



Meal Prep: A Beginner's Guide

by Alyssia Sheikh



mind over munch

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hello@mindovermunch.com

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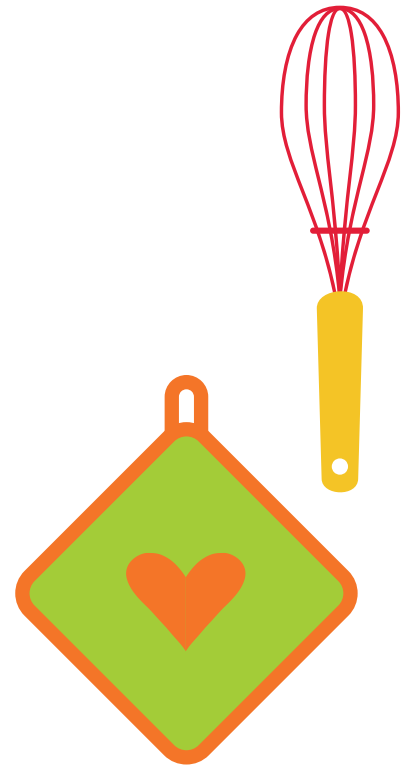
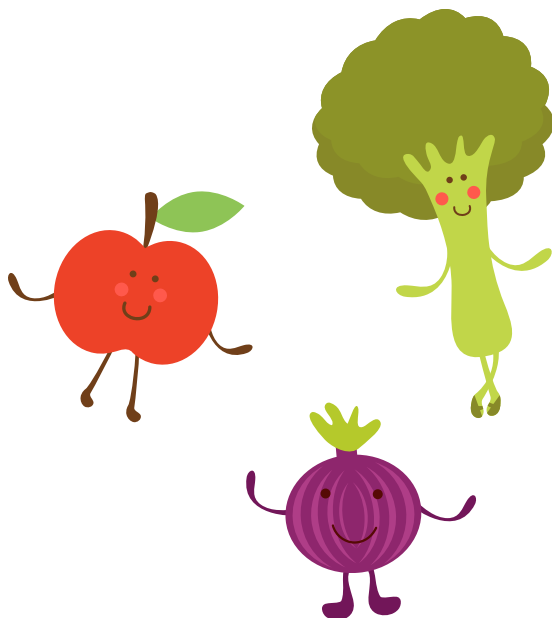
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Welcome!

Hello Friends!

I'm so excited for you to dive into my newest eBook, *Meal Prep: A Beginner's Guide*! Everyone wants to find success with their healthy lifestyle, but many of us struggle to make those lifestyle changes and stick with them. For many people, meal prepping is the answer! This book will guide you through making your meal prepping experiences as efficient, effective and easy as possible! If you've never meal prepped before, or if you've tried and found it difficult to organize or maintain, you'll find tons of tips and tricks here to help you succeed.

It's important to keep in mind that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to meal prep. Meal prepping doesn't HAVE to look like the photo on the cover of this book, even though that's what many of us think of when we hear "meal prep." This book doesn't cater to one type of meal prepper, but rather aims to accommodate various styles of prepping, as well as personalities and preferences. This book is not a meal plan, and does not promote a specific diet or lifestyle—people following a vegan or gluten-free lifestyle can find this information just as useful as a meat eater. The information provided will help you with learning how to prep meals, including planning, organization, cooking techniques, basic recipes, packaging essentials, labeling tips and much more! At the end of the guide you'll find a recipe book that I've included to give you some ideas for getting started on your own meal prep journey! All of the recipes are portable, easy to make and of course delicious!

Please modify any of the information to fit your lifestyle as needed. Following this basic plan while making it specific to you is what will lead you to meal-prepping success!

I couldn't be more excited to add this into the mix of everything Mind Over Munch™ aims to offer, and I can't thank YOU enough for the support.

Remember that you can always head to www.mindovermunch.com for all of my easy recipes! For comments, questions, recipe requests, or anything else, please feel free to email me at hello@mindovermunch.com!

Let the meal prepping begin!

Cheers!



Alyssia Sheikh



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what is
Meal Prep?

Meal Prep

There's a quote by my man Benjamin Franklin "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail" and boy does he know what he's talking about! Sure, a select few people who don't have as many outstanding commitments or restrictions may be able to manage on their health & fitness journeys without planning, but for the vast majority of us, we aren't able to keep things running smoothly for an extended period of time if we aren't planning things out. This doesn't mean we have to track calories or macros (although you of course can!), it just means thinking a little more ahead than usual. Meal prepping can be daunting and seem complicated at first, but once you make it a routine you will find yourself on the road to success, and much more quickly! Let's take a look at the What, Where, When, Why and How:

"By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail"

-Benjamin Franklin

WHAT?

Meal prep is exactly what it sounds like- prepping meals in advance! It can be entire meals, or parts of meals.

WHERE?

In your kitchen, with a countertop that has a lot of space or an extra table for work space.

WHEN?

Once or twice a week. Most people choose one day over the weekend when they have a bit more time.

WHY?

Meal prep will ultimately make your life easier/more efficient. Portion control is covered, time and money are saved, and we don't have to decide what to eat later on because a healthy choice is readily available for you. If you had the choice between a processed food option and a healthy and delicious meal that was already prepared for you- many of us would probably go for the healthier prepared option. So many people WANT to make healthy choices but we want it to be EASY. Make it easy on yourself by prepping ahead so that healthy and delicious meal is waiting for you... tempting you!



HOW?

Many of us think we don't even have time for meal prep, but chances are, if we added up all of the time we spend creating healthy meals every single day, we would end up spending MORE time doing that than prepping beforehand! Set yourself up for success by prioritizing your meal prep. Set time aside 1-2 days a week where you can do as little or as much meal prep as you need to make it effective. Some of us will need more prepping than others. Some people prefer to prep EVERY MEAL in advance, and for that reason they'll eat the same thing every day. Some people prefer to eat different things and therefore find ways to prep a little bit at a time and make creating the final meal go a little more smoothly.

Look at meal prepping as a priority, a normal household chore like "doing the dishes" or "taking out the trash." If you make it important enough to be a task that must be completed for the week, you'll be more encouraged to continue doing so and finding the success you're looking for!



Recommended Essential Tools

These tools and gadgets are my recommendations for making your meal prep lifestyle easier, more efficient and successful. You will likely find yourself needing other tools beyond the ones listed as you find your own meal-prepping routine, and may find you don't need all of these as often, but having these on hand will be a great start to your success!

UTENSILS

- mixing spoons
- wooden spoons
- whisk
- peeler
- spatulas (scraping/turning)
- basting brush
- rolling pin
- tongs

KNIVES/CUTTING

- chef's knife
- serrated/bread knife
- paring knife
- kitchen shears
- pizza cutter
- can opener
- veggie chopper
- cutting boards
- grater

PREP

- plastic food storage containers
- plastic storage bags
- masking tape/markers for labeling

COOKWARE

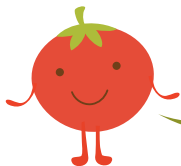
- skillets (large and small)
- saucepans (large and small)
- baking sheets
- muffin tin (large and small)
- baking dishes (9x13" & 9x9")
- slow cooker

OTHER

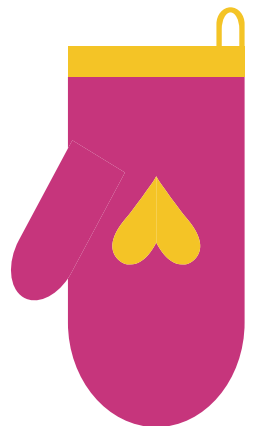
- blender
- measuring spoons/cups
- digital food scale
- mixing bowls
- olive/coconut oil cooking spray

NICE BUT NOT ESSENTIAL

- steaming basket
- rice cooker
- cookie scoop
- toaster oven
- pie pan
- loaf pan
- food processor
- hand/stand mixer
- spiralizer
- mandoline



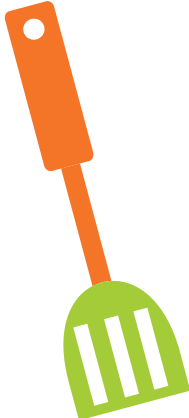
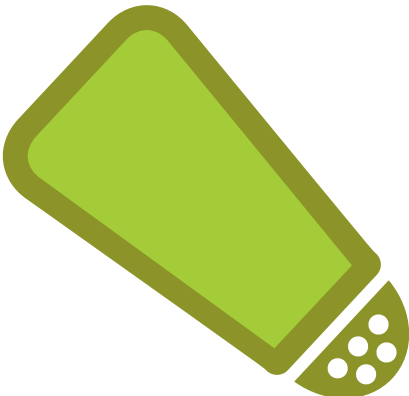
If there is ONE item you get off of this list to help your meal prep success, I strongly suggest it be a vegetable chopper! My veggie chopper was about \$20 on Amazon and saves me HOURS of time prepping– it seriously can shave off around 30 minutes of meal prepping time!



