

3 Budget Family Dinner Plan

Three complete dinners for four, one reconciled grocery list, practical safety notes, and honestly separated checkout and consumed-food estimates.

One-Pot Beefy Mac & Peas

Sweet Potato Black Bean Chili

BBQ Drumstick Bowls & Corn Slaw

Real recipe cards plus their complete list.

No blank worksheets. No nutrition, health, or lower-bill promise. Prices are one dated local snapshot and will vary.

US LETTER
+ A4

Cook from the card. Read the costs honestly.

Whole-package checkout

What you would pay for the packages needed for that dinner if you start with none, excluding the base pantry. Package remainders stay in your kitchen.

Consumed ingredients

The prorated value of the amounts that enter the meal, including listed oil and vinegar plus a transparent \$0.15 dried-seasoning allowance per recipe.

Two separate ranges

Each is a 90%–115% planning band around its own dated snapshot, rounded outward. Neither is a guarantee; store, ZIP, season, package and substitutions change the bill.

Check the pantry first

The cards name oil, vinegar and dried seasonings separately. Buying pantry staples you lack will add to checkout.

Use the safety notes on every card

Use a food thermometer: poultry and leftovers 165°F; ground beef 160°F. Refrigerate perishables within 2 hours (1 hour above 90°F); use cooked refrigerated leftovers within 3–4 days. Keep raw poultry and its juices away from ready-to-eat food.

Scope and honest limits

- Dinners only. Each sampled recipe yields at least four average portions; your household decides portions and sides.
- This is general meal-planning information—not medical, nutrition, allergy or child-feeding advice. It is not a calorie plan and does not promise weight, health, disease, nutritional-completeness or lower-bill outcomes.
- Allergen notes cover the named core ingredients, not cross-contact or every formulation. Read every physical package label every time.
- Price audit: Walmart online pickup, Sacramento Gerber Rd Supercenter #3081, ZIP 95829, captured 2026-07-13. Taxes, fees, membership, delivery and pantry restocking are excluded.

Grounding: FoodSafety.gov temperature/storage guidance and FDA major-allergen guidance, accessed 2026-07-13. Full exact-item and QA records are preserved with the complete plan.

One list. Every card accounted for.

Buy quantities are aggregated from Recipes 08, 15 and 16 together, so shared packages are counted once. “3-card need” is the exact amount used across the cards; the package line shows what goes in the cart and what remains.

WHOLE-PACKAGE CHECKOUT RANGE*
\$41–\$54
snapshot \$46.12

MEAT & EGGS

☐

80/20 ground beef
1 × 1 lb roll
3-card need: 1 lb

\$6.93

☐

chicken drumsticks
1 × 5 lb bag · plan uses 2.5 lb; about 2.5 lb remains
3-card need: 2.5 lb

\$4.92

GRAINS & BREAD

☐

elbow macaroni
1 × 16 oz box
3-card need: 16 oz

\$1.24

☐

long-grain white rice
1 × 5 lb bag · plan uses 7 oz; about 73 oz remains
3-card need: 7 oz

\$3.67

DAIRY

☐

plain nonfat Greek yogurt
1 × 32 oz tub · plan uses 4 oz; about 28 oz remains
3-card need: 4 oz

\$3.28

☐

shredded cheddar
1 × 16 oz bag · plan uses 6 oz; about 10 oz remains
3-card need: 6 oz

\$3.48

PANTRY + CARRYOVER MAP

Check first: 2 tbsp canola oil; 1 tbsp white vinegar; Italian seasoning, chili powder, cumin, paprika, garlic powder, salt and pepper. Tap water used in the methods (4 cups total) is not a grocery purchase. Recipe 15’s “remaining 11 oz” refers to the full plan; in this standalone sample, open the second 15 oz tomato-sauce can and keep or freeze the 4 oz remainder. Recipes 08 and 15 each make six portions: serve four, then refrigerate the two extras within 2 hours and use within 3–4 days, or freeze promptly for later.

CONSUMED-INGREDIENT COST RANGE†
\$24–\$31
snapshot \$26.76

PRODUCE

☐

green cabbage
1 × one ~3.05 lb head · plan uses 0.75 lb; about 2.3 lb remains
3-card need: 0.75 lb

\$2.59

☐

whole fresh sweet potatoes
1 × 3 lb bag · plan uses 1.5 lb; about 1.5 lb remains
3-card need: 1.5 lb

\$5.03

☐

yellow onions
1 × 3 lb bag · plan uses 1 lb; about 2 lb remains
3-card need: 1 lb

\$3.64

CANS & JARS

☐

black beans
1 × 15 oz can
3-card need: 1 can

\$0.86

☐

dark red kidney beans
1 × 15.5 oz can
3-card need: 1 can

\$0.86

☐

diced tomatoes
3 × 14.5 oz can
3-card need: 3 cans

\$2.88

☐

original barbecue sauce
1 × 18 oz bottle · plan uses 6 oz; about 12 oz remains
3-card need: 6 oz

\$1.88

☐

tomato sauce
2 × 15 oz can · plan uses 26 oz; about 4 oz remains
3-card need: 26 oz

\$1.92

FROZEN

☐

frozen corn
2 × 12 oz bag · plan uses 16 oz; about 8 oz remains
3-card need: 16 oz

\$1.96

☐

frozen sweet peas
1 × 12 oz bag
3-card need: 12 oz

\$0.98

PRICE-FLEX SWAPS

Compare store brands and unit prices first. If cheaper, use the same weight of ground turkey instead of beef (cook to 165°F), or cooked lentils for a meatless mac; use bone-in thighs instead of drumsticks (cook to 165°F); choose same-item frozen or in-season produce. Recheck package labels—substitutions can change allergens.

