

how to
cook 30

toddler dinners
in 1 hour



Part One

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LET'S TALK WHY

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As parents, we have an obligation to provide whole foods that will nourish our children so their bodies can grow. This obligation indisputably becomes one of the most time-consuming parenting tasks every single day. Cooking at home is one of my biggest passions... but let's be honest, it can be exhausting and I hate doing the dishes. Fortunately through trial-and-error, I've perfected how to provide nutritious meals for my son in a simple way.

Before we start, I recommend reflecting on your own childhood and family eating habits. Are they habits you'd like to repeat with your own child or maybe you like to do things differently?

After you answer the above question, remind yourself that you have power to do what you feel is best for your child, starting today.

The second most important thing to note is that although you may not like sardines or cauliflower, your child's taste buds are still developing and you should not deprive them from eating nutrient-dense foods because you do not enjoy the taste.

The abovementioned is a difficult habit to break because we usually have our 'routine' grocery shopping mapped out and often overlook items we personally don't enjoy. I do have to go out of my way, or circle back just to find the canned sardines & sheep's yogurt. It is okay for your children to try things you typically do not eat.

My hope is that you will use this simple 3-step process to explore a variety of nutrient-dense meals for your little.

Don't forget to check out "Part II" of "How to Cook 30 Toddler Dinners in 1 Hour" so you can pair this frozen protein recipe with nutrient-dense, delicious sides!

XO,
Lia Tusso



INGREDIENT LIST

4 lbs of ground meat

I recommend using three or four different meats so your child consumes a variety throughout the month. This will help expose them to different tastes. You may use ground beef, lamb, pork, bison, venison, and/or turkey. If your budget allows opt for organic & grass-fed.

4 eggs

Any eggs will do! Cage-Free organic eggs are expensive and are about \$4.00+ more than grade-A it's okay to compromise here if needed.

2 cups grated parmesan cheese

The parmesan cheese is NOT necessary, but it does add a great taste to ground beef and bison! My classic Italian meatball recipe does require parmesan.

2 cups bread crumbs

Bread crumbs are a pantry staple. You can use seasoned or unseasoned breadcrumbs. I do like to switch it up depending on the meat I'm using. For example, I add Italian breadcrumbs to beef and unseasoned to lamb.

2 cups quick oats

Look for organic quick oats. Oats are notorious for having chemicals sprayed on them, so try to avoid if possible, the price difference for organic is approximately \$2.00.

seasonings of choice

You probably have what you need in your pantry already! You can add whatever seasonings you'd like. Try parsley for beef, cumin for lamb, a little paprika in pork...and sometimes just a dash of pepper. Try to avoid too much salt for the little ones.

1 cup water

You don't need to measure this out exactly, but you will need to use water to keep the meatballs or patties moist. The key is to get a peanut-butter-like consistency.



