

Six Chicks Freeze and Fix

How to Start a
Freezer Meal

Co-op An Excerpt
from

The
What's for Dinner
Solution



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Six Chicks Freeze and Fix, an excerpt from:

The What's For Dinner Solution

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Freezer Cooking

The Problem:

I hate having to cook on the busiest nights of the weeks. I wish dinner was just waiting at home for me.

The Solution:

Having a warehouse of meals in your freezer – just waiting for you.

It all started innocently enough. My husband was working long days as an engineer with an even longer commute. I was busy with our two small kids and running a business from the office (read: playroom) of our tiny home. After a day of dishes, diapers, and purchase orders, dinner was the last thing on my mind. Unfortunately, it was not the last thing on my family's minds.

So, like so many moms before me, I would resort to take-out food, breakfast cereal, and resentment. Why am I the only one around here that has to think about dinner? Everyone in this house has two arms. (It didn't occur to me at the time that two of those people were under the age of four, and the other was out of the house for eleven hours a day.)

Kathi vs. Freezer Cooking

Enter the book “*Once-A-Month Cooking*” by Mimi Wilson and Mary Beth Lagerborg. This little book showed women like me how they could cook for a day and eat for a month by preparing thirty different meals for the freezer. This book revolutionized my life.

Suddenly, I was the freezer queen. I was shopping and cooking, chopping and freezing. It gave me such satisfaction to stand back and look at the thirty meals snug in the freezer, waiting to be served to friends and family. It was so comforting to know what was for dinner each night. Our cereal consumption went way down.

However, after a while, my family started to get tired of the same recipes, month after month. I was an inexperienced cook, and trying to get other recipes to work for the freezer system seemed like too big of a job.

Reunited—Back to the Freezer

Fast-forward a few years. My kids are both in school during the day, and I work those same hours out of the house. I harkened back to the days of dinners waiting to be popped in the oven as soon as I walked through the door, instead of the four o’clock mad dash to the grocery store I was currently running every afternoon. I knew I had to get back into the freezer meal game.

This time, however, I had a new tool at my disposal. The internet. I did a Google search and came up with more recipes for freezer meals than I could cook in a lifetime. Then, I started to talk with other friends who were experimenting with freezer cooking. Suddenly, I was swapping recipes with friends both on-line and next-door. I started to prepare a few meals, freeze them and serve them to my family and friends.

There were more hits than misses in those early days, and I knew that I could fit freezer cooking back into our busy lives.

You Could be a Freezer Cooker if...

Are you wondering if freezer cooking is for you? Here are some reasons that I love to freezer cook:

- It reduces my stress by having meals ready to go every night.
- It reduces my shopping bill by letting me shop for inexpensive ingredients and on-sale meat.
- It helps me help others. I am always able to deliver a meal to someone who just had a baby, has a sick family member, or is in a financial crunch.
- It lets me customize meals for special diets.

On the next few pages, I will give you some guidelines to freezer cooking, as well as some recipes that have been tested by dozens of my friends and family to be crowd pleasers. Now just a warning: freezer cooking can become close to an addiction. I get a high off of having dozens of meals stocked in my freezer, waiting to be put to use in our home or the homes of people we love. Once you try it, you might decide that your freezer is your favorite appliance in the kitchen.

Provisions-shopping for the big day

Once you decide on your recipes, it is time to put together a shopping list.

When you are tripling recipes, (which is what I recommend if you are going to do bulk freezer cooking) it is much easier (and cheaper) to buy in bulk. If you are creating similar recipes (all Italian, all Mexican), you might be able to buy your sauces and seasonings in bulk as well. If you have leftover chicken breasts

or ground beef after preparing your meals, you can pour extra marinade over the chicken breast and freeze, or turn the ground beef into taco meat with taco seasonings and some chopped onions.

Before shopping, it is a good idea to clean out your freezer and refrigerator to make room for all the food you are bringing home from the store. (And also to figure out, for sure, what is in there you can use for your big cooking day.)

