

## Meal Planning for Different Groups

Different groups of people eat different meals depending on their **metabolism**, level of activity, nutritional requirements, health status, suitability of food and lifestyle. Meals should be planned based on the age, occupation, needs and eating habits of people.

### Meal planning for Different Age Groups

- **Toddlers and children below five:** Children in this age group require plenty of nutrients like protein, calcium, vitamins, minerals and iron. It is important to feed them foods from each food group in appropriate portions
- **School going children:** This age group is very active and requires a lot of energy to do all the physical and mental activities such as sports, schoolwork and homework. Breakfast should be eaten every morning. This can include fruits, juices, bread and cereals. There are certain things parents can do to develop positive food habits in their children.
  - A variety of fruits and vegetables should be given to children at intervals of two to three hours.
  - Colourful food packed with flavour should also be provided.
  - Children can be taught about the nutritional value of foods.
  - New foods may be introduced along with their favourites.
  - Children should not be forced to eat more than what they want as it can lead to obesity.
  - Children should not be fed when they are tired or sleepy.
  - Bribes and games should be avoided while trying to make them eat.
  - Small portions of food should be given at regular intervals to maintain energy.
    - There should be variety in food texture and shape.
  - **Adolescents:** The teenage years are a period of fast mental and physical growth. Adolescents tend to involve themselves in several physical activities and hence

need more energy. Girls should also eat foods rich in iron since they lose a good amount of iron during menstruation.

- **Pregnant and Lactating women:** Women have to be very careful about what they consume during pregnancy. It is recommended that women who are old enough to have children should follow a balanced diet to prepare their body for pregnancy. You may have heard of the saying that pregnant women should 'eat for two.' While it is true that a pregnant woman must eat enough for herself and her baby, she should also be careful not to over eat. 'Eating for two' simply means that whatever she eats should provide sufficient nutrients to both her and her baby. After birth, certain things should be kept in mind when feeding the baby.

**Breastfeeding, bottle-feeding and complementary feeding** are a few ways to feed babies. Let us understand in more detail what the benefits of each type of feeding method are.

1. **Breast milk** is the ideal food for newborn babies for the following reasons:
  - It has a correct mix of nutrients that the baby requires to grow.
  - The temperature and consistency of the milk are just right.
  - Antibodies present in the milk help the baby fight viruses and bacteria.
  - It forms a stronger bond between the mother and the baby.
  - It is sterile, so the baby is unlikely to suffer from stomach problems.
  - It is also effective in lowering the risks of diabetes and respiratory problems in babies.
2. **Bottle feeding** is usually adopted by women who are unable to breast feed their babies. Bottles are used to feed milk to the baby. Modified cow's milk is mostly used to make the formula for the baby's milk. Ordinary cow's milk is high in minerals and protein and should be avoided as it can affect the baby's kidneys. It also lacks other vital nutrients. The formula should be prepared

with the right amount of milk powder as too much of it can lead to several health problems. It is important to **sterilise** the bottle and the teats to ensure that milk is not **contaminated**.

For pregnant women, the nutritional requirement varies depending on the trimester. There is no specific quantity of foods recommended for pregnant and lactating women.

3. When the baby reaches a certain age, about six months, breast milk or formula is not sufficient to provide it with the nutrients it requires. **Complementary feeding** means introducing the baby to some solid food in addition to continued breast feeding. The baby may demand breast milk till the age of two and this demand should be fulfilled to help them grow. Complementary feeding is also called '**weaning**' which refers to the food given when a child stops breast feeding or when the change from breast milk to other food begins.

- **The Elderly:** As people grow older, they become less active and become more prone to illnesses. This age group comprises of people who are 60 years of age and above. Their bones become weak and brittle and gives rise to a condition called **osteoporosis**. To prevent this condition, they should have a lot of calcium and vitamin D in their diet. Osteoporosis mostly affects women but men can also be affected. **Hormone replacement therapy** or **HRT** can help prevent osteoporosis in women. Older people also suffer from a number of nutritional problems because of an inability to digest many types of food. They are often affected by problems like diabetes, arthritis and heart diseases. Elderly people should be served soft and plain food to help with digestion. They should have fruits and vegetables at least five times a day. Carbohydrates such as brown rice, potatoes and cereals should be consumed for energy. Protein sources such as meat, fish and eggs should also be consumed.

### **Meal planning for Different Occupational/Working Group**

Working professionals don't always have enough time to focus on their food habits and eat whatever is readily available. However, depending on the kind of jobs they hold, different people should follow different diets.

