The Best of Everyday Cheapskate

Excerpts from Mary’s bestselling eBooklets to get you on board with saving time and money every day!
Excerpts from

Make Your Own Mixes

Make your own mixes for significant cost-savings—save half the cost of commercial mixes!

Download this complete 34-page eBooklet HERE for only $5.
SEASONINGS, RUBS AND DIPS

Apple Pie Spice
4 parts ground cinnamon
2 parts ground nutmeg
1 part ground cardamom
Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container.

Pumpkin Pie Seasoning I
4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
Mix well. Store in an airtight container. Use this as a substitute for store bought pumpkin pie spice.

Pumpkin Pie Seasoning II
4 parts ground cinnamon
2 parts ground ginger
1 part allspice
1 part nutmeg
Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container.

Herbs dé Provence
1 tablespoon dried basil leaves
1 tablespoon dried marjoram leaves
1 tablespoon dried summer savory leaves*
1 tablespoon dried thyme leaves
2 teaspoons dried orange zest, powdered
1 powdered or ground bay leaf
1 teaspoon fennel seeds
2 teaspoons dried lavender* 
1/8 teaspoon white pepper
Combine all ingredients in a small, tightly closed jar. Store in a dark, cool place. Makes about 5 tablespoons.

Cajun Spice Mix
2 teaspoons sea salt
2 teaspoons garlic powder
2 1/2 teaspoons paprika
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 1/4 teaspoons dried oregano
1 1/4 teaspoons dried thyme
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container.

Rice Seasoning
3/4 cup chicken bouillon granules
1/2 cup dried parsley
1 tablespoon dried basil
1 tablespoon dill weed
2 tablespoons dried onion flakes
1 teaspoon seasoning salt
2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 teaspoon lemon pepper seasoning
1 cup almonds, coarsely chopped (optional)
Mix together and store in an airtight container.

To use: Bring two cups of water to a boil. Add 1 cup rice and 3 tablespoons of the seasoning. Cover and simmer for 18 minutes.

Chili Seasoning
2 parts chili powder
1 part paprika
Combine all ingredients. Store in small airtight container.

“Old Bay” Seasoning
1 tablespoon celery seed
1 tablespoon whole black peppercorns
6 bay leaves
1/2 teaspoon whole cardamom
1/2 teaspoon mustard seed
4 whole cloves
1 teaspoon paprika
1/4 teaspoon ground mace
Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container.

Chinese 5-Spice Powder
1 teaspoon ground Szechwan pepper
1 teaspoon ground star anise
1 1/4 teaspoons ground fennel seeds
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container.

Salad Supreme Seasoning
1 1/2 teaspoons sesame seeds
1 teaspoon paprika
3/4 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 teaspoon poppy seeds
1/2 teaspoon celery seed
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
1/4 teaspoon coarse ground black pepper
1 pinch cayenne pepper
2 tablespoons grated Romano cheese
Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container.

To use: Great in pasta salad. Sprinkle onto tossed salads. For delicious hamburgers sprinkle over top before broiling or after grilling.
Salt-Free Seasoning

1 tablespoon garlic powder
2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves
2 teaspoons onion powder
2 teaspoons paprika
2 teaspoons celery seed
1 1/2 teaspoons ground white pepper
1 tablespoon dry mustard powder
2 teaspoons dried finely chopped lemon peel
1 teaspoon ground black pepper

Combine all ingredients. Store in an airtight container. Use on meats, poultry and fish, or at the table for a salt-free seasoning.

CONVENIENCE MIXES

Sloppy Joe Mix

1 cup dried minced onion
3 tablespoons dried green pepper pieces
4 teaspoons sea salt
3 tablespoons cornstarch
4 teaspoons instant minced garlic
2 teaspoons dry mustard
2 teaspoons celery seed
2 teaspoons chili powder

Combine all ingredients and mix well. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dry place. Makes the equivalent of eight packages purchased Sloppy Joe seasoning mix. Three tablespoons Sloppy Joe Mix equals one package purchased mix.

To use: Brown 1 pound lean ground beef in a large skillet; drain fat. Add 3 tablespoons mix, 1/2 cup water and 1 cup ketchup or crushed tomatoes. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover pan, and simmer 5-10 minutes until thickened. Servings: 4 to 6.

Shake n’ Bake Mix for Chicken and Fish

4 cups flour
4 cups finely crushed saltine crackers
4 tablespoons sea salt
2 tablespoons sugar
2 teaspoons garlic powder
2 teaspoons onion powder
3 tablespoons paprika
1/4 cup vegetable oil

Combine all ingredients. Mix well. Store in a tightly covered container. Keep in a cool, dry place for up to six months. Refrigerate or freeze for longer storage.

To use: Place an appropriate amount of mix into a large plastic bag for the amount of chicken or fish you will prepare. Moisten chicken or fish pieces with water,
beaten egg, buttermilk, milk, or salad dressing to coat, then into the bag. Shake to coat. Bake at 400F until thoroughly cooked: About 45 minutes for bone-in; 20 minutes boneless chicken or fish, or until done. Do not cover or turn chicken or fish while baking.

**Ground Beef “Helper”**

1 1/4 teaspoons ground black pepper
1 1/3 cups nonfat dry milk
3 tablespoons onion powder
1/3 cup dry onion flakes
1 tablespoon garlic powder
2 teaspoons beef bouillon granules
2 tablespoons dried parsley flakes

Combine all ingredients and store in an airtight container. Makes about 2 1/2 cups of mix.

**To use:** Add 1/2 to 2/3 cup of this mix for each pound of ground beef, according to your taste. You are going to be delighted to discover this mix is even better than commercial Hamburger Helper, without mysterious ingredients and for half the price. Store in an airtight container for up to three months without any loss of flavor.