Recommended Spices & Seasonings

Many people depend on fat for flavor in their cooking. One great way to cut back fat and calories while still enjoying the taste of your food is to turn to spices and seasonings for flavor! Keep this recommended list of spices on hand, and feel free to get creative with using different spices and seasonings to make your dishes flavorful and interesting!

SPICES/SEASONINGS



- allspice
- basil
- bay leaves
- black pepper
- cayenne
- chili powder
- cinnamon
- cloves, ground
- coriander
- cumin
- curry powder
- garam masala
- garlic powder
- ginger, ground
- Italian seasoning
- kosher salt
- lemon pepper
- nutmeg
- onion powder
- oregano
- paprika
- pumpkin pie spice (if available)
- rosemary
- sage
- thyme

Remember that **SUCCESS** does not just mean eating the foods you are supposed to eat, but also enjoying it while you do so. If you aren't enjoying your food, the meal prepping is not going to last. It is important to find what works for **YOU**. What **KIND** of meal prep do you **NEED** for success? Do all meals need to be ready beforehand? Only dinners? Or maybe you struggle most with snacking as opposed to meals? Answering this question honestly will help you make successful meal-prepping choices, and help keep you satisfied mentally and physically!

Composing Meals

The way your meals look will depend on your preferences and fitness goals. In general, we want our meals to contain a smart balance of lean proteins, healthy carbohydrates and healthy fats. The amounts of these macronutrients that you consume will differ from others based on your current goals and where you are on your journey, but below you will find some healthy options for each of these macronutrient categories.

PROTEIN FROM ANIMAL PRODUCTS

lean/extra lean ground poultry
chicken breast
turkey breast
deli turkey (low sodium)
roast deli beef (low sodium)
extra lean ground beef
salmon (canned and fillet)
tuna (canned and fillet)
white fish
shellfish (crab, scallops, shrimp, etc.)
eggs/egg whites
cottage cheese
Greek yogurt

PROTEIN FROM PLANT PRODUCTS

beans (black, kidney, garbanzo, etc.)
edamame
tempeh
tofu

PROTEIN FROM POWDERS

soy
whey
egg
legume

CARBOHYDRATES FROM GRAINS

bread (whole grain or sprouted grain)
tortillas (brown rice, corn or sprouted grain)
oats (quick cooking, old fashioned, steel cut)
amaranth
barley
buckwheat
bulgur wheat
brown or wild rice
popcorn
quinoa

CARBOHYDRATES FROM FRUITS/VEGETABLES

all fruits & vegetables

PASTA

brown rice pasta
whole grain pasta

ROOT VEGETABLES

potatoes
sweet potatoes/yams

STARCHY VEGETABLES

corn
peas

FATS FROM DAIRY/NON-DAIRY

cheese/low fat cheese
egg yolk
nut milk (almond, cashew, etc.).

FATS FROM FRUIT

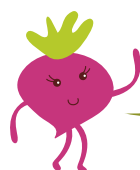
avocado
olives

FATS FROM NUTS & SEEDS

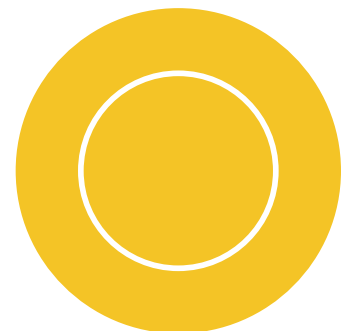
almonds, raw
almond butter
peanuts, natural
peanut butter
pumpkin seeds
sunflower seeds
tahini
walnuts

FATS FROM OILS

coconut oil
fish oil
flaxseed oil
olive oil



*Go for color!
Remember that
more color in
your produce and
diet means more
nutrients!*



Portions & Serving Size

Portion size, as well as the amount of meals you eat per day, will depend on you. We all need different amounts of food depending on our size, personal statistics and of course fitness goals. In general, however, we want to compose our meals with a healthy balance of carbohydrates, protein and fats. Because there are more calories in a gram of fat (about double) than in a gram of carbohydrates or protein, we need much less fat—but we DO still need some! Below are some suggested standard serving sizes, shown both visually and numerically to accommodate lifestyles who count calories and those who do not. Most of these portions are around 100 calories each, but of course vary per item.



PROTEIN

A portion of protein is about the size/thickness of the palm of your hand. This is about 3–4 oz of lean meat, 2–3 oz of fish, or 1 cup of dairy.



CARBOHYDRATES

A portion of carbs is about the size of a clenched fist. This is about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup oatmeal, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup root vegetables, beans, grains or pasta, 1 slice of bread or a tortilla, and about 1 cup of fruit. Enjoy unlimited amounts of vegetables (not including starchy/root vegetables).



FATS

A portion of fats is about the size of your thumb. This is about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup avocado, 2 Tbsp nuts, 2 egg yolks, 1–2 Tbsp salad dressing or oil, 1 oz regular cheese, and 2 oz low fat cheese.

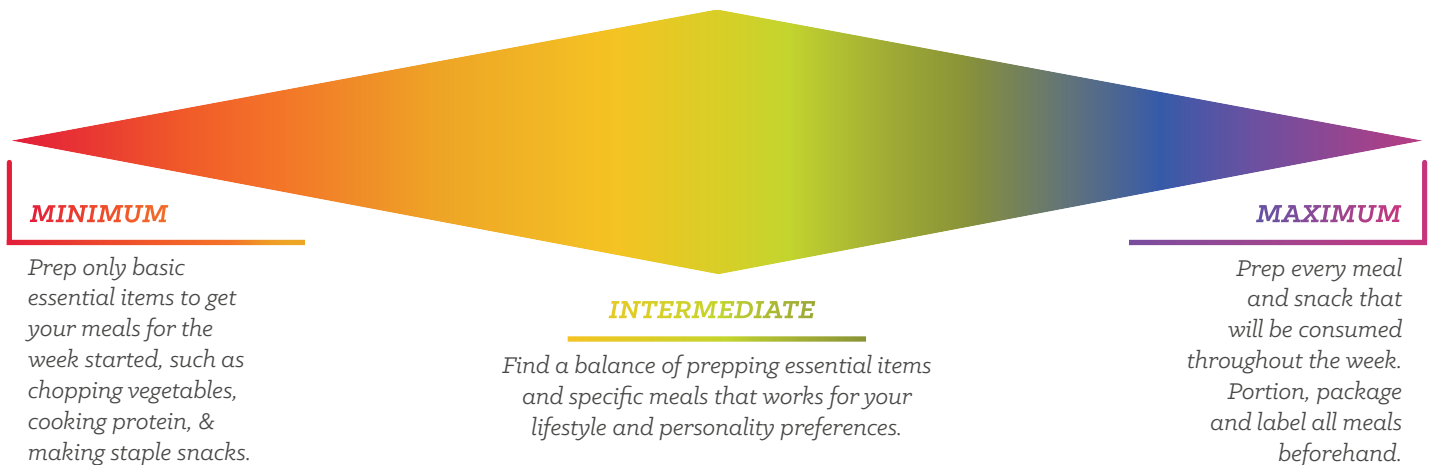


Eat unlimited amounts of nonstarchy vegetables! Keep in mind that root and starchy vegetables, such as potatoes, sweet potatoes, peas and corn are high-quality carbohydrates. While rich in micronutrients, however, they are higher in calories than nonstarchy vegetables so it is important to consume in moderation—especially if trying to lose weight.

