



Share Your Family Meal Photos #EatTogetherIdaho



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Eat Together Idaho is an initiative from the Idaho Office of Drug Policy (ODP). The Eat Together Idaho campaign, and the Idaho Family Dinner Meal Guide, are developed by ODP with support from The Family Dinner Project, Be The Parents, and our many incredible state and local partners. For more recipes, conversation starters & activities, visit:



It's time to eat together Idaho!

Idaho Family Dinner Meal Guide



Recipes | Conversation Starters | Fun Activities

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The Power of Family Meals



Whether it's breakfast, lunch, dinner, or even just an afterschool snack – family meals foster connection, build strong relationships, and provide significant benefits for parents and children.

Research shows that regularly eating meals as a family reduces stress and loneliness among adults and boosts self-esteem, mental health, and academic performance among children and teens.¹

Importantly, research has found that family meals can help prevent youth substance misuse.¹



Teens that routinely eat dinner with their family 3 to 5 nights a week are half as likely to use alcohol, 4 times less likely to smoke, and 2.5 times less likely to use marijuana than teens that have dinner with their family less than twice a week.²

Dinner is more than a meal...

It's an opportunity for your family to connect, create rituals, share stories, and build bonds.

In the U.S., 84% of adults wish they could share meals with loved ones more often.³

But it's not just grown ups – when asked if they would rather eat dinner with their parents, their peers, or by themselves in front of a screen, 80% of kids said that would rather eat with their families. Teens also report that dinner is the time of the day they feel that they're most likely to connect and talk with their parents.⁴

It's time to Eat Together Idaho!

Dinner doesn't have to be fancy or perfect. This Meal Guide is full of simple recipes, engaging conversation starters, and fun activities the whole family will enjoy. We hope it will help you kick-start your family dinner routine!

Find more resources at EatTogetherIdaho.org



¹ What to Know About Family Meals and Substance Use. 2024. The Family Dinner Project. ² The Importance of Family Dinners. 2012. The National Center on Addiction & Substance Abuse. ³ AHA Family Meals Survey. 2022. American Heart Association. ⁴ The Benefit of Family Mealtimes. 2020. Harvard School of Education.

Skillet Apple Cider Chicken

Makes 4 servings | Total prep & cook time: 35 minutes

- 1 pound boneless chicken thighs
- 1 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 Tablespoons butter
- 1 Tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 cups apple slices (1/4 inch thick)
- 1/3 cup chopped shallots or yellow onion
- 1/3 cup apple cider (NOT apple cider vinegar)

- 1 Heat a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat.
- 2 In a small bowl, mix together 3/4 tsp salt, the coriander, cinnamon, nutmeg, dried thyme, and pepper. Sprinkle the spice mixture on both sides of the chicken thighs.
- 3 Oil the skillet and then add the chicken thighs to the pan. Cook for 5 minutes, then flip and cook for 5 more minutes or until cooked through. Transfer chicken to a plate, you'll add it back to the pan in the end of the next step.
- 4 Add butter to the same pan (no need to wipe it out first), then add the brown sugar, apples, shallots/onion, and remaining 1/4 tsp salt. Cook for 5 minutes until apples begin to soften. Pour in the apple cider, cook for 5 more minutes until the sauce has slightly thickened.
- 5 Add the chicken back to the pan and cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Spoon the apple mixture over the chicken to serve.



Recipe courtesy of Sally's Baking Addiction

Conversation Starters

- 1 If you woke up tomorrow and could do one thing that you can't do right now, what would it be?
- 2 If you could be any animal, what animal would you be?
- 3 What was the hardest thing you did today?

Just the Facts

Youth who start drinking before age 15 are **four times more likely** to develop an alcohol dependence as adults than those who begin drinking at or after age 21.

(Health Consequences of Adolescent Alcohol Involvement, National Institutes of Health, 2004)

Family Fun

Trivia Time!

- How many feathers does an adult turkey have?
An adult turkey has 5,000-6,000 feathers
- What is the official Idaho state tree?
The Western White Pine
- How many feet tall is the tallest building in Idaho in 2025?
The tallest building in Idaho is the "Arthur" building in Boise - it is 290 feet tall (26 floors!)
- How many feet tall is the tallest building in the world?
The tallest building in the world is in Dubai - it is 2,717 feet tall (163 floors!)

Beef and Cabbage Soup

Makes 6 servings | Total prep & cook time: 1 hour

- 1 yellow onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 6 cups beef broth
- 1 lemon
- 5 cups cabbage, shredded (1 lb.)
- 2 15oz. cans stewed tomatoes
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp dried basil
- 1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- freshly cracked black pepper

- 1** Finely dice onion and mince garlic. Sauté in a large soup pot over medium heat until the onions are soft (about 5 minutes). Add the ground beef and continue to cook until browned, draining fat if needed.
- 2** Add the shredded cabbage, stewed tomatoes (with juices), oregano, basil, pepper, beef broth, and Worcestershire sauce. Stir everything to combine.
- 3** Place a lid on the pot, turn the heat up to high, and let it come to a boil. Once boiling, turn the heat down to low and let it to simmer for about 30 minutes, or until the cabbage is very soft.
- 4** Taste the soup and add salt if needed. Break up any larger pieces of tomato. Squeeze about 1 Tbsp of lemon juice. Stir to combine, taste once more and make adjustments if needed, then serve.



