

FOOD
family
STYLE

SIMPLE & TASTY
RECIPES FOR
EVERYDAY LIFE



Leigh Oliver Vickery

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The recipe for the Chipotle Chicken Tostadas pictured on the front cover is found on [p. 135](#).

Dedicated to my mother and best friend B. J. Smith, who has helped me discover the
great loves of my life:

Jesus Christ,
my family,
a good book,
a busy kitchen, and
dark chocolate.

Because of you, dear Mama, I believe.

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Introduction

One Big Happy Table

I would like to pretend that mealtime at our house is always peaceful.

In my imaginary world that exists somewhere between Mary of the House of Jesus and Martha of the House of Stewart, I picture my husband and two teenage sons smiling and smelling fresh, seated at our kitchen table while I serve them a hot meal.

And although I don't actually wear any of these in real life, my dream outfit is a freshly pressed pleated skirt, pastel twinset, and a strand of antique pearls.

After appropriate oohing and aahing over the meal I created, we hold hands and take turns thanking God for his blessings. Equally as important, everybody chews with their mouths closed.

Alas, the reality is much closer to these recent real-life examples around our house:

I had forgotten to go to the grocery store the day before, and we were out of everything we usually eat for breakfast.

I said, "We don't have any eggs. Or bacon. Or bread. Or milk. We're having beef tacos for breakfast. You liked them just fine last night. And you better be thankful. Remember there are kids all over the world who will not eat today."

My son hollered, "Then send them the leftover tacos! I just want some American chocolate milk!"

And another night, I was greeted with this as I put dinner on the table:

"MOM, why did you make this again? You know I hate chicken chop suey! If you make me eat this, I will commit chicken chop suicide!" (And no, this cookbook does not include the recipe for the dreaded chicken chop suicide.)

This next one might be the best. As I was finishing preparing a talk for MOPS International's convention in Nashville last year, my husband called upstairs to the office-slash-playroom, "Leigh, supper is on the table. We're waiting for you to come join us."

This was my response, bellowed down the stairwell:

"I don't have time to eat tonight! Don't you remember I fly out tomorrow to give my talk on the importance of family mealtime?!"

Needless to say, as soon as the words left my mouth, I was busted. And the hoots and snickers from around the table downstairs told me how ridiculous I must have sounded.

Kids love it when Mom has to apologize, don't they?

But for all those crazy moments at mealtime, there are many wonderful ones we have enjoyed around our kitchen table. I don't think life feels any better than when we are eating together—laughing, talking, and letting our conversations wander where they will.

And although it doesn't seem logical that simply sharing food with one another would be as important (if not more so) as teaching your kids practical reasons to stay off drugs and to study hard in school, the evidence is clear. Children of families who regularly eat together are more likely to grow up into mature, responsible, and happy people.

But you don't have to take my word for it; there are countless studies coming out of Harvard, Columbia, and other prestigious research facilities that say eating together several times a week is one of the absolute best ways to help children stay on the right path, help marriages remain intimate, and even mend broken relationships.

The more often families eat together, the less likely kids are to smoke, drink, do drugs, get depressed, develop eating disorders, and consider suicide. The flip side is also true. The more often you sit down, eat with your family, and just talk, the more likely your children are to do well in school, delay having sex, eat their vegetables, learn big words, and know which fork to use.

In our home, we try to sit down together to eat at least four nights a week. Yes, it takes work to get everyone's schedule to somehow align and to get food on the table. And yes, many nights it doesn't work out as well as I imagined.

But we try, and I have seen that the more often we make time to eat together, the better our family relationships become. We have learned how to work together (when the boys are hungry enough, they don't mind helping!), we have learned better table manners, and we have learned so much about our boys' thoughts and ideas we might never have known.

And the laughter that comes from full stomachs and the sense of security a family can give—I wouldn't trade that for anything! Even without all the statistics and studies showing that the family dinner is a crucial part of our society, you know in your heart that when good food and laughter are around your table, it simply feels great. It feels right.

I could elaborate on why I think sharing food with people we love is so powerful, but Robert Farrar Capon, an American Episcopal priest and author, says it much better than I can:

For all its greatness, the created order cries out for further greatness still. The most splendid dinner, the most exquisite food, the most gratifying company, arouse more appetites than they satisfy. They do not slake man's thirst for being; they whet it beyond all bounds.^[1]

I have come to understand that time around the dinner table with people I love is

sacred, and the table is our prelude to much better things to come.