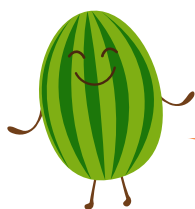


The Spectrum of Meal Prep

We are all different. Not only do our fitness goals and food needs differ, but so do our personalities and learning styles. Different people will prefer to prep their food differently, and will find success with meal prep in different ways. The spectrum below demonstrates extremes in prepping preference, as well as various intervals among them to help you determine what sort of meal prep will give you the most success with your own lifestyle. Remember, meal prep can come in many shapes and sizes!



On each end of the spectrum, you'll find an extreme meal prep variation. On one end there is a "Minimum" option for less initial meal prep, consisting of only the essentials and basics. On the other end, you'll see the "Maximum" option to prep everything that will be eaten throughout the week. You may find yourself gravitating towards one of those options, but many of us will ultimately fall somewhere in the middle— finding the most success when we do some essentials and basic prep, as well as some specific prep for complete meals.

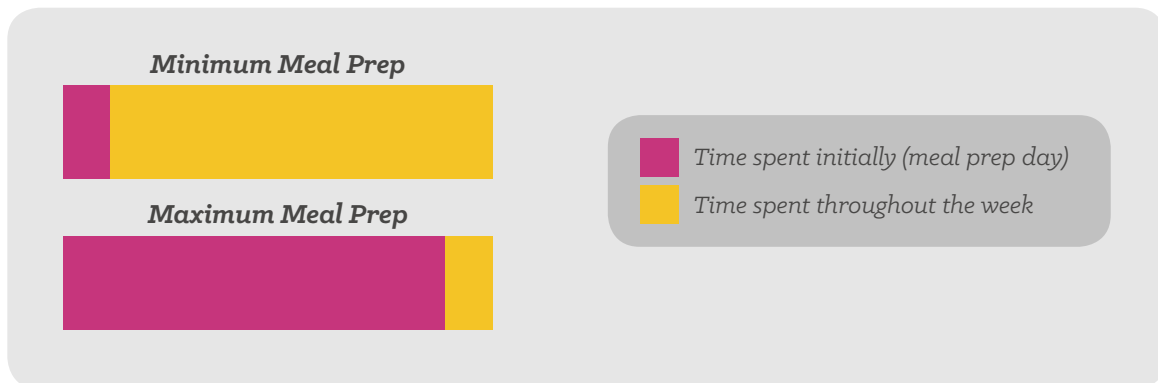


It's important to recognize that one side or part of the spectrum is not better than the other, and one type of prep will not lead to more success than another— it is completely dependent on the person. What works for me might not work for you, and what works for you might not work for someone else.



Finding the Time

The number one thing meal prep of any kind revolves around is **TIME**. Meal Prep **will** take time, and there is no way around that (other than paying someone to do it for you or purchasing pre-prepped meals). What is important to realize is that organizing your time will be the key to your success. Any type of meal prep will involve time if you're going to truly set yourself up for success, but the way you organize your time may spare you more time during the week, or more time on your meal prepping day, depending on what you prefer and need for your lifestyle.



The bar graph illustrates how time is unavoidable, regardless of how you choose to prep—but it is still manageable. The Minimum meal prep option will require less initial time to prep the food, but will demand more time throughout the week to prepare specific meals. The Maximum option will require more initial prep time, but less time throughout the week. In the end, both options will likely take close to the same amount of time, but it will be distributed differently. Still, both options will save you time compared to doing no prep at all, and both options can lead to success on your journey!

Key Points

Keep in mind that these types of meal prep are the “extremes” on the spectrum, and it is common to fall somewhere in between the two. There is no “right” or “wrong” way to meal prep, but there will likely be a way that works better for you. Here are the facts to consider when determining what works for you, but remember—pros and cons are not necessarily weighed equally. It is likely that trial and error will play a role, and you’ll learn how you best meal-prepare as you go!

MINIMUM MEAL PREP

PROS:

- Less time is spent initially
- Less pre-prep planning is necessary
- More flexibility & versatility among meals

CONS:

- More time is spent throughout the week

YOU MAY WANT TO START HERE IF:

- You are good at managing time, and would rather spend a little extra time throughout the week to be able to eat different things each day.

MAXIMUM MEAL PREP

PROS:

- Less time is spent throughout the week

CONS:

- More time is spent initially.
- More pre-prep planning is necessary
- Less flexibility & versatility among meals

YOU MAY WANT TO START HERE IF:

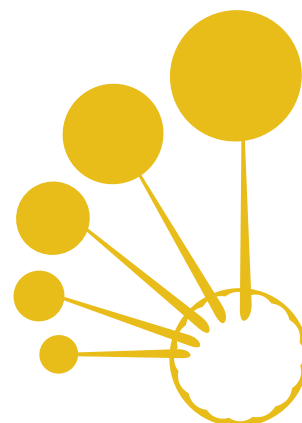
- You struggle with managing time, or are extremely busy during the week. A great option if you're okay with eating the same foods for multiple days.

A Beginner's Guide

Meal prepping can be very overwhelming. There is a lot to consider, and the work can be daunting. Below are a few pieces of advice and things to keep in mind for anyone beginning their meal prep journey.

- *There is no “right” or “wrong” way to meal prep. The information presented here is simply a basic guide that may help beginners who have been wanting to try prepping meals and don’t know where to start. Ultimately, meal prep is about finding the time and doing it. It’s not about HOW you do it, it’s just important that you do!*
- *If you are just starting out with meal prep: don’t try to do it all! Even if you do think you’ll be most successful with a Maximum style prep, start with some essentials and one pre-prepped meal per day of the week rather than everything, and ease into it. It’s a process and you will learn and figure out what works best for you as you go.*
- *Many people who have never prepped meals before are misinformed in thinking it means everything must be cooked. “Meal prep” is preparing meals, or preparing for meals. Even having the raw vegetables cut in advance for your meal is a huge time saver-and isn’t that our ultimate goal of meal prep? To make being healthy less stressful while saving TIME. Portioning out some of your meals, or parts of meals or snacks, will still help you be successful. Just a little bit of food prep can make a big difference!*
- *If meal prepping even a little bit seems too daunting to start, try prepping just one or two things a week-maybe you just hard boil some eggs and bake some chicken. Once those items are readily available to you and no cooking is involved to enjoy it when you want it, you will be able to appreciate the concept of meal prep a little better. Start small!*
- *Give the meal prep process time. It’s easy to try meal prep once and then never do it again. If you can commit to doing meal prep once a week for an entire month, you will likely see a difference in your lifestyle and eating habits, and hopefully therefore start to experience the benefits and results that meal prepping can help you achieve.*

Start to think about your lifestyle and personality. Consider which meals you need readily available with no prep, and which you do not. For-instance, if you prioritize making breakfast every day, but struggle to get dinner prepared each night, adjust your meal prep plan to do basic breakfast prep and more specific dinner prep, or vice versa. Being honest with yourself about where you struggle and where you excel will drive your success with meal prepping.





Pre-Prep

Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail

Meal prep can be a huge key to success, but planning to do the meal prep can seem as daunting as doing the actual prep work itself. It is essential to have a plan going into your prep day. Before you even get in the kitchen, know what you are going to do, how you are going to do it, and in what order. The following pages will help you organize your meals, time and thoughts!

Steps to Successful Pre-Prepping

The following things all have to happen before any prepping even begins!

Step 1: Choose a day during the week that can be your meal prep day.

Many people opt for Saturday or Sunday since they don't work and are more able to set aside a chunk of time. Try to commit to this day regularly- prioritize! You may find that you prefer to prep less food twice per week, splitting up the time it will take on one day alone.

Step 2: Check your calendar

What do you have going on this week? How many meals will you need to prepare? Will you be eating out at all? Make a list of all of the meals you are responsible for creating yourself. How many servings of vegetables/protein will you need? How many servings of starchy carbs? Make a tally! Lists are your friend.

Step 3: Check out your fridge/pantry.

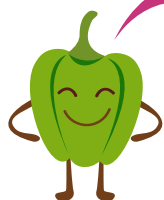
What do you already have that you want to use/need to get rid of. How can you incorporate these into your meals for the week?