### **Sedentary Worker**

A sedentary job involves very little movement. These people work by sitting in one place without doing any significant physical activity. This can cause severe health problems such as increased blood pressure, high sugar and cholesterol levels and an increased risk of colon cancer. People with such jobs should avoid chocolates, chips, cookies and sodas as these could lead to obesity. To maintain a healthy diet, they should eat different types of food. The following are a few types of food they can eat:

- **Breakfast:** High fibre cereal, with or without milk, or bread and butter can be eaten with fresh fruits or fruit juice or tea for breakfast. Coffee should be avoided since the caffeine contained in it can dehydrate the body.
- **Lunch:** A light lunch such as sandwich with a salad and low-fat yogurt may be eaten. Sandwiches and salads can vary on a day to day basis.
- **Dinner:** For dinner, a small portion of chicken, fish or any lean meat may be eaten with mashed potatoes and plenty of vegetables.

### **Manual Worker**

A manual worker is a person who is involved in physical activities like a builder or a construction engineer. People who are involved in such jobs require a lot of strength and energy. They should consume huge amounts of proteins and carbohydrates. Foods that are high in fat and sugar should be avoided. Meals should be planned keeping in mind the nutritional requirements of such persons who should consume a variety of food and fluids. Here is a list of foods that are recommended for manual workers:

- **Breakfast:** For breakfast, they should eat wholegrain meals like cereals and fresh fruits or juices. To add variety, they may also eat grilled bacon, eggs and sausages with bread and butter.
- **Lunch:** For lunch, they can have a chicken sandwich with juice, or vegetable or meat pasties, rolls filled with eggs, meat and cheese.
- **Dinner:** For dinner, manual workers can eat pasta with meat or vegetables and cheese sauce, or potatoes, lentils, vegetable or meat patty with bread.

### **Athletes and Other Sports People**

Athletes and sportspersons are those who are involved in very intensive physical trainings for their respective sports. Their occupation requires them to be fit and healthy and hence, they need a diet that supplies them with the right kind of nutrients and energy. They need a lot of carbohydrates, proteins and a suitable amount of fat in their diet.

Image 3.13 Athletes

- **Breakfast:** A sportsperson or an athlete needs plenty of carbohydrates and protein for breakfast. They can have oatmeal, wholegrain cereals, fruit, milk, eggs and soy products.
- **Lunch:** For lunch, they should eat a low-calorie meal consisting of fruits and vegetables. Pasta or chicken salad are some of the ideal choices for an athlete's lunch. Pasta is a good staple and chicken is a good source of protein.
- **Dinner:** Dinner should consist of sources that are high in protein, fibre, healthy fats, vitamins and carbohydrates such as chicken breast, beans and wholewheat bread or rice.

### **CRITICAL THINKING**

Between a manual worker and an athlete, who needs more carbohydrate?

## **Meal planning for a Convalescent**

A person recovering from medical illness or treatment is called a **convalescent**. During convalescence, taking care of a patient becomes easier as compared to when they are ill. They have enough energy to move and are better able to express their needs. Too much bed rest can do more harm than good. Level of activity may be increased gradually during the recovery period. Convalescence does not mean that a person can eat what they want. Nutritional needs should still be considered and food should be prepared accordingly.

## **Nutritional needs and Suitable Foods for Convalescents**

A person recovering from any kind of illness should consume soup with plenty of vegetables. Staples like rice, pasta and bread are good sources of **carbohydrates** that build energy within. Yogurt consists of **calcium** and **vitamins like B2 and B12**. B12 helps produce red blood cells which is important during convalescence. Dehydration is common among people who are ill or recovering. Staying hydrated is an important step to recovery. Patients should drink plenty of water and fruit juices. **Protein** is an important nutrient during convalescence. Chicken, eggs, legumes, fruits and vegetables should be eaten in large quantities. However, pork should be avoided since it is difficult to digest. Stale food, cakes, pastries, fried food and heavy cream should also be avoided. Fruits and vegetables containing **vitamin C** such as oranges, lemon, mangoes, cauliflower, broccoli and tomatoes should be consumed. The recovering body also needs iron to increase **haemoglobin**. Green leafy vegetables, eggs and fish should be served since they contain iron in them.

## **Planning Meals for a Convalescent**

For **breakfast**, eggs with toast and weak tea or coffee may be served. The eggs can be prepared differently—boiled, poached, scrambled—each day to add flavour.

