

Cooking for One or Two

K-STATE
Research and Extension
Family and Consumer Sciences

Leader's Guide

2025 Annual Lesson Series



Introduction:

A healthy eating pattern is essential for current and long-term health. Individuals living in one- or two-person households may find it challenging to plan meals, use leftovers, or justify the time required to prepare and clean up from a meal for one or two servings.

Considering food prices and health outcomes, it is more important now than ever to educate and support consumers in practical ways to prepare healthy meals at home, feel confident in food preparation, and repurpose leftovers to reduce meal preparation time in the kitchen.

This lesson will provide tips for individuals as they prepare healthy meals in a one- or two-person household. Participants will gain knowledge of how to prepare meals at home, while utilizing knowledge gained to reduce food waste, maintain their food budget, and follow food safety guidelines.

Educational Goals & Objectives:

As a result of participating in this educational program, the learner will be able to:

- Learn easy and practical ways to prepare meals for one or two people.
- Gain confidence in recipe modification.
- Identify ways to repurpose or reuse leftovers.
- Reduce the amount of time spent cooking.
- Learn food safety standards.
- Learn how to shop to reduce food waste and to save money.

Materials Needed:

- Leader's Guide
- Participant Fact Sheet, one copy per participant (MF3659)
- Evaluation, one copy per participant
- PowerPoint
- Computer

- Projector and Projector Screen
- Extension Cord

Optional Materials: food thermometer, examples of freezer storage bags/containers, recipes, ingredients and supplies for a cooking demonstration

Intended Audiences:

Appropriate groups could include but are not limited to: Adult groups of all ages, Family and Community Education (FCE) groups, other community organizations, college students, single parents, senior meal sites, and senior housing sites.

Before the Lesson:

Prepare by taking these steps:

1. Review the PowerPoint presentation, including the resources and talking points included on the notes section of the PowerPoint slides.
2. Consider how the program will be delivered to the identified audience.
3. Consider adjustments that may be needed to align with the nutritional needs, cultural preferences, or learning needs of the intended audience.
 - Plan for any visuals or hands-on activities that will be delivered with the program. (Food Thermometer – Reviewing how to accurately check the internal temperature when reheating leftovers.)
 - Proper Storage – Bring examples of freezer bags and containers that can help prolong food quality.
4. Print participant fact sheet and evaluations for each anticipated participant.
5. K-State Research and Extension FCS Agent – Create a program activity in PEARS and attach the program evaluation. After attaching the evaluation to the program

activity, copy the QR code and paste it onto the last slide of the PowerPoint presentation. This process will need to be replicated for each presentation conducted.

Leading the Lesson:

Introduce the topic:

The Cooking for One or Two fact sheet is designed and written to serve as a script or outline for this lesson. Utilization of the PowerPoint presentation in the class or printed out as a guide for program delivery would be appropriate to ensure course objectives are discussed.

Connection – Participants will attend the session with varying perceptions and challenges related to cooking for one or two. Some may be in a temporary season of cooking for one or two and others may be long-term. It is important for participants to feel heard and understood as they discuss the challenges of why they may not cook or consume meals as often at home.

Engagement – Talk to the participants about the challenges that they encounter regarding cooking for one or two. This will help open dialogue, enhance engagement, and give the educator specific examples to use throughout the presentation.

Discussion – During the presentation, encourage group discussion and brainstorming regarding healthy solutions to common situations or challenges. Participants may be aware of resources or have personal experiences that could benefit the group.

Recipe Preparation – If recipes are prepared during the presentation, follow food safety standards and guidelines. Ensure that foods are cooked to the proper internal temperatures and that hands and surfaces are properly cleaned. Review the food safety measures during the class to help model food safety behaviors. When choosing recipes, consider the cooking equipment that the intended audience may have available to them. Also choose nutritionally balanced recipes to encourage consumption of whole grains, fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, and a variety of protein sources.

