

Enclosed in this care package you will find five dinners (each serves four) that should go directly into the freezer, unless you would like to eat one of them tonight, in which case, keep that one on the counter to start thawing and follow instructions below. The meals can be frozen for up to three months. For the most efficient dinners, it's best to transfer meals from the freezer to the fridge the night before (or the morning of) the day you want to make them, but if you don't think ahead, don't worry, there are instructions for both scenarios.

MACARONI & CHEESE

If thawed: Place pan covered with foil in 350° oven for 25 minutes.

If frozen: Place pan covered with foil in 375° oven for 1 hour or until knife inserted into center comes out warm.

CHICKEN POT PIE

If thawed: Place in a 425° oven and bake for 25-30 minutes, or until crust is golden and filling is bubbly.

If frozen: Place in a 425° oven and bake for just under an hour, or until crust is golden and filling is bubbly.

Notes: You'll know it's ready to eat if a knife stuck in the center comes out warm. Also, if crust looks like it's starting to burn before inside is bubbly, just tent with foil.

Notes Part 2: If you're feeling ambitious, brush the top with egg wash (a whisked egg) before baking to get that sheen-y color.

PASTA WITH PORK RAGU

If thawed: Dump ragu into medium pot, and heat on medium-low until warmed through. While it's heating, prepare pasta according to package directions.

If frozen: Run the bag under warm-ish water until you can break the sauce into chunks (while still in the bag). Dump into medium pot, and heat on medium-low (covered) until warmed through. While it's heating, prepare pasta according to package directions.

Notes: Top with Parmesan if you have it.

CHICKEN CHORIZO CHILI with CORNBREAD

If thawed: Dump chili into medium pot, and heat on medium-low until warmed through. Wrap cornbread in foil and heat in a 300° oven for 15 minutes.

If frozen: Run the bag under warm-ish water until you can break the sauce into chunks (while still in the bag). Dump into medium pot, and heat on medium-low (covered) until warmed through. Wrap cornbread in foil and heat in a 350° oven for 20 minutes.

Notes: I used Aidell's chicken chorizo sausage, which is usually not very spicy, hopefully ok for kids.

CHICKEN ORZO SOUP

If thawed: Dump into medium pot, and heat on medium-low until warmed through.

If frozen: Run the bag under warm-ish water until you can break the soup into chunks (while still in the bag). Dump into medium pot, and heat on medium-low (covered) until warmed through.

SLICE & BAKE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Preheat oven to 350°. Unwrap dough and cut into 1/2-inch-thick rounds (return unused dough to freezer); place 2-inches apart on a baking sheet. Bake cookies until edges are golden brown, 15-18 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; let cool.

GREENS & RED WINE VINAIGRETTE

There is probably enough for two nights of dressed greens here.