

Product: DPBroadsheet Publisher: 09-04-2011 Zone: SUNDAY Edition: 1ST Folio: G13 User: alyssa Time: 09-05-2011 16:03 Color: #161616

Sunday, September 4, 2011 DAILY PRESS 13

## Life Savvy Shopper

# Where can a kid get a free bite to eat?

By following this weekly lineup of kids eating free, going out doesn't have to break the bank



Mac and cheese is a well-known favorite on the kids' menu at many restaurants. **WILL HODGA/TYRONE NEWSPAPERS**



Kids eat free at most IHOP restaurants on Sundays. **MARIO ANDREWS/REUTERS**

Moms turn to it in times of need, and kids yearn for it — a box of chicken nuggets. But a quick dinner doesn't have to be in the backyard of the car. Here are some spots where kids can eat free at a dinner table.

The locations listed below have been verified. Many chain restaurants offer the kids-eat-free promotion at other locations as well. All require the purchase of an adult entrée. Most promotions are for the dinner meal only.

### Sunday

- **Mac's** Southeast Grill, 12368 Warwick Rd., Newport News, 805-3385.
- **IHOP** Many IHOP locations offer free kids meals every night of the week, including the location on Mercury Boulevard in Hampton, 838-9350.

### Monday

- **Cooney Grill**, kids eat for 99 cents at both locations, 26 E. Mercury Blvd., Hampton, 723-0600, and 1215 George Washington Highway, Yorktown, 991-0600.

### Tuesday

- **Lone Star Steakhouse**, 1940 Power Plant Pkwy., Hampton, 263-0361.
- **TGI Fridays**, 12322 Jefferson Ave., Newport News, 885-9788.
- **Beef O'Brady's**, 309 Oyster Point Rd., Newport News, 249-1614.
- **Pirchouse Subs**, 1430 Richmond Rd., Williamsburg, 238-0688.
- **Paroli's**, kids eat for 99 cents, 8739 Jefferson Ave., Newport News, 896-4124.
- **Smokin' Joe's** barbeque, 5081 George Washington Memorial Highway, Yorktown, 875-7774.

### Wednesday

- **Hotter's**, 1801 W. Mercury Blvd., Hampton, 827-3031.

### Thursday

- **Chick-fil-A**, 12423 Warwick Blvd., Newport News, 895-0316.
- **Family** Meals for kids are 99 cents, 111 Newmarket Mall, Hampton, 826-8975.

### Friday

- **Hotter's**, 1801 W. Mercury Blvd., Hampton, 827-3031.

### Saturday

- **Denny's** allows up to two kids to eat free with the purchase of one adult entrée on Tuesday and Saturday nights, 1040 W. Mercury Blvd., Hampton, 826-8832.
- **A.J. Gator's**, 11609 Carrollton Blvd., Carrollton, 238-8833.

### Make a plan

Even if the kids eat free in a restaurant, the total family bill likely will cost more than a home-cooked meal.

Emily Pratt, a Virginia Beach mom and blogger for [honeycheesekitchen.blogspot.com](http://honeycheesekitchen.blogspot.com), says the key to her success is a well-organized plan.

"Working two weeks in advance, I plan two weeks of dinners starting on a Sunday," she says. "This meal plan also assists me when shopping for groceries each week on Monday and helps save money because I am only purchasing the items I need to complete the scheduled meals."

A schedule also can help you take advantage of leftovers.

"I have adapted a two-for-one approach in our meals," she adds. "I am able to create two meals from one main entrée. For example, I will prepare a roast, carrots, potatoes and onions for dinner one night using the crock-pot. The next night, I will reuse all leftover meat and vegetables to create a semi-homemade beef and vegetable soup."

Valerie Cudnik, a Chesapeake-based blogger for [deliciousentic.com](http://deliciousentic.com), portions a whole chicken at the beginning of the week to use in various meals.

"I remove it from the bones and pack it into individual zip-lock bags in 2-cup portions and freeze," she says. "You should be able to get at least three meals from one chicken. Whole chickens can be found on sale for as little as 79 cents per pound. An average chicken is 4 pounds."

Even quicker? Buy a rotisserie chicken at a warehouse club.

"My rotisserie chicken at Harris Teeter in the afternoon around 5:30 p.m.," she says. "They mark down the chickens they cooked for the lunch rush, and you can get them \$1 off."

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### More online

Find recipes by restaurant meals and other local deals at [SavvyShopperToday.com](http://SavvyShopperToday.com). Connect with the Savvy Shopper at [Facebook.com/SavvyShopper](http://Facebook.com/SavvyShopper) and text **DPFREE** to 70993 for sign-up for mobile alerts.

### BOOK SHELF

## The seasoning of a new parent

Before parenting blogs, a book *Mending poignant parental mistakes with recipes for the likes of fish soup with fennel and Parsnip* would seem a fool's errand.

But so accustomed are we to having our needs and our bodies fed by strangers who blog that "Cooking for Gracie" works just fine. Beneficial, in fact.

It helps that the author, acclaimed novelist and New York Times staffer Keith Dixon, knows his way around a word. It also helps that the recipes sound really yummy.

"The first year of Gracie's daughter's life is a sweet ride that many parents will not admit to, whether cooking is something they delight in or simply survive."

"My wife, Jessica, and I were going to eat six pint-size lamb chops an hour ago, but we sat down at the table our week-old daughter, Gracie, gave a cry of hunger from her room — and I looked up with the troubled expression of a pianist who hears distant thunder."

Dixon goes on to explain Gracie's complicated birth, the parental fears that rob him of sleep and, ultimately, his reliance on cooking to get his thoughts. "Caring for my daughter — cooking for her — helps me cope."

You will no doubt root for Dixon on his tactics, sleep training and crippling parental insecurity. His honesty helps, so does his optimism.

"Cooking for Gracie makes me feel less helpless, less at the mercy of invisible forces, less vulnerable, but it also helps me raise my gaze optimistically to a potential new stage on the horizon, one that I hope will involve less cooking for Gracie, and much, much more cooking with Gracie."

— Heidi Stevens, *Tyronese Newspapers*



**"Cooking for Gracie: The Making of a Parent From Scratch"**  
Keith Dixon, Crown, 224 pages, \$22

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