

What's for Dinner? // Mashed Potatoes and Happy Families



Make the most of family mealtime!

Bonding Over Brisket

With the average husband and wife both having to work full-time, or a single mother or father juggling the children and work, sitting down to have dinner together is probably one of the most difficult but important things a family can do.

Sitting down together at the family table and talking to each other about the events of the day without interruptions from the TV or other electronic devices has proven to be very beneficial.

Families should ensure spending time together is built into their weekly schedule. And since we all have to eat, why not make it a point for family time to be spent sharing a meal together?

Here's how family mealtime will benefit your family beyond the dinner table:

- **Encourages better nutrition.** According to the FDA, Americans now consume about one-third of their total calories on foods prepared outside the home. The Center for Disease Control has linked obesity to the propensity of Americans to eat in restaurants where portions are large. Home cooking allows a family to select healthy ingredients, tailor meals to suit its own particular nutritional needs and tastes, serve portions appropriate to age and activity level and monitor methods of preparation.
- **Saves money.** According to the National Restaurant Association, Americans spend 45 percent of their food budget dining out. A family that eats most meals cooked at home saves substantial food dollars.
- **Promotes long-term health care savings.** Consistently eating high-calorie, high-fat foods can lead to obesity and heart disease, among other chronic issues. Eating healthier, home-cooked meals and adopting a healthier lifestyle will leave a person less likely to develop these health conditions. This practice will save money in the future on costs related to health care and prescriptions.
- **Builds life skills.** Manners and etiquette help build character and self-esteem, and help build a positive environment. Eating together provides the opportunity to test drive etiquette and manners. Family mealtime is a perfect occasion for everyone in the family to learn how to set the table, prepare food and clean the dishes. Parents are able to role model healthy eating habits and table manners during family meals.
- **Strengthens communication skills.** The number one source of conflict in a family is lack of or mis-communication. Conversations during the meal provide opportunities for the

family to bond, plan, connect, and learn from one another. In a series of focus groups conducted with low-income program participants by the Nutrition Education Network of Washington, participants said they believed that the primary benefit to eating together was strengthening relationships by providing opportunities for communication. Other studies report similar perceptions on the part of parents.

Other things happen during mealtimes as well, including: **socialization of children; establishment of family unity, safety, and security for children; and increased literacy and language development.**

Data suggests that eating dinner as a family can provide positive life-improving benefits. These benefits for children, especially adolescents, have been shown to cross racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines, but some glaring distinctions exist between families who share meals and those who don't.

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This article was written by Paula Scott, Utah EFNEP State Director, Heidi LeBlanc, Food Sense State Director and Debra Christofferson, Utah Food Sense Assist. Director.

Utah Prepare // Emergency Preparedness Made Easy



Saturday, September 12, 2015
South Towne Expo Center, Sandy, Utah
Utah's Largest One Day
Preparedness Conference and Expo
50+ Exhibitors | 30+ Preparedness Classes

Utahns interested in learning about emergency preparedness can visit the South Towne Expo Center in Sandy on Saturday, Sept. 12, from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. for workshops, speakers, emergency

preparedness vendors, door prizes and giveaways.

“We began this Utah State University Extension-sponsored conference in 2009 to help people understand that there are things they can do to be in charge, even when there is much out of their control during an emergency,” said Teresa Hunsaker, USU Extension family and consumer sciences agent. “By thinking ahead and having necessary items on hand, they can better ride out the storm, so to speak.”

Workshop topics include mock root cellars, meals in minutes with food storage, sheltering in place, emergency fuel storage, emergency communications, emergency childbirth, powerless cooking, special needs preparation, survival tips from the experts, water purification, preparedness and terrorism, water and emergency first aid.

Keynote speaker is Lori Prichard, morning anchor for KSL TV, who will share her first-hand experience with preparedness while in Joplin, Missouri.

“We really try to have this be a one-stop shop where Utahns can become educated and learn what they can do to help themselves, their families and their pets in the event of a barrage of emergency scenarios,” said Hunsaker. “Our goal is to help keep damage and casualties to a minimum should one of these events take place.”

Cost of conference is \$5. Tickets are available online or at the door.

Find more information at utahprepare.com

You Can Can, But Can you Can Safely?



