

Living alone without left-overs

I used to think I'd love to cook for myself.

"I'll never make zucchini," I swore, "or summer squash, or liver."

But when I sat down before my bowl of mashed potatoes and left-over Kentucky Fried Chicken gravy last night, my stomach groaned, and I wished I was sitting at my parents kitchen table.

I imagined the beef stew, or pork chops my mother was cooking, and I wished I hadn't been in such a hurry to start cooking for myself.

The left-over gravy seemed the only appetizing item in the refrigerator when I tried to decide what to make for supper.

"I know, I'll make potatoes," I thought. But I couldn't get all the lumps out. They were soupy, and too bland.

"Do you want some potatoes, Michele?" I asked one of my roommates before dumping half the bowl into the garbage.

"No, I just ate three bowls of cornflakes," she replied. "I'm stuffed."

Chris couldn't help me either. "I'm waiting for my potato patties to finish cooking," she said. "I'm going to smother them with mushroom gravy."

I don't think any single women eat well. We're all watching our weight, saving our dollars, and trying to wash as few dishes as possible.

When I go grocery shopping, I tend to purchase large quantities of a few ingredients, and I mix and match them throughout the week.

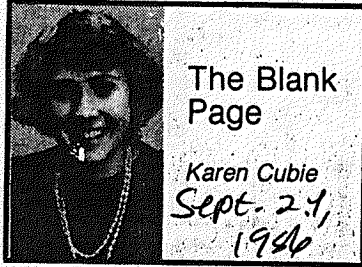
I usually buy several green peppers, onions, mushrooms, pasta, tomato sauce, kidney beans, cheddar cheese, pita pockets, hot dogs, and orange juice.

One night I'll make spaghetti with green peppers, mushrooms, and onions. The next night it'll be chili made with the left over spaghetti sauce, kidney beans, and chili powder. Another night I'll make pita pizza, then hot dogs, and then I'm back to spaghetti again.

I usually manage to spend less than \$20 a week on food, but I find myself craving things I never thought I'd miss — like turnips, asparagus, and cucumbers.

One friend of mine lives on bagels, grapes, summer sausage, peanut butter and cheese. He never turns on a stove, and I don't think he owns a refrigerator. Another friend lives on huge bowls of squash. Someone else makes meals of steamed broccoli, and a wealthier friend lives on scrambled hamburger.

I don't know why other single chefs feed on such lopsided meals, but there are a few reasons for my way of cooking.



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In the second place, it saves on dishes. Last night I boiled the pot of potatoes, drained them, and whisked them while still in the pot. I ate from the pot, and only had a

pot, a fork, and the whisk to wash.

Another reason my meals are so lopsided is I don't think far enough ahead.

Sure, I could have spaghetti with hamburger. I could cook a pork chop or even bake some chicken, but I'd have to remember to leave the meat out in the morning to defrost, and frankly, I couldn't be bothered.

It seems a real waste to cook decent meals for myself. I could imagine baking a lasagna for four people, but not for one. A roast beef dinner would be easy enough, but where would I put the left-overs?

When I was through with dinner last night, I wasn't satisfied, and the cheese, peppers and onions in my refrigerator had no appeal. I was out of crackers, and I needed the pita bread for lunch the next day.

So at about 7:30 p.m. I drove down to a local convenience store and shopped until I found what I was hungry for.

When I got home, I grabbed a spoon, opened the carton of Hagen-Daz Chocolate Chocolate Chip ice cream, and polished off the whole thing.