Production — cooking on the big day

As mentioned before, you will want to spend some time preparing your ingredients. I often do this as soon as I get home – and leave the actual cooking for the next day. Here are some of the tasks you can do in advance of your big cooking day:

- Brown ground beef
- Cook chicken for casseroles
- Chop veggies (can be stored in the refrigerator in a little cold water)
- Cook rice and or pasta (pasta can be stored in a plastic bag with a little bit of vegetable oil so it does not stick to the bag)
- If you are extra ambitious, you can prepare some of the marinades and place them in the gallon bags.

Everything you do on prep day will make it that much easier on cooking day.

C-DAY - Cooking Day

- Make sure you have a good breakfast and wear comfortable shoes. Put on some fun music that makes you want to dance. You will need that energy for cooking.
- Tackle one recipe at a time. If I try to do too many recipes at once, I get confused and sometimes end up with Chicken Cacciatore with a slightly Mexican flair. My family can be so unadventurous sometimes.

- Clean as you go — you will be glad you did at the end of the day.
- Double bag all the marinades to avoid any unfortunate accidents.
- When freezing casseroles, wrap the pan in foil and bag the casseroles in a freezer bag.
- As you bag up your dinners, use your permanent marker to label each with the name of the dish, reheating instructions, and the date that it was assembled.

What not to freeze

- Cake icing made with egg whites
- Cream filling and soft frostings
- Pies made with custard or cream fillings
- Cooked egg whites
- Fried foods
- Fruit jelly
- Soft cheese (unless mixed into a recipe)
- Mayonnaise (unless mixed into a recipe)
- Sour cream (unless mixed into a recipe)
- Potatoes

Freezer safety

- Thaw foods in the refrigerator overnight, or if in a freezer bag, defrost in the microwave. Never thaw

foods at room temperature.

- Do not cook food in freezer bags in the microwave.
- Any food that looks or smells suspect — toss! Guidelines suggest that you keep your meals no more than three months in the freezer.

How To Freeze Prepared Meals

Freezing your food falls into two different categories:

1. Casseroles
2. Soups, Stews, Chili, and Marinades

Here is how to freeze each category:

Casseroles

For casserole freezing, I have used the disposable 8x8 foil cake pans (available at places like Target and Smart and Final) for years.

I think my addiction to foil cake pans started when I was doing our freezer cooking swap with a bunch of other girls (directions on how to start your own group are coming up.) We would each make our dinners at home, and then bring them to a predetermined location, and swap. We didn't want the hassle of returning dishes, so the cake pans worked for our needs.

But it was a little silly when I was cooking casserole to freeze for my own family, I was still using the foil pans. Besides the cost, it didn't seem like the most environmentally wise solution. So I finally broke

down and bought a dozen of those inexpensive (OK, cheap,) steel pans from Target.

Here are my instructions for packaging the casseroles in either a steel, glass or foil pan:

1. Spray the bottom of the serving pan with Pam or some other non-fat cooking spray
2. Put your casserole in the pan
3. Cover the casserole with foil
4. Label the foil with the name and date of the casserole
5. Slip the 8x8 pan into a Ziploc bag with the printing on the bag facing down

OK – so here is the money/environment tip of the day: If you label the foil instead of the Ziploc (which is just keeping your food from freezer burn and is not actually touching any food) you can reuse your Ziploc bag for protecting other meals. If you bag your food with a label on the foil, and you put the Ziploc imprint on the bottom of the casserole, you will clearly be able to see what is in your meal.

You see, those baggies are expensive, and it is my goal to make them last as long as possible.

If you don't have all the pans that you need, here is a great suggestion from one of my blog readers,

Deanna:

“To save more money may I suggest lining a casserole dish in aluminum foil and then preparing the meal in it. Freeze it, lift the meal out, wrap it again in foil, label and stick it in the freezer! When you go to cook it just unwrap the outer layer of foil, pop back in the original dish and cook. Makes clean up a breeze too!”

For marinades, soups, stews and chili, it is just as easy, (or maybe, a little bit easier...)