**Hamburger Noodle Skillet:** Brown and drain one pound ground beef in large skillet. Stir in 1/2 cup “Helper” Seasoning Mix (more or less, to taste). Add one 8-ounce can seasoned tomato sauce and 1 cup cooked noodles. Mix thoroughly over medium heat. Add one 8-ounce can mixed vegetables. Sprinkle 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar or American cheese and heat just long enough for the cheese to melt. Servings: 4.

**SALAD DRESSING MIXES**

**Italian Dressing Mix I**

1 1/2 teaspoons garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
2 tablespoons ground oregano
1 tablespoon dried parsley
1 tablespoon granulated sugar
2 tablespoons sea salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 teaspoon ground basil
1/4 teaspoon ground thyme
1/2 teaspoon dried celery flakes

Combine all ingredients and store in an airtight container.

**To use:** Combine 2 tablespoons of the mix with 1/4 cup vinegar, 2 tablespoons water, and 1/2 to 2/3 cup olive or canola oil.

**Italian Dressing Mix II**

1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon onion powder
1 tablespoon paprika  
2 teaspoons celery seed  
1 tablespoon sesame seeds  
1 tablespoon dried Italian seasoning blend  
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano leaves  
1/2 teaspoon dried basil leaves  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper  

Mix ingredients in a medium bowl and stir well to blend. Store mix in an airtight container in the refrigerator. Will keep for several months.

Oil and Vinegar Dressing: 2 tablespoons mix, 2 tablespoons water or white wine, 1/3 cup red wine vinegar, 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil. Combine ingredients in a glass jar with screw top lid. Shake vigorously to combine.

Creamy Italian Dressing: 1 tablespoon Italian dressing mix, 1/4 cup mayonnaise or plain yogurt, 1 tablespoon water. Combine ingredients in a small bowl and blend thoroughly with a wire whisk until blended.

Creamy Italian Dip: 2 tablespoons mix, 1/3 cup mayonnaise, sour cream, or plain yogurt and 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard. Combine ingredients in a small bowl and blend thoroughly with a wire whisk until blended. Serve with baby carrots, celery sticks, red pepper strips, tortilla chips and potato chips.

Ranch Dressing Mix I  
1/2 cup dry buttermilk  
1 tablespoon dried parsley, crushed  
1 teaspoon dried dill weed  
1 teaspoon onion powder  
1 teaspoon dried onion flakes  
1 teaspoon sea salt  
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder  
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper  

Combine all ingredients in your food processor and grind until it becomes a fine powder. Store in an airtight container.

To use: Combine 1 tablespoon mix with 1 cup mayonnaise and 1 cup milk.

DESSERT MIXES

Chocolate Pudding Mix  
1/2 cup powdered sugar  
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar  
1 cup unsweetened cocoa  
2/3 cup cornstarch  
1/8 teaspoon sea salt  

Combine all ingredients and store in container with tight-fitting lid. Makes 3 cups mix, yielding 12 servings.

To use: Combine 1/2 cup mix, 4 teaspoons butter and 1 1/3 cups milk in a small saucepan. Heat
over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils. Boil gently, stirring constantly, for one minute. Remove from heat and stir in 1/8 teaspoon vanilla. Pour into serving dishes and chill until thickened. Servings: 2.

Butterscotch Pudding Mix
1 1/2 cups dark brown sugar
1/3 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup nonfat dry milk
1 cup cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon sea salt

Combine all ingredients and store in container with tight-fitting lid. Makes 3 cups mix, yielding 24 servings of prepared pudding.

To use: Combine 1/4 cup mix and 1 cup milk in a small saucepan. Heat over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils. Boil gently, stirring constantly, for one minute. Remove from heat and add 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract, stirring well. Pour into serving dishes and chill until thickened. Servings: 2.

Vanilla Pudding Mix
1 1/2 cups nonfat dry milk
1/2 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup powdered sugar
1 cup sifted cornstarch
1/2 teaspoon sea salt

Combine all ingredients and store in container with tight-fitting lid. Makes 3 cups mix, yielding 24 servings of prepared pudding.

To use: Combine 1/4 cup mix and 1 cup milk in a small saucepan. Heat over low heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils. Boil gently, stirring constantly, for one minute. Remove from heat and stir in 1/8 teaspoon vanilla extract. Pour into serving dishes and chill until thickened. Servings: 2.

Lemon Pie-Filling Mix
2 1/2 cups presweetened powdered lemonade mix
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons cornstarch
1 1/4 cups sugar, more for sweeter flavor
1 teaspoon sea salt

In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well. Put into an airtight container. Use within 8 months.

To use: Prepare pie crust. In a large saucepan combine 1 1/4 cups Lemon Pie-Filling Mix, 1/2 cup of water and 3 egg yolks. Mix until smooth. Add remaining 2 cups water. Cook over medium heat, 4 to 5 minutes, stirring constantly until mixture is thick and bubbly. Remove from heat. Add
2 tablespoons butter and stir until melted. Cover and let cool 5 minutes. Stir. Pour into baked pie crust. Cover and refrigerate 3 hours. Top with whipped cream or meringue before serving.

**BAKING MIXES**

**Master Baking Mix**

5 pounds all-purpose flour
2 1/2 cups nonfat dry milk
3/4 cup double-acting baking powder
2 tablespoons cream of tartar
3 tablespoons sea salt
1/2 cup sugar
4 2/3 cups (2 pounds) solid vegetable shortening

Get out the biggest mixing bowl you can find. Sift dry ingredients together. Cut in shortening until mix looks like cornmeal. Store at room temperature in a large sealable container. Yield: 30 cups mix.

