

# Dinner Anyone?

## Extension Activities:

Use the chart on the back of this page to list the items used for the next evening meal prepared and eaten at home. Don't forget to list all packaging items and what happened to them after they were used. If you run out of room, use another sheet of paper.

When the list is completed, analyze the list of materials thrown away. How many items were thrown away? How could these have been recycled or substituted with something that could have been recycled? What could you have used instead to help reduce waste?

This exercise is not intended to probe what the students eat or how they prepare food, but to teach them how to analyze every part of their consumption. It takes so much more than simply pulling food out of the refrigerator or the cupboard to make a meal. Students need to recognize that the food they eat comes in a package, sometimes sealed in a box, that may have been sealed itself in a multi-pack, that came home in a plastic bag, shipped to the store on a plastic-wrapped pallet. The origins of our food seem endless as we discover how many things come in contact with our food and had to be discarded before we used it.

A total of the number of things thrown away should include everything from the packaging to the leftovers and all things contacted in between. The "Materials Used" column is for cookware used, stirring items, tasting utensils, plates served on, etc.. Students may list as much as they wish - as long as it is relevant to that particular item. \*Note\* - For the example "Rice Pilaf", the butter knife was used to cut a pat into the plastic bowl. The fork was used to stir during cooking. Serving utensils may also be included in this column.

At the final part of this exercise, select 1 or 2 students who have relatively large numbers of things thrown away. Attain a kitchen-size garbage bag and ask the students how full the bag would be after those items were thrown away. If possible, recreate the event using similar disposable items. Demonstrate how much of the bag was filled with the trash from the meal. Analyze the trash from the meal and determine what could have been recycled or replaced with another similar "green-friendly" item.