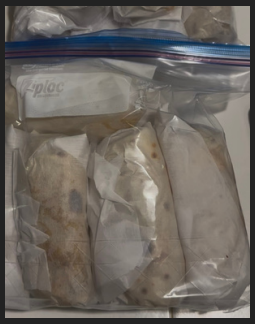
A SURVIVAL GUIDE TO FEEDING YOUR FERAL FAMILY WITHOUT GOING BROKE OR INSANE

THAT SWAMP MOM'S SMART KITCHEN













JULIANNA
@THAT.SWAMPMOM

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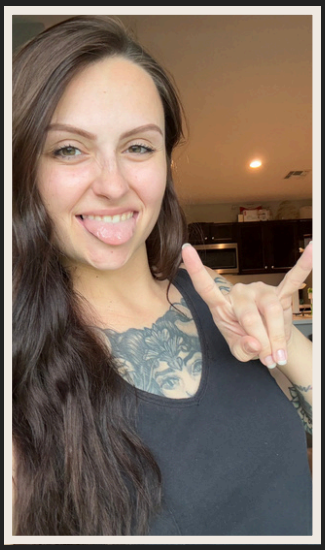
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WELCOME TO THE SWAMP

I'm Julianna, Captain of The Sh*t Show

This is my entire brain on budgeting and feeding a household of bottomless pits with opinions, organized into one gloriously chaotic guide so you don't have to start from scratch or cry in a grocery store parking lot like I did.

A little backstory:



We've never had an unlimited grocery budget, especially living in one of the most expensive zip codes in the country, which was a cute choice. But when I became a stay-at-home mom with our first baby, things got real. Like, "Do I buy eggs or toilet paper?" real.

We've always cared about eating real food that actually tastes good, but also? I didn't want to cook for three hours a day. I didn't have twelve hundred bucks to spend a month on groceries. And I definitely didn't want to keep hearing, "What's for dinner?" while staring into an empty fridge.

So I started figuring it out. One chaotic week at a time. Eventually I created a system that let us eat like normal (sometimes even happy) people, stay under budget every month, and meal prep in a way that doesn't hijack my entire weekend.

Now I'm handing you everything I learned so you can feed your crew without losing your mind, your money, or your motivation.

Let's get into it.

- That Swamp Mom

@THAT.SWAMPMOM

CHAPTER ONE

BUDGETING ESSENTIALS

The very first step...

Let's be real, developing financial literacy and a little budgeting awareness is one of the biggest parts of making this whole thing actually work. You can't meal plan with any kind of intention if you have no clue what your budget is.



But don't panic. No matter how broke or bougie your current situation is, you can make this work. There are a ton of ways to adapt your meal planning to fit your budget, whether that's $200 a month or closer to $1,000.

For reference, I've got a family of five. That means three meals a day, five mouths to feed, and a hard grocery cap of $800 a month. I cannot go over that number unless I want to stress cry in the produce aisle.



If you don't know what your monthly grocery budget should be, here's how to figure it out without spiraling.

Start by looking at your monthly income and subtracting your non-negotiables — stuff like rent or mortgage, car payment, insurance, utilities, and anything else that keeps your life functioning.



What's left after that is where your grocery budget comes from. And if you scroll through your bank statement and notice a lot of "treat yourself" energy (no shame), that's a great place to trim a little fat and make room for food that actually fuels you and your crew.

More food, less impulse Amazon carts. That's the vibe.

CHAPTER ONE: BUDGETING ESSENTIALS

BUILDING A BUDGET



If you're brand new to figuring out how much you can actually spend on groceries each month, here's the rule: err on the low side first. It's way better to come in under budget than to find yourself eating cereal for dinner during the last week of the month.

Once you've got your monthly number nailed down, break it down by how many people you're feeding and how many meals you're responsible for each day.

So let's say, like me, your monthly budget is $800. If I divide that across a 31-day month, I've got $25.80 per day to feed this whole crew.



And there are five of us. Eating three meals a day. That means I've got to pull off 15 meals a day on a total of $25.80. Which comes out to about $1.72 per meal per person. Sounds absolutely insane — but hang tight. You're about to see some budget magic.

