



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Low-cost, no-hassle, family-friendly meals

*By Kay Blakley,  
DeCA home economist*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Most cooks would agree that weeknight family meals need to be on the table fast, with a minimum of effort on the cook’s part. As few dirty pots and pans, as possible, to clean up after the meal is a necessity, too. If those requirements take the form of high-calorie, low-nutritional quality, heat-and-eat choices most weeknights at your house, learn how easy it is to do better with this week’s recipe collection.

Most are one-dish wonders that range in calories from a low of 273 calories per serving to a very respectable 433 per serving. Most use common, inexpensive ingredients like lean ground beef, rice and pasta, plus a few healthy convenience items like frozen veggies and refrigerated (or frozen) ravioli, plus light spaghetti sauce. One recipe, Papaya, Black Beans and Rice, comes from the dietitians at Naval Health Clinic Hawaii. It was the featured dish at a recent Dietitian’s Kitchen “tasting” at Pearl Harbor Commissary and met with rave reviews.

So, take your pick of these six recipe choices, head to your commissary and save money on needed ingredients, and get cookin’. To check out these recipes and more, come to Kay’s Kitchen at <http://www.commissaries.com>. Till next time – I’ll see you at the commissary!

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### **Papaya, Black Beans and Rice** (Serves 6)

*Shared by the dietitians at Naval Health Clinic Hawaii, this recipe was featured at a Dietitian’s Kitchen tasting at Pearl Harbor Commissary. Give it a try — it tastes every bit as good as it looks!*

Ingredients:

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large red onion, roughly chopped (1 cup)
- 1 large red bell pepper, roughly chopped (1 cup)
- 1 large green bell pepper, roughly chopped (1 cup)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/2 teaspoon red (cayenne) pepper
- 1/2 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 medium ripe papaya, peeled, seeded and diced
- 2 (15-ounce) cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 6 cups hot cooked brown rice or quinoa (1 1/2 cups uncooked)

Directions:

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat.
2. Add all ingredients except beans and rice; cook, stirring occasionally, until bell peppers are crisp-tender.
3. Stir in beans; cook until mixture is heat through.
4. Serve over rice or quinoa.

**Nutrient analysis:** *Per serving – 410 calories; 5 g. total fat (1 g. sat. fat); 78 g. carbohydrate; 14 g. dietary fiber; 3 g. protein; 440 mg. sodium.*

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**Slow Cooker Potato and Double-Corn Chowder (Serves 6)**

Ingredients:

- 1 (16-ounce) bag Southern-style\* hash brown potatoes, thawed
- 1 (15.25-ounce) can whole kernel corn, undrained
- 1 (14.75-ounce) can cream-style corn
- 1 (12-ounce can) evaporated milk
- 1 medium onion, chopped (about 1/2 cup)
- 4 slices bacon, cooked crisp and crumbled, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients in a 3- to 4-quart slow cooker.
2. Cover; cook on low setting 6 to 8 hours (or high setting 3 to 4 hours) to develop flavors. Add additional milk, chicken broth or water if finished soup is too thick. Ladle into bowls, top with remaining crumbled bacon and serve.

**Note:** Grilled cheese sandwiches pair well with this soup, or make it a one-dish meal by adding chopped tomatoes and shredded cheddar as a topper in addition to the crumbled bacon.

\*Southern-style hash brown potatoes are diced rather than finely chopped or shredded, so hold their shape better in this recipe.