For **lunch**, they may have chicken soup or broth with rice or other cereals. Boiled lentils, beans and potatoes may also be served with fresh fruit juice.

For **dinner**, chicken soup with bread, boiled potatoes and salad may be served. Dinner should be light and easily digestible.

During convalescence, patients should be encouraged to go out and participate in physical activities. Medicines and dietary recommendations should be followed throughout. 'Feeling better' does not equate to complete recovery.

## **Vegetarians**

Vegetarians are people who do not eat foods that come from animals. They survive on foods that are derived from plants like vegetables, cereals and fruits. There are several reasons why people choose vegetarianism. Let us see what some of these reasons are:

- **Religion:** Many people follow the vegetarian diet because of their religion. Many religions teach their followers to discard foods that come from animals like meat, eggs and fish and stick to eating food that is provided by the Earth.
- **Health:** Some people adopt a vegetarian diet for health reasons. A vegetarian diet may reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes and even some types of cancer.
- **Compassion for animals:** In the current generation, a lot of people are adopting a vegetarian diet because of a love for animal life. They believe that killing an animal for food is cruel and unnecessary.

**Medical reasons:** Many people are advised by their doctors to switch to a vegetarian diet because of their health conditions. While meat does provide a number of nutrients, it also adds calories that may be harmful for the body.

- **Dietary choice:** There are some people who stick to a vegetarian diet simply because they do not like to eat animal flesh.

### **Types of Vegetarian Diets**

A vegetarian diet does help keep weight in check and reduce **cholesterol** since a lot of it is contained in meat products. As there are many reasons for being a vegetarian, there are also various types of vegetarian diets.

- **Lacto-vegetarian:** This vegetarian diet prohibits consumption of all types of meat, fish, poultry and eggs and any foods that may have them as an ingredient. However, they do consume dairy products like milk, cheese, yogurt and butter.
- **Lacto-ovo vegetarian:** This diet allows dairy products and eggs but does not allow any kind of meat and fish.
- **Vegan:** A vegan diet does not allow meat, eggs, fish, dairy products or any other food item that may include these as ingredients.
- **Fruitarian:** A fruitarian diet is based on the consumption of only fruits. While there are benefits of such a diet since fruits are filled with **antioxidants** and vitamins, there are many risks as well.
- **Pescatarian:** This type of diet does not allow meat, dairy products and eggs but includes fish.
- **Pollotarian:** A pollotarian diet allows poultry, but prohibits consumption of any other type of meat, dairy and fish.

### **Nutritional requirements of Vegetarians**



While a vegetarian diet is considered a healthy diet, it is important to have a balanced meal.

Many fruits and vegetables contain various type of nutrients but they may not have them in the same amount as needed by the body. Some nutrients that are available in an animal product may not be available in vegetables or fruits. Vegetarians should plan their meals accordingly in order to enjoy a balanced meal. Let's look at a few nutrients that vegetarians should consider.

**Iron** is a key nutrient in any diet since it is required for the synthesis of red blood cells.

Vegetarians can have beans, whole grains, **broccoli**, dark leafy greens, raisins, wheat and tofu to gain iron in their bodies. But the iron available from these sources is not easily absorbed by the body. Foods that are rich in vitamin C such as broccoli, cauliflower, citrus fruits, West Indian cherries and guava should be eaten to help absorb the iron in the body.

**Calcium** is essential for strong bones and prevention of **osteoporosis**. Dairy products like milk and yogurt are primary sources of calcium. Vegans, who do not eat dairy products may consume soya milk, fresh fruit juices, legumes and molasses, which are good sources of calcium.

**Protein** is one of the most important nutrients required by almost all parts of the body. Ovo-vegetarians can get protein from eggs, while vegans can obtain it from nuts, tofu, soy milk, peanut butter, grains, legumes and seeds. A protein containing all the necessary amino acids is called High Biological Value (H.B.V)/complete protein. Vegetarians usually consume protein of a Low Biological Value (L.B.V) as High Biological Value (H.B.V) proteins are found in animal sources. However, combination of certain types of foods, such as rice and beans provides High Biological Value (H.B.V) proteins.

**Vitamin B12** also help make red blood cells and prevent anaemia. This vitamin is available in eggs or dairy products. It can be a challenge for vegans to get enough vitamin B12 because it is

not usually found in non-animal products. Vegans can have cereals, soy milk and other vegetarian products that contain vitamin B12. If natural sources of vitamin B12 are unavailable, +vegans might consider taking supplements.

