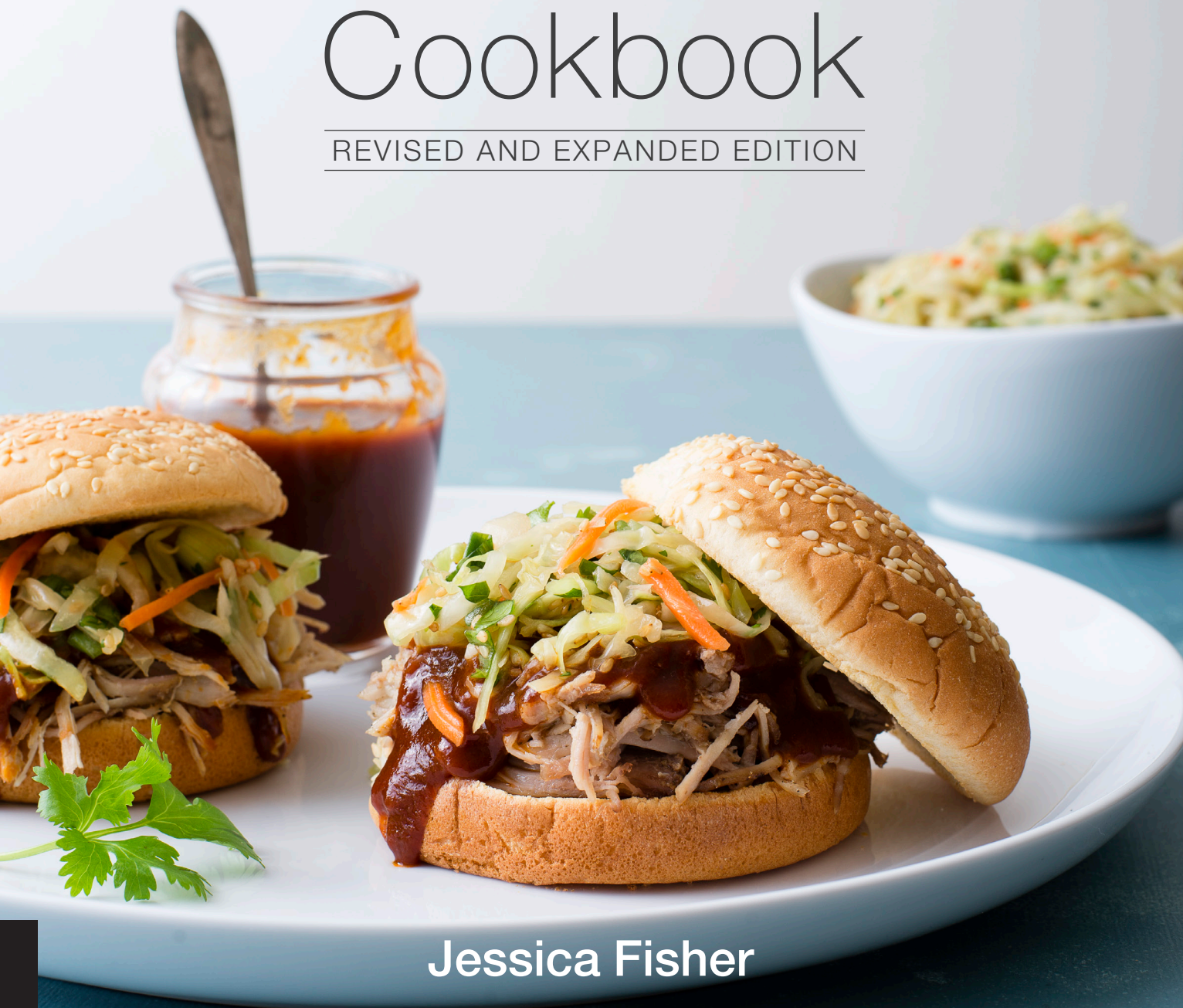


# Not Your Mother's<sup>®</sup> **MAKE-AHEAD AND FREEZE** Cookbook

REVISED AND EXPANDED EDITION



Jessica Fisher

# Contents



Introduction ■ 4

THIS IS *NOT* YOUR MOTHER'S MAKE-AHEAD AND FREEZE COOKBOOK ■ 4

QUICK-START GUIDE ■ 7

THE BASICS OF FREEZER COOKING ■ 8

COOKING PLANS TO FIT YOUR NEEDS ■ 25

CREATING YOUR OWN COOKING PLAN ■ 65



1

**WHERE'S  
THE BEEF?**

72

2

**WINNING  
CHICKEN  
DINNERS**

110

3

**THE CATCH  
OF THE DAY**

150

4

**SIZZLING PORK  
AND SAUSAGE**

160

5

**MEATLESS  
MARVELS**

188

6

**SOUP'S ON**

220

7

**PERFECT  
PIZZAS**

248

8

**BREAKFASTS  
FOR  
CHAMPIONS**

266

9

**BREADS,  
MUFFINS,  
SCONES,  
ROLLS, AND  
THEN SOME**

298

10

**DESSERTS  
WHEN YOU  
CRAVE THEM**

336

Acknowledgments ■ 369

About the Author ■ 370

Index ■ 371

POULTRY AND SEAFOOD PLAN: 2 HOURS OR LESS

10-plus meals serving at least 4 people

Seasoned turkey taco meat, 2 pounds (908 g)  
Basic Taco Seasoning Mix, page 97, 1 batch  
Tandoori Chicken, page 119, 2 batches  
Spicy Taco Lasagna, page 142, 2 batches  
Turkey Burgers with Scallions, page 143, 2 batches  
Mahi Mahi with Almond-Lime Butter, page 152, 2 batches

Grocery List

FRESH PRODUCE:

- ☐ Lemon (1)
- ☐ Limes (2)
- ☐ Scallions (½ to 1 bunch, for ½ cup [50 g] chopped)
- ☐ Ginger (1-inch [2.5 cm] piece for 2 teaspoons chopped)
- ☐ Dill (1 tablespoon chopped)
- ☐ Garlic (2 cloves)

DAIRY:

- ☐ Pepper Jack cheese (1 pound [454 g]; 4 cups shredded)
- ☐ Cheddar cheese (1 pound [454 g]; 4 cups shredded)
- ☐ Cream cheese (two 8-ounce [225 g] packages)
- ☐ Plain yogurt or buttermilk (1½ cups [355 ml])
