

Chicken Freezer Meals Mini Session – Introductory Meals

from [Make-Ahead Meal Mom](#)

I've chosen these recipes to provide a sampling of some of the options that are available for freezer meals. We've got two casseroles, one meal to be cooked in the oven, and two meals that are cooked in the slow cooker or Instant Pot. Some of them require you to pre-cook the chicken, others do not and are put together using raw chicken with very little other prep.

I've also pulled recipes that will take advantage of items that are currently on sale with the pre-Thanksgiving meal deals going on right now, so we can save as much as possible!

The plan includes five recipes, making two of each, for a total of ten meals.

Recipes:

1. [Bruschetta Chicken Bake](#)
2. [Cranberry Catalina Chicken](#)
3. [Chicken Bacon Ranch Taquitos](#)
4. [Café Rio Chicken](#)
5. [Chicken Alfredo Bake](#)

These recipes are written for 6-8 servings each. If you are making for a smaller crowd, you may want to only make one of each recipe, and split it into two containers for two smaller meals. The shopping list will include all ingredients to make two of each meal. If you're only doing one, cut the shopping list ingredients by half.

I suggest doing the Bruschetta Chicken and Chicken Alfredo Bake in aluminum pans for the freezer, although you can do the alfredo in a zip top bag if you prefer. I get the half steam table pans in big packs at Sam's club, but you can get similar ones in a two-pack at Walmart or even the Dollar Store. You will need a lid for your pans (not the clear plastic kind), or a roll of aluminum foil to cover the pans.

The other three will all use zip top freezer bags in the gallon size. Try to get the "freezer" version rather than the "storage" version, as it uses heavy plastic and provides a bit more protection from freezer burn.



Bruschetta Chicken Bake

All the great taste of the classic Bruschetta Chicken, but in an easy-to-make and easy-to-freeze casserole! Serve with garlic bread and a green salad for an easy weeknight dinner!



Yield: One casserole, with 6-8 servings.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 (6 oz.) package boxed stuffing mix, chicken variety
- 1 14.5oz can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (or about 2 teaspoons)
- 1 teaspoon dried basil

MATERIALS

- 1 9x13 (or half steam table) aluminum pan, with lid*
- aluminum foil (if your pan didn't come with a lid)

PREP

1. Spray inside of baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Place chicken in bottom of dish and spread evenly. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Sprinkle mozzarella cheese over chicken pieces.
3. In medium-size bowl, combine stuffing mix, tomatoes, water, garlic and basil. Stir to combine. Spread stuffing mixture evenly over chicken and cheese.
4. Cover, label, date and freeze.

COOK

1. Remove from freezer and thaw overnight in refrigerator.
2. Heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
3. Bake uncovered for 30 minutes or until chicken is fully cooked.

Cranberry Catalina Chicken

Don't let the ingredients scare you - this is a delightful meal that is a great balance of sweet and savory! Serve over rice.



Yields: One gallon-sized freezer bag with 6 servings.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 (14 oz.) can cranberry sauce (I like whole berry, but jellied works, too)
- 8 oz. (1/2 bottle) Catalina dressing
- 1 packet dry onion soup mix (or 2 tablespoons [homemade](#))

MATERIALS

- 1 gallon-sized plastic freezer bag

PREP

1. Label your freezer bag.
2. Add all ingredients to freezer bag.
3. Remove as much air as possible and seal bag.
4. Knead bag gently to mix chicken and sauce.
5. Label and date. Then lay bag flat in freezer to freeze.

COOK

1. The night before cooking, remove meal from freezer and place in your refrigerator to thaw overnight.
2. The morning of, pour contents of freezer bag into crockpot.
3. Cook:
 - a. In slow cooker, on LOW for 3-4 hours, or until chicken is thoroughly cooked.
 - b. In Instant Pot or pressure cooker, HIGH pressure for 8 minutes, then 10 minutes natural release, then quick release.
4. Remove chicken, shred, and return to crock pot. Stir to combine with sauce. Serve over rice or pasta.