### **Suitable Foods for Each Type of Vegetarian**

Various vegetarians require various nutrients depending on the diet they follow. Some have an ample amount of protein in their diet while they lack some other nutrients, and some vegetarians may have a good amount of vitamins but may lack protein. In this section, we will try to understand the foods that are suitable for each type of vegetarian.

**Lacto vegetarian:** Lacto vegetarians can have oatmeal with milk and berries, yogurt or a tofu scramble with vegetables. Green salads, pasta with vegetables and olive oil are also good food choices for a lacto vegetarian diet.

**Lacto-ovo vegetarians:** These vegetarians get enough protein and calcium from eggs and dairy products like milk. They should have grains such as brown rice or barley with beans—kidney beans, soya beans, green beans—or green leafy vegetables to form a complete meal packed with carbohydrates, iron and protein.

**Vegan:** Like lacto vegetarians, vegans can also eat brown rice, beans and leafy vegetables. They can drink soy milk which has protein and some calcium content. They can also eat various fruits, vegetables, nuts and cereals to gain calcium in their bodies. Nuts are a good source of fat since they have natural oils in them.

**Fruitarian:** As the name suggests, fruitarians are on a fruit diet. Although most of their food contains fruits, they can add variety to their diet by drinking fresh fruit juices of different types. They can also make salads out of raisins, apples, pears, tomatoes, pomegranate or any other fruit

they like. As mentioned earlier, a strict fruitarian diet may have risks of certain nutrient deficiencies.

### Image 3.16 Fruitarians Must Consume Various Fruits and Fruit Juices

**Pescatarian:** Pescatarians get most of their nutrients from vegetables, fruits and fish. Fish products are rich in protein, fat, vitamins and minerals. They can also have rice, lentils, grains and various types of fruits and vegetables. Dairy products may be a choice among the pescatarians. Some may have them, some may not. Those who don't take dairy products can choose an alternative such as soya milk and soy milk products.

**Pollotarian:** In addition to a number of fruits and vegetables, pollotarians eat poultry such as chicken and turkey. These birds are rich in protein and iron. There are not many nutritional problems that a pollotarian faces. Like pescatarians, pollotarians may or may not consume dairy products. They may have potato, tuber, beans, nuts and cereals along with different vegetables.

### Meals Planned and Prepared for Different Vegetarians

Several nutritional problems such as iron deficiency anaemia, osteoporosis and vitamin B12 deficiency can occur due to the lack of various nutrients in the diet. Since vegetarians do not eat all kinds of food, meals need to be planned to ensure that they contain all the nutrients necessary to keep them healthy and prevent these disorders.

#### **Lacto vegetarian**

Meals for lacto vegetarians should be planned keeping in mind the nutrients they require and the food they can eat. Staples like pasta, rice and bread can be served with lentils, beans and vegetables as sources of **carbohydrates** and **proteins**. Milk, yogurt and cheese should also form a part of their diet as these contain **vitamin B12** which helps produce red blood cells. Lacto

vegetarians should also eat green leafy vegetables, oatmeal, nuts, brown rice and other cereals to get **iron** in their body. Orange juice or lemon juice may be served along with these vegetables because they contain **vitamin C** which helps absorb the iron in them. Different variations of food may be prepared to suit the diet of lacto vegetarians. For example, a vegetable grilled sandwich with cheese may be prepared instead of a chicken sandwich.

### **Lacto-ovo vegetarian**

Meals prepared for lacto-ovo vegetarians are quite similar to lacto vegetarians, the only difference being the inclusion of eggs. Eggs are a good source of both **protein** and **vitamin B12** and should be consumed regularly. Bread, rice, cereals, pasta can be served with eggs—whether boiled, poached or scrambled—and vegetables. However, consumption of too many eggs should be avoided since that would cause cholesterol problems. One egg a day is sufficient to get all the nutrients that it has to offer.

Image 3.17 Milk, Bread and Eggs

### **Level 2**

#### **Vegan**

Vegans can have grilled vegetable sandwich without cheese or butter. Marmalade made from fruits may be eaten with bread. The only difference between a vegan and a lacto-ovo vegetarian is that they do not eat either eggs or dairy products. Vegans can eat similar foods like rice, pasta, bread, cereals, etc. that are rich in **carbohydrates, protein** and **iron**. They should have plenty of legumes, beans, nuts, leafy vegetables like spinach and **kale**, broccoli, pigeon peas and other sources of **protein**. Vegans can drink soy milk which is a good source of **calcium** and **vitamin D**. Most vegans do not get enough **vitamin B12** in their diet and may have to take supplements for it.

