**Freezer Club Guidelines**

***Purpose****:  In an attempt to serve our families healthy, ethical, and sustainable foods, we’ve developed these guidelines.  The purpose is also to make sure we are all cooking and dividing up servings by the same standards.  The point is to do our best, but we know there may be situations where you can’t meet every guideline due to availability, etc.*

**Produce**

*Thinking about what's in season will help keep the cost of produce down.*

* Buy organic from the Dirty Dozen list; find the latest version at [www.EWG.org](http://www.ewg.org/)

* If you can’t find it organic, try to buy locally or at least from the U.S., if possible.

* Salads = use a healthy leafy green lettuce such as Romaine, Green Leaf, etc (instead of iceberg lettuce since it has almost no nutrition comparatively)

                (Suggestion: Sam's Club Organic Tubs - use 1/2 tub per family)

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**Starches**  (*Please use the following in recipes where it calls for these items.)*

* Pasta = whole wheat pasta

Ravioli/Tortellini = Try to buy whatever has the fewest ingredients

(Suggestion: TJ's is a great, inexpensive place for tortellini)
* Tortillas = whole wheat tortillas (look for ones with fewest ingredients)

                     (Suggestion: Santa Fe Brand at Sam's)

* Rice = brown rice

* Pizza Crust = whole wheat pizza crust dough ball from Shakespeare's Pizza or make your own

* Pie Crust = make from scratch using no Trans Fats (i.e. shortening)

* Bread Crumbs = Panko, homemade with whole wheat or organic bread (basically, look at ingredient list and don't buy if it has HFCS or preservatives, etc.)
* Puff Pastry/Crescent Rolls = have not yet found a brand without Trans Fats.

**Dairy/Eggs**

* Milk - Organic or No Growth Hormone

               (Suggestion: Wal-Mart/Sam's brand is no growth hormone and should state it on label)
* Cream/Half-n-Half - does not have to be organic, but please make sure it does not have Carageenan

               (Suggestion: Heartland brand Cream in glass bottles at HyVee, Central Dairy and Land O'Lakes Half-n-Half)
* Cheese - does not have to be organic (TJ's cheese is no growth hormone), when possible shred your own to avoid anti-caking agents
                (Suggestion: Block Cheese at Sam's is cheapest)
* Sour Cream/Cottage Cheese/Cream cheese - does not have to be organic, but look for least ingredients and no Carageenan

                (Suggestion: Daisy Sour Cream)
* Butter - real butter or something like Earth Balance or Smart Balance blends, to avoid trans fats in margarine
* Eggs - should be local, organic or cage-free and fed no animal by-products
* Mayonnaise - Hellman's Real Mayonnaise has the fewest and most natural ingredients

**Meat**

*This is one area where we really don't want to compromise. For example, if you forget to buy your meat at the Meat Market (on the last day it is open before FC), we would rather get that meal later than to use over the counter meat. Of course, you also have the option of purchasing local/organic meat at HyVee or Clover's, but it will likely be more expensive.*

* Beef and Pork = buy locally; can be bought from MU Meat Market

              Ribs = baby back ribs

* Chicken = Smart Chicken (not organic) for breasts and ground or Organic in another brand
* Chicken/Beef Stock = Organic or Vegetable Stock. (Can also use homemade if made using local meat/Smart Chicken.)

**Seafood**

* Salmon = buy *Alaskan Wild* Salmon (if it says Atlantic, then it was farm-raised)

* Mahi Mahi = buy wild, pole & troll caught

* Shrimp = choose US wild or US inland farmed, if possible (to cut down on toxins)

                                 Best options are Northern Shrimp (Eastern Canada), Northern Prawn, Pink Shrimp

                                          Then Ocean shrimp, Oregon Shrimp, Pacific Pink shrimp (all above are wild)

* Tilapia = farm-raised in US *(We haven't been able to find this in town, yet and so have just continued to buy what we can.)*

* Catfish = U.S. farm-raised

* Cod = Pacific cod

**Avoiding Additives**

* When buying something, look for the brand with the fewest and the most recognizable ingredients.

* Avoid MSG, additives and preservatives as much as possible
* Avoid High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS)

* Since we can’t find a soy sauce without MSG, we’ll try to use it less often. Please use one that does not have added MSG.

                 (Suggestion: TJ's brand or San-J naturally brewed Tamari Premium Soy Sauce from HyVee Health Market)

* When possible, try to make a homemade seasoning/sauce to avoid MSG and preservatives. (i.e.  – taco seasoning/marinara or alfredo sauce)

* Mayo = buy real, full fat mayo

(Suggestion: Hellman’s or TJ's)
* Avoid Trans Fats = anything hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated.
* Bouillon = do not use bouillon cubes, when possible, use stock in place of the water, thus eliminating the need for any bouillon.

                     (Suggestion: Better Than Bouillon --comes in a jar)

**Preparation Guidelines**

* We use Glad OvenWare pans (8x8 size). If your meal has to be given in something else like a 9x12 foil pan (Blueberry French Toast), or gallon bag (soups), you must provide an empty pan to each person so the pans rotate accordingly.