- ☐ Butter (1 cup [225 g])

MEAT/POULTRY/SEAFOOD:

- ☐ Chicken pieces, such as boneless, skinless chicken breast (8 to 12 pieces)
- ☐ Ground turkey (6½ pounds [2951 g])
- ☐ Mahi mahi or other fish fillets (8 fillets, 5 to 8 ounces [140 to 224 g] each)

CANNED/BOTTLED/DRY GOODS:

- ☐ Olive oil (2 tablespoons [30 ml])
- ☐ Sherry (2 tablespoons [30 ml])
- ☐ Favorite purchased pasta sauce, or homemade (6 cups [1410 ml]; 48 ounces [1410 ml])
- ☐ Favorite purchased salsa, or Easy Homemade Salsa, page 77 (16 ounces [454 g])
- ☐ Reduced-sodium chicken broth (2 cups [470 ml])
- ☐ Lasagna noodles (12 to 16)
- ☐ Sliced almonds (½ cup [50 g])

SEASONINGS:

- ☐ Chili powder (½ cup [24 g] plus 1 teaspoon)
- ☐ Kosher salt, fine sea salt, and freshly ground black pepper
- ☐ Onion flakes (2 tablespoons)
- ☐ Dried oregano (2 tablespoons)
- ☐ Garlic powder (1 tablespoon)
- ☐ Paprika (2 teaspoons)
- ☐ Curry powder (2 teaspoons)
- ☐ Dried dill (1 teaspoon), if not using fresh herb

BAKERY:

- ☐ Fresh bread crumbs (1 cup [50 g], or about 3 slices of bread)

TO SAVE MORE TIME, PURCHASE:

- ☐ Chopped ginger and garlic
- ☐ Shredded cheese
- ☐ Fresh bread crumbs

Packaging

- ☐ 2 quart-size (1 L) zip-top freezer bags, labeled Seasoned Turkey Taco Meat
- ☐ 6 gallon-size (4 L) zip-top freezer bags, labeled Tandoori Chicken (2), Mahi Mahi with Almond-Lime Butter (2), Turkey Burgers with Scallions (2)
- ☐ Two 9 × 13-inch (23 × 33 cm) pans with lids or heavy-duty aluminum foil to cover, labeled Spicy Taco Lasagna
- ☐ 1 pint-size (470 ml) zip-top freezer bag, labeled Taco Seasoning Mix
- ☐ Freezer paper for wrapping fish, if not already wrapped
- ☐ Plastic wrap
- ☐ Waxed paper