1. Label a gallon bag with the name of the meal and the date it was prepared.
2. Put your meal in the gallon bag. (If this is a soup or something else that may spill, you can use a cleaned out coffee can to hold up the side of the baggie while you ladle the soup in.)
3. Seal up the baggie most of the way, leaving a small opening to squeeze all of the excess air so that you can avoid freezer burn.
4. Seal the original baggie up in another baggie (again, to avoid freezer burn.)
5. Place a cookie sheet in your freezer and lay your meal down on the cookie sheet in order to freeze. This will not only keep your meal from freezing through the slats of your freezer (thereby insuring you don't get to eat that particular meal until the next time you defrost,) it also makes that meal as compact as possible, allowing you to stack more meals in a tight space.

Here are some of our groups favorite recipes – why are they favorites? Because a majority of the kids would actually eat them...

Baked Ziti

My kids love this recipe. They even eat their veggies without complaining when we serve it.

1 lb	Ground beef
1/4	Chopped onion
16 ozs	Penne pasta, par cooked and drained
6 cups	Spaghetti sauce
6 Slices	Mozzarella cheese
1/2 cup	Parmesan cheese

1. **Prepare:** Brown ground beef and onions together. Add spaghetti sauce. Combine sauce and cooked pasta; mix well.
2. **Freeze:** Spread pasta in 9x13 pan and cover with foil. Attach two freezer bags to pan, one with the Mozzarella cheese slices, one with grated Parmesan cheese. Freeze.
3. **Serve:** Thaw casserole and cheeses. Place Mozzarella cheese slices over casserole. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over casserole. Cover and bake at 350° for 30 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbly. Remove the foil and bake for 5 more minutes.

Servings: 4

Chicken and Chips

3 cups	Diced, cooked chicken
1 Can	Cream of chicken soup
1/2 cup	Sour cream
1/4 cup	Salsa
2 cups	Shredded jack cheese
2 cups	Crushed corn chips

1. **Prepare:** Combine chicken, soup, sour cream and salsa. Spoon half of this mixture into casserole dish.

Top with half the cheese and 1 cup of the crushed corn chips. Repeat.

2. **Freeze:** Cover with foil and freeze.

3. **Serve:** Defrost overnight and reheat in a 350° oven for 35 minutes.

Servings: 4

Chicken Burritos

1 1/4 cups	Rice
1-14 oz	Can of refried beans
2 cups	Monterey jack cheese
2 cups	Boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 - 20 oz	Green enchilada sauce
6	Tortillas

1. **Prepare:** Cook the rice according to package directions. Grate the cheese. Cook and shred the chicken breasts.
2. **Assemble:** Spread each tortilla with refried beans. Mix the shredded chicken with half of the enchilada sauce. Spoon the chicken mixture and rice into the tortillas. Sprinkle with half the cheese. Roll and place seam side down in a 8x8 pan covered with 1/4 cup of the enchilada sauce. Cover with remaining sauce and cheese.
3. **Freeze:** Wrap in foil and freeze.
4. **Serve:** Defrost in refrigerator overnight. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes with foil removed.

Servings: 4

If we are having guests, I will pick up a taco salad kit, chips and salsa, and limes to squeeze over the salad.

Chicken Cacciatore

1 lb	Boneless, skinless, chicken breasts
1 Tbs	Vegetable oil
1 1/4 cup	Onion
2 cups	Mushrooms
1 tsp	Minced garlic
1-28 oz	Can of crushed tomatoes in puree
2 tbs	Parsley
1/4 tsp	Pepper
2 tsp	Italian Seasoning
1 tsp	Basil
	Parmesan cheese

1. **Prepare:** Cut chicken into cubes. Slice onions and mushrooms. Chop garlic.
2. **Cooking:** In a large skillet, sauté chicken in vegetable oil until no longer pink in the center. Remove chicken from skillet and sauté onions, mushrooms, and garlic until the onions are transparent. Add chicken and remaining ingredients except for Parmesan cheese. Simmer for 15 minutes. Allow sauce to cool.
3. **Freeze:** Freeze in a 13x9 pan.
4. **Serve:** Thaw sauce in the refrigerator overnight. Place the foil-covered pan in a 350° oven for 30 minutes to warm. Serve over pasta or mashed potatoes.

