



# NEWS RELEASE

## Defense Commissary Agency

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## Quick meals on a budget

*By Lt. Col. Karen E. Hawkins,  
DeCA dietitian*

**FORT LEE, Va.** – Our lives are so busy today. Often both parents are working, children playing sports and participating in all sorts of activities, along with taking the family dog to the vet. It's a real challenge to get it all done and still prepare and serve meals that are quick and healthy. Let your commissary help you do just that. When there's little or no time to cook, stop off at the commissary and choose something that can satisfy you and your hungry family, while saving 30 percent on your grocery bill in the process.

Instead of hitting fast food restaurants, try these quick, easy tips on how to make healthy choices. With some simple tips and tools, it's easy to make meals that are nutritious, quick and tasty.

With just a little planning and preparation, you can create almost a whole meal in a crock pot the night before and turn it on in the morning. Kay's Kitchen has some great slow cooker recipes and meals that are easy and nutritious. One two-ingredient recipe, Slow Cooker Barbeque Beef, can be thrown into the slow cooker just before you dash off to work. It's wonderful to walk in the house with the aroma of dinner waiting for you.

### More meal ideas

#### Mix this

Frozen meal in a bag or meal-to-go in the meat section of the commissary

Salad in a bag

#### with this

Extra frozen vegetables or beans, or brown rice or whole pasta

Sliced almonds; low-fat cheese; dried, canned, or fresh fruit; grape tomatoes

**Mix this****with this**

Cooked vegetables

Salad dressing or marinade

**More tips**

- Keep quick brown rice and canned beans, a great source of protein, on hand for really quick meals. Try adding a little salsa to spice up the dinner.
- Use your microwave for more than frozen dinners. Use it to bake potatoes and sweet potatoes and top them with grated or cottage cheese. Serve with a salad for a unique dinner.
- Have breakfast for dinner: scramble several eggs with cut-up vegetables and cheese. Then serve it with toasted whole-grain bread and fruit. Great way to enjoy the flavor along with all the egg nutrients, including protein and choline.

Add these foods to your shopping list while making your life easier. Eating healthy on a budget can be easy in 30 minutes or less with just a little planning and preparation.

For more information about making healthy choices, visit Ask the Dietitian on <http://www.commissaries.com> and post your questions on the DeCA Dietitian Forum. Be sure to look for other useful information in the Dietitian's Voice archive. Sign up with the DeCA Dietitian on [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and get messages sent to your cell phone today. For delicious recipes, check out Kay's Kitchen. And to enjoy all your commissary has to offer, sign up for the *Commissary Connection*.

**- 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 worth about \$3,400 annually for a family of four. 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.*