If tracking expenses makes you break out in hives, don't worry. I made a worksheet to help you keep tabs on what you're spending and refine your budget as you go. **Click here for your customizable and printable expenses tracking sheet.**



Now that we've survived the numbers talk, we can finally dive into the fun part, planning the actual meals.

Math class is dismissed. Let's get into the food.

"Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishment"

-Jim Rohn

CHAPTER TWO

MEAL MAPPING

Now that you've got your budget locked in, the next thing to figure out is what kind of food actually flies in your house. I'm talking about your household's diet and what ingredients are non-negotiable.

In our swamp, we eat an animal-based diet. That means meat is showing up at least once a day, and we're pretty intense about what does and doesn't make it into the kitchen. No seed oils. No artificial dyes. No mystery ingredients we can't pronounce.

We're flexible on organic vs. non-organic most of the time, except when it comes to the Dirty Dozen. If it's on that list, it's gotta be organic or it's not coming home. If you've never heard of the Dirty Dozen or the Clean Fifteen, don't worry, I've got a breakdown for you in the tips & resources chapter.

I'm not above snatching a good deal though. If organic meat happens to be the same price as regular, you better believe I'm stocking up. But if the price difference means I can't afford butter that isn't made with actual butterfat? I'll skip the organic meat that week and keep the real fat on the table.

Because we know our dietary priorities, I plan ahead for extra spending in certain areas. We go through a lot of butter. And olive oil. And tallow. Because when you cut out vegetable oils, you've gotta make sure you've got the good stuff on hand.

So before you even start building out your meal plans, get honest about what your family actually eats and what you're not willing to compromise on. This will keep you from impulse buying random crap that doesn't line up with your actual food values, and will make your budget stretch way further in the long run.

Once I know our dietary priorities, I can figure out which ingredients we're willing to spend more on and hunt for sales accordingly.

Before I start building my grocery list, I do something I call meal mapping — planning out every meal for the month in one sitting. It sounds intense, but it saves so much stress, time, and money in the long run.

The goal is to create a monthly rotation of meals that use similar ingredients, so nothing goes to waste. It's way easier when you're cooking with real, simple food.

Your meal map becomes the backbone of your grocery list, and I've included a template to help you plan meals for your family without the mental gymnastics.

Click here for your customizable and printable meal map.

CHAPTER TWO: MEAL MAPPING

Once your meal map is done, it's time to turn it into your master grocery list, aka your shopping battle plan.

At this point, I've been doing this long enough that I basically have a mental checklist of what we always need stocked. But for the sake of not losing my mind mid-month, I keep a running list in the Notes app on my phone. Every time we run out of something, I toss it in there. Easy.

If you're more of a pen-and-paper kind of dude, slap a magnetic notepad or whiteboard on your fridge and jot things down as you go. It makes shopping week slightly less of a disaster.

Now, when it comes to building your actual grocery list from the meal map, the most important thing is portioning, especially with meat. You'd be surprised how far you can stretch two big chicken breasts or a little over a pound of ground beef if you're building the right kind of meals and sides.

Here's an example: we buy all our meat from Costco. Their chicken breast packs usually come out to around 7 pounds total, split into six packs with two big chicken breasts each. So if my meal map calls for 10 chicken meals, I know I need two of those Costco packs.

Same with the ground beef — they sell it in bulk containers that weigh about 6–7 pounds. I know one of those will get me through five beef-based meals. Boom. Math done. Cart loaded.

In the next section, I'll show you how I use this info alongside some price-checking to build a final shopping list that doesn't make me sob at checkout. Let's go!





CHAPTER THREE

SHOPPING STRATEGY

Once your grocery list is ready, the next step is checking your usual stores to figure out where you should buy each item. I know it might sound like a hassle, but it really doesn't take much time, and it's saved me thousands of dollars over the years.

If you don't already have a Costco membership, I seriously recommend getting one. A huge portion of our groceries come from Costco. Like I've said before, ingredient quality matters in our house, and Costco has some amazing options at prices that work for a tight budget. Yes, there's a membership fee, but it pays for itself. If you get the executive membership, you'll even get a rewards check once a year with store credit. Totally worth it if you're serious about eating real, homemade food without breaking the bank.

We also shop at a few other stores that might not be on your radar but save us a ton of money, especially when buying in bulk. A few of these are nationwide, so depending on where you live, you might be able to take advantage of them too. I'll break those down for you next.