Servings: 4

I like to serve this with a crisp salad and rosemary bread.

Chicken Manicotti

So rich, so wonderful - this is a "once-every-three-months" treat for our family.

1 tbs	Butter, melted
3 cups	Cooked chicken breasts, shredded
2 cups	Low Fat Ricotta Cheese
1/2 cup	Mozzarella or Parmesan Cheese
1 tsp	Dried parsley
2	Eggs, lightly beaten
4 cups	Tomato Sauce
14	Manicotti Shells, par boiled, still firm

1. **Prepare:** In a large skillet, brown chicken in butter or margarine for 3 minutes. Mix chicken, both cheeses, spices and eggs. Cover the bottom of your pan with tomato sauce. Stuff the manicotti shells with the chicken mixture and place in pan, sides touching. Cover with remaining sauce.

2. **Freeze:** Cover pans with foil and freeze.

3. **Serve:** Thaw. Sprinkle manicotti with Parmesan or Mozzarella cheese. Bake uncovered at 350° for 30 minutes.

Servings: 6

Chicken Tortilla Soup

1 can	Tomato soup
1 can	Chicken broth
4 cups	Water
1 package	Taco seasoning
4	Boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 can	Corn

Optional Toppings: Jack or cheddar cheese, tortilla chips, green onions

1. **Prepare:** Cook and shred chicken breasts. Mix together tomato soup, chicken broth, water, taco seasoning, chicken and corn. Simmer for 20 minutes. Let cool.
2. **Freeze:** Freeze in gallon storage bags.
3. **Serve:** Defrost soup in refrigerator overnight. Warm and serve with additional toppings of your choosing.

Servings: 4

We serve this with corn quesadillas and vegetarian refried beans.

Dreamy Spaghetti

8 oz	spaghetti
15 oz	tomato sauce
8 oz pkg.	cream cheese
1 lb	ground beef
1/2 lb	cottage cheese
1/4 cup	sour cream
1/3 cup	green onion, minced
	Parmesan cheese

- 1. Prepare:** Cook spaghetti and drain. Brown ground beef and drain. Combine spaghetti, ground beef, tomato sauce and season to taste. Remove from heat. Combine cheeses, sour cream and onion in another dish. In casserole or 8x8 foil pan, spread 1/2 spaghetti; cover with cheese mixture. Cover with remaining spaghetti. Spread tomato sauce mixture over all.
- 2. Freeze:** Cover pan with aluminum foil (spray foil with cooking oil so that acid from tomato sauce does not touch the foil.)
- 3. Serve:** Sprinkle parmesan cheese on top. Bake at 350 for 45 min.

Freezer Meatballs

2 lbs	Lean ground beef
1 cup	Dry unseasoned bread crumbs
2	Eggs
1-1/2 tsp	Salt
1/4 tsp	Pepper

1. **Prepare:** Mix all ingredients. Divide mixture into 32 equal portions and roll into meatballs.
2. **Freeze:** Place in freezer on tray until frozen; pack into two one-gallon bags.
3. **Serve:** Cook meatballs in a medium skillet until they are no longer pink in the middle.

Servings: 8

Green Chile Enchiladas

Mexican food in minutes - YUM!

5	Tortillas
3 cups	Chicken breasts, chopped
3	Green onions, finely diced
1 small can	Diced green chilies
1/2 lb	Monterey jack cheese, shredded, divided
1 large can	Green chile enchilada sauce

1. **Prepare:** Pour a small amount of enchilada sauce to cover bottom of square baking dish. Combine chicken, chilies, onions and cheese, leaving a small amount of cheese for the top of the enchiladas. Place an equal amount of chicken mixture into each tortilla and roll. Pour remaining sauce on top of enchiladas and top with remaining cheese.

2. **Freeze:** Cover pan with foil and freeze.

3. **Serve:** Defrost in the refrigerator overnight. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes or until bubbly.