RECIPE

1 lb of ground meat

1 egg

1/2 cup parmesan cheese

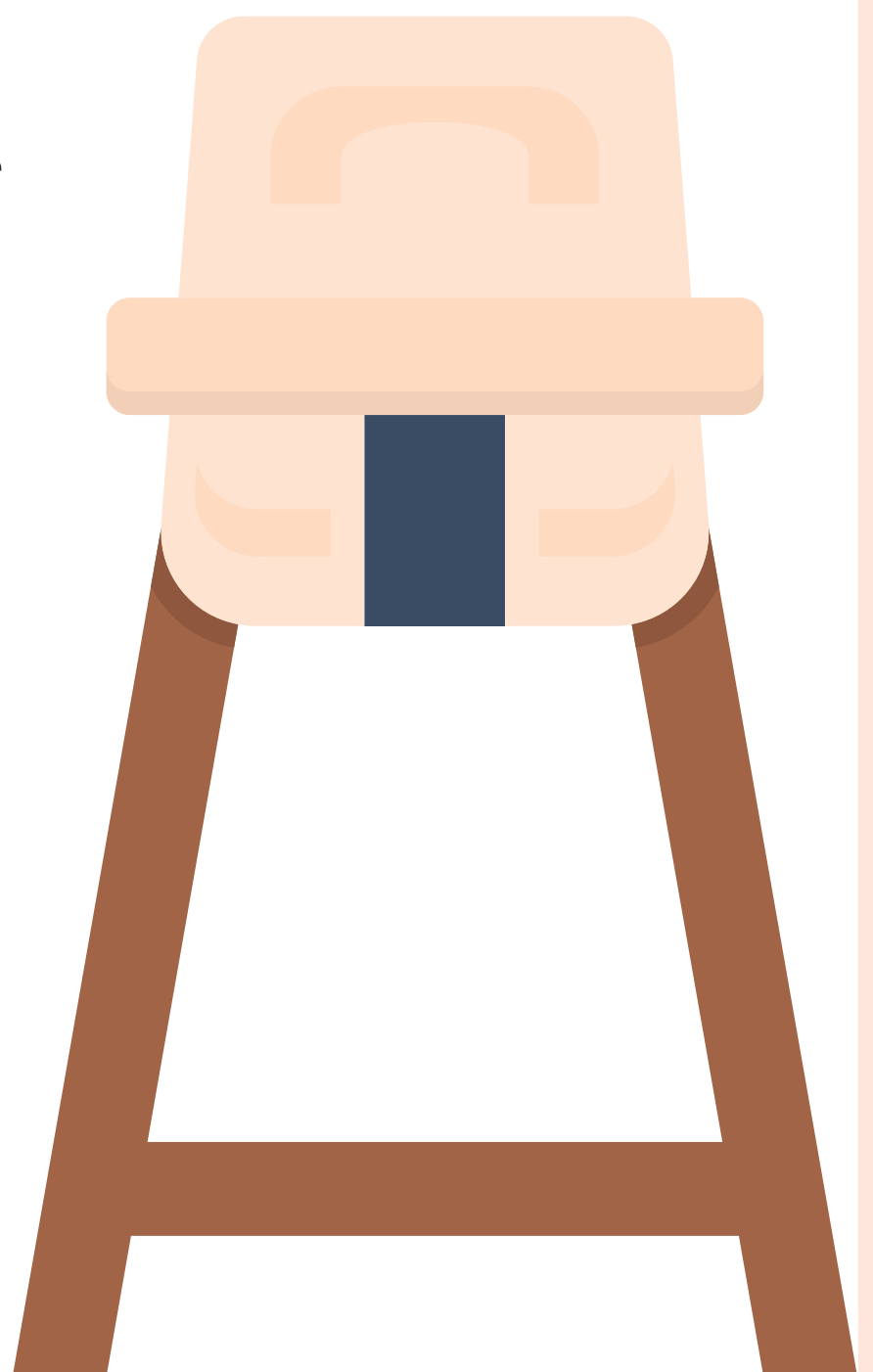
1/2 cup bread crumbs

1/2 cup quick oats

seasonings of choice

1/4 cup water (approximately)

The above recipe is for 1 lb of ground meat.
Note you will use this recipe four times in a row if you have four different meats.
Feel free to change up the seasonings for each meat.



BEFORE YOU START

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Schedule this project ahead of time.

It is not something that can be accomplished last-minute. Pick a day that works best for you, and plan accordingly. Tell your partner or other family members that you will need the kitchen to yourself during this time. You should also have your grocery delivery arrive a day (or two) beforehand, or pick-up the ingredients during your normal grocery run.

Choose your hour wisely.

For example, if this is your first attempt, I suggest using 1 hour during your child's 2 hour nap. Or perhaps 1 hour after you put your child down for bed. Feeling rushed will lead to frustration because this is a repetitive recipe and mini-meatball forming can be tedious.

Start with a clean kitchen.

Raw meat may contain harmful bacteria (like salmonella and E. Coli) that may quickly spread in the kitchen.

It's important to start with a clean surface to avoid any contamination, this includes your kitchen sink. Wash and remove all dishes or baby bottles from the sink prior to starting.

By your third attempt I guarantee you will complete the messy part in 45 minutes!



GET PREPARED

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Lay all of the ingredients on the counter and ensure you have everything you need. Open all containers and seasonings prior to starting so you can easily access everything.

