

Menu Planning



Follow these steps to plan your meals.

You will need

- Calendar
- List of recipes you cook regularly or new recipes you want to try
- Paper for your shopping list
- Pencil and eraser (to mark changes on the calendar as you plan meals)

Timesaving Tips

- Buy items in bulk and prepare them at the beginning of the week. Cleaning and chopping vegetables or cooking chicken ahead of time will save you time and effort during the week.
- Use canned or frozen vegetables and fruit.
- Make a list of quick dinners you can make when you are short on time using items you often have on-hand.



Instructions

Use your calendar to plan meals for the next month. Complete each step before moving on to the next step.

1. **Plan main dishes first.** Group main dishes that share ingredients, and plan them for the same week. For example, you might plan chicken stir-fry and salad with grilled chicken for the same week. Try to group three to four dishes per week that use similar ingredients. You can buy these items in bulk and prepare them at the beginning of the week. Decide what main dish you want to make each night and write it in the space for that day.
2. **Add fruits and vegetable side dishes.** Choose fruits and vegetables to add to your menu. This ensures that you are planning for a fruit or vegetable (or both!) at meals.
3. **Plan starch side dishes.** Write in the other side dish you plan to serve at each meal. These may include potato, pasta or rice. For example, add a baked potato or a serving of macaroni and cheese.
4. **Add a dessert one or two times per week.** Dessert should not be part of dinner every night. Choose fresh, frozen or canned fruit, sugar-free Jell-O, low fat pudding or frozen yogurt as healthy alternatives.
5. **Plan ahead for frozen or quick-fix meals.** Double the recipe for one or two meals for the month so you can plan to freeze it. This can be a quick dinner when you are short on time. Mark these meals on your calendar, and plan ahead to purchase extra ingredients.
6. **Plan ahead for eating out.** One night per month, take a break from assembling a meal. It is best to eat out as little as possible. Planning ahead for your evening meal should take away the need to eat out. Planning to eat out ahead of time helps you enjoy it more because you are using this time to enjoy a break instead of relying on fast food due to lack of time.

Two-Week Dinner Plan



Shopping List

Look for these main ingredients at the grocery store. Items on the shopping list are marked below in italics.

Chicken breast
Fresh spinach
Pasta
Beans
Beef

Bell Peppers
Brown Rice
Pork
Potatoes
Chicken Breast

Grilled Vegetables
Cheese
Wheat Bread
Salad Ingredients

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week 1	Baked <i>chicken breast</i>	Fettuccine alfredo (<i>pasta</i>)	<i>Bean and beef</i> chili	Stir-fried <i>beef</i> with <i>peppers</i> , broccoli and onions	<i>Pasta</i> salad with cubed <i>chicken</i>	<i>Bean</i> burritos with salsa	<i>Spinach</i> lasagna <i>Chicken breast</i>
	<i>Spinach</i> salad	Steamed broccoli	Cornbread		Fresh veggies and dip	Red bell <i>peppers</i> stuffed with seasoned <i>brown rice</i>	Strawberry Jell-O and whipped topping
	Canned peaches	Baked apples	Green beans	<i>Brown rice</i>			
	Vanilla ice cream			Mandarin oranges			
Week 2	<i>Pork</i> chops	Eat Out Day: Order Pizza	<i>Grilled chicken</i>	Cuban <i>pork</i> sandwiches on <i>wheat bread</i> with <i>cheese</i>	Barbecue <i>chicken</i>	<i>Grilled cheese</i> sandwiches on <i>wheat bread</i>	Baked <i>potato</i> bar (potato with different toppings)
	Applesauce	Make <i>salad</i> to go with the pizza	<i>Grilled vegetables</i>	<i>Salad</i>	Cole slaw	Tomato soup	<i>Salad</i>
	<i>Mashed potatoes</i> and gravy		Wild rice	Berry cobbler	Roasted <i>potato</i> fries	Leftover <i>grilled vegetables</i>	Vanilla ice cream with berries