Make sure you're canning your food safely!

Three Simple Steps to Safe Canning

Preserving your own foods can save you money and is a great way to know what is in the foods you eat. It is important to follow the safest canning guidelines and use up-to-date equipment to ensure your product is safe.

1. Be sure to check the source of your recipe. Extensive research and testing have resulted in scientific-based guidelines, which are the safest. To ensure you are using a science-based resource, your recipe and guidelines should come from Utah State University Extension, The National Center for Home Food Preservation, University of Georgia or The Ball Blue Book. Information should have been released after 2009. No other sources, including recipes on the Internet, can be presumed safe.

2. Pressure canner gauges should be tested once a year. Low-acid foods should be canned using a pressure canner. Watch for pressure canner gauge testing by your local Extension office in your area.

3. Attend a class to ensure you are current on your canning techniques. Look for a MASTER FOOD PRESERVER Course in your area. This class is an in-depth series on food preservation for optimum food safety in all areas of food preservation including pressure canning, water bath canning, dehydrating, and freezing.

For more current information on canning and food preservation, visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation online at nchfp.uga.edu or extension.usu.edu/canning.

This article was written by SuzAnne Jorgensen, FCS Extension Agent, Garfield County

Emergency Checklist // Are You Prepared?



Overwhelmed by emergency preparedness? Here's a simple checklist to help you get started!

Preparing to Prepare

Have you ever wondered how to prepare for an emergency? Here is a checklist of basic emergency preparedness questions that need answers if you are to be safe in an emergency.

If you answer NO to any of them, take time to work on getting them completed.

GENERAL

If you are to evacuate your home, do you and your family have an identified common meeting place?

Have you established an out-of-state contact? Does each family member know the name, phone number and address of this contact?

Do you have a working emergency radio to receive emergency instructions?

Do you have a functional flashlight in every occupied bedroom? (Candles are not recommended unless you are sure there is not a natural gas leak nearby.)

Do you have a first-aid kit in your home and each vehicle? If you have a motor home, be sure to put one in there too.

Do you have work gloves and basic tools for minor rescue and clean up?

Do you have emergency cash on hand? (Small bills and coins. During emergencies or loss of power, banks and ATM machines are closed.)

Have you stored/rotated a month's supply of needed medications?

If you wear glasses/contacts, do you have an extra pair in case of breakage?

EARTHQUAKES

Do you keep shoes (not sandals) near your bed to protect your feet against broken glass and other objects that may be on the floor?

Does your family know what to do before, during and after an earthquake or other emergency situation?

Do you have heavy unsecured objects hanging over beds that can fall during an earthquake?

UTILITIES

If water lines are ruptured, do you know how to shut off the main water line?

Can the main water valve be turned off by hand without using a special tool?

If a special tool is needed to shut off the water main, do you

have one near the turn off or know where to find one in an emergency?

Do you know where the main gas shut-off valve to your house is located?

Natural gas valves need a special tool to turn off. Do you have one nearby?

Without electricity and gas, do you have the means to heat at least part of the house?

Do you have means to cover broken windows and doors?

Do you have a plan for toilet facilities if there is an extended water shortage?

FIRE

Has your family rehearsed fire escape routes from your home?

In case of a minor fire, do you have a fire extinguisher? Do you know how to operate it? Is it charged?

Do you have working smoke alarms in the proper locations in your home?

FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

Do you have duplicate keys and copies of important documents stored outside of your home or in your evacuation kit?

Do you have a copy of your will, trust and insurance papers that can be taken with you?

Do you have a copy of your household inventory (CD or photos with serial numbers, etc.) for insurance purposes?

EMERGENCY FOOD

Do you have a supply of food, clothing and fuel (where appropriate) for 1 month, 6 months or 1 year?

Do you have sufficient food?

Do you have means to cook food without gas or electricity?

Do you have sufficient water for drinking, cooking and sanitary needs?

Do you have a 72-hour evacuation kit? Could you or someone in your family carry it?

This article was written by Christine Jensen



Christine Jensen has been employed by Utah State University Extension in Emery County for 15 years.

Quick, Kid-Friendly Lunches on a Budget



Make lunches your kids will love!

How to Win the Battle

Now that school is in full swing, mornings are filled with getting ready, making lunches and heading out the door in a timely fashion.