You will also need:

- 1 large bowl
- 1 pair of kitchen scissors
- 1 meat thermometer
- Paper towels
- An apron
- freezer bags (gallon-size recommended)

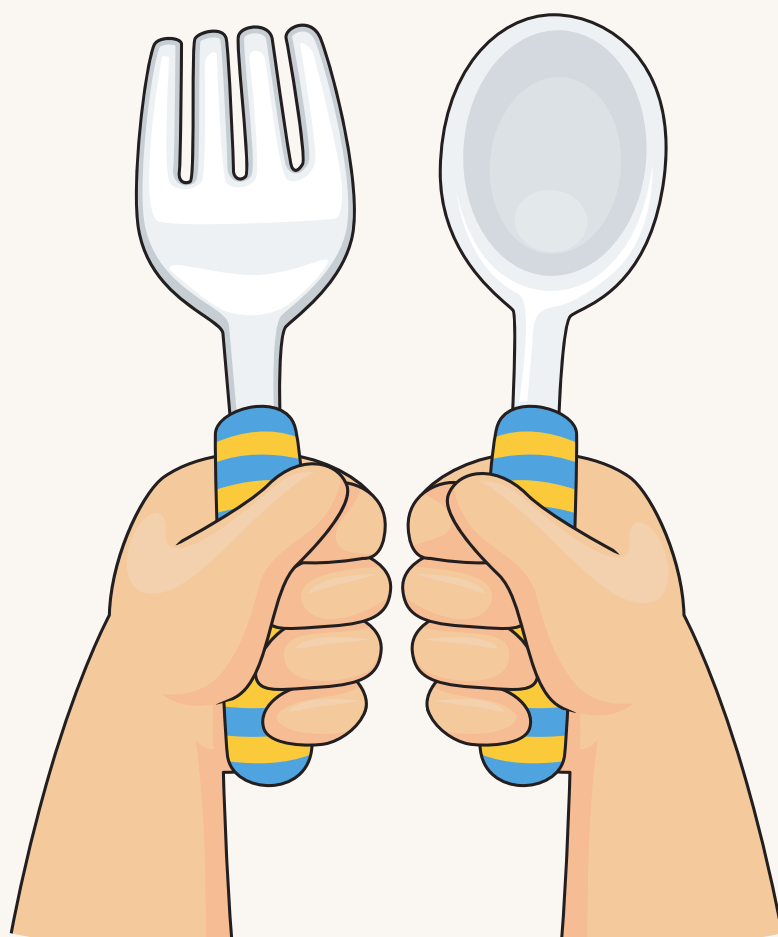
Turn oven to 350 degrees.

Tips:

-Never rinse raw meat in your kitchen sink (even if your mother-in-law tells you to!). This is an outdated recommendation, rinsing raw meat can lead to contamination in the kitchen.

-Wash hands frequently while handling raw meat.

-Always use hot soapy water to wash hands and clean dirty dishes.





START THE CLOCK

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Once you're ready to get started, check the clock. Give yourself exactly one hour to nail this out - but **allow yourself grace** to not rush if you feel you need to go at a slower pace.

In your bowl mix together the recipe:

- 1 lb ground meat
- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup parmesan cheese
- 1 egg


Next, use your hands to "cup" water out of the faucet and pour into the bowl. The key is to get a nice peanut-butter like consistency. Repeat if necessary.

Once everything is mixed well and the consistency has been reached start forming into mini-meatballs.

The key is to get at least 30 mini-meatballs per 1 lb of meat. This way your child will have about 4 mini-meatballs available for each dinner, which should equal approximately 4 ounces of protein. *Note, that a child's daily protein requirement depends on the size of the child. Please do your own research or speak to your pediatrician to determine how much protein your child should consume daily.

Put meatballs into oven for approximately 15 minutes. Turn 1/2 way to allow browning on both sides.

Cook until the internal temperature reaches at least 165 for safe consumption. Use your meat thermometer for accuracy.



FREEZER FRESH

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Once all of your meatballs are cooked (you should have approximately 120) label four freezer bags (gallon size) with the type of meat, and date.

Once frozen, you can pull what you'd like each night. Typically my son consumes 3-4 meatballs per dinner at age 1.

Put them on a microwave-safe plate (glass is least toxic). Sprinkle a dash of water over the frozen meatballs to get them moist.

Use your microwave's DEFROST setting for 5:00 minutes. While you're waiting for your meatballs to defrost prepare your vegetables. (Check out "Part !!" of "How to cook 30 toddler dinners in 1 hour").

Allow the meatballs to cool, and then cut into appropriately-sized pieces for your little.



SOURCES

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