Activity – Reducing a Recipe

In the Cooking for One or Two Fact Sheet, a sample recipe is provided for bean and rice burritos. When preparing meals, if freezing leftovers or utilizing refrigerated leftovers within 3 to 4 days is not possible, participants may choose to alter a recipe to reduce the amount of food prepared. The chart included to the right, is in the participant fact sheet. Walk through the recipe with participants to identify the proper quantity of each ingredient that should be used to reduce the recipe from 8 servings to 4 servings. Print off the Cooking Basics: Reducing a Recipe Fact Sheet for participants to use with this activity, ksre-learn.com/mf3531

Ask participants what potential issues may result from reducing a recipe and ask them to brainstorm possible solutions.

Baked goods often require precise measurements of ingredients, making the recipes difficult to successfully reduce. Consider making the original recipe and freezing it into individual portions for future use.

Convert the recipe before you start cooking. This will help identify the ingredient quantities needed, the required cooking tools, and help reduce confusion while cooking.

Cookware. Smaller cookware may be needed when reducing a recipe for a casserole or quiche. A dish that is too small may prolong cooking time and one too large may cause overcooking.

Cooking time. Recipes that have been reduced can have shorter cooking times. Perform periodic checks on your item, using a food thermometer. Write down the cooking time on your modified recipe for future reference.

Halving an egg. A standard large egg is approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. If a modified recipe calls for $\frac{1}{2}$ of an egg, whisk the egg and then measure out 2 tablespoons of the whisked egg mixture.

Reducing a Recipe Activity – Bean and Rice Burritos

Ingredient	8 servings	4 servings
Rice (cooked)	2 cups	
Onion (small, chopped)	1	
Kidney beans	2 cups (1 15-ounce can, drained)	
Flour tortillas (10 inch)	8	
Salsa	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	
Cheese (shredded)	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	

Activity – Goal Setting

Goal setting is an opportunity for program participants to be intentional about the behavior or change that they intend to implement because of the educational program. Writing down a goal can help increase confidence and motivation and can help encourage behavior change.

Ask participants to think about the challenges discussed at the beginning of the program.

Encourage participants to think about what they learned in the program and to brainstorm what they can do or change to help overcome their encountered challenge.

Have participants turn to the Goal Setting section on the Cooking for One or Two Fact Sheet.

Discuss that a SMART goal is an individualized goal that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely. When writing down a SMART goal, it should be easy to identify what is going to be done, when it's going to be done, and how often.

Encourage participants to write down a realistic and specific goal. Ask participants what motivates them to make the change. What potential challenges might be encountered? What outcome is anticipated?

1. SMART Goal (Write a goal that is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely)

2. Motivation (What is motivating you to make a change?)
3. Challenges (What current challenges are keeping you from being successful?)
4. Outcomes (What do you anticipate will happen because of your changes?)

Ask – Ask participants if they have any questions.

After the lesson

Family and Community Education Groups — Gather evaluations and return to your local K-State Research and Extension office

K-State Research and Extension FCS agent — Enter paper evaluations into PEARS

Supplemental Handouts

Cooking Basics: Reducing a Recipe — ksre-learn.com/mf3531

Together We Can Reduce Food Waste — ksre-learn.com/mf3482

Create a Grocery Game Plan: Weekly Calendar and Grocery List - www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/healthy-eating-budget/make-plan

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Evaluation

Cooking for One or Two

Please take a moment to respond to the questions below.

Date and location of presentation: _____

My county of residence: _____

Gender: Female Male Non-binary Prefer not to answer

Race: American Indian/Alaska Native Asian Black/African American
 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander White Prefer not to respond

Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latino Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino Prefer not to respond

Age: 18-29 years 30-59 years 60-75 years 76+ years
 Prefer not to respond

1. Because of this program, I increased my knowledge of how to prepare healthy meals at home.

Strongly disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly agree

2. Because of this program, I intend to follow food safety recommendations on storing and reheating leftovers.

Strongly disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly agree

3. Because of this program, I intend to utilize and repurpose leftovers to reduce food waste.

Strongly disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly agree

4. Because of this program, I intend on using the knowledge gained to increase the frequency of meals prepared and consumed at home.

Strongly disagree Disagree Undecided Agree Strongly agree

5. Please list 2 things you learned from this program you intend to incorporate into your life.

6. Please share any additional comments or suggestions.