One day, my hope is that you and I will be together, laughing and enjoying God's wonderful creation as we were meant to—around one big happy table.

I wanted to write *Food Family Style* to help you enjoy your time in the kitchen and your family's time around the table. Getting food on the table and everyone seated at the same time will always take work, but before you know it, your family will look forward to these moments—and the magic of meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

¹. Robert Farrar Capon, *The Supper of the Lamb* (New York: Smithmark, 1996), 188–90.

Let's Begin

I was in my car when I first received a phone call from Jean Blackmer at MOPS International. (My car really is my second home and office, complete with snacks, toilet paper, and internet service.) It was a dream come true to be asked to help create this cookbook for MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers). Well, to be honest, I had not even known to dream for an opportunity this extraordinary. I am grateful to my loving Father who knows how to care for me and bless me in ways I don't even know how to imagine.

MOPS is an amazing organization, as many of you have experienced. There's nothing better than having a community of other mothers to lean on and learn from when the days feel long and tempers feel short. And although my boys are older now, one of my very best friends came from the time in our lives when we both had young children and just needed to check in with each other (several times a day) to make sure we were not going crazy or making huge parenting mistakes.

MOPS gives you a wonderful place to create friendships with women who are doing their best—just like you—to be great moms, wives, and friends.

And as basic as it sounds, part of our biggest responsibilities in taking care of our families is simply feeding them! It doesn't seem like that big of a deal, but you might be startled to realize your child will eat an average of 19,710 times by the time he or she turns eighteen. Yikes! That's a lot of meals to get on the table ... which is where this cookbook comes into the picture.

I hope this cookbook will help inspire you to make mealtime a priority in your home. I worked with other MOPS moms across the country to find tried-and-true recipes kids and families love, and I have also included many of my friends' and family's favorites to help make your time in the kitchen fun, easy, and delicious!

Throughout each section, you will find helpful, easy-to-read icons to help you plan and prepare meals. Look for these symbols at the end of each recipe to help you choose what's best for your family.

 = Doubles Easily

These recipes can be easily doubled to feed a crowd—or a few hungry teenagers.

 = Freezes Well

These recipes freeze well, making it easier to plan ahead.

 = Gluten Free

These recipes do not have wheat as an ingredient. Some foods have hidden sources of gluten or were processed in a plant where wheat is used, so please always read the labels on the ingredients you choose.

 = Healthful

These recipes are more health-conscious choices, cutting fat or calories, and were created with attention to healthier ingredient options.

 = MOPS Favorite

These recipes are MOPS favorites—and some are from MOPS moms.

 = Slow Cooker

These recipes are suitable for preparing in a slow cooker, and slow cooker instructions are included in the recipe directions.

 = Vegetarian

These recipes are vegetarian.

Food Family Style also has tips for stocking a perfect pantry, getting your kids involved in the kitchen, and talking around the table, as well as a few complete menu ideas for special occasions. Each recipe should feed a family of four, unless it says

otherwise.

My hope is that *Food Family Style* will become your go-to cookbook for family mealtimes. Yes, cooking does take planning and a bit of effort, but in a short time, I am confident you will feel God's blessings upon your family as you enjoy the pleasure of good food and family conversations.

There are few things in life as sacred as sitting together around the table and inviting our Creator to join us as we give thanks for what he has given us. May you feel his love and his pleasure as you go about your kitchen, changing what seems ordinary into something extraordinary for your family: a place full of love called home.

Hope to see you around the table!

Leig

CHAPTER 1

Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking is like love. It should be entered into with abandon or not at all.

Julia Child

My favorite people in the world to cook with are children. I love their imaginations, creativity, willingness to take a risk, and ability to laugh when things don't turn out exactly as planned!

The kitchen is a wonderful playground for you and your child to create, experiment and play, while also offering the benefit of immediate results. I love seeing confidence and joy light up a child's face when a bowl of flour, sugar, eggs, butter, and chocolate magically becomes a pan of warm brownies. Sure, you're going to make a lot of messes but what is life if not a little messy? In the end, you realize life tastes pretty good. And the beauty of being made in the image of our Father, the ultimate Creator, is that the more we create, the more like our true selves we become.