## **Fruitarian**

Fruits are a great source of **vitamins** and **minerals** and they also contain other useful nutrients. When planning meals for a fruitarian, it is ideal to serve different types of fruits to get the best out of each one. Some fruitarians also eat nuts and seeds, so fruit salad garnished with toasted nuts and seeds may be served. Instead of serving raw pieces of fruits, they can be blended to make fruit juice. This adds variety to the diet and also keeps the body hydrated. Like vegans, fruitarians may suffer from vitamin **B12** deficiency and may have to take supplements for it. Bananas, pineapples and papaya are sources of **carbohydrates** and can be served daily with other fruits.

## **Pescatarian**

A lot of nutrients come from fish. They are rich in **protein, fats, fat-soluble vitamin D** and they are also a great source of **omega-3 fatty acids**. These fatty acids help the body and brain function properly. Fish can be combined with boiled potatoes and beans to form a three-mix meal. Fatty substances like oil, butter and cheese should be avoided when serving fish since it contains fatty substances in it. Various fish like salmon, tuna, sardines and trout should be prepared each day. Salmon is a great source of **vitamin B12** and **calcium**. Tuna is also rich in calcium and can be prepared alternately with salmon. Fish can be prepared in many ways. Some of the common fish preparations are fried fish, steamed fish, grilled fish and baked fish. Fish can be served with steamed vegetables, salads, brown rice, potatoes and pasta to create a balance in the nutrient intake.

## **Pollotarian**

Poultry like chicken is rich in **protein, vitamin B6, vitamin B12** and turkey has a low cholesterol content. Different types of poultry can be prepared and served with vegetable salad, steamed vegetables, pasta or potatoes and beans. They are low in calcium so that should be

compensated by vegetables that contain **calcium** such as cabbage, broccoli, spinach and soya beans. Like fish, poultry can also be fried, steamed, boiled, baked and even grilled. They can be served with bread as a sandwich or with brown rice to create a balance of **carbohydrate** and protein.

### **Planning Meals and Modifying Recipes to Prevent Nutritional Disorders**

Insufficient nutrients in the diet can cause certain nutritional disorders. If left unattended, they could lead to serious health issues. Some of the common nutritional disorders are discussed in this section. We will also discuss the type of foods that are suitable for each disorder and how recipes can be modified to meet their nutritional needs.

- **Obesity:** Obesity is being overweight and could be due to an imbalance in the nutrients consumed. To prevent obesity, whole grains, vegetables (which includes the roots, stems, leaves and flowers of plants), nuts, fruits, fish and poultry should be eaten. Foods that are rich in sugar and starch should be avoided. White meat like chicken can be eaten instead of red meat like pork or beef.
- **Diabetes (type 2):** This is a common type of diabetes that is caused when the body is unable to use or produce enough amounts of **insulin**. People with type 2 diabetes are put on a strict diet. Salt and sugar should be used to a minimum while preparing meals for diabetic patients. Whole grains, brown rice and brown bread may be eaten. Fresh fruits and vegetables may also be eaten. Only fruits with a low **glycaemic index** should be consumed. Nuts like almonds, cashews, walnuts etc. can also be consumed. Red meat should be avoided as much as possible since they are high in cholesterol.
- **Osteoporosis:** Osteoporosis is caused by a deficiency in calcium which weakens the bones. This disorder normally occurs in older people. Dairy products such as low-fat or non-fat milk should be consumed. Fish such as **sardines**, tuna and mackerel and

vegetables and fruits such as spinach, sweet potato and papaya should also be consumed for their various vitamins and calcium contents.

- **Hypertension:** Hypertension or high blood pressure is common among many adults and older people. People suffering from hypertension should avoid sodium and eat more fibrous foods and foods rich in potassium. Bananas, beans, broccoli, sweet potatoes, pineapples and dark green leafy vegetables are foods that are rich in fibre and should be eaten.
- **Anaemia:** This is a condition that occurs because of a low iron content in the blood. It is more common in women since they lose a good amount of iron during their menstrual cycle. To retain iron in the body, foods like red meat, poultry, seafood, beans, leafy vegetables and peas should be eaten. To absorb the iron obtained from plant sources, foods rich in vitamin C should be eaten. For example, oranges, grapefruit, tomatoes, etc.

