



# MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT

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## Winter Warm - Ups from South of the Border

When it's cold outside, there is nothing better than a few twists on some old favorite recipes. Why not try a Mexican dinner? If you are feeling extra energetic, try making your own manicotti. It's fast, easy and sure to make you the most popular cook this side of the border.

### Mexican Chicken Manicotti

- 8 uncooked manicotti shells
- 1 1/2 cups cut-up cooked chicken or turkey
- 1 cup shredded carrots (about 2 medium)
- 1 cup ricotta cheese
- 2 tablespoons sliced green onions
- 2 teaspoons dried parsley (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup salsa
- 1/4 cup shredded Monterey Jack Cheese with jalapeño peppers

Heat oven to 325°. Cook manicotti shells as directed on package, drain. Mix chicken, carrots, ricotta cheese, onions, parsley and garlic. Fill manicotti shells with chicken mixture.

Arrange in lightly oiled rectangular pan, 13x9x2 inches. Pour salsa over manicotti. Sprinkle with Monterey Jack cheese. Cover and bake about 35 minutes or until hot in center.

If you would like to make your own manicotti shells here is a recipe

### Manicotti

Crepe batter:

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup water

Beat eggs, add water and flour. Beat until smooth. Heat large frying pan and lightly oil. Using a 1/4 cup measuring cup as a scoop, add 1/4 cup batter and rotate pan. Cook until set. Flip and cook second side.

Add 1-2 tablespoons filling to each manicotti shell... fold sides on and place in pan with sauce. Bake as noted in previous recipe.

### Mexican Macaroni and Cheese

- 7 ounces uncooked small shell macaroni (about 2 cups)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup sliced ripe olives
- 1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chilies, drained

Cook macaroni as directed on package: drain. Stir in remaining ingredients. Cook over low heat about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until cheese is melted and sauce is hot.

### Cheesy Bean Dip

- 1 pound can refried beans
- 1/4 pound Colby cheese (or Monterey Jack or cheddar), grated
- Minced onion to taste (optional)

Heat refried beans in a fry pan on low heat. Sprinkle a small amount of minced onion over the beans and top with cheese. Serve on small pieces of bread, crackers, tortilla chips, lettuce, or eat plain.

### Taco Dip

- 2 cups plain yogurt
- 1 cup salsa
- Shredded lettuce
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 4 oz. cheddar cheese, shredded

Dippers:

- \* unsalted corn chips
- \* fresh vegetables
- \* tortillas or bagels cut into pieces and toasted

Mix yogurt and salsa and spread on bottom of pie plate or dinner plate. Sprinkle with lettuce, then tomato. Cover with cheese. Can also add chili peppers, sliced black olives, and sliced green onion.



## Stretching your Food \$



Buying in larger amounts can save you money. If you have not tried this because you can't use or don't have the storage for 25

rolls of toilet paper or paper towels, ask a friend to split the cost. You still save on the item and won't be replacing it on for example weekly or bimonthly trips to the store. Check "unit pricing" to be sure larger quantities are cheaper.

## Food Safety

### Food Storage Guidelines

Depending on the food, the proper length of time to store items in the pantry, freezer or refrigerator can vary widely.

When buying dry or canned goods, make sure any dates on the packages or cans haven't expired. Don't purchase cans that are bulged or swollen. Store unopened dry foods in their original packages and keep opened products in airtight containers.

For a free food storage chart, call Cornell Cooperative Extension @ (315) 866-7920

## Household Helpers

- Make "gourmet" coffees by adding 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon vanilla or 1 teaspoon cocoa powder to coffee grounds before brewing.
- Hardened brown sugar will be soft again after placing a slice of bread in the bag of sugar overnight.

## Kid Corner

### Alphabet Pretzels

1-1/2 teaspoons yeast  
6 Tablespoons warm water  
1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)  
1-1/2 teaspoons sugar  
1 cup flour  
egg, beaten  
sesame seeds (optional)

Measure warm water into a large mixing bowl. Sprinkle yeast into water and stir until it dissolves. Add salt, sugar, and flour. Mix and knead dough. Divide into 6 small balls of dough. Each ball may be rolled and

twisted into letters, numbers, shapes, etc. Lay pretzels on lightly oiled cookie sheet. Brush each with beaten egg and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake at 375 °F for 12-15 minutes until brown.

### Artist Smock

Old pillow cases turn into inexpensive smocks for children to use while painting or doing other "messy stuff". Cut two holes on each side for arms and one large hole for the head at the top.

### Free Nutrition Education Programs are also available



Nutrition Teaching Assistants are available to help limited income individuals and families throughout Herkimer County stretch their food dollars to feed themselves and their families better.

Lessons can take place in participants homes or worksites as well as at community centers. Newsletters and other resources

by mail.

#### Topics include:

Budgeting and stretching food dollars.  
Basic nutrition and menu planning.  
Preparing low cost, easy recipes and menus.  
Preserving, storing and preparing food safely.

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