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Tracy Todd and Shannon White discuss their recipe

photo by Chris Johnson

Pot Roast, Pork Chops or Pizza? Oh, My!

By Emily Foshee

"MOM, WHAT'S FOR DINNER?" is probably one of the questions every multi-tasking, on-the-go mom dreads the most. In between car pool, career, orthodontist appointments, volunteer work, school and sports activities, and the obligatory 'I've got to take care of myself' pedicure, or whatever other convenient, nurturing activity she can squeeze in to her day, there is no time left to plan a tasty, nutritious meal. What do moms do at 5:00 in the afternoon, when the kids and husband are looking expectantly at mom, then the kitchen, then back at mom, then the kitchen...that familiar, hungry look in their eyes getting stronger and stronger...

Moms may feel the mealtime stress the most, but they're not alone. According to a national survey by ConAgra Foods, more than 70 percent of parents experience some sort of stress associated with dinner preparation.

Like all new trends, dinner assembly franchises are popping up throughout the country to meet the mealtime needs of the typical American family. Using the "fix and freeze" dinner preparation concept, dinner assembly stores provide delicious entrée recipes, fresh ingredients and helpful professionals to assist harried homemakers in meal preparation.

Dream Dinners is recognized as the

originator of innovative and convenient dinner assembly stores. Created by working mothers Stephanie Allen and Tina Kuna, the Snohomish, Washington-based company was the first to roll out this timesaving concept on a national scale. Frisco Dream Dinner franchisees Richard and Linda Reeder's store is a delightful, colorful, friendly haven that provides answers to the meal preparation problem.

Customers choose from tasty entrée selections that are old-time family favorites, such as pot roast, meat loaf, and Salisbury steak, with new entrees offered each month. Stir-fried chicken with cashews, steak salsa Verde, pecan-crust pork chops and mandarin-glazed tilapia are popular selections.

Dream Dinners makes the meal preparation process "as easy as pie." After selecting their entrees and making a reservation, customers arrive at the store and begin to prepare their meals. Bright, shining stainless steel stations with fresh, pre-cut ingredients (onions, bell peppers, celery), condiments, and beef, chicken or seafood, a Dream Dinners employee to provide assistance, and easy-to-follow instructions are waiting.

After each entrée has been assembled in a disposable container, all that is left to do is go home and pop them in the freezer. Mom's remaining responsibility is deciding which one to thaw out and cook for dinner that night!

Each entrée provides four to six servings, and is priced from \$15.00 to \$25.00 each. "Each family is different, of course," says Ms. Reeder, "but typically, our customers spend an average of \$3.00 per serving." Customers are asked to purchase 12 entrees for each month. Dream Dinners also provides a list of suggested vegetables and salads that will compliment each entrée.

Not only can busy moms go to Dream Dinners to prepare a month's worth of entrees, but they can also schedule parties at the store. Dream Dinners offers a unique way to host baby showers, bridal showers, or just a fun evening with friends.

The advantages of purchasing pre-assembled entrees are endless. Think of the money that could be saved at the grocery store! How many times has an unusual ingredient, needed for just one special dish, been purchased, only to be used once then shoved to the back of the pantry shelf?



Frisco's Best are in the Chamber

FRISCO HAS THE BEST of everything: first-rate residential and commercial developments, new streets and highways, sports and medical facilities, a wide choice of shops and restaurants, professionals and good schools. With dedicated community leaders determined to keep quality in Frisco, the outlook for continued growth is excellent.

The Frisco Chamber of Commerce provides immeasurable services to residents, organizations, professionals, schools, colleges, and of course, businesses. It is the first stop for new residents and its staff provides exceptional assistance. As a strong advocate for business in North Texas, the Chamber provides a voice for its members on essential issues and works with the City of Frisco to promote and enhance a healthy business climate. The Chamber vigorously represents its membership in this rich business environment.

Quality of life is about more than business. The Chamber also offers opportunities for recreation, with the Annual Awards Banquet, "Business After Hours," luncheons and a golf tournament. There is ample opportunity for good times away from the office in Frisco. Networking is just one way the Chamber brings business owners together. It's a chance to catch up on what's going on in Frisco and the Chamber.

