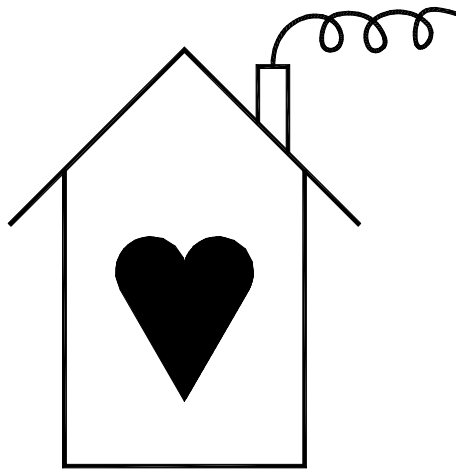


# Exiting the Fast Food Lane

## Freezer Cooking Guide



Marie Cole

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Exiting the Fast Food Lane:  
Freezer Cooking Guide

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Are you ready to exit the fast food lane and enjoy home-cooked meals at a fraction of the cost and double the nutrition? You've come to the right place! At Freezer Pleasers, we are dedicated to bringing the family back together around the dinner table!

Research has shown that children and teenagers that regularly eat dinner with their families perform better socially, academically, and emotionally. I believe that the reintroduction of a regular family mealtime is a small step that parents can take in strengthening their bonds and ties to their children.

Even if you don't have children, the benefits gained from enjoying home-made, nutritious, delicious meals are tremendous! However, few of us have the time to slave over a stove in the kitchen, spending upwards of one to two hours preparing meals like our grandmas used to make.

By utilizing the concepts found in this book, as well as in the book *The Freezer Cooking Manual from 30 Day Gourmet*, you can prepare your meals ahead of time, spend less money, and far less time! Many of the meals can even be thawed right in the microwave and be on your table within 20-30 minutes! Imagine just going to your own freezer, choosing something yummy for dinner, thawing it, and merely heating it for dinner! You will spend less time preparing dinner than it takes to drive to the fast food restaurant!

You will notice that all of the recipes are arranged in a table format. This allows you to easily double or triple, or even multiply it by six, without having to do the math.

So, welcome to my kitchen! I hope you'll enjoy your stay and find recipes that will become your family's favorites!

**Dr. Chris Stout, former president of the Illinois Psychological Association and chief of psychology at Forest Hospital in Des Plaines, Ill., says *communication is the organized family meal's main ingredient.***

**In the house of the wise are stores of choice food and oil, but a foolish man devours all he has.**

**-Proverbs 21:20**

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## **Hash Brown Casserole**

<b>MEALS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Serves 8-10</b>				
Hash Browns, shredded, frozen (thawed)	32 oz.	64 oz.	96 oz.	192 oz.
Butter	½ c.	1 c.	1 ½ c.	3 c.
Onion, chopped	¼ c.	½ c.	¾ c.	1 ½ c.
Salt	¼ t.	½ t.	¾ t.	1 ½ t.
Cream of Chicken Soup	10 ¾ oz.	21 ½ oz.	32 ¼ oz.	64 ½ oz.
Cheddar Cheese, shredded	1 c.	2 c.	3 c.	6 c.
Sour Cream	8 oz.	16 oz.	24 oz.	48 oz.
Corn Flakes Cereal, crushed	2 c.	4 c.	6 c.	12 c.
Butter	¼ c.	½ c.	¾ c.	1 ½ c.

### **ASSEMBLY DIRECTIONS**

Melt the butter in the microwave. Mix potatoes with ½ c. melted butter, onions, soup, sour cream, cheese, and salt. Place in 9x13 pan or in 1-gallon freezer bag.

Mix crushed corn flakes with ¼ c. melted butter. Place in separate freezer bag (1-qt. size).

Wrap 9x13 pan well with saran wrap and then foil. Attach corn flake mixture with tape or place both in a 2-gallon freezer bag OR place both inside a 2-gallon freezer bag. Label and freeze.

### **SERVING DIRECTIONS**

Thaw. Sprinkle the corn flake mixture over the top. Bake 50 minutes in a preheated 350° oven.

**CONTAINERS:** 9X13 Casserole dish or gallon freezer bag, quart freezer bag, 2-gallon freezer bag.

### **COOK'S TIP: Dealing With Very Cold Ingredients**

The hash browns in this recipe are very cold, and you will probably need to use your hands to mix it all together. Purchase a new set of those yellow rubber gloves that reach to the elbow, and label them "Food Only." You can save these to use every time you assemble anything cold!