Gadgets and Small Appliances

- Food processor

Prep List

1. Assemble the storage containers and ingredients.

2. Make the bread crumbs in the blender or food processor. Toast the almonds.

3. Soften the butter.

4. Chop the scallions.
5. Shred the cheeses for the lasagna.

6. Juice the lemons.

7. Chop the garlic and ginger.

8. Zest the lime.

## Meatball Sub Kit

Meatball subs are classic comfort food. Skip the trip to the deli by making your own—and better!—at home for less. Put together a few meatball sub kits so that you can indulge yourself whenever a craving hits. // **Makes 8 sandwiches**

- **PACKAGING:** Plastic containers with lids, gallon- (4 L), quart- (1 L) and sandwich-size zip-top freezer bags.

**40 small cooked meatballs** (about ½ batch **Herbed Meatballs**, page 106)  
**2 cups (470 ml) favorite marinara sauce**  
 (try **Quick and Spicy Marinara Sauce**, page 216)

**½ cup (112 g) butter, softened**  
**1 teaspoon chopped garlic**  
**½ teaspoon dried parsley**  
**8 submarine rolls or hearty hot dog buns**  
**Mozzarella cheese, for topping (optional)**

1. Place the cooled, cooked meatballs in a closed container or zip-top bag.
2. Place the sauce in a closed container or zip-top bag.
3. In a small mixing bowl, combine the butter, garlic, and parsley. Spread this mixture on both cut sides of the rolls. Wrap the rolls in foil and place in a larger zip-top bag.
4. Place the cheese in a small zip-top bag.

### **FREEZING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Place the chilled containers or bags of meatballs, sauce, rolls, and cheese together in the freezer.

### **TO THAW AND SERVE:**

Thaw the components in the refrigerator. Reheat the sauce and meatballs in the microwave or in a pan on the stovetop. Bake the wrapped rolls for 10 minutes in a 350°F (180°C or gas mark 4) oven. Unwrap the rolls and open them. Broil the rolls until crisp and golden. Assemble the sandwiches by piling 5 meatballs and sauce on each roll and topping with cheese. Return to the broiler if you'd like to melt the cheese a bit more. Serve immediately.



**TO THAW AND SERVE:**

If you have frozen your hamburger patties individually, simply remove the desired number of patties from the bag. There is no need to thaw them before cooking. If you used the bundle method of packaging, thaw the bundle on a dish in the refrigerator. (You may be able to cook these unthawed as well, if the frozen patties separate easily.) Place the hamburger patties on a hot grill or in a skillet. When the tops of the burgers appear wet, flip them over. Continue cooking until the burgers reach the desired doneness. Serve on buns with lettuce, tomatoes, and other toppings as desired.

## Tarragon Turkey Burgers with Blue Cheese and Chipotle Mayo

Chipotle mayonnaise and flavorful blue cheese crown these herbed burgers. No one will miss the all-beef patty. // **Serves 4**

■ **PACKAGING:** Zip-top freezer bags, waxed paper, plastic wrap

**1¼ pounds (568 g) ground turkey**

**¼ cup (25 g) chopped scallions**

**1½ teaspoons chopped fresh tarragon**

**leaves or ½ teaspoon dried tarragon**

**½ teaspoon kosher salt**

**¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**

**WHEN READY TO SERVE, YOU WILL NEED:**

**½ cup (60 g) crumbled blue cheese**

**½ cup (112 g) mayonnaise**

**1 chipotle chile in adobo sauce,  
finely chopped**

**Hamburger buns**

**Lettuce leaves or shredded lettuce**

**Sliced tomatoes**

**Sliced red onion**

**Other toppings, as desired**

**1.** In a large bowl, mix all of the ingredients just until everything is evenly distributed. Don't overmix, as that will make your burgers tough.

**2.** Divide the mixture into 4 equal portions. Form each portion into a flat patty.



1. Place the fish fillets in the freezer bag. Place in the freezer.

2. In the plastic container, combine the rice vinegar, soy sauce, ginger, and hoisin sauce. Mix well and seal the container. Place this container in the larger bag in the freezer.

#### TO THAW AND SERVE:

Thaw the bag in the refrigerator. Stir the marinade to recombine. Lay the thawed fillets in a shallow dish, then drizzle them with the thawed marinade. Allow the fish to marinate for 20 minutes. Cook the fish on a hot grill until it starts to flake, 10 to 15 minutes.