When it comes to busy mornings, healthy lunches are one of the first things that get removed from the radar! Have you thought much about the food you toss in your child's lunch box each morning? Is the meal balanced with a variety of nutrient dense foods your child loves?

Right now you are probably saying "My kids won't eat healthy foods! And I don't have time or money to make healthier lunches!" Well, we have some tips to make this mealtime a bit healthier and less stressful without breaking the bank.

Here are a few tips for making healthy lunches for children on a limited food budget!

1. Plan lunches before the week starts to make sure you have

all the ingredients you need to make healthy lunches. This prevents unplanned visits to the grocery store, which saves time and money. Also consider what you will be eating for dinner that week so you can use leftovers!

2. Involve your kids by inviting them to help you make a list of grains, proteins, dairy products, and fruits/veggies they would enjoy eating at lunchtime. To save some money, have children look through the grocery ads and circle the items from each food group they would like in their lunches that week. They will enjoy getting to help create their own lunches and it helps make sure your not spending money on food that will go to waste later.

3. Make preparing lunches a family activity. Preparing daily lunches for your kids doesn't just have to be a task you do by yourself. Spend a few minutes each night together gathering items they picked out from each food group to create a unique lunch for them to have the next day. Try giving your children options. Cheese stick or yogurt. Carrot sticks or cucumber slices. This way, they get a say in what they will eat which increases the likelihood they will actually eat it and less food will be wasted. This allows you to prepare a healthier meal for your child without having to sacrifice time during your busy morning.

4. Make healthy lunches fun for kids by cutting foods like fruit, veggies, cheese, and bread into fun shapes like stars or hearts. Use cookie cutters to save time. Try making an open face sandwich with different veggies as the eyes, nose, and mouth. You can also let your child pick out a lunch box at the beginning of the year so they are excited about bringing lunch each day! Making food look fun is one large step towards helping your children eat healthy foods at lunchtime.

5. Make it tasty! Still having a hard time getting your kids to eat fruits and vegetables? Try adding a special dipping sauce like a salad dressing, hummus, or fruit dip to increase

acceptance. Having something to dunk fruits and veggies into makes them fun and tasty!

Here is one idea of a quick and simple lunch to put together for you kiddos.

Sandwich Kabobs

This kid friendly recipe takes simple foods and puts them together in a unique way. All you need is meat, cheese, lettuce, bread and tomato (or any other veggie your child likes). Cut the foods into 1 in sections and slide them onto a skewer for a kid friendly kabob! Add a side of grapes, pretzels, carrots and celery to make a meal. Within minutes you have yourself a fun and healthy meal for your child's lunch.

To get your children involved in this recipe, have them pick out and wash the produce. They can also help put the food on the skewer in whatever order they want!

This article was written by Mateja Savoie Roskos MPH, RD, CD, CNP and Sheri Winn





Easy Eats // Putting the “Fast” in Breakfast!



Start the day with healthy, filling and FAST nutrition!

The Breakfast Quest

If everyone knows that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, why do so many people skip it? The number one reason people don't eat breakfast is because they are too busy or don't have enough time.

While it's true that mornings can be crazy and hectic, there are also ways to sneak breakfast in without having to sacrifice your snooze button.

These breakfast ideas from Eat Well Utah are wonderful for everyone, but they are especially great for kids in grade school and high school. Helping kids start their day off right will help them stay energized and happy throughout the day. They will even perform better in school!

To learn more about the benefits of breakfast and how you can make a nutritious morning meal in SECONDS, **click here!**

To help you start your breakfast quest, here is a delicious recipe that is fast, easy and sure to get you off on the right foot.

Freezer Breakfast Burritos

Directions

Boil or cook potatoes in the microwave until tender. Once cool cut into 1" cubes. Heat 1 tsp. oil in a large skillet. Add in the sausage, pepper, and onion and cook until sausage is cooked through, about 5-7 minutes. Add the potato and cook and additional 2 minutes. Remove from heat. In a medium bowl whisk the eggs and milk together. Add the remaining oil to a skillet. Over medium heat add the egg mixture and cook, stirring to scramble, until just cooked through. Remove from heat. Top a tortilla with sausage mixture, eggs, and sprinkle with cheese. Roll up into a burrito and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Repeat with remaining tortillas. Place the burritos in the freezer. Once frozen remove them from the baking pan and place them in a freezer bag. Freeze for up to 3 months. To reheat, microwave for 2 minutes or until warmed through.

