

Healthy Cooking • Slim-Down Secrets • Food News

SELF
SPECIAL
ISSUE

SELF Dishes

73 Light & Easy Recipes

Miracle Meals 20-Minute Weekday Dinners

Super Foods! 10 Everyday Edibles With Amazing Powers

Low-Cal Desserts Chocolate Cake You Can Eat p.108

BONUS
7-Day
Diet Plan
Eat Smart,
Lose Weight



So fast, so good
Satisfying shrimp
dinner p.86

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Candles and white china add instant elegance.

Party emergency!

A few friends drop by—and suddenly you have a soiree in full swing. You could call in takeout, but wouldn't it be nice to entertain like a grown-up? We asked Sandra Lee, host of the Food Network's *Semi-Homemade Cooking*, for party-ready foods you can whip up in a flash. Just add music!

Quickie cocktail Keep a midpriced Champagne or sparkling white wine stashed in the fridge; for a sophisticated sip, add a splash of pomegranate juice.

Fast dip Mix lowfat cream cheese with the juice from a jar of jalapeños or capers and serve with pre-cut crudité's such as baby carrots, celery and broccoli.

Surprising spears Coat asparagus in peanut butter, roll in chopped peanuts and bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Trust us, this bite will be a hit!

Minute marinade "Any salad dressing can double as a marinade," Lee says.

Dessert in a dash Add 1 teaspoon of vanilla, lemon, rum or maple extract to a tub of Cool Whip Lite for a decadent-tasting topping for fruit. —*Maridel Reyes*

The new fast food

No time to cook at home? Make-and-take businesses sprouting up nationwide do the shopping, chopping and mopping so you can breeze in and create yummy dinners in minutes.

READY For about \$200 and two hours of your time, you'll go home with 4 to 6 servings of 12 different meals to store in your freezer and then pop into the oven for insta-dinners. Some companies serve wine and hors d'oeuvres while you cook; you can even host a make-your-own-dinner party.

SET Most centers offer nutritional info online so you can tailor your choices. The focus is on reasonable portions and wholesome ingredients that put takeout to shame.

COOK! Go to MakeAndTake.com to find centers near you. Then bask in the glory of your "homemade" cooking for weeks to come. —*Natalie Gingerich*



Hot pots

Move over, Teflon: Not all cookware is created equal. Using certain pots and pans can help make your food taste delicious or even be more nutritious.



COPPER Stainless steel-lined copper cookware heats quickly and evenly and is best for sautéing chicken or fish. The even heat also helps prevent scorching, making copper perfect for sauces.



CAST IRON These pans safely add the mineral into food; the more acidic the food, the more iron it will absorb. They also provide steady heat, so use for slow cookers like soup, stews and beans.



SOAPSTONE Once cured, soapstone develops a nonstick surface, so you can cook with less fat. To do: Set pan on low heat; wipe with vegetable oil. Repeat until the pot develops a nice patina. —*Ivette Manners*