**One dozen biscuits:** Mix together 3 cups master mix and 3/4 cup water. Blend and knead a few strokes. Roll out and cut biscuits with a round biscuit cutter, into squares or diamond shapes. Place on ungreased cookie sheet; bake 10 minute at 450F.

**One dozen cheese biscuits:** Mix together 2 cups master mix, 1/2 cup water and 1/3 cup grated sharp Cheddar cheese. Add water and stir 20 to 25 strokes. Turn onto lightly floured board; knead about 15 times. Roll to 1/2-inch thick. Cut with floured biscuit cutter. Place on ungreased cookie sheet; bake at 425F for 10 minutes. Brush with melted garlic butter, if desired.

**Dumplings:** Use the same measurements as for biscuits. Drop into hot liquid of choice. Cook 10 minutes uncovered and an additional 10 minutes covered.

**Muffins:** 3 cups master mix, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 egg, 1 cup water. Mix water and egg; add dry ingredients. Add optional items such as blue-berries, chocolate chips, nuts and so forth, as desired (see below). Bake in 12 muffin cups for 25 minutes at 400F.

**Variations:**

**Apple muffins:** Add 3/4 cup peeled, finely-diced apple, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon and a dash of ground nutmeg to muffin batter.

**Blueberry muffins:** Add 1/2 cup canned, fresh or frozen blueberries without juice to muffin batter.

**Banana muffins:** Reduce water to 1/2 cup and add 1/2 cup mashed banana and 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg to muffin batter.

**Bran muffins:** Reduce mix to 1 1/2 cups and add 1/2 cup all-bran type cereal to dry ingredients.
**Cheese muffins:** Add 1/2 cup grated Cheddar cheese to dry ingredients.

**Coffee Cake:** 3 cups Master Mix, 1/2 cup sugar, 1 egg and 2/3 cup water. Blend all ingredients and pour into a greased 9-inch cake pan. Cover with topping: 1/2 cup brown sugar, 3 tablespoons butter, 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon. Optional: Add 1/2 cup nuts or raisins to the topping mix. Bake at 400F for 25 minutes.

Want more mixes? Many more? Download the complete Make Your Own Mixes [HERE](#)!
Excerpts from

Everyday Entrees

Simple, crowd pleasing main dishes to serve to the family, bring to a pot-luck or fix for last-minute guests!

Download this complete 46-page eBooklet HERE for only $5.
Cincinnati Chili

2 pounds lean ground beef
3 cups water
1 large onion, finely minced
1 clove garlic, finely minced
1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon ground allspice
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon cider vinegar

In a medium sauce pan mix the raw ground beef into the water until broken up (no browning or sautéing required). Stir in the rest of the ingredients. Simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for at least 3 hours.

Serve over cooked spaghetti and top with grated cheddar cheese, chopped onions and/or kidney beans. Can also pour over a hot dog in a bun. Servings: 6 to 8.

Slow Cooker Corned Beef and Cabbage

6 medium carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 onions, chopped
1 (2 pounds) corned beef brisket with seasoning packet
1 (12-ounce) can beer
water
8 thin wedges cabbage

In 4 to 6 quart slow cooker, combine carrots and onions. Top with beef brisket and sprinkle with seasonings from packet. Pour beer over brisket and add enough water to just cover brisket. Cover and cook on Low for 10 to 12 hours.
Remove corned beef from slow cooker and cover with foil to keep warm. Add cabbage wedges to vegetables and broth. Cover and cook on High for an additional 30 minutes or until cabbage is crisp tender.

To serve, cut beef across grain into thin slices. Remove vegetables from slow cooker with slotted spoon and serve with beef. Pour cooking juices over portions. Servings: 8

**Lasagna Pie**

1 pound ground beef
1/2 cup small curd cottage cheese
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 cups (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese
3/4 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1 (6-ounce) can tomato paste
1/2 cup Bisquick
1 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 eggs
chopped fresh parsley (optional)

Preheat oven to 400ºF. Grease a 9-inch deep-dish pie plate. Brown beef in a skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally until brown; drain well. Layer cottage cheese and Parmesan cheese in the pie plate. Stir 1 cup of mozzarella cheese, Italian seasoning and tomato paste into the meat. Spoon evenly over top of cheeses.

In a medium bowl, combine Bisquick, milk, salt, pepper and eggs until well blended. Pour over the top of the meat mixture.

Bake 30 to 35 minutes or until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Sprinkle with remaining 1 cup mozzarella cheese over the top and return to the oven for several minutes until the cheese melts. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Sprinkle with fresh parsley. Servings: 6 to 8.
Quick as a Flash Burrito Filling

2 pounds ground beef, browned
2 packets of Lawry’s Burrito Seasoning mix
2 1/2 cups of water

Add ingredients to pan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and allow to simmer uncovered for 10 minutes. Done! Wrap in warm flour tortillas with grated cheese. Servings: 8.

Quick and Easy Chicken Cacciatore

2 teaspoons olive oil
4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
3/4 teaspoon salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 small yellow or green bell pepper, cut into thin strips
2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
1/2 cup dry red wine
1 1/2 cups Marinara sauce
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Heat oil in large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat; add chicken. Sprinkle 1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper over chicken; cook 4 minutes per side. Transfer chicken to a plate; set aside.

Add bell pepper and mushrooms to skillet and heat to medium. Sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon salt; cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add wine; cook 2 minutes. Stir in Marinara sauce; heat through. Return chicken to skillet; reduce heat and simmer, turning once, for 4 minutes or until cooked through. Top with parsley. Servings: 4.
**Parmesan Chicken**

1 packet onion soup mix  
1 1/2 cups milk  
2 (10.75-ounce) cans condensed cream of mushroom soup  
1 cup long-grain white rice (not instant or Minute Rice)  
6 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves  
1/4 cup butter (salted or unsalted), cut in bits  
salt and pepper to taste  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Combine the onion soup mix, milk, mushroom soup, and rice in a bowl. Place chicken breasts in bottom of greased slow cooker. Top with butter. Pour soup mixture over top.