For the Frisco Chamber of Commerce, the best of Frisco is about the quality of life and business, and it provides this with enthusiasm and purpose. As an advocate, a friendly and capable resource, and an action-oriented proponent of business, the Frisco Chamber of Commerce has the best of Frisco in its membership.



Becky Johnson prepares her recipes

photo by Chris Johnson

How many times have unneeded items been purchased on impulse? Or because they were on sale?

Fort Worth resident Julie Byrd, founder of Super Suppers, and owner of The Culinary School of Fort Worth, saw the need for an organized approach to preparing healthy meals when friends complained about their families eating too much junk food and losing more and more quality time together. After refining the idea for more than a decade, Super Suppers opened their first official "Super Suppers store" in DFW in 2002 and has now expanded nationally.

Super Suppers came to Frisco in April of 2005 and provides a choice of 12 entrees (that offer four to six servings each) every month and weekly classes to assemble those entrees.

"Our customers have so many different eating habits and needs," says Super Supper franchise owner Kelly Brashear, "that we've taken extra care to incorporate as much flexibility into our offers as we can."

"Walk-in" days are popular with customers, Mr. Brashear continued, because they can drop by the store without a reservation from noon to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and assemble a full-sized entrée for \$20.00 or a ½ sized entrée for \$10.00. "Many of our clients turn this into an entertaining evening," said Mr. Brashear, "and will assemble two

or three entrees, drink a glass of wine, and sample some of the entrees we have available."

"Grab 'n Go" allows Super Supper customers to stop by the store, pick out entrees that are already assembled and put them in the oven when they get home.

Using the "fix & freeze" dinner preparation concept, dinner assembly stores provide delicious entrée recipes, fresh ingredients and helpful professionals.

"We feel like we've covered all our bases," concluded Mr. Brashear. "Our clients can make a reservation to assemble a full month's worth of meals, drop in when their schedule permits to assemble one or two entrees, or just stop by and select a pre-assembled entrée from our freezer." Side dishes to compliment the entrees are currently being created and will soon be introduced.

If even the thought of being in a kitchen sends you into a panic, never fear! Chef

Shelley Merner, chef-owner of Frisco-based Elegant Eats, is the answer to your prayers. Chef Shelley meets with her clients to learn what their food preferences are, what their individual dietary needs may be, and if they're following a specific weight loss plan. If a client has nutritional needs based on medical issues, Chef Shelley will work with your doctor to ensure that your meals are exactly what you need to stay healthy and fit.

So, if you love pasta, have an aversion to onions and can't get enough garlic, Chef Shelley will use that information to create a menu that includes dishes each family member will love. Customer favorites include beef stroganoff, pork chops with bourbon pecan stuffing and chicken Parmesan.

With entrée list in hand, Chef Shelley goes to the grocery store and selects the finest, freshest ingredients available just before arriving at a client's house to prepare their meals! She prepares all the entrees, salads and side dishes requested, packages, and labels them and puts them in the freezer with easy to follow heating instructions. Then, best of all, she cleans the kitchen, leaving it sparkling clean!

"I love to cook meals just the way my customers like them," says Chef Shelley, "and am happy to create breakfast and lunch menus as well. I'll also design a menu for a special party or holiday gathering and prepare and serve the meal at the party, so my clients can relax and enjoy the festivities."

Chef Shelley received her personal chef training at the Culinary Business Academy and graduated with a degree in gourmet cooking and catering from the Professional Career Development Institute.

Families gathering around the dinner table for a warm, nutritious meal are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. But, with the new, increasingly popular meal preparation resources becoming more and more available, wonderful home-cooked meals are once again possible, without the hours of planning, shopping and preparation they used to require. And, as mom sits down to a delectable dinner with her family, she doesn't have to wonder if she's in Kansas anymore. She knows that there truly is no place like home.

Emily Foshee is a freelance writer living in Frisco.

The logo for Frisco Style Magazine features a stylized 'FSM' monogram in white on a red square background. To the right, the word 'frisco' is written in a cursive script, and 'STYLE MAGAZINE' is written in a bold, serif font.

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