## Mahi Mahi with Almond-Lime Butter

Whenever I serve this simple fish with almond-lime butter, folks just can't get enough of it. With the flavors and textures of lime zest, toasted almonds, and dill, this butter sauce blends delectably into the fish. This is my mom's favorite recipe in this entire book! // **Serves 4**

■ **PACKAGING:** Plastic wrap, gallon-size (4 L) zip-top freezer bag

**4 mahi mahi fillets, 5 to 8 ounces (140 to 224 g) each, wrapped securely in freezer paper**

**½ cup (112 g) (1 stick) salted butter, softened**

**¼ cup (27 g) toasted sliced almonds**

**1½ teaspoons chopped fresh dill  
or ½ teaspoon dried dill**

**Grated zest of 1 lime**

**½ teaspoon kosher salt**

**Freshly ground black pepper**

1. Place the fish in the freezer bag. Place the bag in the freezer.

2. In a small bowl, combine the softened butter, almonds, dill, lime zest, salt, and pepper. Blend well.

3. Lay out a small sheet of plastic wrap. Spoon the compound butter onto the center of the plastic wrap. Using the plastic wrap as a guide, form the butter into a narrow log. Wrap the butter securely in the plastic wrap and place the butter log in the freezer bag with the fish. Seal and return the bag to the freezer.

#### TO THAW AND SERVE:

Thaw the bag in the refrigerator. Season the thawed fillets with salt and pepper and cook them, turning once, on a hot, oiled grill until the fish starts to flake, 10 to 15 minutes. Meanwhile, allow the butter to soften. Top each fillet with a few slices of the compound butter. The butter will melt quickly atop the hot fish, forming a sauce. Serve immediately.



## Pork and Chile Tamales

Tamales are a Christmas tradition in Mexico and southern California. Though I was born and raised in southern California, I did not grow up enjoying homemade tamales. I wish I had! Years ago, my husband suggested that we learn how to make them ourselves. Now, we often keep a few batches of tamales stashed in the freezer. They freeze beautifully and are a delicious snack, lunch, or dinner.

// **Serves 12 to 15**

■ **PACKAGING:** Quart- (1 L) or gallon-size (4 L) zip-top freezer bags

**1 package dried corn husks**  
**1½ cups (300 g) unsalted butter, softened**  
**4 cups (480 g) masa harina**  
**2 teaspoons salt**  
**2 to 3 cups (470 to 705 ml) chicken broth**

**2 cups (280 g) Versatile Slow-Cooked Carnitas (page 161)**  
**½ to 1 cup (120 to 235 ml) red chile sauce or enchilada sauce**

**WHEN READY TO SERVE, YOU WILL NEED:**

**Additional red chile sauce or enchilada sauce**

**Sour cream**  
**Easy Homemade Salsa (page 77)**

1. Soak the corn husks in warm water until pliable, up to several hours. Remove any silks or debris from the husks and rinse the husks thoroughly. Keep the husks damp until ready to use.
2. In a large bowl, whip the butter until light and fluffy. Blend in the masa harina, salt, and 2 cups (470 ml) of chicken broth. Blend well. Add more chicken broth until the dough holds together well. It should have the consistency of soft cookie dough. Cover the prepared masa with a damp cloth and keep it cool until ready to use.
3. In a medium bowl, combine the carnitas and enough of the red chile sauce to moisten it. Taste for seasoning and adjust as desired.
4. For each tamale, lay a presoaked husk flat on a work surface with the tip away from you. Spread 2 tablespoons (28 g) masa on the husk, in a 5 × 4-inch (12.7 × 10 cm) rectangle. Spoon 2 tablespoons (28 g) carnitas filling in a line down the center of the masa rectangle.
5. Fold the right side of the corn husk over the center of the filling, then fold the left side over the filling, wrapping any uncovered husk around the tamale. Fold the ends over.
6. Lay each tamale in a steamer basket, folded side down to hold it shut. Once all the tamales are folded and arranged in the steamer, place the steamer basket in a large pot over a few inches of boiling water. Make sure that the steam can move freely around the tamales; don't pack them in too tightly.

**7.** Cover the pot and turn the heat to medium so that the water will boil gently. Steam the tamales for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

**8.** To test for doneness, remove one tamale from the top of the stack and one from the middle. Open them; they are done if the masa dough is firm, does not stick to the husk, and does not have a raw, doughy taste.

**FREEZING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Cool the tamales completely and package them in freezer bags. Chill in the refrigerator before freezing.