Sprinkle with salt, pepper, and Parmesan cheese. Cover; cook on Low for 8 to 10 hours or on High for 4 to 6 hours. Servings: 6.

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**Buttermilk Fried Fish**

1/2 cup of buttermilk  
1/2 cup cornmeal  
1/2 teaspoon paprika  
1/2 teaspoon oregano  
1/8 teaspoon cayenne  
fish fillets (catfish is perfect for this recipe)

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking pan or cookie sheet with aluminum foil and spray it with cooking spray. In a flat dish or pan mix together cornmeal, paprika, oregano and cayenne, stirring with a fork until blended. Pour the buttermilk into a shallow bowl.

Cut fish fillets to equal four portion-sized servings. Dip each piece in the buttermilk and then in the cornmeal mixture, making sure to dip both sides of each piece. Place on the sprayed foil.

Drizzle olive oil over the fillets or spray with olive oil-flavored cooking spray. Bake for 25 minutes. Servings: 4.
Quick Pizza Sauce

1 (14.5-ounces) can crushed tomatoes
1 large garlic clove, minced or pressed through garlic press
1 tablespoon olive oil
salt and ground black pepper

Process tomatoes in bowl of food processor until smooth, about five 1-second pulses. Heat garlic and oil in medium saucepan over medium heat until garlic is sizzling, about 40 seconds. Stir in tomatoes; bring to simmer and cook, uncovered, until sauce thickens enough to coat wooden spoon, about 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Yield: About 1 1/2 cups, enough for two 14-inch pizzas.

Barbecued Cheeseburger Pizza

1 pound ground beef
1 1/2 cups barbecue sauce
1 1/2 cups Bisquick
1/4 cup very hot water
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
Dill pickle slices (optional)
5 slices American or cheddar cheese, cut diagonally in half

Move rack in oven to the lowest position. Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a 12-inch pizza pan. Brown the beef in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally until brown; drain well. Stir in 1/2 cup of the barbecue sauce; set aside.

In a bowl stir together Bisquick, hot water and oil until dough forms; beat vigorously 20 strokes. Press the dough into the pizza pan, using fingers dipped in flour. Pinch the edge to form a 1/2-inch rim. Spread the remaining 1 cup barbecue sauce over crust. Top with beef mixture and pickle slices. Top with cheese. Bake 12 to 15 minutes or until the crust is brown and cheese is melted. Servings: 8.

If you enjoyed these recipes, purchase the entire Everyday Entrees downloadable eBooklet HERE.
Excerpts from

Gifts in a Jar

Everything you need to know to make fabulous gifts from your kitchen that are sure to please everyone on your Gift List.

Download this complete 42-page eBooklet HERE for only $5.
COOKIES, BROWNIES AND SWEET TREATS

Chocolate Chip Cookies
Layered to look like “sand art,” this fabulous cookie mix makes the perfect gift for anyone on any special occasion.

1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 cup chocolate chips
1 cup packed brown sugar
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, mixed with 1 tsp baking soda and 1/4 tsp salt

Layer ingredients in the jar in the order given, pressing each layer firmly in place before adding the next. Everything will fit if you are diligent to pack each layer tightly, particularly the brown sugar and all-purpose flour. Measure carefully.

Attach this message to jar: Empty cookie mix into large mixing bowl. Thoroughly blend mix with spoon. Add 3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter or margarine (not diet or tub variety), 1 egg and 1 tsp vanilla.

Mix thoroughly. Shape into walnut sized balls and place 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350°F for 7 to 10 minutes, or until just slightly golden. Do not overbake. Cool 10 minutes on baking sheet. Remove to racks to finish cooling. These cookies will not firm up until completely cooled. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Trail Mix Cookies
1/2 cup packed brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar
3/4 cup wheat germ
1/3 cup quick cooking oats
1 cup raisins
1/3 cup packed flaked coconut
1/2 cup all-purpose flour, mixed with 1 tsp baking powder

Layer ingredients in the jar in the order given, pressing each layer firmly in place before adding the next.

Attach this message to jar: Empty cookie mix into large mixing bowl. Mix thoroughly with spoon. Add 1/2 cup butter, softened. Mix in 1 egg, slightly beaten and 1 tsp vanilla. Mix until completely blended. Shape into walnut-sized balls and place 2 inches apart on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350°F for 12 to 14 minutes until edges are lightly browned. Cool 5 minutes on baking sheet. Remove cookies to racks to finish cooling. Yield: 2 1/2 dozen cookies.
SAVORY MIXES

Grilling Spices
3 tblsp whole coriander seeds
3 tblsp cumin seeds
3 tblsp dill seeds
3 tblsp yellow mustard seeds
6 tblsp whole fennel seeds
6 tblsp white sugar
3 tblsp salt
1 1/2 tsp fresh ground pepper

Combine all seeds in a skillet over medium heat. Toast, shaking pan, about 4 minutes. Using a spice grinder or food processor, coarsely grind seeds. Transfer to a small bowl. Add sugar, salt and pepper. Stir well to combine. Makes about 1 1/2 cups. Works well in small decorative jars.

Attach this message to jar: These grilling spices give meat, fish, or poultry an intensely flavorful, slightly crunchy outer layer while sealing in the meat’s juices. Simply rub in the spices and cook—no waiting time is required. Store tightly closed at room temperature for up to 6 months.