You may not have thought about cooking with your kids as a place to teach more than the basic skills of how to get food on the table, but it's really a beautiful setting for many lessons:

Learning to be patient

Maintaining a sense of humor

Handling failure

Working as a team

Following through on a task

Mastering health and cleanliness skills

Reading and following instructions

Developing math, science, and vocabulary skills

Enjoying a sense of accomplishment

Using your imagination

Developing healthy eating habits

And like any playground, it's best to have a few rules and boundaries in place to keep everyone safe and playing happily.

The first and most important rule of learning to cook is to HAVE FUN! Having fun should be the foundation of every kitchen activity you begin with your children. If it's not fun or if they fear failure, then they'll never discover the joy and pleasure of cooking and eating what they've created. It will seem like just another chore, and they might miss out on one of God's greatest blessings.

Two of the many things I appreciate about my mother are that she gave me a lot of freedom in the kitchen and never, ever told me I was making too big of a mess or that what I created was a disaster. Believe me, I was (and am) messy and made many disasters (think baked iceberg salad!), but she continually encouraged me and built my confidence. This is a wonderful gift you can give your own children, and here's an important secret I've learned: if I let my kids help plan and cook the menu, they are much more likely to eat what they've prepared. This even works with green beans!

Here are a few practical suggestions for you to go over with your child to keep your time in the kitchen running smoothly:

1. Ask permission!

Make sure your child knows to always ask your permission before beginning any project in the kitchen. Hey, why not suggest to them that you want to be their helper in the kitchen? You will learn things together, and the best part is this: at the end, you will have something yummy to enjoy together as a family.

2. Be safe!

Before getting started, make sure you both read our “Safety Tips for Kids” for the kitchen (see [p. 20](#)).

3. Be prepared!

You and your child need to read through the recipe you want to make. Take this time to look up any words or techniques you don't know. You might even learn about another country's culture as you experiment with ethnic recipes. It's also very important to gather together everything you need—both ingredients and tools—before you start cooking. You don't want to be halfway through the recipe and realize you're missing something!

4. Be clean!

Cleaning is a big part of cooking, although it's not nearly as fun. Not only is it safe to keep a tidy kitchen, but if you clean as you go along, then when you're ready to sit down and enjoy what you've cooked you won't have mountains of dishes to worry about.

5. Have fun!

Back to our first rule. Most of all, remember to enjoy your time in the kitchen and learn to do things the way you enjoy! Experiment and make changes that work for

your tastes, and be sure to write those changes next to the recipe so you'll remember next time.

Safety Tips for Kids

Properly Handwash

Always wash your hands before cooking or making a snack. Use warm water and plenty of soap. Wash the tops and bottoms of your hands, between your fingers, and under your fingernails. Scrub for at least twenty seconds. Rinse your hands with warm water, and dry them with a clean towel. You also need to repeat this handwashing immediately after handling any raw meat of any kind.

Prevent Germs

Wash vegetables and fruits in clean water (no soap) before you eat them. Wash your hands immediately after you touch raw poultry, meat, fish, or eggs, which can contain bacteria that can make you ill. Keep work areas and countertops clean by washing them with warm water and soap. Raw meat should be cut and prepared on a separate surface from fruits and vegetables, and that surface should be immediately washed with hot water and soap. Store leftover food in the refrigerator; don't leave it on the counter.

Use Caution around the Stove and Oven

Never use a stove or oven unless an adult has given you permission and instructed you how to use it. Be sure to keep towels, paper towels, and pot holders away from the burners. Don't wear loose clothing or long sleeves while cooking, as clothing can catch fire if it touches a hot burner. Turn pan handles toward the rear of the stove so the pan won't be accidentally knocked over by somebody walking by. Turn the stove or oven off when you're done cooking, and remember that the burner will stay hot for several minutes after it has been turned off.

Practice Microwave Safety

Although microwave ovens can be safer and easier to use than the stove, there are still certain dangers. Ask your parents what containers are safe to use in the microwave. Avoid plastic bags and plastic tubs because the plastic can melt. Don't use brown paper bags or Styrofoam takeout containers. And NEVER use aluminum foil or metal in the microwave. Remember that food is very hot when it's removed from the microwave, even if it doesn't look hot. Stir food before you eat it, as some parts might be hotter than others.

