is a high-fiber food; having fiber in the morning gives you and your children a great start to your day because it makes you feel full, provides long lasting energy, and regulates digestion.