

MENU FOR A SINGLE PERSON

BUDGET COOKING FOR A SINGLE PERSON

The food industry is very good at telling us we are too busy to cook. However careful planning can ensure you have food in the house and even meals cooked in advance for those busy nights.

Healthy eating on a budget is possible when cooking for one person. This menu illustrates how to feed a one person for around \$40 per week.

The menu included provides all the nutrients necessary for adults and will suit the budgets of most people.

Foods from the 4 main food groups listed below should take priority over unhealthy and unnecessary food items:

- fruits and vegetables
- breads and cereals
- milk and milk products and
- meat and meat alternatives.

You might notice that items that do not contribute to a healthy diet are not included – this is where savings are made. Removing all those expensive snack items enables us to take control of our food purchases and provide ourselves with the healthy foods we deserve.

Many of the recipes in this budget menu plan are sourced from the Great Little Cookbook.

[Download The Great Little Cookbook from the Work and Income website.](#)

MENU COSTING FOR ONE PERSON FOR ONE WEEK

Food	Price
Breakfast 1pkt Weetbix = 48 biscuits <u>or</u> 1kg rolled oats	\$3 - \$4
Fruits and Vegetables <u>For example:</u> Carrots (1kg) Cabbage Potatoes (2kg) Oranges (1.5kg) Kiwifruit (7) Onions	\$14
Meat, chicken, tinned fish, eggs <u>For example:</u> A frozen chicken or 600g meat A dozen eggs Tinned Salmon	\$14 - 18
Groceries including Rice (1kg) Pasta Milk Bread	\$8
TOTAL	\$38 - \$43

NOTE: This costing is correct as at June 2017.

Tips when shopping or cooking on a budget

Check the supermarket specials and compare supermarkets with fresh fruit and vegetable retailers to pick out the cheapest deals from each store.

You will not save money if you have to drive all over town, so try to choose stores in your area.

Fruits: try to eat 2 per day

- Buy seasonal fruit only.
- Kiwifruit is generally cheap.
- Look for in-store specials.
- Oranges and kiwifruit provide Vitamin C.

Vegetables

- Buy fresh seasonal vegetables when available.
- When fresh prices rise, look at frozen veges.
- Silverbeet is very easy to grow so look at buying some plants and growing it to provide green veges through the winter.
- **Look for whole pumpkins.** These are excellent buying early in winter (1 pumpkin less than \$2).
 - They will last for months if you store them whole in a cool dark place.
 - You can make soup, use in egg dishes and as a vegetable with meat.
- Often 10kg bags of potatoes are sold very cheaply and make good buying.
- Funky Pumpkin, Raeward Fresh and Marshland Road growers maybe much cheaper for certain vegetables but be careful.

Meat, Fish, Chicken and Eggs

Chicken

- Always cheaper as a whole frozen chicken.
- Avoid chicken nibbles or drumsticks as you are paying for bone.

Meat

- Supermarkets specials are good buying as are butchers.
- Stewing meat like blade and shin are often cheaper than mince. Look carefully at the prices as even rump steak can be cheaper than mince and stewing meat!
- Often corned beef is very cheap but don't eat too often as high in salt.
- Sausages are thought to be cheap but make sure you compare their price with the meats on special.

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Fish

- Tinned fish represents very good value and can be bought as salmon, smoked fish or plain fish.
- Use tinned fish in fish pie, fish cakes, or kedgeree
- Mussels represent good value too and can be used with rice or pasta or made into seafood chowder.

Eggs

- Represent excellent and cheap forms of protein.
- Use them in stir fried rice, crustless quiche where they are used to bring together, cooked vegetables, leftover meat etc.

Grocery

Check out the prices of supermarket specials and also buy some of your dried foods at shops such as Bin Inn. They can sell rice, oats, pasta etc. cheaper than supermarkets.

- Pasta and rice can be used as meal bases e.g. egg fried rice or served with a main meal.
- When you have a little extra, stock up on the following to add interest to your meals:
 - canned beans;
 - soup mixes;
 - flour;
 - salt;
 - pepper;
 - herbs;
 - frozen veges;
 - margarine; or
 - soy sauce.

Tips and hints for this budget menu plan

Breakfast

There are 48 weetbix biscuits in the packet so up to 6 weetbix could be eaten each day – or saved for the next week.

Lunches

Sandwiches

1 loaf of bread (sandwich sliced) gives 20 slices.

Suggested fillings include 4 boiled eggs or chicken meat from the carcass.

Hot Meals

Cook pasta and add chicken meat, fried onions and:

- white sauce (add curry powder for extra flavour); or
- a can of tomatoes.

Main Meals

This week at least 3 meals will be chicken, 2 meals will use tinned fish and 2 with eggs.