Cajun Spices
3/4 cup salt
1/4 cup ground cayenne pepper
2 tblsp ground white pepper
2 tblsp ground black pepper
2 tblsp paprika
2 tblsp onion powder
2 tblsp garlic powder

Put each ingredient into a separate cup or small bowl. While holding a pint canning jar at an angle, add ingredients to create a “sand art” look. The salt and cayenne may be divided into smaller portions and used to separate other spices, creating more “stripes.”

Attach this message to jar: Can be used on potatoes, eggs and meat.

Country Soup
1/2 cup barley
1/2 cup dried split peas
1/2 cup uncooked rice
1/2 cup dry lentils
2 tblsp dried minced onion
2 tblsp dried parsley
2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp lemon pepper
2 tblsp beef bouillon granules
1/2 cup uncooked alphabet pasta
1 cup uncooked twist macaroni

In a wide mouth one-quart jar, layer the barley, peas, rice and...
lentils. Then, layer around the edges the onion, parsley, salt, lemon pepper, bouillon and the alphabet pasta. Fill the rest of the jar with the twist macaroni. Seal.

Attach this message to jar: Add contents of jar to 3 quarts of water, 2 chopped celery stalks, 2 sliced carrots, 1 cup shredded cabbage (optional) and 2 cups diced tomatoes. Cover and simmer over medium-low heat, until vegetables are tender.

CAKES, QUICK BREADS AND GIFTS FROM THE KITCHEN

Lemon Poppy Seed Cake

2 2/3 cups white sugar
2/3 cup shortening
4 eggs
1/2 cup fresh lemon juice
1/4 cup water
3 tblsp grated lemon peel
1 tsp lemon extract
1/2 cup poppy seeds
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 tsp baking powder
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp salt
Preheat oven to 325°F. In large bowl cream sugar and shortening with electric mixer.

Add eggs and mix well. Add lemon juice, water, lemon peel, extract and poppy seeds. Place dry ingredients in a separate large bowl and blend with a whisk. Add creamed ingredients to dry ingredients and mix with whisk and spoon.

Place 1 cup batter each into 7 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet. Bake at 325°F for 55 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Never under bake cakes. Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

Apple Cake

2/3 cup shortening
2 2/3 cups white sugar
4 eggs
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
1 1/2 tsp salt
2 tsp baking soda
3 cups all-purpose flour
2/3 cup water
3 cups grated, peeled apple
2/3 cup raisins
2/3 cup chopped walnuts
Preheat oven to 325°F. Sift together all-purpose flour, baking soda, salt, nutmeg and cinnamon. Set aside.

Cream shortening and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs and beat well. Add flour mixture alternately with water; mix until smooth. Fold in apples, raisins and nuts.

Place 1 cup batter each into 8 well-greased pint-size jars. Wipe batter from rims. Place jars on a baking sheet.

Bake at 325°F for 45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a cake comes out clean. Never under bake cakes. Wipe rims. Place hot, sterilized lids and rings on hot jars. Place jars on a wire rack; they will seal as they cool. Keep in refrigerator for up to two weeks.

**Old Fashioned Molasses Crinkles**

2 1/4 cups all-purpose flour  
2 tsps baking soda  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
3/4 tsp ground ginger  
1/2 tsp ground allspice  
1/2 tsp ground cloves  
1/4 tsp cayenne pepper or  
1/4 tsp chipotle powder  
1/2 tsp salt  
1/2 cup vegetable shortening at room temperature  
1/2 stick (1/4 cup) unsalted butter, softened  
1 cup packed dark brown sugar  
1 large egg  
1/2 cup grandmas molasses (not black strap or barbados)  
granulated sugar for sugaring tops of cookies

Whisk together all-purpose flour, baking soda, cinnamon, ginger, allspice, cloves, pepper and salt in a bowl until combined.

Beat together shortening, butter and brown sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, about 3 minutes in a stand mixer (preferably fitted with paddle attachment) or 6 minutes with a handheld. Add egg and molasses, beating until combined. Reduce speed to low, then mix in flour mixture until combined.

Put oven racks in upper and lower thirds of oven and preheat oven to 375°F.

Roll 1 heaping tsp of dough into a 1-inch ball with wet hands, then dip 1 end of ball in granulated sugar. Make more cookies in same manner, arranging them, sugared side up, 2 inches apart on 2 un-greased baking sheets.

Bake cookies, switching position of sheets halfway through baking,
Ranger Cookies

2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 tsp baking powder
3/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
2/3 cup (1 stick plus 2 2/3 tblsp) unsalted butter, slightly softened
1/2 cup vegetable shortening
1 1/3 cups packed light brown sugar
2/3 cup white sugar
2 large eggs
2 1/2 tsps vanilla extract
2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
2 cups corn flakes, crushed
1 1/4 cups chopped pecans
1 1/4 cups shredded or flaked sweetened coconut

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease several baking sheets or line with parchment paper.

In a medium bowl, thoroughly stir together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt; set aside. In a large bowl with an electric mixer on medium speed, beat together the butter and shortening until lightened. Add the sugars and beat until fluffy and smooth. Add the eggs and vanilla and beat until evenly incorporated. Beat or stir in the all-purpose flour mixture until evenly incorporated. Stir in the oats, corn flakes, pecans, and coconut until evenly incorporated. Let the dough stand for 5 to 10 minutes, or until firmed up slightly.

Shape portions of the dough into generous golf-ball-sized balls with lightly-greased hands. Place on the baking sheets, spacing about 3 inches apart. Using your hand, pat down the balls until about 1/3 inch thick.

Bake the cookies, one sheet at a time, in the upper third of the oven for 8 to 11 minutes, or until tinged with brown and just beginning to firm up in the centers; be careful not to overbake. Transfer the sheet to a wire rack and let stand until the cookies firm up slightly, about 3 minutes. Transfer the cookies to wire racks. Let stand until completely cooled.

Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week or freeze for up to 1 month. Yield: 3 dozen cookies.