### **Modify Recipes to Suit the Different Special Diets**

Obesity is a serious health issue, which if ignored can lead to other health problems like diabetes. However, being **obese** or **diabetic** does not mean that a person should not eat anything they like. They can still enjoy all their favourite foods as long as they are taken in moderation. A few ways to make healthy food without compromising on the taste are discussed below:

- Instead of frying, steaming, boiling, baking or grilling may be used as cooking methods
- Lard and butter can be replaced with canola or olive oil.
- Little salt may be used and other herbs and spices can be added to enhance flavour.
- Cutting the oil content by half reduces the fat in the food without compromising the flavour.
- Egg white omelette is often a healthier choice since the yolk has more calories than the egg white.

- Brown rice should be preferred instead of white rice.
- Less sugar should be used when baking or making desserts.
- When cooking any kind of meat, the fat can be trimmed off to reduce its content.
- Instead of whole milk, skimmed milk can be taken.
- Unnecessary ingredients like heavy cream, cheese, extra oil used to make the food more appealing can be eliminated.
- The use of fat and sugar can be reduced.
- Fat-free products like fat-free cream or fat-free yoghurt can be used instead of heavy cream or lard.

### Image 3.19 Grilling Vegetables

A diagnosis of osteoporosis will require the patient to consume a lot of bone-building foods that are rich in nutrients like calcium, protein and vitamin D. Dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese are rich in calcium but too much of them can lead to other problems. Along with dairy products, osteoporosis patients can try other foods that are rich in calcium and vitamin D like green leafy vegetables, broccoli, salmon, etc. Salmon with a side of potato and beans makes a great and healthy meal combining calcium with carbohydrate and protein. Broccoli with ham is another great recipe for osteoporosis.

If a person is suffering from **hypertension**, the first thing that comes to mind is **no salt**. Salt should be reduced when preparing meals for someone with hypertension but it does not have to be completely eliminated. There are certain foods like fish and some green vegetables that have natural salts present in them. When cooking these items, salt may be replaced with other herbs and seasonings to add flavour. Instead of frying food, it can be boiled, grilled or baked. Fresh vegetables should be used in place of packed or frozen vegetables. Lemon juice may be squeezed over food to add flavour. Brown rice, wholewheat flour, wholewheat bread may be used instead of white rice or bread.



**Anaemia** is often caused by the loss of blood or a low iron content in the body. Foods prepared for an anaemic patient should be rich in iron. Several foods like beef, poultry, fish, soya beans, lentils, spinach are rich sources of iron. Shrimp may be prepared with soya beans and spinach to make an iron-rich dish. Chickpea may be cooked with spinach and served with rice or flat bread to form a perfect combination of iron and carbohydrate. Ingredients like spinach, lentils, soya beans and chickpea can be combined with several other foods to create a dish that is filled with iron along with other nutrients.

### **Planning Nutritious Low-Budget Meals**

One of the factors to keep in mind when planning meals is budget. When planning low-budget meals, it is helpful to find out what ingredients can be used in place of expensive ones. Some ingredients that are already present in the house can also be used to prepare a nutritious meal. It is important to have an idea of the meal that you plan to prepare—what are the ingredients needed? What is the staple for the meal? Which ingredient is optional or replaceable?

Now, let us see what kind of foods can be prepared for various meals of the day without spending too much money.

**Breakfast:** While eggs, bacon and sausages seem to be the ideal breakfast items, vegetables like beans, plantain hash with bread can be eaten which adds flavour and variety to the daily breakfast. Chickpea curry with roasted flat bread or *roti* is packed with protein and fibre and is also an affordable breakfast item.

**Lunch:** The key point to remember when preparing meals on a budget is to find alternatives for the expensive ingredients without compromising on the nutrients and flavour. Adding lots of vegetables is a helpful tip. If you've decided to eat chicken for lunch, the chicken can be boiled

to make a stock, which can be stored and used to make another meal. Leftover chicken can also be used to make sandwiches for lunch.

**Dinner:** Again, if there is food left over from lunch, it can be reused to make dinner. Leftover chicken can be mixed with fresh vegetables and herbs to make a nutritious and filling salad.

Black or red beans with rice is quite popular in the Caribbean. It is also a budget-friendly meal filled with nutritional values.

Use ingredients that are inexpensive like potatoes, lentils, beans, rice, eggplant, etc. Select recipes that require minimum seasoning or spices without compromising on the flavour. Instead of getting rid of leftovers, use them to create another meal.

Black and Red Beans with Rice