**TO SERVE:**

Steam the frozen tamales for 20 to 30 minutes or until heated through. Or microwave frozen tamales on a plate, covered with a damp paper towel, for 1 to 2 minutes per tamale. Serve the tamales with red chile sauce, sour cream, and salsa.

## Soy-Ginger Pork Tenderloin

This Asian-flavored pork tenderloin marinates as it thaws in the refrigerator, making for simple last-minute preparation. Once thawed, this easy but elegant meal can go from refrigerator to table in about 30 minutes. Serve with rice and vegetables on the side. // **Serves 4**

■ **PACKAGING:** Gallon-size (4 L) zip-top freezer bag

**¼ cup (60 ml) rice vinegar**  
**¼ cup (60 ml) vegetable oil**  
**3 tablespoons (45 ml) soy sauce**  
**1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger**

**½ teaspoon crushed garlic**  
**¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**  
**¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes**  
**One 1-pound (454 g) pork tenderloin**

1. Place the freezer bag in a medium bowl, folding the top over the edges. Pour in the vinegar, oil, and soy sauce, and add the ginger, garlic, black pepper, and red pepper flakes. Massage the bag to combine the marinade ingredients.
2. Add the tenderloin to the bag. Seal the bag, squeezing out as much air as possible. Massage the bag to distribute the marinade evenly.

**FREEZING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Freeze the bag flat in the freezer.

## Baked Manicotti with Sun-Dried Tomatoes and Thyme

Noodles and cheese are a beautiful combination. They can be prepared casually, as in a pasta salad or mac and cheese, or they can be dressed up, as in this manicotti. Manicotti can seem intimidating to prepare, since the large pasta tubes tear easily. To help them hold their shape, cook the noodles just until al dente or a tad firmer. The noodles will soften upon freezing and with further baking in the oven. I've called for one large pan here, but feel free to package the manicotti in smaller baking dishes or store them in freezer bags without the sauce (freeze the sauce separately). That way, you can bake whatever quantity you want at serving time. // **Serves 5 to 7**

■ **PACKAGING:** 9 × 13-inch (23 × 33 cm) baking dish with lid

**1 package manicotti (about 14 manicotti)**  
**2 cups (240 g) shredded mozzarella cheese, divided**  
**15 ounces (420 g) ricotta cheese**  
**½ cup (27 g) finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes**

**½ teaspoon dried thyme**  
**¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**  
**3 cups (705 ml) Easy Slow Cooker Red Sauce (page 217) or other favorite sauce**

1. Grease the baking dish.
2. Cook the manicotti just until al dente, according to the package directions. Drain the noodles.
3. In a large bowl, combine 1 cup (120 g) of the mozzarella cheese, the ricotta, sun-dried tomatoes, thyme, and black pepper. Stir well to combine.
4. Fill the cooked manicotti by spooning a heaping tablespoon of the mixture into each one. You can also fill the manicotti using a piping bag made out of a quart-size (1 L) freezer bag. Spoon the cheese filling into the bag and seal. Snip off one corner of the bag and pipe the filling into the cooked manicotti.
5. Arrange the manicotti in the prepared baking dish. Pour the sauce over the manicotti. Sprinkle the remaining 1 cup (120 g) mozzarella cheese over the sauce.

**FREEZING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Cover and chill the pan in the refrigerator before freezing.

**TO THAW AND SERVE:**

Thaw the manicotti in the refrigerator. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C or gas mark 4). Bake the pasta until heated through, about 30 minutes.



## Cheesy Butternut Squash Soup with Herbs

Believe it or not, I had never eaten butternut squash until our CSA provided an abundance of them one fall. We are fast friends now. The squash plays so nicely with cheddar in this soup. Happiness in a spoon! I like to package it in single servings for quick lunches on the go. // **Serves 6 to 8**

■ **PACKAGING:** Plastic containers with lids

**5 tablespoons (70 g) salted butter, divided**  
**One 2-pound (908 g) butternut squash,**  
**peeled, seeded, and cubed, or two**  
**12-ounce (340 g) packages cubed**  
**squash**