* Let soups (or anything else) cool and then put in plastic bags.  If they are hot, the BPA will leak from the bag.

* Do not include a dry pasta or rice, if it calls for the dish to be served over it.

* When packaging multiple items into our pans, you only need to bag the juicy items.  If they are dry, it’s probably fine to leave them in the pan.  (i.e. – Taco Salad, bag the tomatoes so they don’t make the cheese mushy, but leave the remaining ingredients in piles in the pan)

* Label the outside of pans or bags with the following: name of dish, date it was made, cooking instructions, your initials

* Type up your recipe(s) in a word document(s) and upload to Google Docs.

* If making a homerun recipe, please mark any changes you made on the document in Google Docs. (You can mark your changes in red and denote towards the bottom something like: Carla's changes September 2010 in red.)

**Quantity Guidelines**

*Specific quantities for things like wraps, etc. are listed on the Homerun list. Other general guidelines are listed below.*

* **Soups –** Gallon Bags - 8 cups
* **Pancakes/Waffles** - 12
* **Wraps/Burritos** - 8
* **Stew/Chili –** Bags or Pans - 8 cups
* **Burgers –** 1/3-1/2 lb. per burger
* **Pulled Pork/Mexican Pot Roast Tacos/BBQ Beef/Asian Lettuce Wraps, etc. –** Fill the pan using the recipe as a guideline (do our best to make what the recipe says is 4 servings), but if we come a little short we talk about it the next round and try to adjust.
* **Chicken Breasts –** 4 per family (1.5-2 lbs.) when they are the main part of the meal. If it is cut up in pasta, use whatever the right portion would be based on the recipe if it's in a dish.
* **Chicken Strips –** equal to 4 breasts (1.5-2 lbs.)
* **Pork Chops –** 4 totaling 1.5-2 lbs
* **Pork Tenderloin –** 1.75-2 lbs. per family
* **Steak** – 2 lbs. per family unless recipe states otherwise
* **Ribs –** 3+ lbs. per family - baby back
* **French Dip** – enough for 4 generous sandwich servings plus 2 cups au jus per pan (little over half of pan)
* **Pastas/Casseroles –** Fill the pan
* **Salmon** – 6 oz. per serving or 1.5 lbs. per family
* **Tilapia** – 6 oz. per serving or 1.5 lbs. per family, approx. 7 fillets

**Shrimp** – 1.5 lbs. per family

**Freezer Club Monthly Check List**

* Check Dirty Dozen list and other guidelines before buying ingredients.
* Double check quantities that have been specified for various meals listed at the end of the guidelines file.
* Prepare meals - usually in Gladware pan (if not, be sure to bring empty pan for each person).
* Label all containers with name of meal, date, initials and instructions, which can be affixed to top of pan or written on bag.
* Upload New Recipes to specific month’s folder in Google Docs.
* Make changes to HR Recipes on Google Docs.
* Look up new recipes to bring to the meeting and/or know which HR recipes you would like to make for next round.
* Be prepared to mark on HR list what you had and whether it was a HR. Along those lines, try to remember or jot down any problems you had with any of the meals, so we can discuss them and try to improve.

**Helpful Hints**

* When trying to figure out meals you want to make for the next round, it is helpful if you have a variety of ideas. For instance, having breakfast, chicken, beef, etc. ideas insures that if there is too much chicken by the time you share what you want to make, you may still be able to make something from your list to help round out the menu.

*\*In general, we try to have at least one seafood, one pork tenderloin, one soup or chili (in winter months), one pasta, one fresh meal, one breakfast or vegetarian meal and then round that out with beef, chicken or sausage meals. We do sometimes have two of these things or on occasion no seafood, it isn’t an exact science, but we do try to keep the menu well-rounded.*

* Look over the ingredients in your upcoming meal within a few days of our meeting so that if you are grocery shopping for your family throughout the month, you might notice if an ingredient is on sale. You might also know ahead of time that you need something at Sam’s or wherever and can pick it up as part of your normal monthly trip instead of making multiple trips when you are ready to prepare your meal.
* Multiple steps can be done at different times. Examples from me personally:
	+ Bruschetta Chicken - I prepared the chicken mixture and put the cheese on it and froze it, a week or so later, I made the bread cubes and packaged the chicken stock.
	+ Mango Salsa - it’s a lot of chopping and I don’t have time to do it all at once. So, I put the wet ingredients (oil, vinegar, etc.) into the baggies and chop one thing like the jalepenos. Then put the bags in the fridge and the next day chop the mangos and add the garlic, etc. I may do recipes like these over the course of three days.
	+ Taco Salad - Even though it’s a fresh meal, you can brown the meat and bag it up and freeze it in advance so all you are doing the day before FC is bagging the fresh ingredients.
* If making two meals, trying to set a goal of having one meal completely done two weeks before the next meeting will eliminate some of the stress.