Check out the following places to see if you have these specific stores or similar ones in your area:

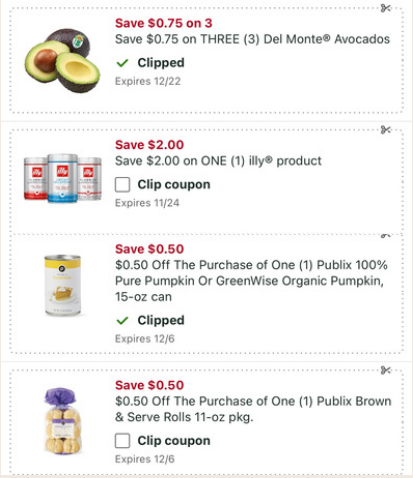
- **Gordon Food Service**- here, we get a lot of our seasonings/spices, as well as condiments, certain baking ingredients, dried chili's for sauces, and Semolina flour for making homemade pasta ($29 for 50 lbs!) You do not need a membership to shop here, and they accept EBT.
- **Restaurant Depot**- here, we get our bread flour (King Arthur Artisan Flour, $26 for 50 lbs!) and some other occasional ingredients when they have sales. Restaurant Depot does require a membership to shop in store, but it is free. Alternatively, you could order things from them through Instacart, which offers a free trial and your first two deliveries are free! Restaurant Depot does not currently accept EBT.

I do also recommend checking Amazon for certain items as they have really good deals on certain things. For example this 27 pound bucket of Roland Sea Salt for $29. It lasts forever and you can't find anything at that good of a price, or for that high of quality at a local store, unless there's a crazy sale going on! Amazon also has certain food products that qualify for EBT.

CHAPTER THREE

SHOPPING STRATEGY

When I am in the process of doing price comparisons, I always check the apps of my frequently visited stores to see if there are any special sales or coupons. While most of our main grocery haul is done at Costco, I do get a lot of things from one of our local grocery stores, Publix, and I highly recommend staying up to date with the digital coupons your local store puts out each month. This saves us a LOT of money! See the screenshot below for an example:



Now that we have mapped out where exactly we are going to be buying each ingredient, we will reference our meal map to see how much of each ingredient we need, and then proceed with the final draft of our grocery list. Once we have the exact amount of ingredients needed for the month categorized under which store we will be getting it from, it's time to do a price check and write down the total cost of each ingredient so that there are no surprises when you get to the store.

Here is an example of what my grocery list starts to look like when I am putting it all together:

STORE: Costco

ITEM:	QTY:	PRICE:
ground beef	3	$75
chicken breasts	3	$96
chuck roast	1	$45
whole chickens	1	$20
bacon	1	$17
butter	2	$15
bag of garlic	1	$6
eggs	1	$11

I created a customizable and printable grocery list template for you to make your final grocery list. **Click here for the template.**

BEFORE YOU GO SHOPPING...

ORGANIZE, CLEAN OUT, AND MAKE SPACE!

Why is this important?

Before I even think about hauling in a month's worth of groceries, I always clean out the pantry, fridge, and freezer. I wipe everything down and get it organized for what's about to come in.

It might sound like overkill, but I didn't use to do this, and now that I do, the difference is massive. We actually know what food we have, nothing gets shoved to the back and forgotten, and there are no crusty surprises hiding in the pantry.

Now, everything in our kitchen is either ready to eat or ready to cook with. No more food waste. No more rage-cleaning because I tried to cram Costco-sized groceries into a freezer full of freezer-burned mystery meat.

Once that's done, you're officially ready to hit the store.



Ready for incoming food!

It's time to stock up!

Now that it's time to actually go grocery shopping, how you tackle your list is totally up to you. Some people like to split it up and do two smaller hauls a month to save space. Personally, I'd rather just rip the Band-Aid off.

I do one massive grocery trip at the start of the month, then make a few smaller stops for fresh stuff like produce and milk when we run out. The grocery store is my own personal hell, so I like to get the big haul done and over with, then move on with my life.

It also helps me stay way more organized and less tempted to impulse buy random crap.
However you decide to shop, now that we've tackled the list and the haul, it's time to get into the good stuff — meal prep!

