

# Kitchen Corner

## Activities and Easy Meals

**Remember:** Before any cooking activities with children, everyone involved must wash their hands thoroughly and for at least 20 seconds each time. Ensure the proper supervision of children, especially when using utensils.

### 1. Food Preparation

Children can help with food preparation and this too can be a learning experience.

Fruits and Vegetables – Using any fruit (i.e. - banana) or any vegetable (i.e. - Broccoli) discuss with children the color of the item, the texture and size.

Ask them: “What does it smell like? What does it feel like? Is it soft or hard?”

Proceed to washing the items with the children and use a plastic knife to help them cut the items. Support their efforts using encouraging statements (i.e. – “You cut the banana!) and describe how they did it (i.e. - “You moved the knife back and forth until you had two pieces!”)

This can be done with any food. Children will love to hear the excitement in your voice and feel successful.

### 2. Making Sandwiches

This is simple enough but also helps share control with children.

Together decide what will go in the sandwich you want to make. Allow children to explore ideas that you may not necessarily agree with or think they won't taste good. The best chefs experiment with food.

A simple sandwich is grilled cheese. The child can place the cheese on the bread and any vegetable you wish to add. Parent can put it in the oven to melt the cheese.

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### 3. **Homemade Pizza**

Together decide on what ingredients to add to the pizza. (whatever you both like) You can use whole wheat bagels or whole wheat pita bread, shredded cheese, spaghetti sauce. In two medium bowls place the cheese and the sauce. You will need a baking sheet or aluminum pan.

Place the bagel halves or pita bread on a baking sheet. Add and spread the sauce as desired. Add cheese as desired.

Parents preheat the oven at 300 degrees. Then place the sheets in the oven for 10-15 minutes. Optional: add peppers, onions, chicken, etc.

### 4. **Macaroni and Cheese**

You will need ½ pound box of macaroni, American or cheddar cheese, butter, and milk of choice.

In a medium sized saucepan add 1 cup of milk, 2 tablespoons of butter. Add American or Cheddar cheese. Place pan on a low flame to melt the cheese. In a large pot add water, oil and salt. Bring the water to a boil and then add the macaroni. Let it boil for about 10 minutes or until desired texture.

Parents: Drain the water from the large pot and then add the melted cheese and a spoon full of butter. Mix well.

Uncooked Macaroni Activity – Children can make jewelry out of a few pieces of macaroni. Simply provide them with some string and macaroni. Show them how to thread the string through the macaroni and then tie it for them when they are done. This is great for eye hand coordination and focus. Make your own as well and be there to support their efforts.

### 5. **Trail Mix**

This is a simple thing to do as well. You will need any kind of cereal, dried fruits, and wafer cookies (crumbled). Give your child their own bowl and you can have one as well. Allow them to mix the ingredients and maybe even crumble the wafers. Once it's all mixed. Enjoy!

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### 6. Homemade Pancakes

You will need:

- 1 ½ cup of All-Purpose flour
- 3 ½ teaspoons of baking powder
- 1 tablespoon of sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt (depending on preference)
- 1 egg
- 1 ¼ cup of milk
- 3 tablespoons of oil

Pour all the dry ingredients into a medium mixing bowl. Add eggs, oil and milk. Mix well. Preheat skillet at a medium flame. Smear onto the skillet a tablespoon of butter. Place ¼ cup of batter and cook for 3-4 minutes on each side. Optional: Add fresh fruits to the mix or as a topper.

### 7. Easy Made Dip

You will need: Plain yogurt or sour cream, hidden valley dried dressing and dip mix (ranch), sliced carrots and celery sticks

Pour yogurt or sour cream into a medium mixing bowl. Add the hidden valley ranch dried mix. Mix well and then refrigerate for an hour. Serve with vegetable sticks. Optional: Triscuit or wheat thin crackers.

**Kitchen tip:** Milk should be stored at a temperature of 40 degrees or lower. Always try to maintain a thermostat in your refrigerator and check the temperature regularly.

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