Recipe courtesy of Budget Bytes

Conversation Starters

- 1** Name three things that make you happy.
- 2** What is your favorite family tradition and why?
- 3** What is your best personality trait?
- 4** If we didn't have to go to work or school on a weekday, what would you want to do instead?

Fun Food Fact

The heaviest cabbage ever recorded was grown in Palmer, Alaska in 2012 and weighed 138.25 pounds!

(Guinness World Records)



Family Activity

Try Not to Laugh

➤ Classic Version

In the classic version of the game, two people - the *Jokester* and the *Grinch* - face off against each other. The person chosen as the Jokester has to try to make the Grinch laugh with silly faces, noises, and gestures. The person chosen as the Grinch has to try not to smile or laugh, no matter what the Jokester does. Each round should last 1-2 minutes.

➤ Group Version

Similar to the classic version of the game, but this time you have the whole group try and make one person laugh!

Activity courtesy of The Family Dinner Project

Cheesy Pizza Pinwheels

Makes 12 pinwheels | Total prep & bake time: 1 hour

- 1 ball pizza dough (14-16 ounces)
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, low-moisture & part-skim
- 2 tablespoons chopped basil, plus extra to top after baking
- 1/4 cup chopped pepperoni slices
- 1/4 cup tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup diced red onion

- 1 Heat oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper or nonstick baking mat.
- 2 Dust the counter with flour. Place the dough on top and pat it into a rectangular shape. Using a floured rolling pin, roll the dough as thin as possible, roughly 9x15 inches.
- 3 Spread the tomato sauce evenly over the dough, leaving an inch of clean border at the top. Sprinkle the cheese, then the chopped pepperoni, onion, and basil.
- 4 Starting at the long end nearest you, roll up the dough & pinch the dough closed along the seam. Use a sharp knife to slice the tube into 12 rolls. Transfer them to the baking sheet, spaced a few inches apart. Tighten up the rolls as needed and tuck in any toppings that fell out.
- 5 If you're eager to eat, bake them immediately. If you have time and want puffier, breadier rolls, let them rise at room temp for 30-45 minutes, then bake. Bake for 12-15 minutes, until cheese is bubbly and rolls are turning golden on top.
- 6 Let cool for a few minutes before serving. Leftover rolls can be refrigerated in an airtight container and heated for 30 to 60 seconds in the microwave.



Get creative! Instead of pepperoni and red onion, sub in your own favorite pizza ingredients!

Conversation Starters

- 1 What does it mean to be *inspired*?
- 2 If you could have a zoo animal as a pet, which animal would you pick and why?
- 3 How do others cheer you up when you're feeling down?

Just the Facts

Teens who know their parents disapprove of underage drinking are **30% less likely** to drink and drive and **20% less likely** to get into a car with an impaired driver.

(Yale University, 2020)

Family Activity

Trivia Time!

- Approximately how many pizzas are sold in the U.S. each year?
3 Billion
- Approximately how many slices of pizza are eaten per second in the U.S.?
An estimated 350 slices of pizza are eaten per second in the U.S.
- True or False: Idaho's dairy industry is the 3rd largest cheese producer in the nation.
True - Idaho is the 3rd largest producer behind Wisconsin and California.
- How many pounds of cheese are produced in Idaho annually?
1.04 billion pounds were produced in 2024

Turkey Pesto Paninis

Makes 6 servings | Total prep & cook time: 20 minutes

- 6 ciabatta rolls, or 12 slices of sourdough or crusty Italian bread
- 6 slices Provolone cheese
- 1/2 cup pesto
- 1/4 cup sundried tomatoes, finely chopped
- 1 pound all-natural deli-sliced turkey
- 2-3 tablespoons softened butter

★ No panini press or special equipment required!

- 1 Build the Paninis:** Butter the outside of both pieces of bread and spread pesto on the inside of both pieces. On one piece of bread, add 1 slice of Provolone cheese, 2-3 slices of turkey, and 2 teaspoons of chopped sundried tomatoes. Place other piece of bread on top.



If you're freezing the sandwiches for later, wrap them individually (before cooking), transfer to a container or zip-top bag, and freeze.

- 2 Cook the Paninis:** Heat a skillet to medium-high heat. Place the sandwich in the hot pan and press down on the top of the sandwich with a spatula or another heavy pan. Once the bread gets toasted and the cheese starts to melt (about 2-4 minutes), flip to the other side and press the sandwich down again. Remove the sandwich from the pan once it's golden brown on the both sides.



Recipe courtesy of The Family Dinner Project

Conversation Starters

- 1** If you could meet any person from history, who would you want to meet? What would you want to ask them?
- 2** What would you do if you made the rules at home?
- 3** How do you like to be rewarded for hard work?
- 4** Share two things that you felt grateful or thankful for today.