**1½ cups (270 g) chopped onion**

**1 cup (120 g) chopped celery**

**1 cup (120 g) chopped carrot**

**1 cup (120 g) diced potato**

**5 cups (1175 ml) reduced-sodium**  
**chicken broth or water**

**¼ teaspoon rubbed sage**

**¼ teaspoon dried thyme**

**⅛ teaspoon dried marjoram**

**¼ cup (30 g) unbleached all-purpose flour**

**2 cups (470 ml) milk**

**2 cups (240 g) shredded cheddar cheese**

**Salt and freshly ground black pepper**

1. In a large stockpot, melt 3 tablespoons (42 g) of the butter over medium heat. Add the butternut squash and onion. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Add the celery, carrot, and potato. Cook 5 minutes more, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the chicken broth, sage, thyme, and marjoram, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons (28 g) butter in a large pot over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and cook for a minute or two. Whisk in the milk until smooth. Simmer until thickened. Whisk in the cheddar cheese gradually, stirring to incorporate. Remove from the heat.
5. Puree the vegetable mixture with an immersion blender or in a food processor, in batches if necessary. Stir in the cheese mixture. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

**FREEZING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Divide the soup into meal-size portions in plastic containers. Chill in the refrigerator before freezing.

**TO THAW AND SERVE:**

Thaw the soup in the refrigerator. Reheat in a saucepan until heated through.

## Split Pea Soup with Bacon and Thyme

In this hearty, flavorful split pea soup, the bacon and thyme go particularly well with the creamy goodness of the peas, making for a delightful supper. // **Serves 8**

■ **PACKAGING:** Plastic containers with lids

**4 slices lower-salt bacon, finely chopped**

**1½ cups (270 g) chopped onion**

**1 cup (120 g) chopped carrot**

**3 quarts (2.7 L) water**

**1 pound (454 g) split peas, picked over**  
**and rinsed**

**1 bay leaf**

**1 tablespoon (18 g) fine sea salt**

**½ teaspoon dried marjoram**

**½ teaspoon dried thyme**

**¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper**

1. In a large stockpot, cook the bacon and onion over medium heat until the bacon is crisp and the onion has begun to turn translucent, about 5 to 10 minutes.
2. Add the carrot, reduce the heat to low, and cook for about 2 minutes.
3. Add the water, peas, bay leaf, salt, marjoram, thyme, and pepper. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 2 hours.
4. Remove the bay leaf. Puree the soup with an immersion blender or in a food processor or blender, in batches if necessary. Adjust the seasonings to taste.

**FREEZING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Divide the soup into meal-size portions in plastic containers. Chill in the refrigerator before freezing.

**TO THAW AND SERVE:**

Thaw the soup in the refrigerator. Reheat in a saucepan until heated through.

**FREEZING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Store in a plastic container or freezer bag in the freezer.

**TO THAW AND SERVE:**

Thaw the granola in its container on the counter. Add the cranberries right before serving.

Raspberry Baked Oatmeal

I was a skeptic about baked oatmeal, but Lynn’s Kitchen Adventures made me a believer. My friend Lynn has created over TWENTY different versions of baked oatmeal! This raspberry-studded version is one I adapted from her standard, based on what I had on hand and what my kids liked. I was so pleased to see how freezer-friendly these oatmeal casseroles are! // **Serves 8 to 10**

■ **PACKAGING:** One 9 × 13-inch (23 × 33 cm) baking pan with lid

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>3 cups (240 g) old-fashioned oats</b> | <b>½ cup (120 ml) nonfat milk</b>         |
| <b>¼ cup (60 g) brown sugar</b>          | <b>¼ cup (60 ml) oil or (56 g) butter</b> |
| <b>2 teaspoons baking powder</b>         | <b>1 teaspoon vanilla extract</b>         |
| <b>¾ teaspoon salt</b>                   | <b>2 eggs</b>                             |
| <b>½ cup (112 g) applesauce</b>          | <b>2 cups (300 g) raspberries</b>         |
| <b>½ cup (112 g) plain yogurt</b>        | <b>(can use frozen, no need to thaw)</b>  |

**WHEN READY TO SERVE, YOU WILL NEED:**

**Heavy cream, whipped or plain**

1. Grease a 9 × 13-inch (23 × 33 cm) baking pan.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine the oats, brown sugar, baking powder, and salt.
3. In a second mixing bowl, whisk together the applesauce, yogurt, milk, oil, vanilla, eggs.
4. Pour the wet ingredients onto the dry, and add the raspberries. Fold gently to combine. Spoon the mixture into the prepared pan.

**FREEZING INSTRUCTIONS:**

Cover and freeze.

**TO THAW AND SERVE:**

Thaw the casserole overnight in the refrigerator. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C or gas mark 4) and bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until golden. To bake from frozen, add 10 to 15 minutes to the baking time.