READY FOR GROCERIES CHECKLIST

- Expenses tracked
- Grocery budget awareness
- Meal map completed
- Ingredients checklist done
- Price comparisons made
- Full grocery list completed
- Pantry, refrigerator and freezer cleaned out and organized





It's Time For Meal Prep!

CHAPTER FOUR

MEAL PREP

Work now, so you can relax later

Now that the pantry, fridge, and freezer are fully stocked, it's time to put the pedal to the metal and knock out your meal prep. Yes, it feels like a lot in the moment, but future you will be so grateful. I don't do this every month for fun, I do it because it saves my sanity when the chaos hits mid-week.



Meal prep is going to look a little different for everyone, depending on how much you make from scratch. In our house, we prioritize quality ingredients and stretching our budget, so we make almost everything at home. That means more prep up front, but I break it down in a way that doesn't burn me out.

The meal map you already made is going to be your best friend here. Now it's just a matter of building out your meal prep plan to match your real-life schedule.



I included a printable template to help you map it out in a way that actually works for you, not just some Pinterest fantasy. **Click here for your customizable and printable meal prep schedule & checklist template.**

Does meal prep remove the need to cook the rest of the month?

It can, but that's not how I do it.



Personally, I like to prep our dinners in a way that cuts down the time and effort, but still leaves a little room for fresh cooking. On the other hand, breakfast and lunch are usually fully prepped ahead so we can just grab, heat, and survive.

That's what works for us, but the goal is to build a system that fits your life and what you're actually willing to do. Tailor your prep to your schedule, your energy, and your chaos level.

CHAPTER FOUR: MEAL PREP

MONTHLY MEAL PREP FRAMEWORK

Food Category	Plan of Attack
Condiments & Seasonings	This is usually the easiest portion of meal prep, despite the fact that I make a lot of homemade condiments! Set aside 30 mins anytime and you should be able to prep all condiments for the next month (or beyond)
Homemade Pasta & Tortillas	Set aside 1-2 hours to batch prepare pasta & hang to dry, batch prepare tortillas and freeze all that won't be used within a week
Meat Prep	Separating and portioning meat, batch preparing things like meatballs and burger patties, breaded chicken cutlets, homemade ham, sausage links, etc.
Breakfasts	Set aside 1-2 hours to put together breakfast burritos & sandwiches, overnight oats can be done weekly, oatmeal bars & pantry pancakes can be batch prepared and frozen for up to 2 months
Lunches	Set aside 1-2 hours to prepare adult lunches for the month. Prepare a loaf of bread to keep on standby in the freezer in a pinch. Lunch is usually repurposing leftovers so this step is simple.
Dinners	Pasta and tortillas, as well as previously prepped meats, are a huge help here. Set aside 1 hour to batch prepare pizza dough, burger buns and sandwich rolls.
Snacks & Miscellaneous	Set aside 1-2 hours to prepare any homemade snacks (crackers, chips, muffins, yogurt, etc) and any dinner aids (bread crumbs, pasta & pizza sauce, chicken stock, lard & tallow, etc)

CHAPTER FOUR

MEAL PREP CONTINUED

As you saw on the previous page, even if you're making everything from scratch, you can totally knock it all out in one day if you're determined to get it over with.

That said, once you get into a rhythm, you'll start to learn how long each task actually takes, and it gets way easier to work meal prep into your schedule without it feeling like a full-time job.

There are only a few things I won't attempt when my kids are awake, just because they need more focus and time. But honestly, about 90% of my food prep gets done during the day in short bursts, while managing the usual chaos.

For example, my homemade marinara takes maybe 20 minutes to prep. Then it cooks in the slow cooker all day or overnight, and all I have to do is jar it later. Most of my meal prep happens like that — quick little tasks here and there that add up fast without frying my brain.

You don't have to do it all at once. Just do what fits your life.

I prepared an example chart below of how to compartmentalize your time and make your meal prep as much of a breeze as possible. Performing these small tasks throughout the day is how I complete about a months worth of meal prep in roughly the span of a week without any overwhelm.

Try to remember, it can take time to get settled into your own groove with meal prep! Trust the process, because the payoff is so worth it.

Try to remember, it can take time to get settled into your own groove with meal prep! Trust the process, because the payoff is so worth it.