Step 4: Decide on your meals

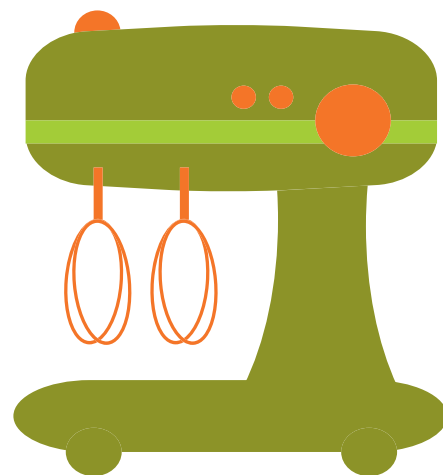
How specific you get is up to your preference of meal prep- it could be similar to Maximum preppers choosing specific meals, or it could be more along the lines of Minimum preppers and have only essential items and general ideas for different meals. If you're cooking up 20 oz meat and you're aiming for 4 oz of meat in a serving, that's 5 lunches/dinner. Try to determine the sales at your store beforehand so you don't feel tempted to switch up the list too much once you're there. Be sure to account for any other mouths you need to feed if necessary.

Step 5: Shop and sort!

Get all of your goods at the store and sort them out at home- what will you make now or later?



An option is to consider eating the same dish, but switching up whether you consume it for lunch or dinner. Some meals can be transformed. For instance, can your protein dish for the week be a warm dinner served with roasted vegetables, or a cold lunch served on a bed of greens as a salad?



Weekly Meal Prep Calendar (Sample)

Sample meal prep weekly calendar for someone who prefers Maximum meal prep with similar meals. ***Keep in mind, this is not a specific meal plan for any one person and is only an example and template for how to use the weekly calendar to plan and organize your meals.***

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Sunday	freezer break-fast burrito (from last week)	chicken, rice & broccoli with a boiled egg	meatballs, green peas and sweet potato	Greek yogurt meatloaf muffins celery & PB
Monday	fruit spinach protein smoothie	meatballs, green peas and sweet potato	chicken, rice & broccoli with a boiled egg	mixed berries meatloaf muffins carrots/hummus
Tuesday	fruit spinach protein smoothie	chicken, rice & broccoli with a boiled egg	meatballs, green peas and sweet potato	protein bar mixed berries peppers/hummus
Wednesday	fruit spinach protein smoothie	corporate lunch	chicken, rice & broccoli with a boiled egg	protein bar mixed berries meatloaf muffins
Thursday	fruit spinach protein smoothie	chicken, rice & broccoli with a boiled egg	meatballs, green peas and sweet potato	celery & PB meatloaf muffins mixed berries
Friday	fruit spinach protein smoothie	chicken, rice & broccoli with a boiled egg	girls night out	peppers/hummus meatloaf muffins mixed berries
Saturday	family pancake breakfast	leftovers	meatballs, green peas and sweet potato	Greek yogurt mixed berries protein bar

 prep/partial prep

 event/no prep

Weekly Meal Prep Calendar (Sample)

Sample meal prep weekly calendar for someone who prefers Minimum meal prep with varied meals. ***Keep in mind, this is not a specific meal plan for any one person and is only an example and template for how to use the weekly calendar to plan and organize your meals.***

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Sunday	fruit spinach protein smoothie	green veggie swiss panini	meatballs, green peas and sweet potatos	Greek yogurt meatloaf muffins celery & PB
Monday	overnight oats	Ezekiel turkey & swiss	meatballs, green peas and sweet potato	boiled egg meatloaf muffins carrots/hummus
Tuesday	overnight oats	turkey taco salad	veggie frittata with chicken & sweet potato	protein bar boiled egg peppers/hummus
Wednesday	hot oat bran	corporate lunch	meatballs, green peas and sweet potato	protein bar boiled egg meatloaf muffins
Thursday	banana chocolate protein smoothie	turkey, spinach & swiss wrap Greek yogurt	turkey taco salad	celery & PB meatloaf muffins boiled egg
Friday	fruit spinach protein smoothie	meatballs, green peas and sweet potato	girls night out!	peppers/hummus meatloaf muffins boiled egg
Saturday	family pancake breakfast	leftovers	veggie frittata with chicken & sweet potato	Greek yogurt boiled egg protein bar

 prep/partial prep

 event/no prep

Weekly Meal Prep Calendar

Fill in the calendar below as a guide in planning your meals for the week. Keep in mind, how detailed you are will depend on whether you prefer the Minimum or Maximum side on the spectrum of meal prep.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Sunday				
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				

Grocery/Pantry Essentials

The list below shows you some of my own grocery and pantry essential items. These are the foods that you will likely always be able to find in my kitchen, and are on my grocery list regularly. Adjust the list to suit your lifestyle and preferences!

Fruits

Apples
Avocado
Bananas
Berries (mixed)
Grapes
Mango

Vegetables

Baby Carrots
Bell Peppers
Garlic
Kale
Mushrooms
Onion
Snap Peas
Spinach
Sweet Potatoes
Tomatoes
Zucchini

Dairy/Non-Dairy

Almond Milk (unsweetened)
Cottage Cheese (low fat)
Eggs
Egg Whites
Feta Cheese
Greek Yogurt (plain)

Grains

Bread (Sprouted Grain/Whole Wheat)
Brown Rice
Oats
Pasta (Whole Wheat or Quinoa)
Tortillas (Sprouted Grain/Whole Wheat)
Quinoa

Nuts/Seeds/Snacks

Almonds (& other nuts)
Chia Seeds
Crunchy Edamame
Sunflower Seeds

Canned/Pantry

Black Beans
Broth
Chicken (canned)
Chickpeas/Garbanzo Beans
Diced Tomatoes
Peanut Butter
Pumpkin Puree
Soup
Salsa
Tuna (canned)
White Beans
Whole Kernel Corn

I rinse my canned beans & corn before using them to get rid of excess sodium, & then salt as I cook so I'm in control!



Protein/Meat

Chicken Breast
Deli Chicken/Turkey (low sodium)
Lean Ground Turkey Breast
Salmon

Frozen

Frozen Fruit
Shrimp
Vegetable Steamers

Baking/Condiments

Balsamic Vinegar
Baking Powder/Soda
Brown Sugar
Coconut Flour
Coconut Oil
EVOD
Honey
Jam (no-sugar-added)
Lemon/Lime Juice
Mustard (Yellow, Dijon)
Oat Flour (make your own from oats)
Olive Oil/Olive Oil Cooking Spray
Soy Sauce (low sodium)
Stevia
Whole Wheat Flour
Vanilla Extract

I never buy oat flour— it's so easy to make on your own! Just blend up oats in the food processor!



Meal Prep Planner

Use this form to help you organize your prep before getting in the kitchen. What do you need to prep? Think about how you can organize your time while prepping before you get in the kitchen. For instance, do both your protein and sweet potatoes need to go in the oven? Can you cook them at the same time?

Produce

i.e. Dice Vegetables

i.e. Portion & Bag Grapes

Protein

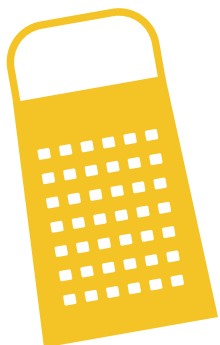
i.e. Cook Ground Turkey

Snacks

i.e. Make Bean Salsa

Grains/Starch

i.e. Cook Quinoa



TIP: Remember to defrost your protein the day before meal prep day. I am always buying lean chicken and turkey when it's on sale and freezing it- a great option for saving money- but have forgotten to defrost before meal prep many a time! Do your best to consider this, but if you forget, you can always thaw it out in warm water.



A top-down view of a wooden cutting board on a rustic wooden surface. On the board, there is a large silver knife with a black handle, a bunch of green beans, two red tomatoes, and a single yellow chili pepper. Surrounding the board are more fresh ingredients: a large eggplant, several red tomatoes, a red bell pepper, a bunch of green herbs, a bunch of carrots, a red onion, and some white mushrooms.