Note: I usually double the sauce because my family likes it over rice. I have not included the ingredients for double sauce in the shopping list – if you want to double the sauce, add 1 additional bottle Catalina dressing and 2 additional cans of cranberry sauce to your list.

Chicken Bacon Ranch Taquitos

This is a delightful recipe from [Six Sister's Stuff](#) and is a family favorite! The creamy, cheesy chicken filling inside the crispy flaky tortillas is to die for! I've modified their recipe slightly to make it freezer-friendly.



Yields: 20 taquitos.

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 10-12 slices bacon , cooked and crumbled (about 1 box of the pre-cooked stuff)
- 4 cups chicken , cooked and shredded (about 2 pounds chicken)
- 1 packet dry ranch dressing mix (or 3 tablespoons [homemade](#))
- 2 cups Monterey Jack cheese , shredded
- 3 tablespoons green onion , chopped
- 2 (10ct) packages flour tortillas, soft taco size (6 inch)
- non-stick cooking spray
- salt

MATERIALS

- 2 gallon-sized plastic freezer bags

PREP

1. Place softened cream cheese into large bowl and stir until smooth (to remove any lumps).
2. Add in chicken, bacon, cheese, onions and ranch dressing mix. Stir to combine. Taste, and add salt or more ranch dressing mix if needed.
3. Place 2-3 tablespoons of filling mix onto a tortilla, in a thin line near one edge. Wrap the edge of the tortilla over the filling mixture and roll tightly, ending seam-side down. Repeat with remaining tortillas.
4. Label and date a gallon-size freezer bag, being sure to include baking directions. Place rolled taquitos gently in bag. Freeze until needed.

COOK

1. Place frozen taquitos onto a foil-lined baking sheet. Spray with non-stick cooking spray, and sprinkle lightly with salt.
2. Bake at 425 degrees Fahrenheit for 20-25 minutes or until lightly golden brown.
3. Serve with your choice of toppings (shredded lettuce, sour cream, chopped tomatoes, etc.) and/or dipping sauces (salsa, ranch dressing, etc.).

Crockpot Café Rio Chicken

This copycat Cafe Rio Chicken recipe is an easy freezer meal to add to your rotation! It tastes delicious, can be eaten multiple ways, and requires no pre-cooking or prep!! Serve in tacos or on a Southwestern salad!



Yields: One gallon-sized freezer bag with 6 servings.

INGREDIENTS

- 4-6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1/2 bottle Zesty Italian salad dressing
- 1 packet dry ranch dressing mix (or 3 tablespoons [homemade](#))
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 1/2 - 2 teaspoons)
- 1/2 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/2 tablespoon ground cumin

MATERIALS

- 1 gallon-sized plastic freezer bag

PREP

1. Label your freezer bag.
2. Add all ingredients to your freezer bag.
3. Remove as much air as possible, seal, and lay flat in freezer.

COOK

1. The night before cooking, move bag to your refrigerator to thaw.
2. The morning of, pour contents of freezer bag into crockpot.
3. Cook:
 - a. In slow cooker on LOW for 4-6 hours, or until chicken is thoroughly cooked;
 - b. In Instant Pot or pressure cooker, HIGH pressure for 15 minutes, then 10 minutes natural release, then quick release.
4. Remove chicken, shred, and return to crock or pot. Stir to combine with sauce. Serve over rice, pasta, in tacos or add to salad.

Chicken Alfredo Bake

Rich, creamy and absolutely delicious! Your family will never know this is a Freezer meal! This is comfort food at its finest and a carb lover's dream!!



Yields: One 9x13 casserole, 6-8 servings.