7:00 AM	Prepare ingredients for pasta sauce & start slow cooker
7:20 AM	Prepare ingredients for hot sauce, put them in a jar, & put away in cabinet for fermentation
7:30 AM	Mix pizza dough & let ferment on counter
12:00 PM	Divide pizza dough & put in the fridge to cold ferment
12:10 PM	Make bread crumbs
3:10 PM	Whip up oatmeal bars & sourdough discard crackers & put in the oven
4:00 PM	Portion out oatmeal bars & put them away. Put crackers away
7:00 PM	Turn off slow cooker to let sauce start cooling. Whip up overnight oats & put that in the fridge
8:00 PM	Portion out pasta sauce & put it away

FOOD STORAGE & PRESERVATION

Now that we've tackled meal prep, let's talk about food storage and preservation — because prepping all this food means nothing if it goes bad before you can use it. I put together a simple chart that shows the best way to store each ingredient, along with how long it'll actually last using that method.

If you've got the room in your budget (and your pantry), I highly recommend investing in a canner. It's one of the best ways to extend the shelf life of your food and save money long-term. I don't can yet, because we're low on space, but believe me, the second I have the room, that canner is moving in like family.

If you're in the same boat and canning isn't an option right now, don't stress. Your freezer is about to become your best friend. It can still do a ton of heavy lifting when it comes to food preservation, and it's way easier to work with in a small space.

Food	Storage Instructions	Life Span
Homemade Marinara Sauce	Store in food grade plastic containers or ziploc freezer bags for freezing & refrigeration. If canning, store in a mason jar.	1 year canned and shelved, 6 months frozen, 5 days refrigerated
Homemade Corn & Flour Tortillas	Store in an airtight bag or cling wrap.	6-8 months frozen, 1 month refrigerated, 3-5 days room temp
Homemade Pasta	Store in an airtight bag for freezing and refrigeration. If drying, let hang dry completely before storing it in an airtight bag for the pantry.	2 days refrigerated (fresh), 8 months frozen (fresh), 2-6 months dried
Homemade Pizza Dough	After dividing & shaping the dough, wrap it tightly in plastic wrap for refrigeration. If freezing, lay it gently in a freezer safe ziploc and remove as much air as possible from the bag.	5 days refrigerated, 3 months frozen
Homemade Fermented Hot sauce	Store in a mason jar or previously used hot sauce bottle with the lid kept tightly screwed on	Can ferment in the cabinet for up to 1 year, lasts 1-2 years in fridge, up to 3 years canned & shelved
Breakfast Burritos & Sandwiches	Wrap in sandwich paper or parchment paper and then place in an airtight plastic bag	3 days refrigerated, 3 months frozen
Overnight Oats	Store in an airtight mason jar.	5 days refrigerated. Not recommended to freeze
Oatmeal Bars	Store in an airtight food safe container or ziploc bag.	5 days refrigerated, 3 months frozen
Pancakes	Store in an airtight food safe container or ziploc bag.	1 week refrigerated, 3 months frozen
Homemade Breadcrumbs	Make sure they are completely dry before storing. Store in airtight container	Room temp 1-2 weeks, refrigerated 1-2 months, frozen 6 months
Sourdough Bread	Bread box or bread bag for room temp. Refrigeration NOT recommended- for freezing, wrap tightly in plastic wrap	Room temp 2-4 days, frozen 3 months

FOOD STORAGE RED FLAGS

As much as we want to avoid food waste at all costs, we will toss it before we make ourselves sick by eating it. Here's some things to be aware of with food storage:



Discoloration

Look for any dark or unusual color changes. If the color is off and that is paired with a bad smell or has unusual texture changes, toss it.



Signs of Mold

Any visible fuzzy or discolored spots (usually green, white, black or blue) are almost always a sign of mold. Toss it.



Freezer Burn

Any white or greyish patches usually indicate freezer burn. It might not be unsafe to consume, but the taste and texture will be off.



Unpleasant Odor

Any strong, unpleasant odor is a red flag. If your nose is telling you it belongs in the trash, believe it.



Texture Changes

Any out of the ordinary texture (slimy or sticky) is a sign of harmful bacteria growth. Toss that thang!



Leaks

If a pantry or refrigerator item has been leaking, that is an immediate no. It's bad. Toss it.