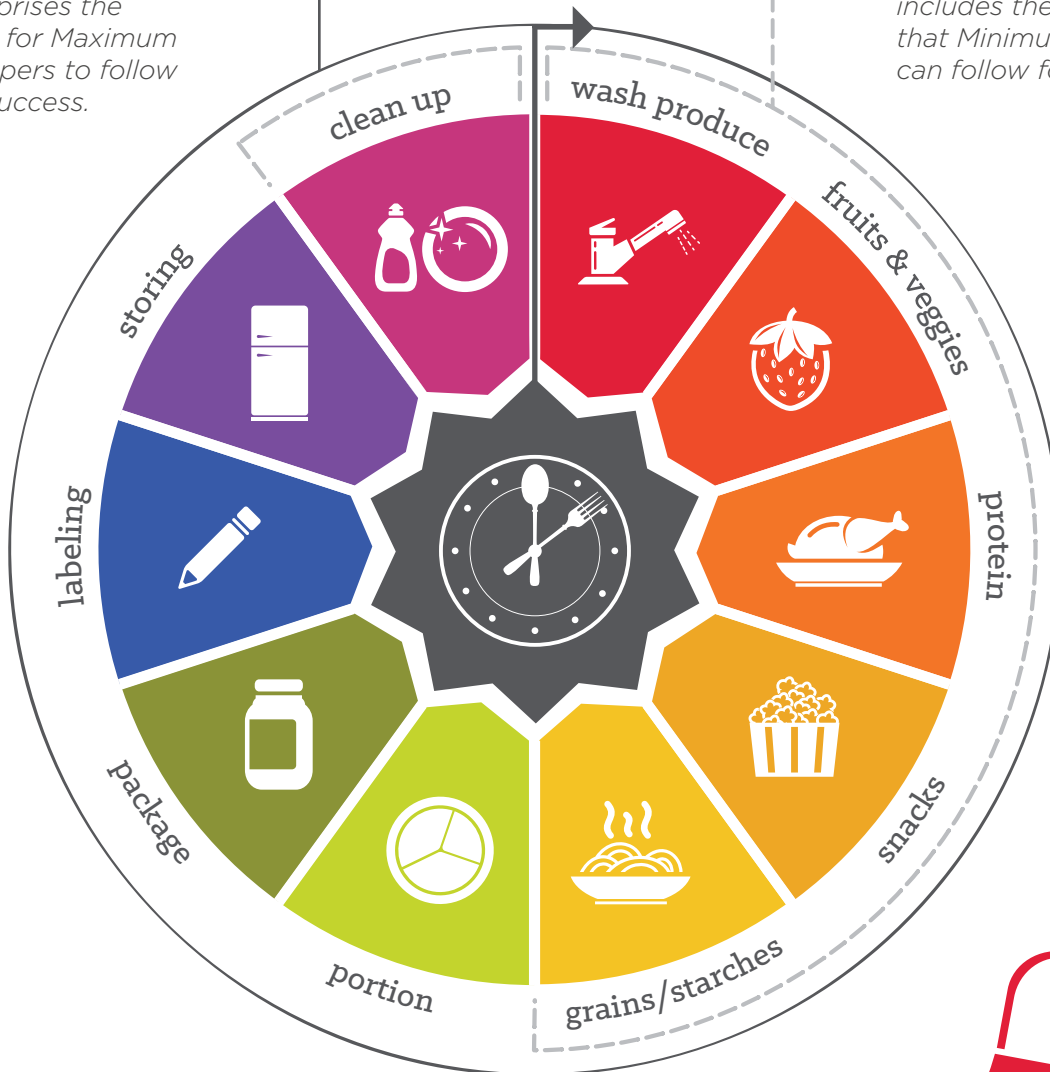
The Mead Prep

How To Meal Prep

The wheel below breaks down how we will tackle the meal prep journey on the following pages. Feel free to take what you want, and leave what you don't, to create your own meal prep routine!

The entire circle comprises the path for Maximum preppers to follow for success.

This dashed line includes the segments that Minimum preppers can follow for success.

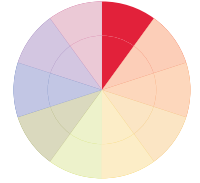


Remember that Minimum and Maximum meal prep are the extreme options on the spectrum. There are endless intervals in between the two that can work for your personality and lifestyle to help you find success. The following pages demonstrate suggestions for prepping each of the segments presented, but you are not limited to these suggestions. Get creative and fit this prep work to your preferences!





Washing Produce



Regardless of whether you meal prep or not, washing your produce is a step that should not be skipped! There are many different methods, and no method completely removes or kills all microbes, but thoroughly rinsing your produce will significantly help to avoid foodborne illness and remove any surface dirt, bacteria, and pesticide residue. Below I've shared the method I use to wash produce, along with some other suggestions.



- Wash your hands thoroughly before cleaning your produce.
- Add your produce to a bowl or clean sink, and rub the fruits and vegetables briskly under running water. You do not need an abrasive scrubber to clean your produce. If the produce has a firm skin or rind you can use a brush. Try to use water that is close to the temperature of the produce you'll be cleaning.
- You do not need any detergent to clean your produce. If you wish to soak your produce for 5 or so minutes you may add white vinegar, but keep in mind a ratio of at least 1 part vinegar to 3 parts water is necessary to make it effective and worthwhile.
- Firm produce such as apples or cucumbers can have a waxy preservative so be sure to wash extra well.
- For leafy greens, separate and rinse leaves separately, discarding outer leaves if they're bruised or torn. They can be tough to clean, so I prefer to soak them in a bowl of cold water for just a few minutes and briefly rinse after. Blot them dry with paper towels.
- You do not need to rewash any products that are labeled "ready-to-eat" or "washed."
- Refrigerate your produce as soon as you can after cleaning and preparing it.

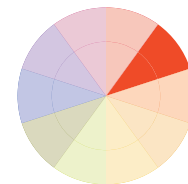


It's generally recommended to wash produce directly before use, but when it comes to meal prep we have to wash first if we want to get any prep done. As long as your produce is not at room temperature for more than a few hours and is stored in the refrigerator in covered containers, you're good to go!





Fruits & Veggies



Here are my tips for prepping your produce, as well as some quick, basic recipes and cooking techniques for your easy meal prep essentials!

TIPS

- Wash your hands thoroughly before prepping any food.
- Make sure you have a clean space to work in, with an empty sink and dishwasher. This will make the entire meal-prep process move along more smoothly.
- Cut your essential staple fruits & vegetables, along with any you'll need for recipes.
- Cook any vegetables that you have on your meal-prep plan, if necessary.
- Use a heavy wide bladed chef's knife to make cutting through tough vegetables easier. Also, make sure your knife is not dull for efficiency as well as your own protection.
- As mentioned on the Essential Tools page, I HIGHLY recommend getting a vegetable chopper– it will make your meal-prepping life so much easier!

ESSENTIAL RECIPE

Oven-Roasted Vegetables

Preheat oven to 450°F. Chop up your vegetables as desired. The larger the pieces, the longer they will take to cook, so try to make the ones in the batch you're cooking of similar size. Place vegetables in a single layer on a baking sheet/dish lined with foil. Drizzle with olive oil (you don't need much!) and sprinkle with salt, pepper and desired seasonings. Use your hands to toss, coating the vegetables completely. Roast for 30 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally.



Fruits and veggies contain phytochemicals and antioxidants that help reduce your risk of disease and keep you healthy. Taking supplements with these nutrients doesn't work as well as eating fresh produce, so it's important to eat a good amount of fruits and vegetables every single day!



BLANCHING

Blanching (also known as parboiling) is a simple technique that you may choose to use in your food prep. It is often recommended when freezing vegetables to help maintain flavor, texture and color. It also cleans the surface of remaining dirt and organisms, can reduce bitterness, and helps to slow the loss of nutrients.

To blanch your produce, bring a pot of water to a boil. Immerse your produce into the boiling water for just a few minutes. Different vegetables will need different amounts of time, but most will be done between 2–5 minutes. You can always taste a piece to decide if it's done. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the blanched produce to a bowl of water filled with ice– this will help to stop the cooking process (called “shocking”). Once cool, drain the vegetables and dry on paper towels.

STEAMING

Steaming is one of the easiest, quickest and healthiest ways to cook our veggies!

