

# Meal Planning Guide



This guide will get you off to a great start!

- Learn how to make meal planning a breeze
- FREE sample 2 week cycle menu
- FREE template to plan your own meals

*The information provided is not a substitute for medical care or advice. Information provided is for educational purposes only and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Consult your healthcare provider about making diet and lifestyle changes.*

# Meal Planning Made Easy

Menu planning is a great way to stay within your food budget and relieve the everyday stress of not knowing what to cook. The idea of menu planning may seem complex and overwhelming, but after you do it once or twice, you will find it is easy. Use these simple and easy tips to make a menu in just minutes!

1. Schedule a time that will work for you to plan your weekly menu. Make sure it is realistic so you will have a few minutes to dedicate to the task.
2. Plan your menu around food items you already have on hand. This will not only make your grocery bill less, but also use up items before they spoil.
3. Choose a variety of meals that include family favorites, budget stretchers, and quick-fix meals.
4. Cook once, eat twice! Plan ahead to use your leftovers by using them in meals you'll eat later in the week. This will reduce the amount you have to cook and decrease the amount of food waste.
5. Picture your plate as you plan each meal. Remember to include veggies and fruits in the menu. Ideally half the plate will be fruits and vegetables, a quarter of the plate will have grains, and the other quarter will have protein. With a glass on the side for dairy, you will have all the food groups suggested by [MyPlate](#).
6. Have the local store ads available when you are planning. Always take advantage of sales on products you know you will use.
7. Create a thorough shopping list of everything you'll need for the week. This way you will only have to go shopping once and avoid spending money on multiple trips to the supermarket.
8. Be flexible! If you have a bunch of leftovers, eat those instead of cooking a new recipe. You can always make that new recipe another day. If you have something come up last minute, swap recipes around to fit your schedule.



## Bonus meal planning tips:

- Use a two to four week cycle menu with a basic menu. (Look on the next page for an example of a cycle menu)
- Plan theme nights. For example: Meatless Mondays, Taco (Mexican) Tuesdays, Soup Saturdays, breakfast for dinner Thursdays, Pizza Fridays, or Italian Wednesdays.

# Sample 2 Week Cycle Menu

A cycle menu is a menu for a set amount of time that can be repeated over and over again to simplify menu planning. Most of the recipes for this cycle menu can be found at [www.yourchoicenutrition.com/recipes](http://www.yourchoicenutrition.com/recipes) or in *The Healthy Family Cookbook: 100 Fast and Easy Recipes for the Whole Family* (affiliate link) noted below with the page each recipe is found on.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Breakfast	- <a href="#">Breakfast Quesadillas</a> -Orange Juice	- <a href="#">Peach &amp; Pistachio Smoothie Bowl</a>	- <a href="#">Strawberry Banana Chocolate Smoothie</a>	- <a href="#">Spinach Parmesan Egg Muffins</a> -Whole wheat toast	- <a href="#">Brunch Egg &amp; Veggie Casserole</a>	- <a href="#">Pressure Cooker Peanut Butter Banana Steel Cut Oats</a>	- <a href="#">Apple Walnut Pancakes</a> -Turkey sausage
Lunch	- <a href="#">Turkey Pesto Panini</a> (pg. 87) -Side Salad	- <a href="#">Veggie Pita Sandwiches with Avocado Hummus</a> -Baby Carrots	- <a href="#">Ham and Cheese Quesadillas</a> (pg. 46) -Celery and hummus	- <a href="#">Grilled Chicken with Crunchy Broccoli Slaw Salad</a> (pg. 96) -Grapes	- <a href="#">Grilled Turkey Avocado Sandwich</a> -Fresh Veggies with Dip	- <a href="#">Blueberry Spinach Salad with Blueberry Vinaigrette</a>	Leftovers for lunch
Dinner	- <a href="#">Tangy Orange Chicken Stir-Fry</a> (pg. 70) (Make extra rice)	- <a href="#">Baked Chicken "fried" rice</a> (pg. 34) (use extra rice from Sunday)	- <a href="#">Taco Salad with Zesty Corn Salsa</a> (pg. 48)	Leftover Night	- <a href="#">Stir-Fried Thai Chicken with Noodles &amp; Peanut Sauce</a> (pg. 147)	- <a href="#">Breakfast for Dinner Casserole</a> (pg. 37)	- <a href="#">Thick &amp; Cheesy Corn Chowder</a> (pg. 109) -Whole Wheat Bread Sticks

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Breakfast	- <a href="#">Peanut Butter Protein Pancakes</a> -Orange Juice	- <a href="#">Southwestern Avocado Egg Boats</a> -Wheat toast	- <a href="#">Peachy Green Smoothie Bowl</a>	- <a href="#">Strawberry Bagel</a> -Cream Cheese -Fresh Strawberries	- <a href="#">Mango Turmeric Smoothie</a>	- <a href="#">Blender Banana Nut Oat Muffins</a> -Orange slices	- <a href="#">Sweet Potato &amp; Kale Hash with Eggs</a>
Lunch	- <a href="#">Buffalo Chicken Wraps</a> -Apple	- <a href="#">Roasted Sweet Potato &amp; Cauliflower Power Bowl</a>	- <a href="#">Avocado Tuna Lettuce Wrap</a> -Fresh Fruit	- <a href="#">Honey Garlic Salmon Burgers</a>	- <a href="#">Chicken BLT Wraps</a> (pg. 80)	- <a href="#">Tomato Avocado Grilled Cheese Sandwich</a> -Fresh Berries	Leftovers for Lunch
Dinner	- <a href="#">Shredded Summer Squash &amp; Chicken Fajitas</a> (pg. 57) -Rice (make extra)	- <a href="#">Moroccan-Spiced Chickpeas &amp; Sweet Potato Skillet</a> (pg. 123)	- <a href="#">Big Easy Jambalaya</a> (pg. 148) -Use extra rice from Sunday	Leftover Night	- <a href="#">Roast Beef and Kale Empanadas</a> (pg. 85) -Sauteed zucchini	- <a href="#">Green Veggie Pesto Pizza</a> (pg. 36)	- <a href="#">Pressure Cooker Minestrone Soup</a> -Whole Wheat Bread Sticks

# Weekly Meal Planner

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							

## Shopping List

Produce	Frozen	Bakery	Other Grains/Dry Goods
Dairy	Canned Goods	Meat/Poultry	Misc.

