

Eating Well on a Food Stamp Budget

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By Jacquie Wayans,

Having relied on food stamps at one time in my life, I have become skilled at making a meal work without spending very much to make it happen.

It is important to me to expose my kids to great food flavors. Since I am of West Indian heritage, spices rule. One day, I found myself with the taste for a curry dish, but was limited on my usual meat and veggie supplies (typical towards the end of the month). I looked carefully in my cupboards and came up with a tasty dish I now love.

I know how hard feeding a family on a food stamp budget can be. That is why I wanted to share this recipe here – where it can hopefully reach other people living on food stamps. But, even if you're not on food stamps, I hope you'll enjoy it!

Secret Curry Yum Ingredients: **Canola oil** – 2 tbs **Clove or two of Garlic** – chopped (You get a lot for a little, huge health benefits) **Fresh or dry thyme** – (You can get fresh for a buck) **Med or Lg Onion** – 1 whole (Cheap and full of flavor) **A green pepper** – (Can be expensive out of season, but worth flavor and nutrients) **1 or 2 celery stalks** - chopped **Curry Powder** – 1 tbs **1 packet of Lipton onion soup mix** (I catch when on sale for a dollar and stack up – low sodium chicken broth good substitute) **Fish, chicken, beef or pork** (whatever serving you have for your family. I chop the meat up into small bits, since this dish is all about the sauce, you don't need much meat.) **Potato** **Potato** – one or two large potatoes will do. Peel and dice **Curry** – ¼ cup **Soy sauce** – (optional) I save packets from Chinese food stores **1 small can Pumpkin Puree** – secret ingredient – same color as curry, blends into sauce. **Rice:** the amount needed for your family. I lay the sauce on the rice. *If buying fresh is out of the question, Goya makes a frozen Sofrito or Recaito for two bucks that goes a long way in flavoring anything! ** If you have cinnamon, throw a dash in at the end.

Directions: Pour oil into pot and add first 7 ingredients on med heat. Once the aroma is in the air, add your meat and brown it on all sides. Then add your **water**, enough to cover the meat completely. Then add your packet of Lipton mix.

Add 1 potato and soy sauce and rest of curry. Once potato is tender, mash it in sauce add the pumpkin puree and next potato (not to mash). Add water if needed and salt and pepper to taste. You should have a filling meal and leftovers.

I know it is hard to try new food on a tight budget. I say, take the risk in a smart way. By mixing something new with something tried and true, you increase the chances that kids will like it and won't even know it's there.

[Please note that this dish is a bit high in sodium. There are easy ways to reduce that, by substituting Chicken Broth for Lipton mix and then add Sea salt to taste when dish is done. The soy sauce is optional – just gives a rich flavor – again low sodium is available. The key here is the water. Water not only stretches the dish by increasing gravy volume, but it can also dilute the sodium]