Servings: 4

Grilled Flank Steak

1 cup	Soy sauce
1/2 cup	Brown sugar
1/2 cup	Unsweetened pineapple juice
1/2 cup	Italian salad dressing
1/2 cup	Red wine vinegar
1/2 cup	Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp	Salt
1 clove	Garlic
1-1/2 lb	Flank steak

1. **Prepare:** Mix all the above ingredients and pour over the flank steak in a gallon bag.
2. **Freeze:** Double bag the flank steak. Freeze lying down.
3. **Serve:** Defrost in refrigerator overnight. Grill steak over hot charcoal for 5 to 10 minutes on each side.
Slice thinly across the grain.

Servings: 4

Hillary's Teriyaki Marinade

2 cups	Teriyaki sauce
1 cup	Water
8 Cloves	Garlic, minced
2 tsp	Ginger, ground
4	Chicken breasts, boneless, skinless

1. **Prepare:** Mix all the ingredients together. Pour over chicken breasts in a one-gallon bag.
2. **Freeze:** Double bag the chicken. Freeze lying flat.
3. **Serve:** Thaw chicken overnight in the refrigerator. Drain marinade. Place chicken breasts in a pan sprayed with light cooking oil. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes.

Servings: 4

Honey Mustard Chicken

1 Stick	Butter, melted
1/4 cup	Dijon mustard
1/2 cup	Honey
4-6	Boneless, skinless chicken breasts

1. **Prepare:** Mix all the ingredients together. Pour over chicken breasts in a one gallon bag.
2. **Freeze:** Double bag the chicken. Freeze lying flat.
3. **Serve:** Thaw chicken overnight in the refrigerator. Drain marinade. Place chicken breasts in a pan sprayed with light cooking oil. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes.

Servings: 4

Kathi's Chili

A less-spicy version that even kids will like.

3/4 lb	Ground turkey
1 cup	Chopped onions
1 clove	Garlic, minced
1-16 oz can	Stewed tomatoes
1-16 oz can	Kidney beans, drained
1-16 oz can	Tomato sauce
3 tsp	Chili powder
1/2 tsp	Basil
1-6 oz can	Tomato paste

1. **Prepare:** In a large saucepan, cook ground turkey, onions, and garlic until the onions are translucent and the meat is brown. Drain. Stir in un-drained tomatoes, drained kidney beans, tomato sauce, chili powder, basil and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes. Let cool.
2. **Freeze:** Double bag in gallon freezer bags. Lay flat in freezer and freeze.
3. **Serve:** Let chili thaw overnight. Warm on stove or in microwave.

Servings: 4

Jalapeno Flank Steak

6	Jalapenos
8 cloves	Garlic
1 tbs	Cracked black pepper
2 tbs	Coarse salt
1/2 cup	Lime juice
2 tbs	Dried oregano
1 cup	Olive oil
1 - 1/2 lb	Flank steak

1. **Prepare:** Combine all ingredients (except steak) in blender and puree. Pour over steak and rub in. Marinate in refrigerator for 2-24 hours or freeze for later use.
2. **Freeze:** Double-bag and freeze
3. **Serve:** Grill steak on the barbeque, or cut it up and stir-fry for fajita meat.

Servings: 4

Note: You can double this recipe and cook marinade on stove to have extra sauce to pour over steak.

Kathy's Pork Chops

Sounds weird when you read the ingredients but it's wonderful.

4	Boneless pork chops
1 Packet	Onion soup mix
1-1/2 cups	Thousand island dressing
1-1/2 cups	Apricot preserves (not jelly)

1. **Prepare:** Mix all the ingredients together. Pour over pork chops in a one gallon bag.
2. **Freeze:** Double bag the pork chops. Freeze lying flat.
3. **Serve:** Thaw pork chops overnight in the refrigerator. Drain marinade. Place pork chops in a pan sprayed with light cooking oil. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes.

Servings: 4

Lemon Chicken

1 tsp	Thyme leaves
1/2 tsp	Pepper
1 clove	Garlic, minced
1/3 cup	Lemon juice, fresh squeezed
4	Chicken breasts, boneless, skinless

1. **Prepare:** Mix all the ingredients together. Pour over chicken breasts in a one-gallon bag.
2. **Freeze:** Double bag the chicken. Freeze lying flat.
3. **Serve:** Thaw chicken overnight in the refrigerator. Drain marinade. Place chicken breasts in a pan sprayed with light cooking oil. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes.