Excessive Dryness

Could be a sign of staleness. It might not hurt you but it might taste pretty unpleasant. Take your chances at your own risk but Swamp Mom says toss it.



Contamination

Any signs of insects, pests, or any other form of contamination is an immediate no. Toss it!



Unusual Sounds

If you hear a hissing or fizzing sound when opening sealed containers, this could indicate gas buildup from bacterial growth. Toss it. This does not include the popping sound a jar makes when you open it.

CHAPTER FIVE

ELIMINATING FOOD WASTE

More Money Saved? Yes please!

Let's talk about how to stretch your grocery budget even further by growing some of your food at home, starting with ingredients you already buy.



Nothing feels better than cutting down your grocery bill, and this is one of the easiest ways to do it. For example, I've been making my own hot sauce for a while, so I started saving the seeds from the peppers I use. Now I'm growing my own little hot pepper jungle in the backyard. Total game changer.

And the best part? You don't need a big yard or fancy setup. Even if you live in an apartment with a tiny outdoor space or balcony, you can still grow a few key things and make it work.



I put together a chart with common grocery items that are super easy to grow at home, depending on how much space you've got to play with. Let's get into it.

Small Space/ Container Friendly (Ideal for Pots or Small Gardens)	Tomato's, Peppers (small variations), Herbs (basil, cilantro, parsley, etc), Lettuce
Medium Space (Requires More Room For Proper Growth)	Cucumbers, Summer & Winter Squash, Tomatillos, Carrots, Peppers (large variety)
Large Space (Best For Garden Beds Or Larger Areas)	Pumpkins, Onions, Melons, Apples, Avocados



CHAPTER FIVE: ELIMINATING FOOD WASTE

REPURPOSING LEFTOVERS

Food waste? Not in this house.

We've gotten so efficient at repurposing leftovers that almost nothing ends up in the trash. Every bit of food gets used, whether it's showing up as lunch the next day or turning into something totally new.

Even though we mostly stick to our meal map, if we have enough leftovers to cover a breakfast, lunch, or dinner, we're taking that win. No shame in reheating what already works.

Check out the chart on the next page for ideas on how we turn leftovers into something fresh and actually delicious.

And if you're buying meat with bones in it, save those bones. Always. Throw them in a freezer-safe bag and store them until you're ready to make homemade stock. It's easy, and it saves so much money. You can find recipes for both chicken and beef stock in the recipe chapter.

Same goes for fat trimmings from beef or pork — toss those in the freezer too. Later on, you can render them into lard or tallow, which is gold for cooking. Waste nothing. Use everything. That's the Swamp Mom way.

Don't toss those veggie scraps. They're stock gold.

Any trimmings you've got from vegetables like carrots, celery, or herbs can go straight into a freezer-safe bag. Once you've filled the bag, you've got the perfect base for homemade stock. Just add it to your saved bones when you're ready to make it.

I don't recommend saving onion trimmings though. For both food safety and flavor reasons, those are better off in the compost.

Also, save your bacon grease. It's liquid gold. You can use it to fry burgers, eggs, potatoes, or as a roasting base for veggies. You can even use it in place of butter or shortening for things like pie crust. Yes, really.

These little leftover hacks will almost completely eliminate food waste and can help stretch your meal map even further. Depending on how many leftovers you have, you might even gain an extra week of meals.

When I plan my grocery list and meal map, I plan for the full month. But by the time the next grocery trip comes around, we almost always have food left. That's how efficient we've gotten with repurposing what we have and making everything stretch.

It saves money, cuts down on prep, and makes life easier all around.

CHAPTER THREE: ELIMINATING FOOD WASTE

SMART LEFTOVER SYSTEM:

Ground Beef	Quesadillas, Burritos, Grilled Cheese with Meat, Empanadas, Pizza
Chicken	Italian Pasta Salad, Quesadillas, Chicken Salad, Empanadas, Pizza
Stew Meat	Quesadillas, Burritos, Grilled Cheese with Meat, Tacos, Empanadas, Pizza
Rice	Rice and Fried Eggs, Fried Rice, Burritos, Using it with another side of rice (making less new rice)
Potatoes	Eggs and Potatoes, Burritos
Pasta	Italian pasta salad, Macaroni & Cheese, Using it with another pasta dinner (making less new pasta)
Bacon	Breakfast burritos, Grilled Cheese with Bacon, or seriously... Just have a delicious snack of bacon
Stale Bread	Bread Crumbs, Croutons
Coffee Grounds	Use it as fertilizer for your plants!
Sourdough Discard	Discard Crackers, Bread, Muffins, Roux for Sauce, Cookies, Pancakes, Insect Repellent (1 part discard, 3 parts water, 2-3 drops of soap, mix together in a mason jar and leave on counter with lid off), Plant Fertilizer (mix with water and pour over your plants)
Eggshells	Homemade Toothpaste, Abrasive All Natural Cleaner/Polisher, Plant Fertilizer
Banana Peels	Fertilizer, compost, Natural Polisher, Pest Repellent, Meat Tenderizer, Puree for Baking, Sleepytime Tea
Apple Cores/Trimmings	Save and ferment to make Homemade Apple Cider Vinegar

CHAPTER FIVE: ELIMINATING FOOD WASTE

MAKING FOOD STRETCH

One of the biggest hacks about having delicious, nutrtitious and filling meals without breaking the bank is learning how to incorporate filling sides with the higher cost proteins like beef and chicken.

I can generously feed my entire family of 5 with just over a pound of ground beef, or alternatively, 2 large chicken breasts. We often times even have a considerate amount of leftovers after the fact. This is because I prepare the food in a very specific and intentional way, and always have filling sides to go along with it.

Let me introduce to you your new best friends...

- Rice
- Beans (dry bagged beans)
- Potatoes
- Homemade Bread
- Homemade Pasta
- Fried Tostones
- Pizza Dough
- Empanadas

These staple items are no joke, SO cheap to make large quantities of, are good for you, and taste delicious when prepared correctly.

Check the “Staple Recipes” chapter for my personal cooking methods for these filling sides.

Now let me introduce you to your new go-to strategy with beef and chicken:

- Fileted Chicken Breasts
- Adding “fillers” to ground beef (bread crumbs, rice, diced onions, other diced veggies)

Adding the fillers to beef adds delicious flavor to the beef, annd also makes the beef stretch so much further. It makes a huge difference over time, and I notice a difference between using fillers and not using fillers when it comes to having leftovers. There’s always leftovers with our filler beef. Simply add the extra ingredients to the beef. I like to add some tomato paste as well to give a saucy vibe to the beef, and the whole family loves it every time. It’s also a great way to sneak veggies for the little ones.

Now onto fileted chicken. First and foremost, it tastes better because it’s always cooked more evenly and comes out juicier. That being said, it makes the chicken stretch so much further, especially if you bread the chicken and make chicken cutlets. Cutlets are also dirt cheap to make, especially when you’re making the bread crumbs at home.

I know it sounds simple, but these very simple adjustments save us SO MUCH food.

CHAPTER SIX: STAPLE RECIPES

STAPLE RECIPES

The following list contains all clickable links to some of my most frequently made homemade staple recipes. Enjoy!

That Swamp Moms Homemade Flour Tortillas
That Swamp Moms Homemade Corn Tortillas
That Swamp Moms Homemade Pasta
That Swamp Moms Homemade Struggle Pasta (Dirt Cheap)
That Swamp Moms Roasted Potatoes
That Swamp Moms Overnight Oats
That Swamp Moms Oatmeal Bars
That Swamp Moms Pantry Pancakes
That Swamp Moms Breakfast Burritos
That Swamp Moms Sourdough Bread
That Swamp Moms Sourdough Focaccia
That Swamp Moms NY Style Sourdough Pizza Dough
That Swamp Moms Empanada Dough
That Swamp Moms Marinara Sauce
That Swamp Moms Meatballs
That Swamp Moms Green Gold Hot Sauce
That Swamp Moms Beans & Rice
That Swamp Moms Homemade Bread Crumbs
That Swamp Moms Tostones (Fried Plantains)
That Swamp Moms Sourdough Burger Buns

CHAPTER SEVEN: TIPS & RESOURCES

TEMPLATE BANK & MORE INFO

Throughout this guide, I sprinkled a few different templates for you to print & customize to help you stay organized. I linked them all again here for you to have in one, easy-to-find spot. I hope you find these helpful!

