



Nutrition and Meal Planning Guide

Rethinking Your Eating Habits

The aim here isn't to limit what you eat but to find a balanced, adaptable approach to food that respects any dietary needs—like gluten-free, kosher, vegan, or lactose-free preferences. Healthy eating focuses on cutting back on quick-digesting carbohydrates while prioritizing choices rich in protein, fiber, and good fats, all without the hassle of calorie counting. What “balance” looks like varies for everyone, but it could mean swapping in simple, delicious options. For breakfast, think eggs with avocado or yogurt topped with berries. For lunch or dinner, try a veggie-packed grain bowl with grilled chicken or a hearty slow-cooker dish. The idea is to craft a sustainable, enjoyable way of eating that supports weight management and long-term wellness, weaving better food choices into your existing routine—especially with meals that are quick to whip up on busy nights.

Crafting a Weekly Meal Plan

Preparation is everything. At the week's start, pull up your schedule and map out what's ahead. Set up a weeknight rhythm with themed dinners to keep things consistent yet fun. Here are some ideas:

- **Monday: Meat-Free Night**
- **Tuesday: Taco Time**
- **Wednesday: Seafood Special**
- **Thursday: Stir-Fry Evening**
- **Friday: Breakfast-for-Dinner (think egg-based dishes)**
- **Saturday: Takeout Treat**
- **Sunday: One-Pan Wonder**

Recipe Roundup

Gather your favorite recipes and slot them into your weekly lineup. To keep things fresh (and avoid overeating out of monotony), toss in one new dish each week. As your collection grows, store them in a digital folder, Pinterest board, or physical binder. Reliable staples might include one-pan dinners, stir-fries, roasted chicken, bean chili, grain bowls, or baked fish.

Prep Like a Pro

With your plan and recipes ready, get a head start on the week. Chop veggies on Sunday—or grab pre-cut or frozen ones—to save time later. Cook one or two proteins in advance, along with any sauces or dressings, for fast assembly during the week. Protein ideas:

- Hard-boiled eggs
- Pre-cooked sausage links
- Canned tuna or salmon
- Canned beans
- Pan-seared chicken (cubed, seasoned, cooked in olive oil for 6-8 minutes)
- Oven-baked salmon (seasoned, baked at 450°F for 12-13 minutes)

Storing Produce

Pick the freshest fruits and veggies you can find. Wash them at the week's start, then wrap delicate items in paper towels to soak up moisture and keep them crisp longer.

Cook Once, Eat Twice

Whenever possible, make extra. Doubling a one-pan meal, for instance, gives you ready-to-go options for later in the week.

Slow and Steady Wins

Slow cookers (or Instant Pots) are your meal-prep allies. Toss ingredients in before you head out in the morning, and come home to a warm meal. Think beef stew, meatballs, whole chicken, soups, curries, or even oatmeal—all effortless this way.

Roasting Veggies

Roasting is a fantastic way to prep vegetables ahead for salads, bowls, or protein pairings. Great candidates include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, parsnips, and sweet potatoes. For flawless results, follow a trusty roasting guide.

Freezer Essentials

Stock your freezer with versatile basics: veggies (spinach, cauliflower rice, peas, broccoli, edamame), proteins (ground meat, sausage, chicken, fish), sauces (marinara, pesto), and herbs (frozen in olive oil cubes). Label frozen meals with dates, keeping older items upfront. A go-to freezer recipe:

- **Turkey-Zucchini Meatballs:** Packed with spices (adjust to taste), these double as tasty burgers too.
- **Veggie Burgers:** Hilary's, Sunshine Burgers, Dr. Praeger's
- **Bone Broth:** Brodo or Kettle & Fire (add chicken, beans, veggies for instant soup)

Quick Dinner Inspirations

Try these easy, wholesome ideas (plus theme-night twists):

- **Veggie Night:** Skillet gigante beans with kale and walnuts
- **Stir-Fry Night:** Honey-garlic chicken with veggies (use 1-2 tbsp honey)
- **Fish Night:** Parchment-baked fish, maple-soy salmon, or garlic shrimp with white beans
- **Chicken Night:** Simple chicken dishes
- **Slow-Cooker Night:** Apricot chicken with grains and veggies
- **One-Pan Night:** Chicken with rainbow veggies, lemon, and Parmesan

Build the Perfect Grain Bowl

Prep grains, veggies, and dressings early in the week for a fast bowl anytime:

- **Grains:** ½ cup cooked farro, rye berries, or quinoa
- **Veggies:** Roasted, grilled, or raw
- **Fat:** Nuts, feta, ricotta salata, or avocado
- **Dressing:** Lemon-olive oil, shallot vinaigrette, or garlic-tahini

Sauces and Dressings

Make a few sauces or dressings ahead to boost flavor all week:

- **Tahini:** Thin Soom tahini with water
- **Tahini-Miso:** Equal parts tahini and miso, plus warm water and sesame oil
- **Pesto:** Freeze homemade (try an oil-free zucchini version) in cubes
- **Romesco:** Perfect with cauliflower or green beans
- **Homemade:** Mustard-shallot vinaigrette or a basic mix of ¼ cup apple cider vinegar, ¼ cup olive oil, lemon, salt, and a splash of water

Marinade Magic

Elevate proteins with an easy marinade:

Balsamic Chicken

- *Ingredients:* 4 (4oz) chicken pieces, ⅓ cup balsamic vinegar, 1 tsp olive oil, 1 tbsp Dijon mustard, salt, pepper
- *Steps:* Slice chicken, marinate overnight, grill to 165°F

Bonus Staples

Sneak in nutrients with these shortcuts:

- **Trader Joe's Steamed Lentils:** Fiber-rich, iron-packed, ready-to-eat
- **Broccoli Rice:** Swap for cauliflower rice in fritters or bowls
- **Antipasto Cherry Tomatoes:** Sweet, oil-packed, great with pasta or as sauce
- **Shaved Brussels Sprouts:** Pre-prepped for salads or sautés