*Never eat more than you can lift.*

*--Miss Piggy*

Miss Piggy would probably like this recipe! It is very hearty and filling. One of my roommates prepared this for a church social, and I immediately asked her for the recipe! Thanks, Michelle

## **COOK'S TIP: Too Much Junk Food?**

For a long time in our household, I felt like my kids were getting too much junk food and things from a can. One of our favorite lunches was the ring-shaped pasta that comes in a can. We still indulge in that occasionally, but more frequently I have started using recipes like *Baked Ziti*. This way I have control over the ingredients. I can use the freshest cheeses and vegetables. If I choose, I can use whole wheat pasta, although admittedly I don't use it very often. Or, I can add extra vegetables.

When I make recipes like *Baked Ziti*, ones that are good for lunch and dinner, I don't put them in a 9x13 pan. I generally use 8x8 pans. That way I can get more meals out of it, and the serving size works for both lunch and dinner for us. My cooking buddy does use 9x13 pans, but she has four kids!

If you, like me, are tired of opening cans for lunch (with all of their added salt and preservatives), then give *Baked Ziti* a try! It is simple to prepare, and the taste is cheesy enough for any kid to like, while it is sophisticated enough for most adults to enjoy as well.

Also, instead of paying high dollar for prepackaged spaghetti sauce, try the very simple *Marie's Spaghetti Sauce* with this meal.

## **Baked Ziti**

<b>MEALS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Serves 6-8</b>				
Ziti Macaroni, uncooked	½ lb.	1 lb.	1 ½ lb.	3 lb.
Ricotta Cheese	16 oz.	32 oz.	48 oz.	96 oz.
Mozzarella Cheese, shredded	3 c.	6 c.	9 c.	18 c.
Spaghetti Sauce	3 c.	6 c.	9 c.	18 c.
Parmesan Cheese, grated	½ c.	1 c.	1 ½ c.	3 c.
Mushrooms, sliced, canned	8 oz.	16 oz.	24 oz.	48 oz.

### **ASSEMBLY DIRECTIONS**

Cook ziti according to package directions for half the recommended time. Drain and place in a large bowl.

Mix ricotta, mushrooms, and half of the mozzarella cheese with the pasta.

Cover bottom of 9x13 pan with half of the spaghetti sauce. Spoon ziti mixture into pan. Cover with remaining sauce. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and remaining mozzarella.

Wrap pan securely with foil. Place in 2-gallon freezer bag. Label and freeze.

### **SERVING DIRECTIONS**

Thaw completely. Bake covered at 350° for 35 minutes or until hot and bubbly.

**CONTAINERS:** 9X13 dish, foil, 2-gallon freezer bag.

## **Spaghetti Pie**

<b>MEALS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Serves 6-8</b>				
Spaghetti Noodles, dry, broken in half	4 c.	8 c.	12 c.	24 c.
Eggs, each	2	4	6	12
Butter	¼ c.	½ c.	¾ c.	1 ½ c.
Parmesan Cheese, grated	¼ c.	½ c.	¾ c.	1 ½ c.
Ricotta Cheese, part-skim	1 c.	2 c.	3 c.	6 c.
Marie's Spaghetti Sauce	2 c.	4 c.	6 c.	12 c.
Mozzarella Cheese, shredded	½ c.	1 c.	1 ½ c.	3 c.

### **ASSEMBLY DIRECTIONS**

Cook spaghetti in boiling water for half the recommended time. Drain. While spaghetti is still hot, add butter, eggs, and Parmesan cheese. Mix well.

In a 10" pie plate or 9x9 casserole dish, spread spaghetti mixture in bottom of dish and up the sides to form a crust. Spread the ricotta cheese over the top. Pour spaghetti sauce on top of this, and finally sprinkle mozzarella cheese over the top.

Wrap dish well in saran wrap and then in foil. Place dish in freezer bag. Label and freeze.

### **SERVING DIRECTIONS**

Thaw. Bake covered in a 350° oven for 35 minutes, or until cheese is melted and casserole is heated through.

**CONTAINERS:** 10" pie plate or 9x9 casserole, saran wrap, foil, freezer bag to fit pie plate or casserole dish.

### **COMMENTS**

If you prepare Veggie-Stuffed Shells, you can use any leftover filling in place of the ricotta in this recipe. Also, the filling for the 30 Day Gourmet recipe for Cheese-Filled Shells tastes wonderful in place of the ricotta!

