

Week

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2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
4 cups cooked red beans (see Sunday)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 cup chopped scallions

1. Cook rice according to package directions. Let stand, covered, in pot until serving. (Reserve the rest of the rice for Thursday.)

2. Heat the olive oil in a Dutch oven or deep skillet over medium high. Add the garlic and stir-fry mix and cook, stirring occasionally, until somewhat softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, vinegar, cumin, oregano and Tabasco; cook 2 to 3 minutes. Add the beans, salt and pepper; reduce heat to medium, cover and simmer 10 to 12 minutes.

3. Serve beans over rice; garnish with scallions. Makes 4 servings.

Tuesday

Use thinly sliced leftover pork to make warm pressed Cubano sandwiches — they take less than 10 minutes to make. Make it on a whole-grain baguette and accompany with a salad and/or steamed vegetable for a well-balanced meal.

CUBANO (PRESSED CUBAN SANDWICH)

Serve with a salad and/or steamed vegetable.

1 (10-ounce) baguette
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
4 ounces sliced Swiss cheese (reduced fat, if desired)
8 ounces sliced pork (see Sunday)
6 long dill pickle slices
1 tablespoon olive oil

1. Split the bread horizontally. Spread the mustard over both cut surfaces. Place a layer of cheese on the bottom half; top with the pork, pickles and a second layer of cheese. Close the sandwich and brush the outside surfaces (top and bottom) with olive oil. Cut into 4 even lengths.

2. Heat a large, nonstick skillet over medium high and add sandwiches. Place a heavy skillet (such as cast iron) on top of sandwiches and cook until the undersides are golden and the cheese begins to melt, 2 to 3 minutes. Turn the sandwiches and repeat, again weighting the sandwiches with the heavy skillet, and cook until the cheese is melted, another 2 to 3 minutes. Serve

immediately. Makes 4 servings.

Wednesday

The red beans you made on Sunday get put to good use in this hearty and healthful minestrone that is far less labor intensive than most: It is made with a combination of nutritious frozen and fresh vegetables to keep your workload light without sacrificing flavor. You may even have some left over — it reheats beautifully in the microwave for lunch, or can be frozen for a couple of months.

MINESTRONE

Serve this soup with crusty garlic bread

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 cup frozen chopped onion, thawed
4 ribs celery, chopped (about 2 cups)
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon dried basil
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
6 cups lower-sodium chicken or vegetable broth

1 (14 1/2-ounce) can diced tomatoes
1/4 cup ditalini pasta
1 (10-ounce) box frozen peas and carrots, thawed
2 cups cooked red beans (see Sunday)

1 pound zucchini, cut into 1-inch pieces
Grated Parmesan, for garnish

1. Heat oil in a large soup pot. Add the onion, celery, garlic, basil and thyme, and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is soft and translucent, 4 to 5 minutes.

2. Add the broth and tomato and bring to a boil. Stir in the ditalini, reduce heat to simmer and add the peas and carrots and red beans; simmer 20 minutes.

3. Add zucchini and cook 10 minutes longer. Ladle into bowls and sprinkle with Parmesan. Makes 10 cups.

Thursday

Use the last of the pork and that extra batch of rice you made to whip up pork fried rice. For this and other recipes calling for minced garlic, we used the bottled, pre-chopped version with good results. And we loved the time savings.

PORK FRIED RICE

For a crunchy and refreshing accompaniment, toss shredded cabbage with rice vinegar, soy sauce and sesame seeds.

2 tablespoons lower-sodium soy

Shopping List

PRODUCE

2 pounds baking potatoes
1 head garlic (or 1 small jar chopped garlic)
1 bunch scallions
1 red onion
1 red bell pepper
6 ounces sugar snap peas
Celery
1 pound zucchini

SHELF GOODS AND STAPLES

Dried thyme
Dried basil
Ground cumin
Dried oregano
Olive oil
Canola oil
1 pound dry (not canned) red kidney beans
14-ounce box fast-cooking brown rice (for Monday and Thursday)
2 (14 1/2-ounce) cans diced tomatoes
Sherry vinegar
Tabasco sauce

1 (10-ounce) whole-grain baguette or French loaf
Dijon mustard
Low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
Ditalini pasta
Low-sodium soy sauce
Hoisin sauce
Rice vinegar

MEAT

1 (3- to 4-pound) boneless pork loin

DAIRY

Sliced Swiss cheese (reduced fat, if desired)
Kosher dill pickle slices
Eggs
Parmesan cheese

FREEZER

1 (20-ounce) bag frozen pepper and onion stir-fry mix
Frozen chopped onions
10-ounce box frozen peas and carrots
10-ounce box frozen peas (if not using fresh snap peas for the fried rice)

sauce

1 tablespoon hoisin sauce
1 teaspoon rice vinegar
1 tablespoon canola oil
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup very thinly sliced red onion
2 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 teaspoon)
1 large red bell pepper, cut into strips 1/4 inch wide and 2 inches long
2 cups diced cooked pork (see Sunday)
4 cups cooked rice (see Monday)
2 cups (about 6 ounces) sugar snap peas or
1 (10-ounce) box frozen peas, thawed

1. Combine the soy sauce, hoisin and

rice vinegar in a small bowl; set aside.

2. Heat the oil in a large, nonstick skillet over medium high. Add the eggs and let them set slightly for about 1 minute; stir gently until cooked and remove from pan. Cut into strips.

3. Add the onion, garlic and pepper to skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion and garlic are soft, about 3 minutes. Add the pork and rice; stir and add hoisin mixture. Add peas and cook, stirring often, until the peas are crisp-tender and bright green, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in the egg and serve. Makes 4 servings.

(Marge Perry is a food writer for *Newsday*.)

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