INGREDIENTS

- 16 ounces penne rigate pasta
- 6 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons olive oil (see notes)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 1/2 - 2 teaspoons)
- 4 cups heavy cream
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese
- 2 ounces cream cheese
- salt (to taste)
- 2-3 chicken breasts, cooked and diced
- chopped parsley, for garnish (optional)

MATERIALS

- 1 9x13 (or half steam table) aluminum pan, with lid*
- aluminum foil (if your pan didn't come with a lid)

PREP

1. Prepare pasta per package directions, to the al dente stage. (Pasta will cook further in the oven, so do not overcook.)
2. While pasta is cooking, melt butter in large saucepan or dutch oven on stovetop over medium heat. Add olive oil as butter melts.
3. Add the garlic, cream, pepper and 1 cup of the parmesan cheese. Stir to combine and melt cheese.
4. Allow sauce to simmer for 8-10 minutes until thickened, stirring frequently to avoid burning or scorching. Once thickened, remove from heat.
5. Add in mozzarella and cream cheese and stir to combine and allow cheese to melt. Add salt to taste (if needed).
6. Drain pasta then place back in pot. Add in sauce and diced chicken to pasta and stir to combine.

7. Pour pasta and sauce mixture into a 9x13 baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining parmesan cheese.
8. Allow to cool. Cover and label, being sure to include baking directions. Place in freezer.

COOK

1. Remove pan from freezer and allow to thaw overnight in refrigerator.
2. Bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 15-20 minutes, until top begins to brown slightly and sauce is bubbly. Remove from oven, garnish with parsley (if desired) and serve.

Notes: I like to use grilled chicken in this when I can, and Tuscan Herb flavored olive oil (I get mine from Redstone Oil). You can use regular olive oil, or leave it out completely if desired.

SHOPPING LIST

MEATS

- 18 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 20-24 slices precooked bacon (about 2 boxes of the commercial stuff)

DAIRY

- 5 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- 4 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 3 cups shredded Parmesan cheese
- 3 (8 oz) packages cream cheese
- 8 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1 1/2 cups butter

MISC

- 2 (6 oz) boxes stuffing mix, chicken variety
- 2 (14.5 - 15 oz) cans diced tomatoes
- 1 (16 oz) bottle Catalina dressing
- 1 (16 oz) bottle Italian or Zesty Italian dressing
- 2 (14 oz) cans cranberry sauce (whole berry or jellied)
- 2 packets dry onion soup mix (or homemade)
- 4 packets dry ranch dressing mix (or homemade)
- 4 (10 ct) packages flour tortillas, soft taco size
- 2 (16 oz) packages penne rigate pasta

PRODUCE

- 14 cloves garlic, minced (I totally cheat and use the pre-minced jarred stuff from Costco)
- 1 bunch green onions

PANTRY STAPLES

- salt
- pepper
- ground cumin
- chili powder
- dried basil

MATERIALS

- 8 gallon-size freezer bags
- 4 9x13 or half steam table aluminum pans, with lids*
- *aluminum foil if your pans don't come with lids
- Black Sharpie or permanent marker

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There aren't a lot of prep steps to these recipes. You may work recipe by recipe in any order. But I'll give you a suggested run-down in case you'd like a walk-through of what I do.

1. Start by trimming all your chicken breasts (if not already trimmed), to remove extra fat. Then place back in refrigerator, covered, until needed (unless you work fast). [You can stick the trimmings in a freezer bag and freeze them for later use in homemade chicken broth.]
2. Cook 4lbs of the chicken to shred. You can do this several ways, depending on your time and preferences:
 - a. In your slow cooker earlier that day (place chicken breasts in slow cooker, add a cup of water or chicken broth, and cook on low for about 4 hours);
 - b. In a pot (bring a large pot of water to a boil, add chicken, reduce heat and allow to cook over medium heat (slow boil) for 25-30 minutes until cooked through);
 - c. In an Instant Pot or pressure cooker (add chicken breasts to cooking pot, add 1 ½ cups water or chicken broth, cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, with 10 min natural release, then quick release).

Allow chicken to cool, shred and refrigerate until needed in step 7.

3. While that chicken is cooking, grill or fry or broil another 4 pounds of chicken, then allow to cook and dice into bite-sized pieces. Refrigerate until needed in step 8.
4. Assemble the two Bruschetta Chicken Bake according to directions.
5. Assemble the two Cranberry Catalina Chickens according to directions.
6. Assemble the two Café Rio Chickens according to directions.
7. Slice green onions, crumble bacon, and use shredded chicken to assemble the Chicken Bacon Ranch Taquitos.
8. Cook and assemble the two Chicken Alfredo Bakes according to directions.