**Nutrient analysis:** *Per serving – 275 calories; 8 g. total fat (3 g. sat. fat); 20 mg. cholesterol; 730 mg. sodium; 56 g. total carbohydrate (5 g. dietary fiber); 13 g. protein.*

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### **Ravioli Lasagna (Serves 4)**

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cups chunk-style spaghetti sauce
- 1/3 cup water
- 1 (9-ounce) package refrigerated meat- or cheese-filled ravioli
- 1 beaten egg
- 1 (15-ounce) carton fat-free ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup grated Romano or Parmesan cheese
- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained

#### Directions:

1. In a 10-inch skillet combine spaghetti sauce and water; bring to boiling.
2. Stir in ravioli. Cover; cook over medium heat about 3 to 5 minutes or until ravioli are almost tender, stirring once to prevent sticking.
3. In a medium mixing bowl combine the egg, ricotta cheese and Romano or Parmesan cheese with a fork.
4. Dot ravioli with small spoonfuls of spinach; drop ricotta mixture by heaping tablespoonfuls onto ravioli and sauce. Cover and cook over low heat about 10 minutes or until ricotta is set and pasta is just tender.

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### **Dirty Rice (Serves 6)**

#### Ingredients:

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 celery ribs, chopped (about 1/2 cup)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground red pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can beef broth
- 3/4 cup water

#### Directions:

1. Cook ground beef, garlic, celery, parsley and green pepper in a large skillet over medium-high heat, stirring until beef crumbles and is no longer pink.
2. Stir in salt, red pepper, black pepper and Worcestershire sauce.
3. Add rice, broth and 3/4 cup water, stirring well. Bring mixture to a boil; cover, reduce heat and simmer 25 to 30 minutes or until rice is tender.

Serve with a salad and green vegetable for a well-balanced meal.

**Nutrient analysis:** *Per Serving – 267 calories, 7 g. total fat (3 g. sat. fat); 28 mg. cholesterol; 775 mg. sodium; 30 g. total carbohydrate (3 g. dietary fiber); 20 g. protein.*

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### **Countryside Pasta Toss (Serves 4)**

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup uncooked rotini pasta (3-ounces)
- 3/4 pound new potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch wedges
- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1/2 cup snap pea pods
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon dried dill weed
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2-ounces fully cooked ham, cut into thin strips

**Directions:**

1. Cook and drain pasta according to package directions.
2. Place 1/2-inch water in a 3-quart saucepan equipped with a steamer basket. Water should not touch the bottom of the basket. Place potatoes and carrots in basket. Cover tightly and heat to boiling; reduce heat to medium-low. Steam 5 minutes.
3. Add broccoli and pea pods. Cover and steam about 2 minutes longer or until potatoes are tender.
4. Place vegetables in a medium bowl. Add butter, parsley, dill weed and salt; toss until coated. Add ham and pasta; toss until well coated and serve.

**Nutrient analysis:** *Per serving – 240 calories; 4 g. total fat (1 g. sat. fat); 5 mg. cholesterol; 230 mg. sodium; 47 mg. carbohydrate (6 g. dietary fiber); 10 g. protein.*

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### **Cheeseburger Crescent Bake (Serves 8)**

**Ingredients:**

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup dill pickle relish
- 1 1/2 cups shredded American cheese (6-ounces)
- 1 (8-ounce) can refrigerated crescent dinner rolls

**Directions:**

1. In a 10-inch skillet, brown ground beef, breaking into crumbles with a spatula, until no longer pink; drain well.
2. Mix the ketchup into ground beef; heat to boiling, over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally.
3. Stir in the relish and 1 cup of the shredded cheese. Spoon into ungreased 9- or 10-inch glass pie plate.
4. Separate crescent roll dough into 8 triangles; roll up 1-inch on shortest side of dough. Place dough on top of the meat mixture in a spoke pattern with points toward the center. Sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup cheese.

5. Bake at 375 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes.
6. Slice into wedges; serve hot.

**Nutrient analysis:** *Per serving – 360 calories; 22 g. total fat (10 g. sat. fat); 75 mg. cholesterol; 620 mg. sodium; 18 g. total carbohydrate (0 g. dietary fiber, 8 g. sugars); 22 g. protein.*

**-DeCA-**

**About DeCA:** *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings amounting to thousands of dollars annually. For current savings figures for various groups – single member up to a family of seven – visit <http://www.commissaries.com>. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America's military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*