



Short Cuts from a One Woman Show

I am always for looking for ways to simplify my life. Maybe better said, I like shortcuts. Like many of you, I am a one woman show. I feel like a stay at home mom without the kids and with a job. I love working at home. My commute is excellent. I traverse one flight of stairs to get to the office. With gas hovering around \$3.00 a gallon the economy is great, but I wish my commute used a little more fuel. If it involved a little more physical effort, I wouldn't have to work out to burn calories!

Lately I've been passionate about cooking, but I am not passionate about preparing dinner. I find it offensive to put in a full day's work only to end up in the kitchen preparing a meal. We do our fair share of eating out and Lean Cuisines often find their way into our microwave. Dining out is expensive, takes too much time, and is costly to my waistline as well. Lean Cuisine - well it really isn't "cuisine" at all but it does in a pinch. A home cooked meal would be my first choice during the week.

When the spirit moves, I prepare casseroles en mass. I buy a large quantity of one kind of meat on sale or at Sam's. Then I spend a weekend afternoon preparing our favorites casseroles. I get them ready to the point of being put in the oven and stop there. Instead of baking them, I freeze them. I never make a 9x13 casserole anymore. Ron and I are not big on lots of leftovers. If I cook too much of one thing, it ends up getting tossed. I hate throwing away food! Since most casserole recipes are designed for a 9x13 pans, I use two 8x8 cakes pans instead. Foil cake pans are available too. I don't want my favorite stoneware serving pieces stuck in the freezer for months.

For example, I might prepare three different chicken casserole recipes. They end up in six pans. I label and freeze them. Then, if I am thinking ahead, I thaw it in the fridge the night before. If I'm not, I take it out and thaw it on the counter. I bake the casserole while I'm seeing my last client of the day. Add a salad and a frozen vegetable and voila, dinner (some days I'm not that industrious and we skip the salad and the veggie). If you are single, you could probably get four freezer casseroles from one standard recipe.

If you would like more information about "freezer" cooking here are some links:

- savingdinner.com
- 30daygourmet.com
- [More about Freezer Cooking](#)