*Checkout buys the listed whole packages once for all three dinners and excludes pantry restocking. †Consumed prorates the amounts entering the meals, including oil/vinegar used and a \$0.15 dried-seasoning allowance per recipe. The two separately labeled ranges are 90%–115% of their own 2026-07-13 Sacramento snapshots, rounded outward; prices and availability vary.



One-Pot Beefy Mac & Peas

Serves 6 Active 15 min Total 35 min

Checkout* \$16–\$21 snapshot \$18.19 **Consumed†** \$11–\$16 snapshot \$13.13

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb 80/20 ground beef
 - 1 box (16 oz) elbow macaroni
 - 1 can (15 oz) tomato sauce
 - 1 can diced tomatoes
 - 12 oz frozen peas
 - 1½ cups (6 oz) shredded cheddar
 - ½ lb onion, diced
- Pantry:** 2 tsp Italian seasoning; ½ tsp garlic powder; salt and pepper

METHOD

1. Brown beef and onion in a large pot, breaking up the meat. Cook until beef reaches 160°F; drain excess fat safely.
2. Add tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, 3 cups water and seasonings. Bring to a boil.
3. Stir in macaroni; cover and simmer 11–14 minutes, stirring often, until tender. Add splashes of water if needed. While it simmers, cook peas from frozen according to their package until they reach 160°F.
4. Stir the cooked peas and cheddar into the macaroni; heat 3 minutes. Serve four; refrigerate two planned portions.

Serve separately: Reserve plain cooked macaroni and peas; add a little beef separately.

Safety: Ground beef: verify 160°F before adding liquids. Refrigerate within 2 hours; use within 3–4 days. Reheat leftovers to 165°F.

Major allergens: Wheat, Milk

*Checkout buys whole packages for this recipe and excludes the base pantry. †Consumed prorates the amount used, including listed oil/vinegar and the \$0.15 dried-seasoning allowance. Both are separate 90%–115% planning bands around the 2026-07-13 Sacramento snapshot, rounded outward; prices and availability vary.

15

Sweet Potato Black Bean Chili

Serves 6

Active 15 min

Total 42 min

Checkout* \$12–\$17 snapshot \$14.25 Consumed† \$7–\$10 snapshot \$8.31

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lb sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 cans diced tomatoes
- remaining 11 oz tomato sauce from Recipe 12
- 8 oz frozen corn
- ½ lb onion, diced
- 1 tbsp canola oil

Pantry: 2 tbsp chili powder; 2 tsp cumin; ½ tsp garlic powder; salt and pepper

METHOD

1. Heat oil in a large pot. Cook onion 5 minutes. Add spices; stir 30 seconds.
2. Add sweet potatoes, tomatoes, tomato sauce and 1 cup water. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer 18–22 minutes.
3. Stir in both beans and corn; simmer uncovered 8 minutes until sweet potatoes are tender.
4. Serve four portions; refrigerate two planned portions for Leftovers Night.

Serve separately: Keep some cooked sweet potato cubes, beans and corn separate before seasoning.

Safety: Simmer until sweet potatoes are tender and the chili is steaming throughout. Refrigerate within 2 hours; use within 3–4 days. Reheat leftovers to 165°F.

Major allergens: None identified in the core ingredients; check every package label.

*Checkout buys whole packages for this recipe and excludes the base pantry. †Consumed prorates the amount used, including listed oil/vinegar and the \$0.15 dried-seasoning allowance. Both are separate 90%–115% planning bands around the 2026-07-13 Sacramento snapshot, rounded outward; prices and availability vary.

16

BBQ Drumstick Bowls & Corn Slaw

Serves 4

Active 25 min

Total 65 min

Checkout* \$15–\$20 snapshot \$17.32 Consumed† \$4–\$7 snapshot \$5.32

INGREDIENTS

- 2½ lb chicken drumsticks (about half a 5 lb bag)
- 1 cup (7 oz) dry rice
- ¾ cup (6 oz) barbecue sauce, divided between two clean bowls
- 8 oz frozen corn, cooked to 160°F and chilled
- ¾ lb cabbage, shredded
- ½ cup (4 oz) plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tbsp white vinegar
- 1 tbsp canola oil

Pantry: 1 tsp paprika; ½ tsp garlic powder; salt and pepper

METHOD

1. Start with the slaw corn: cook it from frozen according to its package until it reaches 160°F. Spread it in a shallow metal pan set over a larger bowl of ice water; stir until 40°F or colder, then refrigerate.
2. Heat oven to 425°F. Before handling chicken, put 3 oz BBQ sauce in a brush bowl and 3 oz in a clean serving bowl. Rub drumsticks with oil and dry seasonings; roast 25 minutes.
3. Brush chicken only with sauce from the brush bowl. Roast 12–20 minutes more, turning once, until every large piece reaches 165°F away from the bone. Discard sauce left in the brush bowl. Cook rice according to its package while chicken roasts.
4. Wash hands; clean and sanitize raw-chicken surfaces and utensils. With clean tools, mix cabbage, corn at 40°F or colder, yogurt and vinegar. Serve with rice, chicken and sauce from the untouched serving bowl.

Serve separately: Leave one drumstick unsauced; serve rice, corn and cabbage separately.

Safety: Poultry: verify 165°F away from the bone. Keep slaw refrigerated; never serve sauce that touched raw chicken or its brush. Refrigerate within 2 hours; use within 3–4 days. Reheat leftovers to 165°F.

Major allergens: Milk

*Checkout buys whole packages for this recipe and excludes the base pantry. †Consumed prorates the amount used, including listed oil/vinegar and the \$0.15 dried-seasoning allowance. Both are separate 90%–115% planning bands around the 2026-07-13 Sacramento snapshot, rounded outward; prices and availability vary.