CRAFTS AND NON-EDIBLE GIFTS

Lemons in a Jar

Whole preserved lemons are a specialty food item; they also make
a wonderful decorative statement when displayed on a counter or shelf in a glass jar.

2 (one quart) glass canning jars with lids
4 1/2 quarts water
7 to 10 lemons
2/3 cup salt
2 3-inch cinnamon sticks
4 tsp coriander seeds
2 tsp black peppercorns
8 whole cloves
1 cup olive oil

Wash lemons very well. Pour three quarts of water into a stainless steel or other non-reactive saucepan. Bring to a boil and add the lemons. Bring back to boil and cook the lemons for 3 minutes. Drain and immerse the lemons in cold water until they are cool enough to handle. Drain again and set aside. In a saucepan, combine 1 1/2 quarts water, salt and the spices. Bring to a boil over high heat. Remove from the stove. Add olive oil.

Fill hot, dry, sterilized jars with lemons (add a few clean lemon leaves if available). Ladle the hot brine into the jars to within 1/2 inch of the rims.

Cover with lids and apply screw-on rings. Store sealed jars in a cool place for two months before using. Brine will darken slightly.

Attach this message to jar: Preserved Lemons are an important ingredient in Middle Eastern soups and stews where they impart a tart, salty flavor. Cut them into small pieces for salads, add to couscous or serve them as an appetizer along with olives and salted nuts. Best if used within six months or before [insert date]. Once opened, store in refrigerator.

Candy Cane Bath Salts

12 (12 oz.) tall jelly canning jars with lids and rings
2 (4 lbs.) containers Epsom salts
4 lb. sea salt or kosher salt
1/2 tsp glycerin, divided (non-edible drugstore variety)
12 to 15 drops peppermint essential oil
12 to 15 drops red food coloring

Empty one carton Epsom salts into a large mixing bowl. Add 3 cups salt; stir well. Stir in 1/4 tsp glycerin and 6 to 8 drops essential oil. Mix thoroughly.

In a second large mixing bowl, empty one carton Epsom salts, and add 3 cups salt. Stir well. Add 1/4 tsp glycerin, 6 to 8 drops essential oil, and food coloring. Stir until completely blended. Color should be even.
Holding a canning jar at an angle, layer salts in jars, alternating white and red mixtures to resemble the stripes in a candy cane. Fill to the very top so that layers will not shift once you apply the lid. Attach a tag with instructions:

Attach this message to jar: Add one or two tablespoons bath salts to warm bath.

Want more jar recipes? Many more? Download the complete Gifts in a Jar HERE!
Excerpts from

Great Reader Tips Vol.2

More creative time- and money-saving tips from the readers of Mary Hunt’s “Everyday Cheapskate” syndicated column.

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Make Milk Whole

If a recipe calls for whole milk and all you have is skim or low-fat, substitute one cup of skim or non-fat milk plus one tablespoon of unsaturated oil.

Freezer Fill-Up

Save plastic milk containers, fill with water and store in the freezer. A completely full freezer is cheaper to run than one with big air gaps. Bonus: If the power goes out you’ll have lots of fresh cold water.

Onion Rings

Leftover pancake batter makes excellent fried onion rings. Separate the onion rings and allow to soak in the batter for 15 minutes. Fry in hot oil.

Fridge File

A great way to avoid cleaning out the dreaded leftovers in the refrigerator is to keep a leftover inventory. Put a dry erase board on the front of your fridge and each time you put a leftover in the fridge write it down. Include the date you put it in there. Then, when you use that leftover, mark it off your list. You’ll save time and money.

Freeze Fruit

Here’s an easy way to freeze summer fruits: Gently wash fresh raspberries, blueberries or blackberries and pat them dry. Arrange in a single layer on a baking sheet and freeze until hard. Transfer to a plastic freezer bag. Freeze for up to 9 months, removing them as needed to add a taste of summer during the colder months.

Flour Puff

Use a powder puff to dust flour on rolling pins, pastry boards and cookie sheets. Store it in a margarine tub with a small amount of flour for quick dusting jobs. It will fit perfectly!

Instead of Ricotta

Use cottage cheese in place of ricotta in your favorite lasagna recipe to reduce the overall calories and saturated fat. Regular cottage cheese works better than low-fat cheese here.

Gelatin Cups

I make my own single serving gelatin cups for my lunch. I just bought a pack of the half-cup size Gladware containers. I buy the regular gelatin mixes and mix as directed, then pour into the containers. It’s considerably cheaper than buying a six pack of gelatin at the supermarket.
Slick Cleanup

Before measuring honey or other gooey substances like sesame oil, corn syrup and maple syrup, run hot water on the inside of the measuring vessel and empty, but don't dry it off. Instead of clinging to the sides, the sticky liquid will easily slide right out.

Spice Renewal

Don’t throw out those aged spices (whole or ground) because they’ve lost their pungency. Instead, spread the amount you need onto a sheet pan and pop it into a preheated 350 F oven. When they become aromatic (only a few moments), remove from the oven and use as the recipe requires.

Leftover Salad Rescue

If you have leftover salad that you would like to save, but you’ve already tossed it with the dressing, try this: Put a couple of crackers (I usually use Ritz but any should do) on top of the salad, then wrap it with plastic wrap and put in the fridge. The salad will not get all wilted and will be ready to eat again the next day.

Uses for Cheap Candy

Many Stores have candy on sale on the days following Halloween. This is a great time to stock up on candy you can use for other things. Hard candy is perfect for decorating a gingerbread house for Christmas. Or use for filling goody bags or piñatas at birthday parties. You can also reserve some of the kids’ trick or treat stash for holiday baking. M&Ms can be stand-ins for chocolate chips in cookies or as decorations on cut-out cookies. Or chop milk chocolate bars into "chips." Lollipops and hard candies can be crushed to make “stained glass” sugar cookies. Why buy more candy at full price later when you can plan ahead and be creative for much less?