### **COOK'S TIP: Avoiding Ice Crystals**

Allow food to cool before wrapping it or putting it in freezer bags. When food is put into a freezer bag while it is still hot, steam from the food condenses on the inside of the bag, and eventually makes its way down to the surface of the food, making harmless little ice crystals. Just don't let food sit out for more than 2 hours total.

### **COOK'S TIP: Flash Freezing Casseroles**

If you don't have enough pie plates to make six of these pies, don't panic! I have a solution for you! Line your pie plate with foil. Assemble the pie. Fold the edges of the foil over the top of the pie, wrapping it securely. Lift the pie out of the plate, and wrap once more securely with foil. Place pie in a gallon freezer bag. Put the pie in the freezer, on a flat surface with nothing else on top. Once the pies are frozen, you can stack them inside of your freezer. Dilemma solved!

*I have been making this recipe since college, and I'm glad to share it with you. My entire family loves it! I serve it with hot garlic bread and steamed broccoli, or a salad.*

This recipe is so simple, I am almost embarrassed to include it in a cookbook, but it really is quite delicious! Somehow, the process of letting the chicken sit in the marinade in the freezer allows the flavors in the dressing to permeate the chicken.

There are many marinade flavors available on the market today, and I encourage you to try some different ones until you find one that suits your tastes perfectly!

*"My doctor told me to stop having intimate dinners for four. Unless there are three other people."*

Orson Welles

**COOK'S TIP: Safety with Marinades**

Whenever you use marinades, you should always discard them. Never try to use them as a sauce or in any way with your cooked meat, because it has been sitting in raw meat and is likely contaminated with bacteria. It would be dangerous for you to ingest it, so just toss it out! The marinade has served its purpose by flavoring the meat.

## Italian Marinated Chicken

<b>MEALS</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Serves 6</b>				
Chicken Breasts, skinless and boneless, uncooked	6	12	18	36
Italian Salad Dressing	10 oz.	20 oz.	30 oz.	60 oz.

**ASSEMBLY DIRECTIONS**

Place the chicken breasts in a freezer bag. Pour the Italian dressing over them. Either fat-free or fat-full will work fine.

Label and freeze.

**SERVING DIRECTIONS**

To serve: thaw. Discard dressing. Grill, bake, or broil chicken until meat is no longer pink inside and juices run clear.

**CONTAINERS:** Gallon freezer bags.

## ***Pink Lemonade Pie***

The temperatures here in the Texas heat can soar in the summer. One summer, it was so hot (110°) that the asphalt pavement was sticky! I always like to find recipes that are cool and don't require any cooking in the oven!

This pie is so refreshing in the summer, with its tangy lemonade taste. Of course, this pie is delicious year-round, but especially so when the temperature is in triple digits!

I have adapted this recipe from one my mother-in-law gave me. She is a fantastic cook, and often relies on simple recipes like this that yield great results.

Sometimes the pink lemonade can be hard to find at the grocery store. The small can of limeade works just fine in this recipe!

<b>MEALS</b>	<b>2 pies</b>	<b>4 pies</b>	<b>6 pies</b>	<b>12 pies</b>
<b><i>Makes 2 pies</i></b>				
Frozen Pink Lemonade	6 oz.	12 oz.	18 oz.	36 oz.
Pecans, chopped	½ c.	1 c.	1 ½ c.	3 c.
Cream Cheese	8 oz.	16 oz.	24 oz.	48 oz.
Prepared Graham Cracker Crusts	2	4	6	12
Sweetened Condensed Milk	14 oz.	28 oz.	42 oz.	84 oz.
Frozen Whipped Topping, thawed	12 oz.	24 oz.	36 oz.	72 oz.
Red Food Coloring	4 drops	8 drops	12 drops	24 drops

### ***ASSEMBLY DIRECTIONS***

Thaw lemonade and whipped topping. Soften cream cheese. Mix together lemonade, cream cheese, condensed milk, nuts, and red food coloring. Mix until well-blended. Fold in whipped topping. Adjust color until filling is a pretty pink color. Pour into 2 pie shells.

Wrap pies first with saran wrap and then with foil. If your pie shell came with a lid, then use it first, and then wrap well. Slide into a gallon freezer bag, if you wish. Label and freeze.

### ***SERVING DIRECTIONS***

To serve, thaw. Keep refrigerated.

**CONTAINERS:** Saran wrap, foil, and gallon freezer bag.