

# Healthy Eating: Cooking for One<sup>1</sup>

Emily Minton<sup>2</sup>

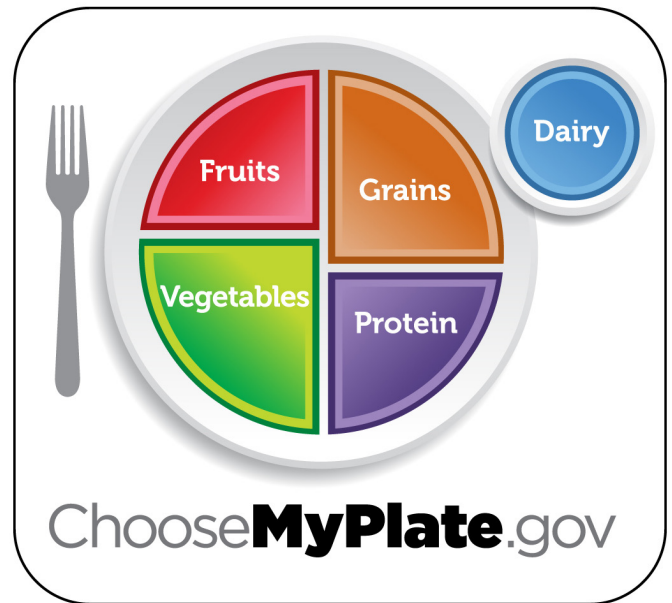
You may think that cooking for one is a difficult task because most recipes are intended to serve four or more people. However, there are things you can do to make cooking for one easy and enjoyable.

## Plan Your Meals

How many times have you started to prepare your favorite recipe when you discover you are missing one or more of the main ingredients? When you plan your meals in advance, you will always have the ingredients you need!

The day before you go shopping, plan your meals for the week. This way you can check to see what ingredients you have and which ones you need to buy. If planning a week's worth of meals seems overwhelming, start with two or three days.

Planning your meals in advance also allows you to focus on your nutritional needs. Many



times when we are hungry and in a hurry to eat we eat whatever is easiest or the first thing we see, not what is a healthy choice. You can use MyPlate to assist you in planning your meals.

1. La versión en español de este documento es *Alimentación Saludable: Cocinando para uno solo* (FCS80008-Span). This document is FCS80008, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Original publication date May 2012. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.
2. Emily Minton, former ENAFS program coordinator, Department of Family, Youth, and Community Sciences; Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

## Alter Recipes

Most recipes are designed for four or more people. When cooking for one, this amount of food can be overwhelming and may discourage you from cooking. The good news is that it is easy to reduce a recipe.

Dry or liquid ingredients measured in cups, tablespoons, or teaspoons are easy to adjust. Some ingredients are more difficult to alter. For example, if a recipe calls for one large egg, try using a small egg instead. When you halve a recipe for four, plan to save one of the two servings for another meal. Be sure to put the leftovers into the refrigerator or freezer within two hours after it is prepared to keep it safe to eat. Use this chart for quick reference to halve the ingredients in a recipe.

Recipe Calls For	Instead Use
1/4 cup	<b>2 tablespoons</b>
1/3 cup	<b>2 tablespoons + 2 teaspoons</b>
1/2 cup	<b>1/4 cup</b>
2/3 cup	<b>1/3 cup</b>
3/4 cup	<b>6 tablespoons</b>
1 cup	<b>1/2 cup</b>
1 tablespoon	<b>1 1/2 teaspoons</b>
1 teaspoon	<b>1/2 teaspoon</b>
1/2 teaspoon	<b>1/4 teaspoon</b>
1/4 teaspoon	<b>1/8 teaspoon</b>
1/8 teaspoon	<b>A pinch or dash</b>



Figure 1. When cooking for one, you can alter recipes written for more people by using less of the ingredients. See the table in this publication to learn how to halve ingredients for recipes.

Credits: Timothy Vollmer CC 2.0 <http://bit.ly/xtU70G>

## Resources

*Cooking for One* (updated February 2012), [http://www.helpguide.org/life/cooking\\_for\\_one\\_fast\\_easy\\_healthy.htm](http://www.helpguide.org/life/cooking_for_one_fast_easy_healthy.htm). Accessed May 8, 2012.

*Healthy Cooking for 1 or 2* (August 2011), <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/healthy-cooking/HQ00474>. Accessed May 8, 2012.