Ingredients:

2 large russet potatoes
2 tsp. canola oil
½ lb. turkey sausage
1 bell pepper
1 small onion
12 large eggs
½ cup milk
8 oz. shredded cheddar cheese
20 whole wheat flour tortillas

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Click here for 4 more delicious and easy breakfast recipes!

Getting Back Into the School Routine!



Take away the stress of going back to school by establishing fun and orderly routines!

Children may not exactly beg parents to establish routines for school-day mornings, family meals or weekend chores, but every family needs a certain amount of structure to function well.

Morning routines at home can help family members feel prepared for the day and reduce the stress they might otherwise feel if they were to rush out the front door in the morning with barely enough time to shower, get dressed and grab their backpack.

Here are some tips to help get your routines established!

Weekday morning routine. The website, www.healthychildren.org, established by the American Academy of Pediatrics, suggests

that in order to make the household function well in the morning, family members should know what needs to be done in advance. The organization suggests the following:

- * Put as many things in order as possible the night before.
- * Keep wake-up routines cheerful and positive.
- * Be sure your child eats breakfast, even if he or she is not hungry in the morning. It's important to have food in the system to start the day. That goes for grownups, too.
- * Pause long enough to say goodbye to your child. A hug goes a long way to make your child's day go better; receiving a hug in return is great, as well.

After-school routine. When parents can't be home to welcome children when school is out, it's important to choose a place they can be where they are safe and cared for until mom, dad or another guardian can be with them. The majority of risk-taking, participation in pranks or juvenile delinquent behaviors from children and youth commonly take place after school when children are unsupervised.

Whether the after-school routine includes staying to participate in activities at the school, going to a grandparent's home, or elsewhere, children who know they have a safe and caring place to go after school will remain more focused throughout the day. Parents should make every effort to see that a caring adult or responsible teen is available. Even having a close neighbor who is at home and available to call, if needed, helps children feel secure.

Dinner routine. It doesn't really matter if the meal is dinner. Families should eat several meals together every week providing all members time to be together. In a back-to-school article posted on life.familyeducation.com it states sitting down to a family meal can be a wonderful time in the day. It should be a time to hear about everyone's day and reinforce that family members do care. This time can be made very positive by allowing each member of the family to briefly tell about their favorite part of the day. It may also serve as a

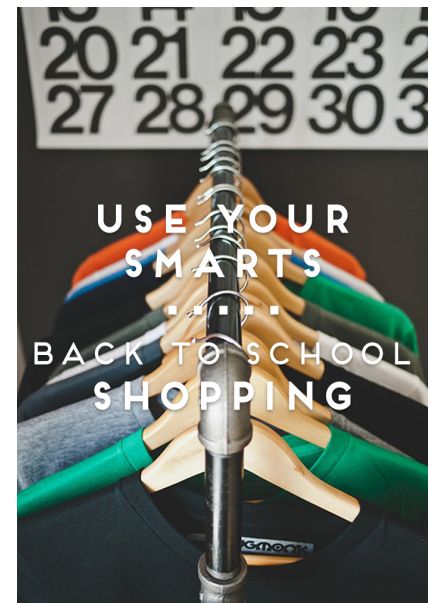
time to discuss family plans or how to best support a family member in an upcoming activity.

Bedtime routine. Children, teens and adults all benefit from having an established routine when they can wind down before crawling into bed. Younger children will benefit the most emotionally and physically from repetition each night. If parents will allow 30-45 minutes of preparation, the children will be calmer and able to fall asleep more easily. Bedtime should include story time and/or a chance for children and youth to talk about their day with mom or dad. Try to avoid rowdy activities just before bedtime. As they get older, children will be able to establish their own routine. However, parents should still have older youth stick to an established time to be in bed.

It is a challenge for families to establish comfortable, effective routines. It requires planning, creating a structure that is realistic, and getting all family members to commit to the plan. However, such efforts will pay great dividends in cutting down on disorder and confusion. It may also strengthen the family unit overall and increase children's devotion to their family.