Sugarless Gum

I like to chew sugarless gum. But during the hot humid months, it absorbs the moisture in the air and gets really messy. Storing it in the refrigerator prevents that problem.

Flavored Water

Instead of paying for name-brand fruit flavored water, try making your own for pennies. Add 1 tablespoon Luzianne Raspberry Flavoring (unsweetened) to 2 quarts of water. Add 3/4 cup Splenda, or to taste. Stir. This makes two quarts, and it tastes great!

Slice and Serve, Now or Later

It is easy to cut a sausage into slices with an electric knife. Even if it is partially frozen, the knife slices...
through the plastic packaging and the sausage with ease. I like to cook the entire package at the same time, wrapping and freezing or refrigerating the cooked sausage patties for future meals. I simply pop them into the microwave for a few seconds. Easy!

**Easy Carrot Cake**

My friend shared the following tip with me. When making her favorite carrot cake recipe, she substitutes junior baby food carrots for the specified amount of grated carrots. She says the cake is actually more moist than if you had used grated carrots.

**Eyeless Potatoes**

To keep potatoes from growing eyes, place them in a basket or open container in a cool dry place and add an apple in with them. I don’t know how this works, but it does. Potatoes will keep longer and won’t get soft and shrivel up as quickly. When stored properly, potatoes will keep for up to two months.

**Culinary Tricks**

After cutting up onions, run cold water over your hands while rubbing them with a stainless steel spoon or utensil. This removes the odor from your hands.

**HOME**

**Save Energy**

If you use an electric stove, cover the drip pans under the burners with aluminum foil. This reflects the heat, so you use a little less energy. Makes them easier to clean, too.

**Heat Waves**

During summer heat waves, drop into a cool store, restaurant or theater every so often. At home, cool down by running water on your wrists, behind the knees and hold a wet towel on your neck or forehead. Also, try sitting in front of a fan blowing over a bowl of ice cubes.

**No More Scratches**

Make the scratches on your polished furniture seem to disappear just by rubbing them with a shelled walnut.

**Sound Check**

We just moved into our new home and the fuse box was mislabeled and confusing. We hooked up a small electric radio in a room and turned it on loud enough to hear in the basement. We then turned the fuses on and off to locate the fuse that matched the room when the music stopped. We moved the radio from room to room to check the fuse switches this way. Now we have an organized fuse box with all the switches marked.
Tennis Ball Vault

Split a tennis ball, but not completely in half. Now you have a place to hide your valuables.

50 Percent Off

Nearly everything can be cut in half. Use only half a dryer sheet or half the recommended amount of detergent. Try it on anything you can think of. If it works, you've cut your cost by half. If it doesn't, you haven't lost anything.

Get Well Gift

Here's an ideal inexpensive gift to bring to someone in a nursing home or hospital. The hospital facial tissue is not the best quality, so I bring a box of Puff with Aloe and it's always a hit.

Fire-Starter

For an easy fire starter I take the stubs of partially burned candles, cut them into 1 to 2-inch pieces and roll them up in a square of wax paper. I twist the ends like a candy and then simply light the ends. This works great to start any type of fire.

Rust Preventer

I live at the beach where the salt air tends to rust anything made of metal. The technician at my bike shop told me to spray furniture polish on the gears, spokes and other parts of my bike to protect and prevent them from rusting.

Many Mini Drawers

I bought a small cabinet from the hardware store designed to hold screws and other small items. It has 80 plastic drawers in it. I decoupaged it with cutouts from wallpaper left over from my bedroom and hung it on the wall. It is the greatest thing for storing earrings and jewelry because I can see what's in each drawer.

Hot Water Heater Savings

In addition to using a water heater blanket, a timer to turn off an electric water heater when no one is at home saves a lot, too. I had one installed and am saving at least $18 a month.

Curtains and Matching Napkins

I purchased a pair of curtains for my kitchen window from a discount store. I knew they were way too long, but they were the shortest length available and inexpensive enough to throw away the excess. After I cut off the excess and made a new hem, I realized I had enough fabric left over to make tie backs, four 16-inch dinner napkins, and a basket liner for my salt and pepper shakers. What a deal.
Bathroom Canisters

Use canisters to control bathroom clutter. I use an inexpensive set of blue and white porcelain canisters that were originally made to store flour, sugar, etc. Not only do they look nice, but I know where to store all of my facial cleansers, cosmetics and cotton balls. Gone are the days of replacing something just because it couldn't be found.

Burner Covers

My husband always receives popcorn tins at Christmas time. Once empty, I use the lids as burner covers for my stove top. I’ve painted them and sometimes cover them with decals. They make nice homemade gifts. You can cover them with just about anything, just be sure to remove them when you turn the stove on. We use the canisters as trash cans or as storage for decorations. They can be painted or covered with wallpaper.

Festive Napkin Rings

Save the empty tape spools from the office tape dispensers. They make great napkin rings. Wrap them with ribbon until the entire spool is covered then hot glue a small holiday item on the outside.

Finger Shrinker

I’m in the jewelry business and on occasion a pregnant customer will come in with a wedding band stuck on her very swollen finger. Usually the only solution is to cut off the ring, which destroys it. I recently suggested to a woman with this problem to rub Preparation-H on her finger to temporarily reduce the swelling enough to get the ring off. It worked! It was painless, quick and saved her ring. I can’t guarantee the results but it’s worth a shot before calling for the jeweler.

Store-Brand

Good Housekeeping magazine recommended Wal-Mart powdered automatic dishwasher detergent as the best buy for the buck. I tried it and loved it. I was a big Cascade fan but find this particular store brand to be superior even to Cascade.