*The Lord is good to me
For this I thank the Lord
For giving me the things I need
The sun, the rain, and the appleseed
The Lord is good to me.*

—*The Johnny Appleseed Song*



- 2 cups pineapple juice
- 1 cup ice cubes
- 1/3 cup nonfat milk
- 1/4 cup honey

Combine all ingredients in a blender. Make sure the blender lid is on tight before you turn it on. Process on high speed until smooth and frothy, about 45 seconds. Pour into 4 glasses and serve.



- 2 cups raisins
- 2 cups candy-coated chocolate pieces such as plain M&Ms
- 2 cups pretzel sticks or small pretzel twists
- 2 cups sunflower nuts
- 2 cups toasted oat “o” cereal such as Cheerios

Combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl, stir, and divide mixture evenly between 16 resealable sandwich bags (about 3/4 cup each). Store bags in freezer. Just pull out, wait 10 minutes, and you'll be ready to hit the trail!



- 3 cups gluten free rice cereal squares
- 3 cups popped popcorn
- ½ cup mixed nuts
- 3 Tbs. vegetable oil
- ⅓ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 2 tsp. garlic salt
- 2 tsp. chili powder

Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine cereal, popcorn, and nuts in large bowl. Drizzle with oil and stir to coat. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, garlic salt, and chili powder, stirring to coat evenly. Spread mixture on large, ungreased baking sheet. Bake 15 minutes, turning once. Cool and store in an airtight container. Serves about 6.



- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter, melted
- ½ tsp. chili powder
- ½ tsp. garlic salt
- ¼ tsp. onion powder
- 8 cups popped popcorn
- ¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Combine first four ingredients. Pour over popcorn, stirring to coat well. Sprinkle with cheese and stir again. Makes 8 servings.



- 1 (10 oz.) bag pretzel rods
- 1 (28 oz.) jar peanut butter, crunchy or creamy
- 1 pkg. chocolate almond bark
- 1 cup crisp rice cereal, crushed
- 1 cup raisins

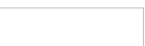
½ cup candy sprinkles
1 cup peanuts, crushed

Spread each pretzel rod with peanut butter and place on foil-lined cookie sheet. In a medium saucepan, melt chocolate almond bark over low heat, stirring often. When melted, spoon evenly over each pretzel rod. Sprinkle pretzels with assorted toppings as desired. Allow to harden on cookie sheet.



6 red apples
1 cup water
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
¾ tsp. cinnamon
¼ cup sugar

Core and peel all apples, then quarter and cut into chunks. Place apple chunks in a medium saucepan. Add all remaining ingredients and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring often. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for about 20–30 minutes, until apples soften and break apart, stirring every few minutes. Transfer mixture to a food processor and pulse until desired consistency. Serve warm or refrigerate until cooled. Keeps about a week in the refrigerator. Serves 4–6.



1½ cups all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
3 med. very ripe bananas, peeled
¾ cup sugar
⅓ cup vegetable oil
2 lg. eggs
1½ tsp. vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9 × 5 loaf pan with butter or nonstick cooking spray. In a medium bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, salt, and baking soda. In a large

bowl, smash the bananas with a fork. Add sugar, oil, eggs, and vanilla, and beat until well blended. Add the flour mixture to the banana mixture. Stir just until blended. Pour batter into prepared loaf pan. Bake for about 45 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center of the bread comes out with just a few crumbs clinging to it. Remove pan from oven and cool on a rack for 20 minutes. Gently run a table knife along edge of pan to loosen bread. Carefully turn the loaf out onto a cooling rack. Let cool at least 15 minutes before cutting and serving. Serves 10.



- 1 pkg. blueberry muffin mix with crumb topping
- 2 Tbs. poppy seeds
- 1 egg
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup powdered sugar
- 1 Tbs. lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray. Rinse berries that came in the mix with cold water; drain very well and set aside. Empty muffin mix into medium bowl. Add poppy seeds and stir well to break up any lumps. Add egg and water. Stir until moist, about 50 strokes with a wooden spoon. Fold in berries. Pour gently into loaf pan. Sprinkle with the crumb topping packet from the mix. Bake about 45–55 minutes, until toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in pan 10 minutes. Loosen sides of loaf from pan with a table knife. Place a piece of foil over the loaf to keep the topping intact, and flip over onto a plate. Flip again, right side up, onto a cooling rack. Cool completely. Mix powdered sugar and lemon juice together, and drizzle over cooled loaf. Serves 10.



- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 cup plain bread crumbs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tsp. garlic salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsalted butter, melted

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line baking sheet with aluminum foil. Cut chicken breast into

bite-size chunks. Mix bread crumbs with Parmesan cheese and garlic salt. Dip chicken into melted butter, then roll in crumb mixture. Place on foil-lined baking sheet and bake for 10–12 minutes. Remove from oven and serve warm. Also good cold for leftovers.



- 1 lb. carrots, peeled and sliced into rounds
- 1 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 2 Tbs. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. water

Place sliced carrots in a microwave-safe bowl and cover with water. Cover bowl loosely with plastic wrap or microwave-safe lid and microwave for 6–7 minutes, until carrots are fork-tender. Drain water and set carrots aside. In a small skillet, melt butter and stir in brown sugar and water. Cook on medium heat for 1 minute. Add carrot coins and toss to coat with brown sugar mixture. Cook on low for 3–4 minutes or until carrots are thoroughly glazed.



- 1 (1 lb.) loaf frozen bread dough, thawed in refrigerator
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- ½ Tbs. dried basil
- ½ Tbs. dried oregano
- 8 oz. sliced pepperoni
- 1½ cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp. water

Place dough in a large, lightly greased bowl. Cover and place in a warm location. Allow dough to rise until doubled in size, about two hours, then punch down. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a large baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray. Roll dough into a 12 by 18 inch rectangle and brush with olive oil. Sprinkle dough with basil and oregano, then layer with pepperoni, leaving a half-inch border at all edges. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Beginning with the longest edge, roll dough into a thin cylinder and seal seam. Place on baking sheet, seam side down, and brush with egg that has been beaten with 1 teaspoon water. Bake 35 minutes or until golden brown. Slice to serve.



- 1 (10½ oz.) can cream of potato soup
- 1 (29 oz.) can Homestyle Veg-All, drained
- 2 cups chicken, cooked and diced
- ½ cup milk
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. dried thyme
- 2 (9 in.) pie crusts, unbaked

“Veg-All” is a brand name for a type of canned vegetables containing carrots, celery, potatoes, sweet peas, and onions. The “Homestyle” variety is cut into larger chunks. If you can't find Veg-All in the canned vegetable aisle of your grocery store, you can easily make your own vegetable mixture.

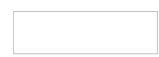
Preheat oven to 375°F. Mix all ingredients together except crusts. Place one crust in the bottom of a deep-dish pie plate. Pour mixture over. Cover with other crust, and crimp edges to seal well. Using a sharp knife, make slits in the top crust to allow steam to escape. Bake 40–45 minutes. Let sit 10 minutes before serving. Serves 4–6.



- 1 lb. stew beef, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 cups cherry tomatoes
- ¼ cup soy sauce
- ¼ cup honey
- salt to taste
- 4 skewers

If using wooden skewers, make sure to soak them in water for 15 minutes before using so they don't burn.

Preheat oven broiler. Line a baking sheet with foil. Combine beef cubes, cherry tomatoes, soy sauce, honey, and salt in a medium bowl and toss to coat. Alternating, thread beef cubes and tomatoes onto skewers. Place kabobs on baking sheet and broil 10 minutes, turning once.



- 2 Tbs. whipped cream cheese (lighter variety works well)
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1 sm. tart apple, peeled, cored, and thinly sliced
- 2 Tbs. crunchy peanut butter
- 2 slices whole wheat bread

Combine cream cheese, vanilla, and honey. Spread cream cheese mixture on one slice of bread. Place apple slices on top. Spread peanut butter on the other slice of bread. Place bread on top of apples, peanut butter side down. Press lightly. Cut in half. Serve 1.



- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 3 cups whole milk
- 2 cups mild cheddar cheese, shredded

In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add flour and salt, whisking constantly for 2 minutes. Whisk in milk and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 2 minutes, whisking occasionally. Remove from heat and add cheese. Stir well. Great over all steamed vegetables.



