

# Master Mixes

The use of “master mixes” is not a new idea. At one time it was a very popular practice. Until recently, making your own master mix had largely been forgotten but it is experiencing a revival.

The underlying premise of master mixes is to have a base set of ingredients mixed and set aside. When you are ready, you add additional ingredients for a finished product. While some versions must be refrigerated or frozen, many more master mixes are shelf-stable and ready for use at a moment’s notice.

The grocery stores are filled with variations of this concept. One common example is a cake mix. Instead of measuring several dry ingredients, you can pour out the contents of a box, add water and an egg. In a short amount of time with minimal effort, you have a “homemade” cake. The reason for the popularity of mixes can be summed up in one word-convenience. While a box mix may not seem expensive, making the same cake from “scratch” can cost even less.

By making your own master mix, you can also control the ingredients. Homemade mixes can have fewer preservatives, trans-fats, and artificial ingredients and less sodium.

Most versions provide flexibility and a variety of uses. Master Baking Mix, for example, can turn out pancakes, biscuits, or muffins, depending on the ingredients and amounts you add. Mixes can also be packaged creatively and given as gifts.

Here are just a few Master Mixes. You can find many more ideas by checking the websites listed below.

## **Master Baking Mix**

1/3 cup baking powder	1 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 1/2 tablespoons salt	9 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 cup sugar	1 1/4 cup oil

Sift baking powder, salt, sugar, cream of tartar, and flour. (If you don’t have a sifter, you can put the ingredients into a large wire sieve; tap gently or stir with a spoon into a large bowl below.) Add oil, cutting in with a pastry blender or stir lightly until mixture is the consistency of cornmeal. Store in an air-tight container in cool, dry place or in the refrigerator. For best results, use within 6 weeks. To measure Master Baking Mix, spoon it lightly into the measuring cup and level off with a straight edge.

## *Biscuits*

3 cups Master Baking Mix  
2/3 cup milk

Add milk to baking mix; stir 25 strokes. Knead 15 strokes on lightly floured board. Roll 1/2-inch thick. Cut with a biscuit cutter or a glass. Place on an ungreased baking sheet; bake at 450°F for 10 minutes. For cheese biscuits; add 1/2 cup grated cheese with milk.

## *Pancakes*

3 cups Master Baking Mix  
1 egg  
1 1/2 cups milk

Blend milk and egg together; stir into baking mix just until blended. Bake on hot griddle. Make 18 4-inch pancakes.

### *Muffins*

3 cups Master Baking Mix	1 cup milk
2 tablespoons sugar	1 egg

Add sugar to the baking mix. Combine milk and egg; stir into baking mix just until moistened (about 25 strokes). Bake in greased muffin pans at 425°F for about 20 minutes.

*Fruit Muffins:* Add 1 cup blueberries, chopped dates, chopped nuts, or grated apples; fold gently into batter. Bake as directed.

**Cream Soup Mix** - Compared to canned condensed cream soup, cream soup mix is much lower in sodium.

2 cups nonfat dry milk	1/4 teaspoon ground pepper
3/4 cup cornstarch	1 teaspoon dried thyme (optional)
1/4 cup low sodium instant chicken or beef bouillon	1 teaspoon dried basil (optional)
2 tablespoons dried onion flakes	1/2 teaspoon garlic powder (optional)

Combine ingredients, put in airtight container and store in refrigerator or freezer.

As a substitute for one can condensed cream soup: measure 1/3 cup dry soup mix and 1 1/4 cups water. Mix together with a fork or whisk and cook on medium heat until thickened, stirring constantly. Create these soups with the Cream Soup Mix:

*Cream of Mushroom Soup* - Add 1 1/2 cups cooked sliced mushrooms to cream soup.

*Bean Soup* - Add 1 1/2 to 2 cups canned beans or cooked dry beans and 2 tablespoons finely chopped onion to cream soup. Season with black pepper.

*Cheese Soup* - Add 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese to cream soup.

*Broccoli Cheese Soup* - Add 1 1/2 cups cooked broccoli to the cheese soup.

*Wild Rice Cheese Soup* - Add 1 1/2 cups cooked wild rice to the cheese soup.

### *Potato Soup*

2/3 cup Cream Soup Mix	Diced ham or bacon (optional)
2 1/2 cups water	Cooked carrots or broccoli (optional)
2 cups cooked, cubed potatoes	

Mix soup mix and water in a saucepan. Bring to a boil to thicken. Add remaining ingredients.

### *Noodle Main Dish*

2 cups dry noodles	1/2 cup peas
1 can tuna or turkey	2 1/2 cups water
2/3 cup Cream Soup Mix	1 cup shredded cheese

Cook noodles according to package. Mix dry soup mix with water, slowly bring to boil to thicken. Remove from heat. Stir soup and remaining ingredients in casserole dish. Bake at 325° for 40 minutes.

Another favorite mix is the Meat and Tomato Freezer Mix recipe below. Save even more time by doubling the recipe to yield 4 portions of the mix. Use a portion for that day's meal and freeze the remainder for later. Plan ahead when you want to use a frozen portion. If you put it in the refrigerator in the morning, to safely thaw during the day. If your family likes it, add chopped green pepper with the other vegetables. Substitute ground turkey or chicken for ground beef if you prefer.

### **Meat and Tomato Freezer Mix**

1 large onion, chopped	1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
2 or 3 celery ribs, chopped	1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 tablespoon vegetable oil	1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 pound lean ground beef	

Cook onion and celery in oil until tender. Add meat and cook thoroughly. Drain fat, if necessary. Add tomato sauce, pepper, and garlic powder and simmer on low heat for about 20 minutes. Divide in half and place in airtight freezer containers or freezer quality plastic bags. Label and freeze.

Use the Meat and Tomato Freezer Mix for these variations:

*Chili* - Add 1 tablespoon chili powder and 1 can drained kidney beans to one portion of the Mix. Bring to a boil, lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

*Spaghetti* - Add 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning, basil or oregano to one portion of the Mix. Bring to a boil, lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Serve over hot, cooked spaghetti or other pasta.

*Sloppy Joe Sandwiches* - Heat one portion of the Mix and serve on buns or rolls.

*Rice Casserole* - Add 2 cups cooked rice and 1 can whole-kernel corn (drained) to one portion of the Mix. Heat on the stove or in the oven until hot. Top with shredded cheese.

- Master Baking Mix, West Virginia University Extension Service Educational Lesson #133, [http://fh.ext.wvu.edu/publications/2010\\_pubs](http://fh.ext.wvu.edu/publications/2010_pubs)
- Cream Soup Mix, "Spend Smart, Eat Smart" from Iowa State Extension, <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/>
- Meat and Tomato Freezer Mix, from Recipe Ideas for Thrifty Families, University of Maine Extension, <http://www.umext.maine.edu/onlinepubs/PDFpubs/4050.pdf>

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