A Holey Solution

My shower curtain tore through at the top on one end and was hanging loosely. I wasn’t ready to get rid of it just yet, so I used my paper hole punch and punched a couple of new holes and doubled the end of the curtain so the curtain ring was going through both of the holes.

Alcohol Kills

Rubbing alcohol kills roaches faster than any commercial insecticide. Just keep it in a spray bottle and a
couple of squirts kills them in about a minute. Label the spray bottle clearly and store well out of the reach of children.

Safe Pest Control

We battled bugs on our tomatoes and other garden plants until we started treating them with rubbing alcohol. We spray it directly on the plants. It kills mildew, aphid, white-fly, scale and many other pests. It is safe for use on produce.

Sleep Under the Stars

Instead of buying glow-in-the-dark plastic stars or stickers for the kids' rooms I found a cheaper way to create the night sky. Dab glow-in-the-dark paint on the tip of a skinny dowel and randomly tap the ceiling. The 'dots' won't show during the day, but at night they glow and even seem to twinkle.

Comfy Kneeling Pad

To make a cheap and comfortable kneeling pad I purchased two 8-foot lengths of 3/4-inch foam plastic water pipe insulation for about $1.20 each. I cut each length of insulation into four pieces, giving me eight pieces. I used duct tape and taped the pieces together side by side (not stacked). This was enough for a kneeling pad approximately 18 by 14 inches. It is very comfortable, especially when working on cold or wet concrete floors because the insulation keeps my knees warm.

Square Solution

If you prefer the square facial tissue boxes but hate paying more for fewer tissues, reuse an empty square tissue box by carefully cutting open one side. Remove about half of the tissues from a regular-sized box. Fold the stack in half and insert it into the square box so you can pull out the tissue through the box's top opening. Tape the side shut till the next refilling.

Extra Compaction

Some models of trash compactors have a switch for extra compaction, but you can do the same thing even if yours doesn't have this feature. Start the compactor and just as the motor starts to reverse, turn the switch off. This stops the ram in the bottom position and eliminates the re-expansion of the trash. I leave mine in this position overnight and it doubles the capacity of the bag. Less cost for bags and fewer trips to the dumpster.

Neat Caulk

I could never get caulking around the tub or sink to look right until I saw my brother use this trick: Tape the tub with blue painter's tape, leaving about 1/4 to 1/2 inch on either side of the joint for the caulk-
ing. Now squeeze the new caulk and smooth it out. Remove the tape and you have a neat and clean line and the caulk looks great. Just be sure to remove the tape before the caulk starts to set.

**Hot Tick Trick**

Tick season is here. The best, easiest and safest way to remove a tick that has already bitten and burrowed itself is to douse it with Tabasco sauce. The tick will pull out in seconds. It really works!

**Rust Out II**

Want to get rust out of anything? Try Magica Rust Remover. This stuff is truly magic (www.magicarusrremover.com).

**Pot Repair**

Don't throw out that busted terra cotta pot. You can repair it quite easily. Moisten the breaks with water. Squeeze carpenter's glue onto the broken edges and reset the pieces. Circle the pot with strips of masking tape to hold the pieces in place. Let the bond harden.

**Up Close and Visible**

I have several necklaces, but didn't wear them due to the hassle of the tangle factor. I got an idea to use a suction cup hook on my bathroom mirror and hang them on that. Voilá! Now I can judge which one looks best in front of the mirror and just replace the others.

**Earring Organizer**

The next time you come across a piece of thin foam wrap (not bubble wrap) used to package fragile items, cut a strip that will fit nicely into a drawer or a compartment of your jewelry box. It makes a handy and convenient earring holder. Simply push the post through the foam wrap and attach the earring back to the other side. The convenience of having all of your earrings secured and in the same place is well worth the couple of seconds it takes to attach them to the foam strip.

**LAUNDRY**

**Fabric Softener**

I make my own fragrance-free fabric softener for a fraction of the cost of commercial brands. I pour 2 cups of baking soda into a gallon-size container then add 2 cups of white vinegar. It fizzes and bubbles so I do this very slowly. I add 4 cups of water, mix and pour into a 1/2 gallon plastic jug. I use 1/4 cup in the final rinse. I have used this with much success.

**Hungry Washing Machine**

I had problems with my washing machine eating socks until I
purchased a couple of lingerie bags with zippers. When I sort the laundry I place all the socks in the bag, zip it up and toss it in with the regular load.

**Spray Starch**

Here's my recipe for homemade spray starch: 2 tablespoons cornstarch and 2 cups cold water. Place in spray bottle and shake well before each use.

**Summer Stain**

No matter how delicious, no one wants to wear a barbecue stain. For washables, put glycerin (a thick solvent, available at drugstores) on the spot, then rinse with cool water. Apply a laundry pre-treatment like Shout or Soilove, and let sit for 15 minutes. Finish with a regular wash cycle. This will remove that red stain even if the item is white.

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Mary Hunt, award winning and bestselling author, syndicated columnist and sought-after motivational speaker, has created a global platform that is making strides to help men and women battle the epidemic impact of consumer debt.

Mary is the founder of Debt-Proof Living, a highly regarded organization consisting of an interactive website, a monthly newsletter, a daily syndicated column and hundreds of thousands of loyal followers. Now in its twenty-first year, DPL is dedicated to its mission to provide hope, help and realistic solutions for individuals who are committed to financially responsible and debt-free living.

As a speaker, Mary travels extensively addressing conferences, corporations, colleges, universities and churches at home and abroad. A frequent guest on radio and television, she has appeared on dozens of television shows including “Dr. Phil,” “Good Morning America,” “The Oprah Winfrey Show” and “Dateline.”