Servings: 4

Pesto Chicken

1/2 cup	Prepared pesto sauce
6	Boneless, skinless, chicken breasts
6 slices	Mozzarella cheese

1. **Prepare:** Pour pesto over chicken breasts in a one-gallon bag.
2. **Freeze:** Double bag the chicken. Place the Mozzarella cheese in a separate freezer bag and attach to the chicken bag. Freeze lying flat.
3. **Serve:** Thaw chicken overnight in the refrigerator. Drain marinade. Place chicken breasts in a pan sprayed with light cooking oil. Place one slice of Mozzarella cheese on each chicken breast. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes.

Servings: 4

Pizza Roll-Ups

1 loaf	frozen french, italian, or all-purpose bread dough
1 lb	lean ground beef or turkey (2 1/2 cups browned)
1 tsp	salt
1/2 tsp	pepper
2 cups	grated part-skim mozzarella cheese
1 tsp	Italian herb seasoning
1 tbs	chopped fresh parsley
4 cups	Italian Tomato Sauce

1. **Prepare:** Thaw dough; roll it into a 14x24-inch rectangle about 1/4-inch thick. Brown ground beef or turkey; stir in remaining ingredients except Italian Tomato Sauce. Spoon filling evenly onto dough, slightly pressing filling into dough.

2. **Freeze:** Roll dough lengthwise like a jelly roll, and cut into 24 1-inch slices. Treat 2 rimmed cookie sheets with nonstick spray; lay slices on sheets about an inch apart. Preheat oven to 400°. Let roll-ups sit for 10 minutes. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown. Cool roll-ups, and freeze in 4 1-gallon bags, 6 per bag. Slip a 1-quart bag with 1 cup sauce into each bag of Pizza Roll-Ups.

3. **Serve:** Thaw roll-ups and warm them in a preheated 400° oven for 10 minutes or put them frozen in the microwave on high heat for about 2 minutes. Serve with warmed Italian Tomato Sauce. Serve with tossed green salad.

Servings: 24

Note: These roll-ups are super for picnics or nights when the family must eat in shifts. They can be eaten warm or cold. They're also a favorite with kids and an easy snack. (And party hors d'oeuvres!)

Poppy Seed Chicken

4	Chicken breasts, cooked and cubed
1 can	Cream of chicken soup
4 ozs	Sour cream
2 tsp	Poppy seeds, divided
1/4 cup	Melted margarine
1/2 sleeve	Ritz crackers

1. Combine soup, sour cream and 1 teaspoon of the poppy seeds in a bowl. Crush crackers and combine with melted margarine and remaining poppy seeds. Layer chicken and soup in casserole dish, then top with cracker mixture. Cover and freeze.

2. Defrost overnight.

3. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Servings: 4

Sun Dried Tomato Chicken

1 cup	Sun-dried tomato salad dressing
1/2 cup	Sun-dried tomatoes in oil
1 small can	Sliced black olives
4-6	Boneless, skinless, chicken breasts

1. Prepare: Mix all the ingredients together. Pour over chicken breasts in a one gallon bag.
2. Freeze: Double bag the chicken. Freeze lying flat.
3. Serve: Thaw chicken overnight in the refrigerator. Drain marinade. Place chicken breasts in a pan sprayed with light cooking oil. Bake at 350° for 30-40 minutes.