This article was written by Kathleen Riggs, Utah State University Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Professor for Iron County. Questions or comments may be sent to kathleen.riggs@usu.edu or call 435-586-8132.

Study Up! // Back to School Shopping the Smart Way



Head back to school in style without breaking the bank.

Here's the Deal

It's hard to believe that it is "back to school" time again!! Just look in the malls and "super" stores and you will see kids and families getting ready. As you prepare to "bust your budget" for these extra expenses this month, consider the following tips to help you weather the budget surge, as well as the shopping wars.

1. Prepare a list. Use the supply list that the schools may provide but also consider each child's needs. Not everything on the school's classroom list has to be purchased, and not everything the kids want should be purchased. Take inventory of what is already on hand at home. Have a discussion with each child about the items being placed on the list. Allow them to have some say, and some decision making power in the

process.

2. Do your 'homework'. Shop the ads and online. Know prices, know features in electronics, know what's in fashion, etc. Children can even shop the ads for the best buys and see how they can make their money go further.

3. Set a budget. Kids need to know there is a limit and there will need to be choices. Have the children involved in pricing and deciding. Would they rather have 5 outfits at a less expensive price, or one pair of expensive jeans? Besides giving children a voice, making decisions also teaches them how to prioritize, how to manage money and how to learn the difference between needs and wants.

4. Consider options. Are there some things that can be picked up 'second hand', like clothes? Tees, sweaters, and jeans are usually great bargains at second hand stores. Are there some items that can wait until part way through the school year, like clothes going on sale later in the fall? Buy in bulk—usually there are “3 for ____”, etc. type sales that can help extend your budget.

5. Set boundaries before shopping. Having a talk with the kids about behavior, ground rules, etc. makes a big difference. Review the list they have helped create, and remind them this is not going to be a battle of wills, that we want this to be a fun time together. If you have a chance to go individually with the kids, that is even better, but either way, be rested and fed before going.

How to be a Good Consumer

a) Save the receipt. This should be a matter of practice for most of our purchases anyway—but especially when we may very well need to return an item, or at least the potential for returning is there.

b) Know the return policy. Sometimes in our frenzy to get the kids outfitted we don't take the time in advance to really check sizes or needs, and end up making purchases just to get done with the shopping. We figure we will just get it now, check it out when we get home, and then return it if we need to. Be careful of falling into that thinking. Sometimes you don't make it back to the store in time to meet their return policies to get cash back—or any refund at all.

c) Make sure the advertised offer is legit. That means watching out for bogus “sales” by knowing the standard price of common back to school items. It also means not being sucked in by the old “bait and switch” tactic some stores use. On items where you know quality counts—such as in back packs, insulated lunch boxes, or school electronics—know why you want the “higher” price.

d) Understand any warranty options and “extended warranty” on school electronics. Study this carefully, know why you want the warranty, or if you even do. Often, it is not worth the added cost.

e) Be careful if shopping for back to school items online. Clothing size, fit, quality, servicing, or any other problems, are often more difficult and time consuming to take care of when items have been purchased online.

This article was written by Teresa Hunsaker

Do You Know the Facts? // Single-Use Laundry Pacs



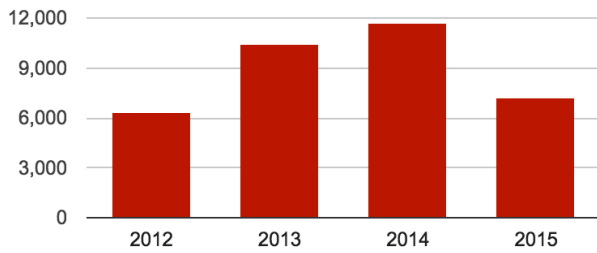
Single-use laundry pacs are convenient, but there are a few things you should know about them.

The Convenient Pac That Packs a Deadly Punch

Single load liquid laundry packets are a new laundry innovation that contain highly concentrated detergent. Their convenience appeals to adults responsible for the family's laundry, but their bright colors and small size make them attractive to children. If not handled properly, the laundry packets can lead to injury if the contents are swallowed or the detergent comes in contact with the eyes.