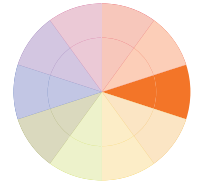
Cut your veggies into bite-sized pieces, around the same size. Insert your steamer basket into your pot, and add about an inch of water so it is still under the basket. Bring to a boil over high heat. Add your veggies to the basket, cover the pot, and reduce heat to medium. Steam! Veggies are done when vibrant and tender—simply pierce with a paring knife. (To steam with a microwave, simply place veggies in a microwave-safe bowl, add a little water to the bottom, cover with plastic-wrap and leave one corner open to vent.)

How Long To Steam Vegetables (variable with cooking method):

<5 mins	5–7 mins	7–10 mins	10–15 mins
spinach peas	asparagus broccoli cauliflower kale	brussels sprouts carrots green beans squash	onions potatoes



Protein Prep



Protein will be another staple of your daily diet. Whether you eat meat or not, it's important to have enough protein prepared beforehand because it's one of the most time-consuming things to cook. These general tips and basic recipes will help your prep move along more quickly!

TIPS

- Even if you buy boneless skinless chicken breast, be sure to trim the fat before cooking.
- If you don't want to dedicate the time to cooking chicken, a great time-saver is to buy a rotisserie chicken from the deli at the supermarket. Simply remove the skin and pull the meat off the bone—easy and delicious! You will end up with both white and dark meat, but remember that while dark meat is slightly higher in calories and fat, it does offer micronutrients such as iron! Sometimes, I just have to say go for what's less stressful and skip the cooking!



- Canned chicken or tuna are other great options for lean pre-cooked meat, but be sure to check the sodium!
- Using seasonings to flavor food instead of fat like (butter or oil) will help cut back on calories and fat without sacrificing taste! Seasonings that do well on meat also tend to work well with tofu for any vegetarians.



A NOTE ON GROUND MEAT

Ground meats can be tough to decipher when it comes to nutritional statistics. It's important to note that "lean" and "extra lean" are not the same. Lean ground turkey, for example, is generally noted to be 93/7, meaning it contains 7% fat, while extra lean is generally 99/1, meaning it contains only 1% fat. That being said, many people are misguided in thinking ground chicken is leaner than turkey, but the truth is most chicken that is ground is not of the lean breast, and therefore contains more fat. It's important to read the package for numbers such as "95/5" and "90/10" directing you on fat content, as well as the nutrition label when deciding which ground meat will suit your lifestyle and diet.

ESSENTIAL RECIPES

Easy Baked Chicken

Preheat oven to 400°F. Cover a baking dish or pan with foil and spray with cooking spray. Pat your chicken dry and rub with a little olive oil. Transfer to your baking sheet, leaving a little space in between. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and other desired seasonings. Bake for 30–40 minutes, until completely cooked through (at least 165°F if using a thermometer). Serve immediately or save for later. Allow to cool and refrigerate for up to a week, or freeze for up to 3 months.

Easy Baked Fish

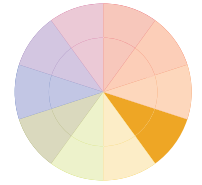
Preheat oven to 450°F. Spray a baking sheet or baking dish with cooking spray. Place fish on baking sheet in a single layer. Sprinkle with salt, pepper and other desired seasonings. Bake uncovered, 10 minutes per inch of thickness or until fish is done.



If you are really on a time crunch and are a Minimum prepper, you can consider just cutting up your raw meat and storing as your prep so it is ready to cook throughout the week, or at another time, rather than cooking it as well on meal prep day.



Staple Snacks



Staple snacks are an important factor of meal prep success— for many of us, we are able to stay on track for meals, but snacking on the wrong things can ruin our hard work elsewhere. Start off strong by prepping healthy snacks to keep around that you can reach for instead of the less nutritious options.

TIPS

- It can be challenging to determine how many snacks to prepare. Use your prep calendar planner to help you decide what an appropriate amount will be for you for the week. Also, it's important to consider how many people will be snacking on these options—it's annoying to make enough for yourself and then open the fridge and find the prepped snacks have disappeared!
- Place your healthy snacks within eyesight. If you make the snack convenient and within reach, you'll be more likely to grab it. That being said, put those less healthy options away—or better yet, get rid of them altogether!
- Snacking is important to keep us going throughout the day— long stretches in between meals without snacking can cause blood sugar to drop and set off cravings, meaning we can end up eating more later!
- Protein-packed snacks will help keep you satiated and full longer because protein slows digestion and keeps blood sugar steady. Protein has also been shown to help keep those cravings under control.
- Rather than focusing on your snacks being low calorie, focus on them being nutritious. When we focus on nutrition and eat the foods our body needs, we will inherently eat a healthier amount of calories.

EASY-PEEL HARD BOILED EGGS

The crazy tip to hard boiling eggs so the shell is easily removable? Thumbtacks! I know it can be terrifying at first, but use a thumbtack to poke a hole in the bottom of your egg—if you're careful the egg will not crack and you'll see a small puncture with none of the egg coming through.

Bring a saucepan of water (enough to cover the eggs) to a boil. Carefully add your eggs (with punctured holes) to the boiling water so they're in a single layer. Allow to boil for about 10 minutes (some say 8 some say 12, 11 works well for me!) and then transfer to an ice bath (water with ice). Allow to cool to the touch. Peel immediately or store for easy peeling later!



ESSENTIAL RECIPES

Homemade Peanut Butter

Add your roasted peanuts (salted or not) to a food processor. Add 1 Tbsp honey and 1 tsp cinnamon (and/or any other seasonings you like) and process! Allow to go for about 5 minutes until a doughball forms. Once the ball forms, scrape down the sides and allow to run until the ball breaks. The oil of the nuts will release and you'll be left with a creamy nut butter!

Brown-Bag Popcorn

Save money, cut fat from butter/oil, and stop consuming chemicals in microwave popcorn bags! Add a few tablespoons of popcorn kernels to a brown lunch bag. Loosely fold over the top of the bag about an inch down, twice. Microwave for about 2 minutes and 15 seconds, or until you get about 4-5 seconds between pops. Store in a SUPER airtight container for the week. Add any flavorings/seasonings you'd like at the time of eating!

Easy Jar Snacks

Fill the bottom of your jar with peanut butter or hummus. Stack your dippers such as celery, peppers or carrots on top!

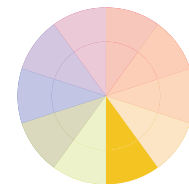


Meal-prepping for more than yourself? It is a lot of work—don't be afraid to call upon others who will be eating the food to help you on prep day. It will go by more quickly, be more enjoyable than doing it alone, and you'll all end up with enough prepared food!





Grains/Starches



Your grains and starches will complete your nutritious meal. Generally, these take time to prepare, so it is important to have them prepped beforehand. Most grains and starches can be cooked using basic techniques, stored for the week, and then dressed up with various ingredients and flavors when the meal comes around with little effort.

TIPS

- Soak your longer-cooking grains beforehand to reduce cooking times.
- If cooking grains for cold salads, you can reduce the cooking time slightly so they retain a chewier texture.
- Don't be afraid to use instant grains to make your meal prep process a little easier— instant grains still retain the same nutrients and health benefits!
- If you're watching sodium intake, you can cook grains in unsalted water. Otherwise, 1/4 tsp salt goes a long way!
- Substitute some of your liquid when cooking grains for broth or tomato juice for added flavor.
- Include diced vegetables to your cooked grains for added volume.

CARBS: GOOD OR BAD?

Carbs are not the enemy! Carbohydrates have a reputation of being “bad,” and many are misinformed in thinking they lead to weight gain, but carbs are a huge part of any healthy lifestyle and are one of the body's main sources of energy! It is important, however, to understand the difference between simple and complex carbs, as well as refined and unrefined carbs. I could write a book explaining the difference, but in a nutshell, we want to try to consume more complex and unrefined carbs— such as plant based foods like fruits and veggies, starchy and root vegetables like sweet potatoes, and whole grains. These types of foods contain more fiber, vitamins, minerals, and micronutrients than refined and simple carbs such as white flours and breads, cookies, honey and candies.

Of course, too much of anything isn't a good thing either. Because carbohydrates like grains are calorically dense, it is important to practice moderation and understand appropriate serving sizes to be sure we aren't consuming too much—too many calories can lead to weight gain. There is one complex carbohydrate that you shouldn't have to monitor, though—veggies! You should feel free to eat as many of these as you want!



