

Prep Ahead Ground Beef Meals

Easy, Economical and Time Saving Meal tips Using Ground Beef

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About the author

Hi I'm Suzi,

Cooking, creating and juggling a busy schedule seem to come natural to me. When my daughters were young, I owned a busy cake shop that produced as many as 20 wedding cakes per weekend and hundreds of all occasion cakes per month. Serving delicious and nutritious meals to my family was important to me. To avoid the fast food habit (not saying we never ate fast food) I came up with some ways to prepare some things ahead to make getting dinner on the table less of a chore.



I found myself sharing my tips and tricks with other busy moms and vowed that *someday* I would find a way to share them on a larger scale.

This is why I started my blog www.ClassIsIn.com Here you will find plenty of recipes and ideas to *streamline* and add a bit of *class* to your life.

I hope you'll stop by sometime and when you do please leave a comment. I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon!

Suzi

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Prep Ahead Ground Beef Meals

Why...

I'm always looking for a quicker and easier way to do things that have the same or better results. Somewhere along the way I hit upon this trick for ground beef. It has saved me time and money over and over.

I find that the quality of meat at the large discount stores like Costco and Sam's club is often superior to that in the regular grocery stores. Buying in bulk is also very economical but some people find it is not always practical. Here is my practical and economical trick for buying bulk ground beef. Try it once ... I promise you will never go back.

Enjoy!

Suzi

Prep Ahead Ground Beef Meals

Things you'll need

- 4-6 quart size, Ziploc freezer bags
- 5-6 lbs. lean ground beef

To have on hand in your pantry:

- Jar of your favorite spaghetti sauce
- Parmesan cheese
- Taco seasoning mix
- Sloppy Joe Mix
- Beef rice-a-roni or Spanish Rice-a-roni
- Canned tomatoes
- Flour
- Tomato sauce
- 28oz. can of refried beans
- 7 oz. can of diced green chiles
- Potatoes
- Taco shells or (fresh corn or flour tortillas)

Additional items are listed in the individual recipes

Prep Ahead Ground Beef Meals

What...

Recipes For Frozen Cooked Ground Beef

- Spaghetti with Meat Sauce
- Beef and Rice-a-Roni
- Tacos
- Hamburger gravy and mashed potatoes
- Burritos or "Bean Dip"
- Mexican Stir Fry
- Sloppy Joe's

Suzi note: All of these recipes can be made using fresh lean ground beef that is cooked and drained. I usually make one of them at the same time since I'm cooking the meat anyway.

Prep Ahead Ground Beef Meals

How...

Start with...

1 large (5-6 lb.) package of lean ground beef

Heat 2 large skillets on high heat, divide ground beef among the 2 skillets. Cook until thoroughly cooked and slightly browned, crumbling with wooden spoon while cooking. I don't season the meat as it will get seasoned in the recipe. Drain beef in a colander (this helps remove the fat)

Divide cooked ground beef among 4-6 quart size Ziploc freezer bags. You want bags to have about 1-1 1/2 lbs. each. Experiment with what works best for your family Write date or use by date on bags. Place bags in freezer. I find it is best when used within 2-3 months though it rarely lasts that long at my house :).

Important Tip!!! - Always take bags from freezer then straight to the microwave for thawing. For some reason if left in the refrigerator it takes on a different not so good taste.

I always keep these bags of cooked ground beef in my freezer. I try to replace before I use the last bag that way I am always prepared to make a quick and easy meal in a pinch.

Prep Ahead Ground Beef Meals

Spaghetti with Meat Sauce

One quart of your favorite spaghetti sauce in a jar
1 pkg. of frozen cooked ground beef
1 lb. spaghetti pasta or other shape if preferred
Grated Parmesan cheese (if desired)

Step by Step Instructions:

- Begin heating the water to cook your pasta.
- While the water is heating take your bag of cooked beef from freezer.
- Place bag in the microwave and heat on high for 3 minutes.
- While meat is in microwave get out a 2 quart saucepan with lid
- Pour spaghetti sauce into the pan and heat on medium high heat. Here is where you can get creative...you can add fresh garlic and/or extra herbs such as basil and oregano if you desire.
- Add the ground beef to the sauce, cover and cook over low to medium heat while your noodles are cooking.
- Cook noodles according to package directions. Strain and serve sauce over noodles. I like to dish up individual servings but you can do it however your family likes it.
- Top with grated parmesan cheese, if desired

Serve with a fresh green salad or vegetable and garlic bread.

Total preparation time from start to finish is about 20-30 minutes!

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Beef and Rice-a-Roni

1 box Beef Rice-a-Roni

1 pkg. frozen cooked ground beef or 1 lb. lean ground beef cooked and drained

- Place bag of frozen cooked ground beef in the microwave on high for 3 minutes.
- While meat is in the microwave begin preparing rice-a-roni according to package directions.
- Once you have added the water and seasoning packet add the ground beef.
- Cover and simmer according to the package directions (about 15-20 minutes).