Servings: 4

Sweet and Sour Chicken

1 cup	Sugar
2 TBS	Cornstarch
1/2 cup	Vinegar
	juice from 8 oz can of pineapple chunks
1/4 cup	Soy Sauce
1/4 tsp	Salt
1 Clove	Garlic, minced
1/2 tsp	Paprika
1/2 tsp	Ginger
3 cups	Chicken breasts, cooked and cubed
1 cup	Chopped onions
1 cup	Chopped green peppers
1 cup	Sliced mushrooms
1-8 oz can	Pineapple chunks

1. **Prepare:** In a saucepan, combine sugar and cornstarch, whisk together. Then add vinegar, pineapple juice, soy sauce, salt, garlic, paprika and ginger. Bring to a boil and simmer, stirring until thickened.
2. **Freeze:** Pour into freezer bag with chicken, vegetables and fruit. Freeze.
3. **Serve:** Defrost in refrigerator overnight. Reheat in a saucepan and serve over rice.

Servings: 4

Teriyaki Chicken

We make this marinade again and again - it is much better than any prepared marinade you can find in the store.

4 each	Chicken legs and thighs (or use six chicken breasts)
1/2 cup	Soy sauce
3 tbs	Honey
1 tsp	Grated, fresh ginger
2 tbs	Dry sherry (optional)
1 clove	Garlic, minced
2	Green onions, thinly sliced

1. **Prepare:** Place the chicken in a gallon plastic bag. Mix the remaining ingredients together in a bowl. Pour the mixture over the chicken. Seal the bag.
2. **Freeze:** Place your bag in another gallon bag and lay flat in the freezer.
3. **Serve:** Defrost the chicken. Pour off marinade and bake chicken in a pan at 350° for 30- 40 minutes, (or until no longer pink in the center.)

Servings: 4

Try this at Home:

One of the best gifts you can give to yourself is a freezerful of meals. Roger and I take a day every couple of months and do a whole big cooking day. Set aside a Friday and Saturday (Friday for shopping and Saturday for cooking,) and try tackling four recipes tripled. That way at the end of the day, you will have 12 meal ready to nestle into your freezer for some quick dinners on busy nights.

Or with a Group:

When my kids were in elementary school, there were a few years where I was working flexible, but full-time hours and I needed to do the whole Freezer Cooking thing on speed.

I believe it was my friend Vikki who came up with the idea of six of us doing a Freezer Swap. (But I do say with a stupid amount of pride that I came up with the name Six Chicks Freeze and Fix.)

At first we tried to all cook together. It was a lot of work and a lot of fun, but then we realized we were giving up one of the greatest benefits of Freezer Cooking – the ability to cook when it is convenient to you.

After our first time, we each cooked at our own homes and then met to swap.

Here is how our group worked:

Each of us chooses three recipes to cook for our group and then we each send out the suggested recipes to the rest of the group for discussion. (Example: if someone suggested doing a bell pepper dish, I, being a hater of all things bell pepper, would ask for either a different dish or swap a substitute dish.)

Here are the three types of recipes that we would exchange:

1 Marinade (half the group does chicken breasts, the other half would do another meat such as flank steak, pork roast or pork chops. Then we would swap meats the next month.)

1 Casserole

1 Wildcard (this is something like a soup, another marinade, another casserole, a chili, etc.)

Each of these recipes would be x6.

So here is a sample of what I would make:

Six family sized-meals of Teriyaki Chicken

Six family sized-meals of Baked Ziti

Six family sized-meals of Chicken Cacciatore

Once I had all my meals prepared, packaged and frozen, I would pack them all into my cooler and go to the pre-determined time and place of “the swap”. (Usually at church or in the parking lot of our local Costco before it’s open.)

That way, each of us would go home with 18 different meals. Cool, huh?

When we did our swap, each person just paid for the meals they were preparing and we figured it would all even out in the end. However, I love the system that Gena Larson from California used with her friends:

“We had a "bookkeeper" that everyone would call their grocery totals in to, and she would total up the entire amount and split it between the number of participants. Persons who paid more than the average for their groceries would be reimbursed from those whose totals were less than the average. Our average cost per meal usually ranged from \$5.50 - 7:00. Most of the time, they usually ran about 6.75/meal. We were all very money conscious and shopped for meats and other items on sale. If we purchased a spice needed for a recipe, we would write "group" on the lid and bring it to our next meeting as a "pantry" items. The cost of those spices were added to grocery totals, so they belonged to all of us. If it was something like salt or garlic, we all used from our own pantries rather than purchase it. “