Eating carbohydrates is closely linked to the regulation of serotonin in the brain. Serotonin is the brain chemical most associated with elevating the mood. It acts as a natural tranquilizer and reduces irritation. What does this mean? Healthy carbs = happy mood!

ESSENTIAL RECIPES

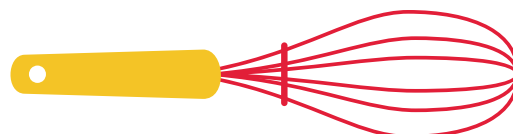
Quinoa: How-To

Quinoa is delicious and nutritious, but it can end up tasting bitter if not prepared properly. Quinoa is covered in a soapy substance called saponin that will result in this bitter taste if not removed.

Rinse your quinoa in a fine sieve until the water runs clear. Drain, and transfer to saucepan. Heat on medium-low and toast the quinoa for about 5 minutes, stirring it around in the pan. Once it's hot and the water is absorbed, you can add your water or liquid. Add a pinch of salt, turn the heat up and allow the water to come to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for 15–20 minutes until the liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat and allow to sit, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork before serving. Ratio: 1 cup quinoa, 2 cups water

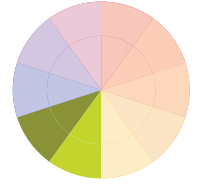
Meal-Prep Baked Sweet Potatoes

Preheat oven to 375°F. For basic baked potatoes or sweet potatoes, pierce each potato with a fork several times, and wrap in foil. Place on a baking sheet and transfer to the oven for about 45 minutes. (Check for doneness at 30 minutes, they can take up to 1 hour or longer— simply unwrap one of the potatoes with foil and pierce with a fork or knife. If it's tender and soft, it's done!) Eat or store for later. Reheat in the microwave or oven.





Portion & Package



The size of your portions is up to you (feel free to use the guide at the beginning of the book if needed), but this section will help you with how to pre-portion your food and package it for storing if necessary. Remember, this is beyond what most Minimum preppers will do, so you may choose to just prep essentials and portion meals as you go rather than pre-determine your portion sizes.

TIPS

- If you want to pre-portion your entire meal, get a set of large plastic storage containers (possibly the ones with different compartments) and place your protein, carb and veggies in the dish if it is appropriate to heat them up together. However, if part of your meal is supposed to be eaten cold, it should be packaged separately.
- Use BPA-free plastic storage containers so they can safely be heated in the microwave for on-the-go eating.
- If you need exact portions for calorie or macronutrient tracking, it's recommended that you use a digital scale for most accurate results. Otherwise, estimates work fine!
- Use plastic sandwich and snack bags or even mason jars to portion out snack sizes of fruits & vegetables, such as carrots, peppers, snap peas, cucumbers, grapes, and berries (also good for Minimum preppers!).
- Meal prep can lead to an excess in plastic storage containers. Purchasing a package of storage containers that fit inside of each other will help with storing and saving space when they aren't being used.
- Because plastic storage containers can take up more space, sometimes it's useful to package food in smaller plastic bags, and store all of your portioned foods in a larger plastic bag.
- Determine if all of your food can be refrigerated, or if some of it needs to be frozen in order to stay fresh.

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

- **VARIOUS SIZES OF PLASTIC STORAGE CONTAINERS**
- **MASON JARS**
- **PLASTIC BAGS (SNACK, SANDWICH & GALLON SIZE)**
- **PLASTIC WRAP**
- **DIGITAL SCALE (OPTIONAL)**

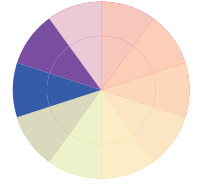


When it comes to Maximum prepping, it's easy to get caught up in every meal being on-the-go. Make an effort to still sit down and eat meals, as you'll find yourself much more satisfied mentally!





Label & Store



Labeling your food is optional, but it's a great idea to keep track of how fresh the food is. Below are tips and suggestions to help make the labeling and storing of your prepped food as easy, efficient and effective as possible!

TIPS

- Label the date you cooked any protein on the storage container/bag.
- Labeling is important to note any dietary differences that may be in your prepared food (for instance, labeling if breakfast burritos have cheese or not if you make some with and without).
- Store fruits and veggies that tend to dry out more quickly in unsealed bags to keep the environment as moist as possible while still allowing the air to circulate.
- Store cooked meals in airtight, leakproof containers/bags.
- Refrigerate your cooked meals/food within two hours of cooking—there is no need to allow the food to cool completely before storing. The sooner you get it stored, the longer it will stay fresh.
- Because the top shelf is the warmest part of the fridge, it is best for pre-prepared foods such as yogurt and cheese. Meat can be stored beneath the top shelf.
- The bottom shelf is the coldest part, so it is a great place for raw meat.
- Use your crisper drawer for storing fruits and vegetables.
- Door racks are best for eggs, condiments and juice as the temperature fluctuates due to being opened and closed.
- Try not to stuff your refrigerator too full so the air can still circulate and keep the food at a safe temperature.

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

- **PERMANENT MARKERS**
- **MASKING TAPE**
- **REFRIGERATOR**



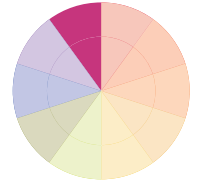
FUN FACT:

A banana peel will turn dark brown if placed in the fridge, but the part you eat inside actually stays fresh! Once a banana reaches ripeness for your tastes (but not before) place it in the refrigerator to drastically slow the conversion of starch into sugars, almost to the point of stopping the ripening process.





Clean-Up



Clean-up will complete your meal prep for the day. It may be the most daunting part to some, but can be efficient and quick with these simple tips! Try looking forward to clean-up time—it means you're meal prep is done and you've set yourself up for success for the week!

TIPS

- The number one thing you can do to make your clean-up efficient and less daunting is to clean as you go! Make sure your kitchen is clean when you start and your dishwasher is empty. As you go through each of the steps on your list, try doing a little bit of clean up along the way to minimize work at the end.
- Raw meat, poultry, fish and other raw foods are common sources of germs, so it is especially important to clean as you go during your protein prep to eliminate the chance of cross-contamination with other foods. Always wash your hands and any utensils or surfaces used after handling these foods.
- Use different chopping boards for meat and produce to avoid cross-contamination.
- Designate a bowl or bag for your food waste. When you're cutting, peeling and chopping the mess can pile up quickly. Have a specific place you can put the waste as it accumulates to keep it out of the way.
- Try to keep dishes on one side of the sink. Keeping one side clear will make using the sink easier as you go through your meal-prep.
- Messes are bound to happen during meal prep, but if you can clean up spills and splats as you go, it will make clean-up easier later on.
- Always use an antibacterial soap to be sure bacteria and germs are not left on your dishes, rather than regular dish liquid or just water.
- Set a timer when you clean! We get to the end of prepping and the last thing we want to do is clean up, but it's amazing what we can accomplish if we just commit to a certain amount of time. Give yourself 10 or 15 minutes to get as much done as you can and you might surprise yourself with how fast the cleaning happens!

ESSENTIAL SUPPLIES

- **ANTIBACTERIAL DISH SOAP**
- **SPONGES**
- **WASH RAGS/PAPER TOWELS**
- **MULTIPLE CUTTING BOARDS**
- **WASTE BASKET**



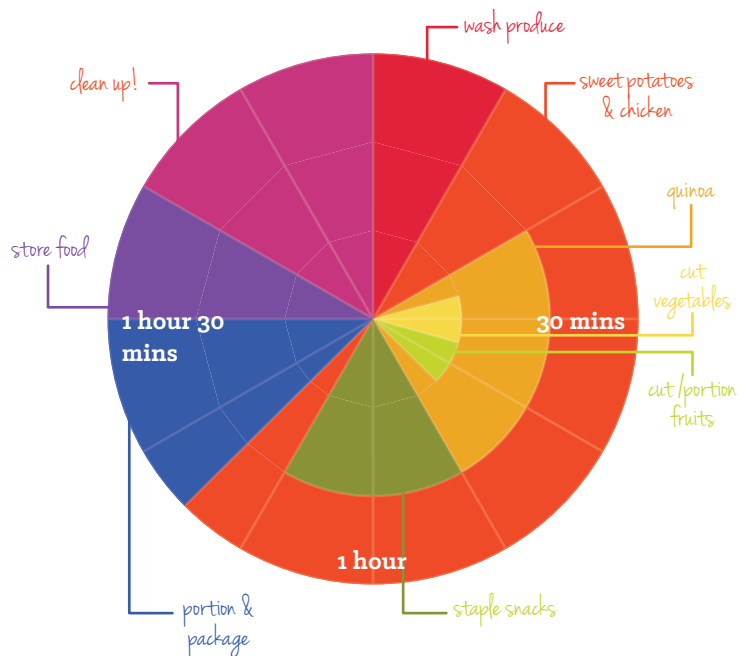
FUN FACT:
Using the dishwasher
saves more water than
hand washing!