- 1 lg. egg, lightly beaten
- ⅛ tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. black pepper
- 2 cups panko (Japanese bread crumbs) or regular bread crumbs
- 1 Tbs. seafood seasoning

2 Tbs. extra virgin olive oil
~~1½ lbs. tilapia or whitefish fillets, cut into strips~~

Preheat oven to 475°F. Spray 1–2 baking sheets with nonstick cooking spray. Place egg in shallow bowl and season with salt and pepper. In a separate bowl, combine panko, seafood seasoning, and olive oil. Toss with a fork to make sure crumbs are evenly coated with oil. Dip fish strips in egg and then in panko mixture. You might need to press with your fingers to make sure crumbs stick. Place on baking sheets, at least an inch apart. Bake without turning until lightly browned, 12–15 minutes.



6 lg. eggs
¼ cup milk
1 tsp. seasoned salt
2 tsp. unsalted butter
½ cup cheddar cheese, shredded

Whisk eggs in a small mixing bowl until combined. Add milk and seasoned salt. Whisk again. Melt butter in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add eggs and cook, stirring constantly, until eggs are barely set, about a minute. Sprinkle with cheese and remove from heat. Let rest a minute while cheese melts. Serve immediately.



2 Tbs. vegetable oil
2 cups yellow onion, chopped
1 cup celery, chopped
1½ cups carrots, peeled and diced or sliced
2 tsp. seasoned salt
1 garlic clove, minced
2 qts. chicken broth
2 cups water
¼ tsp. black pepper
1 cup alphabet pasta, uncooked

Heat oil in a large, heavy stockpot over medium-high heat. Add onion, celery, carrots,

and seasoned salt. Cook, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 2 more minutes. Add broth, water, and pepper. Stir well and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Add pasta and stir well. Simmer until pasta is cooked through, about 10 minutes. Serves 8.



- 1 (32 oz.) bag frozen tater tots
- ¼ cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup yellow onion, chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper
- ½ lb. cooked ham, diced
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 3 cups milk
- 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 425°F. Place tater tots in a 9 × 13 casserole dish. Bake 30 minutes, turning once, until crisp. Reduce heat to 375°F. In a medium saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion, salt, and pepper. Cook until onion is softened, about 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add ham and flour and cook 2 more minutes, stirring constantly. Add milk, still stirring. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until thickened, about 2 minutes. Stir in 1 cup of the cheese. Pour over tater tots. Top with remaining cheese. Bake until bubbly, about 30 minutes. Let sit 5 minutes before serving.



- 6 lg. eggs
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. paprika
- 3 pita rounds, warmed and soft
- ¼ cup ranch dressing
- 1 avocado, pitted and peeled
- 2 Tbs. roasted sunflower seeds, shelled

Place eggs in a medium saucepan. Add cold water to cover eggs by 1 inch. Bring to a

boil over medium-high heat. Once water is boiling, reduce heat to medium-low. Cook ~~for exactly 10 minutes. Remove saucepan from heat and drain hot water from pan. Run~~ cold water over eggs until they are cool enough to handle. Peel eggs immediately, or it will get much harder once they've cooled. Cut each egg in half, then chop into small pieces. Put chopped eggs in a medium mixing bowl and add mayonnaise, salt, and paprika. Mash with a fork to blend. Store in refrigerator until ready to use. To make pita pockets, cut each pita in half and spread ranch dressing inside each pocket. Cut avocado into 12 thin slices, and place 3 slices inside each pocket. Spoon $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the prepared egg salad into each half, and sprinkle with sunflower seeds. Serve immediately. Makes 6.



- 8 (8 in.) flour tortillas
- 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, grated
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated
- 4 tsp. white onion, finely chopped
- 4 tsp. vegetable oil or melted butter
- salsa and guacamole to garnish

Place 1 tortilla on a flat surface. Cover with about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of each of the cheeses. Top with 1 teaspoon of onion. Top with another tortilla. Brush top with oil or melted butter. Repeat to make 4 quesadillas. Heat a medium nonstick skillet over medium-low heat. Spray with nonstick cooking spray and place 1 quesadilla in the skillet, ungreased side down. Cook just until golden on the bottom, about 3 minutes. Flip and cook 2 more minutes. Repeat for remaining quesadillas. Serve hot with salsa and guacamole, desired.



- 2 cups white rice
- 4 cups water
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup carrots, diced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup frozen green peas
- 2 Tbs. vegetable oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup green onions, chopped
- 2 eggs

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