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Pinchin' Pennies in the Kitchen

5 Steps to Making Your Own Meal in a Bowl

Making your own meal in a bowl is inexpensive and easy. You can make meals from ingredients you probably already have on hand. Think about all the different bowls you can make. You also could set up a buffet with a variety of toppings so people can personalize their meal with layers of flavor.

Begin with the grain of your choice, add layers of other ingredients and seasonings, then enjoy!



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1. Choose one grain.

- Add ½ cup of the grain of choice to begin the many flavorful layers of your bowl.
- Choose a grain such as brown rice, white rice, quinoa, wild rice, couscous, grits, oatmeal, buckwheat, whole-grain pasta or millet.

Quick tip: Freeze leftover grains; heat and serve for another bowl creation.

2. Choose one or more vegetable(s).

- Add ½ cup of veggies for flavor, fiber and extra nutrition.
- Choose colorful veggies such as chopped or sliced bell peppers, onions, tomatoes, spinach, carrots, zucchini, green onions, mushrooms or your favorite veggies of choice.
- Vegetables are low in calories and filling.

Quick tip: Buy canned or frozen vegetables labeled “reduced sodium,” “low sodium” or “no salt added” to decrease the amount of sodium in your diet.

3. Choose one or more fruit(s), if desired.

- Add ½ cup of fruit to provide essential nutrients for an overall healthful diet.

- Brighten your bowl with strawberries, blueberries, pineapple, apples, bananas, peaches, mandarin oranges, or your favorite fruit of choice.
- Do you have any fruit that has been in the freezer for a while and you want to use it?

Quick tip: Leave the skin on fruit for added fiber.

4. Choose one protein.

- Add ¼ cup or 2 ounces of protein to your bowl creation.
- Choose lean protein foods such as fully cooked poultry, lean ground beef, lean ham, black beans or your favorite protein of choice.
- Do you have leftover grilled or cooked meat that you need to use?

Quick tip: Choose lean protein; trim away all of the visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking to the recommended safe internal temperature. Cook poultry, for example, to an internal temperature of 165 F.

5. Choose one or more sauce(s) and/or seasoning(s).

- Add ¼ to ½ cup of sauce or seasoning such as one of the following:
 - o Asian – teriyaki or sweet and sour sauce
 - o Mexican – taco sauce, taco seasoning or salsa
 - o Italian – marinara or alfredo sauce
 - o Be creative!

Build a Healthy Bowl With Layers of Flavor

Here are some idea-starters for your bowl combinations. Begin with a grain of your choice.

Bowl Varieties	Vegetables or Fruit	Protein	Sauce, Seasoning or Garnish
Mexican Fiesta Bowl	Tomatoes, onions, black beans, corn, avocado (optional)	Taco-seasoned ground beef or chicken	Shredded cheese, cilantro, low-fat sour cream and taco sauce, salsa or seasoning
Fruit Breakfast Bowl	Apples, bananas, raisins, berries, peaches	Almonds or walnuts	Cinnamon or orange zest; top with dollop of plain Greek yogurt and granola
Summer Veggie Bowl	Cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, celery	Black, pinto or kidney beans	Vinaigrette salad dressing; garnish with shredded cheese
Asian Bowl	Green and red peppers, onions, pineapple	Chicken or pork	Teriyaki sauce, sweet and sour sauce or soy sauce, peanut butter and ginger for a Thai sauce effect
Morning Egg Bowl	Green peppers, onions, tomatoes	Cooked scrambled eggs	Cheddar cheese
Hawaiian Ham Bowl	Red pepper, pineapple, steamed spinach	Ham	Sesame ginger dressing, juice from an orange or pineapple salsa
Seafood Rice Bowl	Red pepper, mushrooms, tomatoes, onions	Cod, canned tuna or salmon (drained)	Cilantro, oil of choice, herbs
Stoplight Rice Bowl	Carrots, red pepper, zucchini	Chicken (optional)	Shredded cheddar cheese
Italian Rice Bowl	Carrots, mushrooms, red pepper, green onion	Turkey sausage	Marinara or alfredo sauce

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