EXPENSES TRACKING SHEET

MEAL MAP PLANNER

MEAL PREP SCHEDULE PLANNER & CHECKLIST

GROCERY LIST TEMPLATE

I also previously referenced something called “The Dirty Dozen” so I left some links here for more info on that, as well as “The Clean Fifteen”. This will help you understand where you should buy organic with fresh produce and when you can save by going non-organic without harming the food quality. Click the links below to find out more.

THE DIRTY DOZEN

THE CLEAN FIFTEEN

TIPS & TRICKS

Finally, I have just a few more tips to set you up for success. These little tricks made a world of difference for me. It really is the little things! See the next page for recommended products.



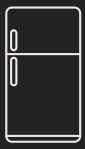
Save Your Glass Jars!

Save every store bought glass jar when you're done with it! This saves so much money on mason jars and can be used for so many things!



Buy In Bulk

If you have the storage space, buying in bulk is the way to go. It will last you such a long time and saves a lot of money!



Get Another Fridge/ Freezer!

If you have the space, I highly recommend getting another fridge/ freezer. Scan Facebook Marketplace for a good deal!



Use Molasses

You can easily make brown sugar at home using molasses and sugar! It saves money and it's healthier!
Light brown sugar: 1 tbsp molasses to 1 cup sugar
Dark brown sugar: 2 tbsp molasses to 1 cup sugar



Straw For Vacuum Seal

You do NOT need a fancy expensive vacuum sealer! Simply stick a straw in your ziplock that has your food, suck all the air out with the straw when the bag is almost shut, and you're golden.



Let Food Cool First

If you're planning to freeze your food, let it cool first! First at room temp, then put it in the fridge for a bit before you freeze it. This will preserve quality and reduce safety hazards.



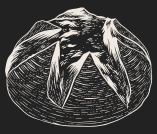
Flatten Your Beef!

Before you put all of your portioned beef into the freezer, flatten it first! This will save so much space. Simply use your hands or a rolling pin to press the beef flat in the Ziplock, and you're golden.



Paper Towel Trick

When using your cutting board, get a paper towel wet, squeeze out the water and put it underneath your cutting board to prevent it from sliding around!



Make Sourdough

Sourdough is SO cheap to make, and you can use it for so many different recipes, not just bread. It's not difficult to maintain and it's incredibly gut healthy.

RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS

Lastly, here are some products that I recommend for making your life easier with food prep and cooking in general. Please keep in mind that these things are not 100% necessary, but do save a lot of time & make the process a lot easier- I use these products ALL THE TIME.

**please note that this contains affiliate links, meaning I could earn a commission at no extra cost to you if you are to make a purchase.*



Scraper/ Chopper

I use these every single day. They can be used for veggies, dough, transferring things from cutting board to pot, etc.
Click here for my suggestion.



Sandwich Paper

This is a lot cheaper and easier to work with than always using parchment paper to wrap your food.
Click here for my suggestion.



Pasta Drying Rack

The pasta drying rack is a game changer. It makes pasta prep so much more efficient.
Click here for my suggestion.



Dutch Oven

Has made my life so much easier with food prep, baking and cooking.
Click here for my suggestion.



Cast Iron Skillet

The only pan I ever use besides 1 stainless steel pan. I would be lost without it, and it carries health benefits!
Click here for my suggestion.



Pasta Machine

Getting the pasta machine was an absolute game changer! Saves time and my kids love helping with it.
Click here for my suggestion.



Instant Pot

I constantly use my Instant Pot. It's so versatile & makes my life SO MUCH easier with food prep.
Click here for my suggestion.



Rice Cooker

Another kitchen tool that I use all the time, and will make your life so much easier.
Click here for my suggestion.



Kitchen Scale

Helps you correctly measure and portion things! I would be lost without this thing.
Click here for my suggestion.

You made it to the end of That Swamp Mom's Smart Kitchen. Hell yeah.

Give yourself grace and patience as you start putting this into action. It's not about being perfect, it's about finding a rhythm that works for your life. It might take some time to get into your groove, but I promise the payoff is worth it!

Even small shifts make a big difference over time. Keep showing up, keep feeding your people, and keep doing it your way.

I believe in you. You've got this.

If you have any questions or just need a little support, reach out to me on Instagram or shoot me an email. I'm in the swamp with you.

That Swamp Mom

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