

# WEEKLY EATS

COOK SMART

Meal Planning + Prep Work Helps YOU Live Happier, Simpler, Smarter-  
In Life AND In The Kitchen!

## MEAL PLANNING 101

**What sounds good?** Always the first thing I think about. Anything I've been craving, it goes on the menu.

**How busy is the week?** Some weeks are busier than others, and that definitely needs to be taken into consideration. If I have a lot of other commitments, there is no way I'm spending more than 30 minutes on dinner (but I still make it – just plan simple meals!)

**What ingredients do I have around?** I've found anytime I focus on using items I already have on hand, my grocery bill is significantly lower.

**What is on sale?** Planning meals around sale items help with the budget. Reviewing circulars for deals on produce, meats and other perishable items help shape my menu.

**Keep it balanced.** If the thing I was craving was a hamburger, I'm not going to plan the rest of the week with meatloaf, spaghetti and meatballs, etc. I try to limit the same protein source to 2x a week (2 nights of chicken, 2 nights of beef, etc).

**Round it out.** Plan side dishes to go with all the main dishes to balance each meal. If you are making macaroni and cheese, don't plan other starchy sides like potatoes or bread – eat your veggies! Your plate should be half vegetable, 1/4 protein, and 1/4 starch or grain (remember some starch sources do NOT count as veggies in this aspect – ie, sweet potato, squash, etc).

**Make a List** Once the menu is planned, I make a grocery shopping list. I gather together all the resources I need including cookbooks, magazines and my laptop. I look at every single recipe that I plan to make during the week and write down all the ingredients I'll need. Even if it is a recipe I've made a million times, I still look at it because it's inevitable I will forget something if I don't.

**Shop Smart.** Now, I shop! One crucial thing for me is to cross off each item as I buy it otherwise I will always, always forget something. The list needs to be totally scratched out by the end of the shopping trip.

**Shop around the edge of the store.** These tend to be the fresher, less processed items. It'll save you some money and you'll have better nutritional options in those areas. There are healthy options all throughout the store, but they tend to concentrate on the edge of the store.

**Don't bring your kids if you can help it.** Grocery stores are designed to appeal to children, they keep all the sugary cereals and all the sweets at their eye level so they can beg and plead for them. If you can help it, and I know it's not always easy, try to go without them.

**Rinse, cut, and portion ALL your fruits and veggies for the entire week.** Let's face it, I hate rinsing and chopping veggies the night-of after I've gotten home from a long day at work and just want to throw dinner together. So, look at your meal plan and figure out what you need and get to rinsing all your veggies, chopping them if necessary, and bagging them up into individual servings for your snacks and meals.

**Use leftovers!** Whether you rethink them and use them to create a new meal or just eat the same thing twice, this saves so much money! I even write leftovers into the meal plan each week. I know that we'll have them to use and I want to make sure we use them. If you hate eating leftovers, but often have food leftover from your meal, just start making less at each meal. This way, it's helping the environment as well as your pocket book.



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## Prep Day

Prep Vegetables & Grains -20 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Chop celery &amp; carrots</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Mince garlic &amp; green onions</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Put sweet potatoes in oven</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Boil corn</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cut off cob</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cook quinoa</li></ul>
Hard Boil Eggs -30 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> In cold water, add eggs. Bring to a boil. Cover &amp; turn off heat. Let sit for 20 minutes. Rinse immediately with cold water.</li></ul>
Prep Meats & Deli Items -10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Shred Rotisserie Chicken</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cook, drain &amp; crumble Bacon</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Thaw Shrimp; remove tails</li></ul>
Make Snack Bars -5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Use food processor to make bars.</li></ul>
Make Bacon Sweet Corn Chicken Salad -5 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Follow recipe</li></ul>
Make Peanut Dressing -5 min	In a food processor, blend: ½ cup unsalted, natural peanut butter, ¼ cup rice wine vinegar, ¼ cup water, 2 tablespoons honey, 2½ tablespoons Tamari, 1½ tablespoons fresh lime juice, 1 teaspoon sesame oil, 1 teaspoon Sriracha chili paste
Prep Breakfasts/Snacks -10 min	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Portion greek yogurt &amp; fruit; veg &amp; hummus; breakfasts (egg cups, oatmeal, etc)</li></ul>

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## Sweet Corn & Bacon Chicken Salad

YIELD: SERVES 2-4

2 cups shredded chicken (1/2 rotisserie chicken)  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon pepper  
1/2 teaspoon paprika  
1 cup plain greek yogurt (preferably full fat or 2%)  
1 1/2 tablespoons dijon mustard  
1 cup cooked sweet corn kernels  
4 bacon slices, fried and crumbled  
4 green onions, sliced

Add shredded chicken to a large bowl and season with salt, pepper and paprika. Add yogurt and mustard, tossing well to coat, then fold in the corn, bacon and green onions. Taste and season with more salt and pepper if desired.

## Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Snack Bar

YIELD: 8-24 BARS

2/3 cup whole pitted dates  
1 cup cashews  
2 tablespoons chocolate chips  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
pinch of salt

Place the dates in a food processor and pulse until processed to a paste. Transfer date paste to a small bowl and set aside.

Place cashews in food processor (no need to clean processor first), and pulse until finely ground. Add date paste, chocolate chips, vanilla extract, and salt to hazelnuts and pulse again until well combined.

Pour mixture onto a large sheet of plastic wrap. Wrap the plastic around the dough crumbs, press into a large ball, then flatten into a square about 1/2 inch thick.

Refrigerate for one hour before cutting into bars.

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## Greek Shrimp Quinoa Salad

YIELD: SERVES 4

1.5 cup cooked quinoa  
1 pound cooked shrimp, peeled & tails removed  
4 ounces feta cheese, large crumbles  
1/2 cup grape or cherry tomatoes, halved  
4 green onions, white and green parts, minced  
1 cucumber diced  
1/2 cup chopped fresh dill  
1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
Salt and pepper

Combine quinoa, shrimp, feta, and veggies. To make the dressing, whisk together the dill, lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper. Drizzle over quinoa mix and serve.

## Cashew Crusted Chicken w/Peach Honey Mustard Sauce

YIELD: SERVES 4

2 ripe peaches, chopped  
1/2 cup Dijon mustard  
1/4 cup honey  
1 tsp paprika  
4 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves  
1 cup coarsely chopped cashews (unsalted)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

In a food processor or blender, combine peaches, mustard honey and paprika. Blend until smooth. Place 1/2 of mixture over chicken. Reserve other 1/2 to serve as dipping sauce.

Place cashews in a shallow dish or bowl. Dip chicken breasts in nuts to coat and place in a lightly greased 9x13 inch baking dish.

Bake at 375 degrees F for 20 to 30 minutes.

### Lemon Parmesan Roasted Asparagus

Break or cut off the woody ends from 1lb of asparagus spears. Toss the asparagus with 2 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp lemon juice, salt, pepper, garlic powder to taste. Arrange the asparagus spears on a foil-lined baking sheet and top with 1/2 cup parmesan. Bake until the cheese begins to brown, about 8-10 minutes (oven can be anywhere between 350-450).

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## Hawaiian Pizza Stuffed Sweet Potatoes w/ Fried Eggs & Cucumber Dill Salad

YIELD: SERVES 4

4 large cooked sweet potatoes  
1/2 cup cooked crumbled bacon  
6 oz shredded low-sodium mozzarella cheese, divided  
1 cup cubed pineapple  
4 green onions, trimmed and minced  
4 fried eggs

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Carefully halve sweet potatoes lengthwise and scoop flesh into a large bowl, being careful not to scrape skins. (TIP: If potatoes are hot, use oven mitts to hold in place while cutting.) Use a potato masher to mash flesh well. Stir in bacon, 4 oz mozzarella and pineapple. Spoon mixture into skins and top with remaining 2 oz mozzarella, dividing evenly. Transfer to a baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes, until mozzarella is golden brown.

While potatoes are cooking, fry eggs. Top baked potatoes with fried egg & diced green onions.

**Cucumber Dill Salad**- Slice 2 cucumbers. Set aside. Mix together 4 Tbsp greek yogurt, 2 Tbsp minced dill, 1 Tbsp Rice Vinegar, 1/2 tsp sugar, 1/2 tsp salt, 1/4 tsp pepper, 1/4 tsp garlic powder. Toss with cucumbers & serve.

## Thai Chicken Lettuce Wraps w/Peanut Dipping Sauce

YIELD: SERVES 2

2 cups shredded cooked chicken  
1/2 bag broccoli slaw  
1/2 cup roasted unsalted peanuts, finely chopped, 2  
tablespoons reserved for garnish  
1 clove garlic, pressed through garlic press  
1 teaspoon lime zest  
1 tablespoon lime juice  
1/2 teaspoon sesame oil  
2 green onions, chopped, 2 tablespoons reserved for  
garnish  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
Pinch black pepper  
1 head romaine or iceberg lettuce; rinsed & leaves  
separated off

In a medium-large bowl, add the chicken & the remainder of the ingredients, EXCEPT lettuce, and toss all together until well combined. Serve chicken mix wrapped in lettuce leaves with Peanut Dressing, green onions, chopped peanuts, Sriracha and/or lime wedges.

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## BLT Chopped Salad with Corn, Feta + Avocado

YIELD: SERVES 2

4 cups mixed greens, chopped  
1 pint grape tomatoes, quartered  
1 cup sweet corn  
1 avocado, chopped  
4 ounces feta, crumbled  
3/4 cup cooked & crumbled bacon  
4 hard boiled eggs, peeled & diced

Dressing

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 lime, juiced  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon pepper

Make dressing: whisk together olive oil, lime juice, salt and pepper.

In a large bowl, combine lettuce, tomatoes, corn and avocado. Add in dressing, then toss well to coat. Fold in bacon, eggs and feta then divide evenly amount 2 plates. Serve!