Fun Food Fact

The largest sandwich ever recorded was a 5,440-pound corned beef sandwich made in Roseville, Michigan in 2004.

(Guinness World Records)



Family Activity

How Many Hands?

Choose a food on your plate and count how many steps were involved in getting it to your table.

For example, "rewinding" your glass of milk's journey might look like this: table, kitchen, grocery store, truck, distribution site, really big truck, farm, dairy farm, cow. If someone gets stuck, go around and see if anyone can think of more steps.

How far back can you go?



Activity courtesy of The Family Dinner Project

Elote Street Corn Pasta Salad

Makes 8 servings | Total time: 1 hour 25 minutes

- ½ tsp chipotle chili powder
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 1 Tbsp cooking oil
- 2 cups frozen corn
- 1 cup red onion
- ½ cup poblano peppers
- ½ tsp garlic cloves
- 8 oz. ditalini pasta
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup Greek yogurt
- 1 Tbsp lime juice
- ½ cups queso fresco
- ¼ cup reserved pasta water

- 1** Prep ingredients. In a small bowl, stir together chili powder, cumin, paprika, salt, and pepper, and set aside.
- 2** In a large skillet over medium-high heat, add oil, corn, red onion, poblano, garlic, and half the spice blend. Cook for 5 minutes until veggies are soft and corn is lightly charred.
- 3** Cook pasta according to the box instructions. Reserve ¼ cup of pasta water then drain and rinse under cold water.
- 4** In a small bowl, mix mayo, Greek yogurt, lime juice, remaining spice blend, and reserved pasta water.
- 5** In a large bowl, combine the pasta, corn mixture, half the green onions, half the queso fresco, and the dressing. Chill for at least 1 hour. Top with remaining green onions and queso fresco before serving.



Recipe courtesy of Budget Bytes

Conversation Starters

- 1** What was the happiest day of your life so far?
- 2** What is your favorite kind of weather and why?
- 3** What helps you feel confident?
- 4** What's one way we could make someone else's day better this week?

Just the Facts

Children and teens who regularly eat meals with their family feel a stronger connection and have better communication with their parents.

(Family Meals Among Parents: Associations with Nutritional, Social, and Emotional Wellbeing. 2019. Journal of Preventative Medicine.)

Family Activity

Trivia Time!

- 1** On average, how many kernels are on an ear of corn/corn cob?
An average ear of corn has 800 kernels.
- 2** True or False: Brazil is the top corn producing country in the world.
False - the U.S. is the top corn producing country, growing 31% of the world's corn.
- 3** How many pounds of corn are grown in the U.S. each year?
833 billion pounds (or 377.63 million metric tons)
- 4** What is the official Idaho state vegetable?
The potato - Idaho grows 11 billion pounds of potatoes each year.

No Bake Pretzel Peanut Butter Bars

Makes 25 servings | Total prep & refrigeration time: 2 hours

- 1 cup graham cracker crumbs (about 8 sheets)
- 1 cup peanut butter (+ 2 Tbsp)
- 1.5 cups chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 25 mini pretzels

- 1** If your graham crackers aren't crumbled, use a food processor to blitz into a fine crumb or crush them in a ziploc bag.
- 2** Place the butter and 1 cup of peanut butter in a bowl. Microwave and stir in 30-second intervals, just until they're warm enough to melt together. Stir until evenly combined. (Reserve the last 2 Tbsp peanut butter for later.)
- 3** Add the powdered sugar and graham cracker crumbs to the melted peanut butter mixture and stir until evenly combined.
- 4** Line an 8x8 inch baking dish with parchment paper, make sure some of the paper overhangs on the sides so you can lift the bars out of the dish later. Press the peanut butter mixture into the bottom in an even layer.
- 5** In a microwavable bowl, add the chocolate chips and the last 2 Tbsp peanut butter. Microwave for 30 seconds and stir. Continue to microwave and stir in 15 second increments until the chocolate is fully melted and smooth.
- 6** Pour the melted chocolate over the peanut butter base in the baking dish and spread it smooth. Add the mini pretzels on top.
- 7** Refrigerate the bars for 2 hours. Once set, lift the bars out of the dish using the parchment paper. Use a sharp knife to cut them into squares. Enjoy immediately, refrigerate for later, or freeze for long term storage.

Simple & No-Bake!



Recipe courtesy of Budget Bytes

Conversation Starters

- 1** Do you like sweet or salty snacks better?
- 2** What does it mean to be *brave*?
- 2** If you joined the circus, what would your act be?

Fun Food Fact

Every year Americans eat enough peanut butter to coat the floor of the Grand Canyon.

(National Peanut Board)



Family Activity

Story by Sentence

One family member begins a story and talks for no more than a minute. You then move on to the next family member, who continues the story - do this until everyone participates.

If suggestions are needed to get started, brainstorm together about a few things that could be included in the story, for example: a city, a type of terrain (mountains, beach, woods), some animals, an event (sports event, historical event, movie), a color, or a food.

Activity courtesy of The Family Dinner Project