Since coming on the market in 2011, the National Poison Data System has received more than 35,000 calls from January 1, 2012 to July 31, 2015 involving children exposed to the

chemicals in the packets. Of those, 769 children required hospitalization, and two children died.



To keep children safe, follow these guidelines.

- 1. Keep the laundry packets out of the reach and sight of children.**
- 2. Read the product label before use.**
- 3. Do not cut, tear or puncture the packets.** They are designed to dissolve in water.
- 4. If the packets stick together, throw them away.**
- 5. Always handle the liquid laundry packets with dry hands.** The film that encases them is designed to dissolve quickly, even in small amounts of water.
- 6. Do not use single load liquid laundry packets when washing laundry by hand or pre-treating stains.**
- 7. Add the packets to the bottom of the washing machine** (in both front loading and top loading machines) before adding the clothes. Do not put the packets in the washer's dispenser drawer.
- 8. Ensure that the recloseable bag or container in which packets are stored is tightly sealed** after use and during storage.
- 9. Store laundry packet containers away from food,** so children don't confuse them with something they can eat.

10. Keep the laundry packets in the original container with the labels intact.

If you think your child has been exposed to the contents of a single-load, liquid-laundry packet, call your local poison control center at 1-800-222-1222.

References

American Cleaning Institute

The Hill

American Association of Poison Control Centers

Top 10 // How to Fill an Empty Stomach on a Full Schedule



When your life is constantly on the go, don't let nutrition go!

Eating Healthy in a Hurry

It's a fact: life is crazy. Unfortunately, one of the first things to go when life gets hectic is a healthy diet. It's hard to find time to cook a delicious meal or prepare a variety of dishes when you barely have time to save your sanity!

When your life is in a whirlwind and you still want to watch what you eat, follow these top 10 tips from Eat Well Utah!

Here are a couple of tips:

#2. Keep a well-stocked pantry. A well stocked pantry with staple items like rice, pasta, canned fruits and vegetables, and herbs and spices can be thrown together for a quick, yet healthy meal when your day didn't quite go as planned. For a list of good foods to have on hand, [click here](#).

#6. Use a slow cooker. Many slow cooker recipes call for

little prep time and long, slow cooking times. Take a minute to throw the ingredients in the slow cooker, leave it, and you will have a great meal later.

For eight other great tips, [click here!](#)

Also, try one of these tasty, hasty dishes. They are perfect to make when your schedule is full but your stomach isn't.

Slow Cooker Chicken and Potatoes

Directions

Spray slow cooker with non-stick cooking spray. Place onions, carrots, and potatoes in the slow cooker. In a small bowl combine the broth, basil, and garlic. Pour over vegetables. In a medium bowl combine paprika and pepper; rub over chicken. Heat a medium skillet over high heat. Add oil to pan and swirl to coat. Add chicken to the pan and cook 3 minutes on each side or until browned. Place chicken on top of vegetables. Cover and cook on low for 3 ½ - 4 hours.

Ingredients:

1 medium onion, sliced
2 cups carrots, sliced
4-6 potatoes, sliced thin
1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
½ tsp. dried basil
1 tsp. minced garlic
1 tsp. paprika
½ tsp. ground black pepper
4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
½ tbsp. olive oil

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Slow Cooker Shredded Chicken

Directions

Mix cumin, chili powder, and dressing in a bowl. Place frozen chicken in slow cooker and pour spice mixture over the chicken to cover. Cook on high for 5 hours or on low for 7 to 8 hours. Shred chicken in the slow cooker and mix it well.

Ingredients:

8 oz. Italian dressing
1 Tbsp. cumin
1 Tbsp. chili powder
3 lbs. frozen boneless, skinless chicken breasts.

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Green Chili Enchiladas

skillet meal 

Directions

Brown meat with onion and garlic; drain fat from meat. Mix in green chilies, seasonings, soup, and milk. Simmer mixture for 10 minutes. Cut tortillas in fourths. Layer tortillas and meat mixture in 9x13 baking dish, starting and ending with meat mixture. Top dish with cheese and bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Ingredients:

½ lb. lean ground beef
1 medium onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 small can diced green chilies
½ tsp. cumin
¼ tsp. chili powder
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. pepper
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 ¼ cups skim or low-fat milk
8 corn tortillas
1 cup grated cheddar cheese

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