Use the tinned fish to make a *fish pie* adding sautéed onions, boiled eggs, parsley and the tinned salmon to a white sauce. Top with mashed potato and serve with coleslaw from the carrot and cabbage. This should do 2 meals.

Eggs can be used as 1-2 main meals like a *Crust less quiche* (GLCB recipe uses 6 eggs). Serve with coleslaw for 2 nights. You could also boil 4 eggs to add to the *fish pie*.

Using the Whole Chicken

4-5 servings can be made from a whole chicken. We suggest you eat the 2 breasts as set out below and make the casserole. The soup can also be frozen as can the meat you have picked off the carcass after boiling it if you decide not to use it in the soup.

Cut the chicken up to make 4 meals

- 1. 2 breasts**
 - Pan fry and serve with mashed or microwaved potatoes, carrots and pan fried cabbage.
 - Stir fry with onions, cabbage and frozen vegetables.
- 2. Legs and thighs can be made into any sort of casserole or curry** by adding onions, chopped up carrots, diced potatoes and some flavourings like a can of tomatoes (2 meals). You could freeze the second serving for the next week.
- 3. Boil the chicken carcass to make soup.** The soup can be frozen (as well as the meat you have picked off the carcass after boiling).
 - Pick off all the meat remaining on the frame to make a meal of chicken soup.
 - Add chopped onion and ¼ to ½ cup rice and some lemon juice. Great to have for lunch.

The meat can also be used with either the pasta or rice, or as a sandwich filling.

RECIPES FOR SINGLE MEN

PORRIDGE

Serves 2

STOVE TOP PORRIDGE

1 cup rolled oats
½ cup cold water or milk
2 cups boiling water
Iodised salt (optional)

Instructions

1. Mix rolled oats with cold water or milk in a saucepan. Stir in boiling water and salt if used.
2. Bring to the boil and cook for 1 minute, stirring occasionally.

MICROWAVE PORRIDGE

1 cup rolled oats
2 ½ cups hot water or milk
Iodised salt (optional)

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl (to prevent it spilling over while cooking).
2. Cook uncovered on medium power for 1½ minutes.
3. Stir and return for 1 minute.

Toppings

Instead of sugar try:

- wheat-germ,
- chopped fresh or canned fruit,
- sultanas or chopped dates, or
- yoghurt.

COOKING PASTA

For one person you will need about 100 to 150g of dry pasta.

Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of water to the boil.
 2. Add 1 tablespoon oil to help stop the pasta sticking together, but is not essential.
 3. Slowly add the pasta to the boiling water.
 4. Do not cover the saucepan.
 5. Cook for about 10 to 12 minutes with the water still boiling.
 6. Stir occasionally to stop sticking.
 7. Drain well.
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RECIPES FOR SINGLE MEN

COOKING RICE

Use ½ to ¾ cup for 1 serving.

ABSORPTION METHOD

1. Bring 1 cup rice and 2 cups water to the boil. Keep the lid on.
2. Turn the element off and leave for 20 minutes. The rice will cook by itself.
3. Serve.

RAPID BOIL METHOD

1. Bring 6 cups of water to the boil.
2. Stir in one cup of rice. Boil rapidly, uncovered for 15 minutes.
3. Drain.

MICROWAVE METHOD

1. Put 1 cup of rice in a dish with 2¼ cups of boiling water.
2. Cover and cook on medium power for 6 minutes.
3. Take out, stir then put back in for another 6 minutes. Watch it doesn't boil over.
4. Stand for 5 minutes before serving.

CHICKEN STOCK

Chicken bones or leftover roast chicken carcass
2 stalks celery, including leaves
2 carrots
2 unpeeled onions
3 bay leaves
6 cups water

Instructions

1. Roughly chop the vegetables.
 2. Put everything in a large saucepan.
 3. Cover and simmer gently for 1 hour.
 4. Leave in any chicken meat but throw away the bones.
 5. Chill the stock overnight.
 6. Skim the fat off the top.
 7. Stock can be frozen until needed.
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Meat

STIR FRY

Serves 1

100g beef, chicken or pork

1 teaspoon oil

1 clove garlic

1 onion

1 tablespoons soy sauce

2 cups finely chopped/sliced

Vegetables – choose from carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, bean sprouts, peppers, leeks, mushrooms, celery, or silverbeet.

Instructions

1. Cut the meat into thin strips and finely chop garlic and onion,
2. Heat 1 teaspoon of oil in the pan and quickly cook the meat on both sides until browned. Add garlic and onions. Cook for a couple of minutes then add the other vegetables and soy sauce. Add a little water if the vegetables stick.
3. Cook, stirring until the vegetables are cooked and slightly crisp.

Serve with noodles or cooked rice.

CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Serves 1

4 small chicken pieces

4 potatoes

2 onions

4 carrots

chopped celery

1 cup water

1 teaspoons instant chicken stock (optional)

1 teaspoon mixed herbs (or 1 tablespoon fresh herbs)

1-2 tablespoons cornflour to thicken

Instructions

1. Take the skin off the chicken pieces. Cut the potatoes into large pieces.
2. Slice the carrots into rounds. Cut the onions into chunks.
3. Put the vegetables and chicken pieces into a casserole dish.
4. If using stock, dissolve in the water. Pour the water over.
5. Sprinkle over the herbs. Cover. Bake at 180°C for 1 ½ hours until chicken is cooked or cook on top of the stove on slow heat for ½ hour, stir to prevent potatoes from sticking. Add more water if necessary.
6. Thicken the casserole by mixing the cornflour in a cup with ¼ cup cold water. Add this to the casserole at the end of cooking.

RECIPES FOR SINGLE MEN

Variations:

- Kumara and apple casserole: Use kumara instead of potatoes. Use chopped apple instead of carrots.
 - Rosemary and garlic casserole: Use fresh rosemary instead of mixed herbs. Add 2 crushed garlic cloves.
 - Apricot casserole: Add dried apricots with other ingredients.
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Fish

FISH PIE

Makes enough for 2 meals

1 kg potatoes
2 tablespoons margarine
2 tablespoons flour
1 cup low-fat milk
450g tin fish (smoked is nice)
2 eggs, hard boiled
parsley (if you have it)

Instructions

1. Cook the potatoes and mash.
2. Melt margarine in a small saucepan, add flour and cook for one minute. Take off the stove and gradually stir in the milk. Put back on the stove, stir, and cook until thick (about five minutes).
3. Lightly break up the fish. Add to the sauce. Add sliced hard-boiled eggs and parsley.
4. Pile into a large oven dish and cover with the mashed potatoes.
5. Cook in a 180°C oven for about 20 minutes or until heated through.

Variation: Add other vegetables like frozen peas.

RECIPES FOR SINGLE MEN

FISH CAKES

Makes enough for 2 meals

1 small can smoked fish or tuna
3 medium potatoes, cooked and
mashed
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 egg
1 tablespoon oil

Instructions

1. Mix all ingredients except oil.
2. Spread a little flour on a board, tip mixture out, shape into a rectangle and cut into eight pieces.
3. Shape into round, flat patties.
4. Heat the oil in a pan. Put four cakes into the pan. Brown on both sides.

Variations: Add flavour with black pepper, chilli sauce, or chopped parsley.

KEDGEREE

1 can tuna or smoked fish
2 cups cooked rice
1 onion, chopped
2 eggs, hard boiled

Instructions

1. Break up fish. Slice eggs.
2. Heat oil in a pot or frying pan, brown the onion.
3. Add the rice, fish, and egg.
4. Heat and serve.

Variation: Use fresh smoked fish.

Eggs

QUICK QUICHE

A great way to use leftovers. Serves 2.

3 eggs

1 cup low-fat milk

½ cup flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 cup onion

1 cup grated cheese

leftover vegetables

1 x 180g tin salmon/tuna (optional)

Instructions

1. Mix eggs and milk in a bowl.
2. Add rest of ingredients and mix.
3. Place into a greased quiche dish or ovenproof dish.
4. Cook for 30-40 minutes at 200°C or until the liquid stops running.

Variations

- Cooked potatoes,
- sliced or cubed pumpkin or kumara
- 5 grated zucchini
- Finely chopped silver-beet
- 1 can corn, drained

EGGY FRIED RICE

A great way of using up left-overs, or a quick meal for fussy eaters. Serves 1

2 cups cooked rice (1/2 cup uncooked rice + 2 cups water)

2 tablespoons oil

1 onion chopped

1 cup frozen peas (or other favourite vegetables)

2-4 eggs beaten

2 tablespoons soy sauce

Instructions

1. Heat oil in a frying pan. Fry onion.
2. Add peas and rice. Cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add soy sauce and mix roughly.
4. Pour eggs onto mixture and stir through until just cooked.

Variation: Use ham, chopped sausages, salami or bacon.

RECIPES FOR SINGLE MEN

VEGETABLE SOUP

Use stock, vegetables and other ingredients of your choice.

6 cups stock (add water if you need to)

3 cups finely chopped vegetables

½ cup barley, rice, lentils, dried peas or soup mix

herbs and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Bring the stock to the boil. Add other ingredients.
2. Simmer for 1-2 hours until everything is cooked.
3. Flavour with herbs and pepper.

Work and Income NZ have copies of The Great Little Cookbook to give to consumers and this has many excellent ideas for cheap meals on a budget.

[Download The Great Little Cookbook from the Work and Income website.](#)