Serve with a green salad and or vegetable! It's that easy!!!

Variation #1: As soon as meat and rice is cooked toss in **1 cup sliced celery** and **1 small can sliced water chestnuts**. Quickly cover and let stand for about 5 minutes. Serve with soy sauce. Yum!

Variation #2: substitute Spanish Rice-a-roni for beef Rice-a-roni along with 1 14.5 oz. can of diced tomatoes according to package directions.

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Tacos

- 1 pkg. Frozen ground beef
- 3 Tbs. Taco Seasoning mix (or one pkg.)
- 1/4 cup water
- 6- 8 Taco Shells or Corn tortillas
- Your favorite toppings:
 - Shredded lettuce
 - Shredded cheese
 - Diced tomatoes
 - Salsa
 - Sour cream
 - Taco sauce or salsa

Variation: This meat is great for Taco Salad or Tostadas!

Heat bag of frozen ground beef in microwave on high for 3 minutes.

Combine meat, water and taco seasoning mix in a small saucepan and cook over high heat until liquid comes to a boil stirring constantly and mashing meat into small pieces. Reduce heat and simmer for 3-5 minutes. Spoon into taco shells or heated corn tortillas. Top with your choice of toppings.

Serve with Quick and Easy Refried Beans, Chips, Salsa etc.

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"Bean Dip" or Burrito Filling

Don't let the name fool you. Serving as a main dish with crispy corn tortilla chips is a great alternative to the classic burrito.

- 1 pkg. frozen cooked ground beef
- 1 28 oz. can refried beans
- 3 Tbs. taco seasoning mix and/or 1 7 oz. can diced green chiles
- 1 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese

Heat 1 pkg. frozen ground beef in microwave on high for 3 minutes. Pour beef into a 1 1/2– 2 quart microwaveable casserole dish. Add beans, taco seasoning and/or green chiles and cream cheese. Cover and heat in microwave on high for about 5 minutes. Stir until all ingredients are thoroughly combined then heat for an additional 3–5 minutes or until mixture is hot and bubbly. Serve as a main dish along with corn tortilla chips or as a burrito wrapped up in a hot flour tortilla. Can also be topped with salsa and/or sour cream :)

Variation: Serve as an appetizer. Simply spread hot dip into a shallow baking pan then top with your choice of shredded cheddar cheese, salsa, sour cream and guacamole. Serve with corn tortilla chips.

Prep Ahead Ground Beef Meals

Mexican Stir Fry

1 pkg. frozen cooked ground beef
2 tsp. olive oil
1 medium onion coarsely chopped
4 cups sliced zucchini (about 2 large or 4 small)
1 clove garlic or 1/4 tsp. granulated
3 Tbs. taco seasoning
1 can Green Giant crisp corn or 1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen corn
1 14.5 oz can diced tomatoes or 2 cups chopped *fresh tomatoes
1-2 Tbs. fresh chopped cilantro (optional)

Assorted toppings if desired: Crushed corn tortilla chips, shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream, chopped cilantro or sliced green onion

Heat 1 pkg. frozen ground beef in microwave on high for 3 minutes. Heat a large wok style skillet or other large skillet over medium high heat, add olive oil, onion and zucchini. Stir fry for about 2-3 minutes then add tomatoes, garlic, taco seasoning, and corn. Cook and stir over medium high until mixture comes to a boil and zucchini is crisp tender. Remove from heat then stir in fresh chopped cilantro. Spoon into bowls along with toppings.

Variation: Use 17 oz. can of chopped diced green chiles in addition to, or in place of taco seasoning.

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Hamburger Gravy Over Mashed Potatoes

This main dish is a true family favorite and sooooo easy. If your family likes it as much as mine you may want to double the batch so there will be plenty for leftovers.

3-4 cups of hot mashed potatoes

For Gravy:

1 pkg. Frozen ground beef
2 Tbs. all purpose flour
1 cup milk
1 cup water
1 tsp. chicken bouillon powder
Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Heat bag of frozen ground beef in microwave on high for 3 minutes. Put into a large skillet and sprinkle with flour, salt and pepper. Stir to until meat is coated. Stir in milk, water and bouillon. Cook over medium heat about 5 minutes until gravy is hot and thickened. Remove from heat and cool slightly to allow it to thicken a bit more. Serve over hot mashed potatoes.

Serve with a green vegetable or salad for a complete and delicious meal that everyone will enjoy!

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Sloppy Joes

- 1 pkg. frozen cooked ground beef
- 1 8oz can tomato sauce or 1 6oz. can tomato paste
- 1 package Sloppy Joe Seasoning Mix
- 4-6 Hamburger buns

Heat bag of frozen ground beef in microwave on high for 3 minutes. Add seasoning mix, water (per package directions) and tomato sauce or paste. Cook per package directions and serve on or over hamburger buns.

Serve with fresh veggies and dip or a tossed green salad for a complete meal!

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Create your own recipe here!