Recap: Meal Prep Day

The various segments of meal prep that were introduced over the course of the previous section provided an estimated time for how long each segment would take, but it's important to keep in mind that these segments may overlap. For instance, while your protein is cooking, you can be preparing something else at the same time. Once you have your list of things you need to do for the day, it's a good idea to organize when and how those things can be accomplished to make your meal prep day run smoothly and efficiently. Below I have included one of my personal meal prep day schedules as a sample.

2-Hour Meal Prep Clock



- 10 mins** • wash produce/preheat oven
- 10 mins** • wrap sweet potatoes in foil & place on baking sheet
- prepare chicken (trim fat, season)
- place sweet potatoes and chicken in oven
- <5 mins** • place quinoa in saucepan with water, bring to a boil to begin cooking. Allow to simmer while working
- 10 mins** • cut & jar vegetables (goes so fast with my veggie chopper!) (bell peppers, mushrooms, zucchini, spinach, lettuce)
- 10 mins** • cut & portion any fruits/veggie snacks (grapes, carrots, berries)
- <5 mins** • remove quinoa from stovetop, fluff with fork, set aside to cool
- 20 mins** • make staple snacks (homemade hummus, bean salsa salad, trail mix)
- <5 mins** • remove sweet potatoes and chicken from the oven, set aside to cool
- 5 mins** • portion & package quinoa, sweet potatoes
- 10 mins** • cut chicken into cubes, portion into bags as you go
- 10 mins** • store food in the fridge properly
- 20 mins** • clean up!
- ~2 hours:** TOTAL TIME

I'm more of a Minimum prepper and rarely make breakfasts on meal prep day, but I try to make sure that I have enough prepared food to last the week for other meals. Remember, you can create your own meal prep day schedule according to what works with your lifestyle and preferences, and your timing may differ based on how much prep/what type of prep you do! This is an example of how meal prep does not NEED to look like the cover of this book!



Freezing Food

Making food that you can freeze is a great option to keep healthy food readily available! Here are some tips on freezing and thawing!

FOODS THAT FREEZE WELL:

- meats, soups/stews, casseroles, slow cooker meals
- bread
- rice
- fruits/veggies best frozen whole: bananas, berries, beans, asparagus, tomatoes, corn
- fruits/veggies best frozen sliced/diced: bell peppers, avocado, mango, pineapple, peas, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, peaches, plums, cherries, apples, squash
- herbs

FOODS THAT DO NOT FREEZE WELL:

- dairy (will separate when frozen)
- fruits/veggies with high water content (celery, lettuce, cucumber, onions)
- whole eggs
- cooked potatoes that aren't shredded
- fried foods
- pasta (unless slightly undercooked)
- jam

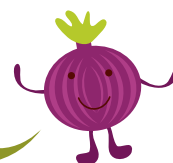
FREEZING TIPS

- Store oven meals in aluminum or glass pans with foil or plastic wrap on top
- Store slow cooker meals in gallon-sized plastic bags (freezer bags). Remove as much air as possible and store them flat in the freezer.
- Generally, plastic bags/wrap are adequate if freezing for only a short time. Use aluminum foil or special freezer bags if freezing for longer periods.
- Place newer food packages in the back and move older frozen packages to the front so they are next in line for use.
- Always write the date that the food was made, the food type and reheating instructions on the frozen food package.
- Cool foods slightly before putting them in the freezer.
- If you can, freeze smaller portions. This will help your food freeze and defrost more quickly, and you can also choose to just defrost what you need rather than the entire recipe (i.e. a serving of meat or stew).

THAWING TIPS

- If you can, thaw slow cooker meals overnight in the fridge before cooking. Your block of frozen food may not fit in the slow cooker and thawing will help the meat to cook evenly.
- Thaw oven meals overnight if you can, but thawing can be skipped if you can monitor your meal while it cooks.
- Do not thaw your food at room temperature to avoid the risk of contamination.
- Oven recipes that come straight from the freezer will take longer to cook than room temperature meals.

Freezer burn happens when the frozen food is exposed to air. It is not harmful to consume, but will affect the food's texture and color. Wrap foods airtight to minimize the chance of freezer burn!



Recommended Storage Times

Many people worry their meal prepped food won't last an entire week in the fridge, and for some foods that is true! Below is a chart that will advise you on how long it is recommended to keep various items frozen or refrigerated.

All information is from the FDA: <http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/UCM109315.pdf>

	Product	Refrigerator	Freezer
eggs	<i>Eggs, Fresh, in shell</i>	4-5 weeks	Don't freeze
	<i>Eggs, Raw Yolks/Whites</i>	2-4 days	1 year
	<i>Eggs, Hard Cooked</i>	1 week	Don't freeze well
	<i>Liquid pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes, opened</i>	3 days	Don't freeze
	<i>Liquid pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes, unopened</i>	10 days	1 year
meat	<i>Frozen Casseroles</i>		3-4 months
	<i>Raw Hamburger & Stew Meats</i>	1-2 days	3-4 months
	<i>Raw Ground Turkey, Veal, Pork, Lamb</i>	1-2 days	3-4 months
	<i>Lunch Meats, opened package</i>	3-5 days	1-2 months
	<i>Lunch Meats, unopened package</i>	2 weeks	1-2 months
	<i>Vegetable or Meat-Added Soups/Stews</i>	3-4 days	2-3 months
	<i>Bacon</i>	7 days	1 month
	<i>Steaks</i>	3-5 days	6-12 months
	<i>Cooked Meat & Meat Dishes</i>	3-4 days	2-3 months
	<i>Fresh Chicken or Turkey, whole</i>	1-2 days	1 year
	<i>Fresh Chicken or Turkey, parts</i>	1-2 days	9 months
	<i>Cooked Poultry</i>	3-4 days	4-6 months
fish	<i>Lean Fish</i>	1-2 days	6 months
	<i>Fatty Fish</i>	1-2 days	2-3 months
	<i>Cooked Fish</i>	3-4 days	4-6 months

Healthy On A Budget

Many people let the idea that “eating healthy is expensive” hold them back, when that really doesn’t need to be true. In fact, many don’t realize that cutting out the junk and processed food can actually save money! Here are some tips to make eating well more affordable.

- Stick to your grocery list. It’s easy to get off track when you’re at the grocery store. Go prepared so you can avoid impromptu purchases as much as possible.
- Go out to eat less. Reducing meals out just a few times per week will save a huge portion of your grocery bill.
- Shop the perimeter of the grocery store. This is a great general healthy lifestyle tip as well, as most whole fresh foods such as produce and meat are found along the outer edges of the store, and processed and packaged foods are on the inside aisles.
- Shop seasonally. Produce that is in season will almost always cost less than produce that is not.
- Eat leafy greens. Greens like kale, spinach, collards and broccoli are nutritious but also less expensive. They’re also easy and quick to prep!
- Meal prep! Prepping meals will save you money because cooking larger portions will cost less per meal.
- Visit discount or club stores. Buying in bulk can offer great bargains—but be sure you’re only purchasing as much as you will use!
- Use your freezer! For more expensive items such as meat, it’s a good idea to stock up when the product goes on sale and freeze it to save when you need it. Frozen vegetables are also equally nutritious and will be of much better value than fresh produce.
- Check out your local Farmers’ Market. The fresh food sold on these street markets often costs less than you’d pay at the grocery store. PLUS you are supporting your environment and local economy!
- Purchase off-brand products. Generic or store brands at grocery stores are cheaper than name brands for the same quality product!
- Avoid individual servings. Single-servings of yogurt, cottage cheese, fruit juice, and snacks, will all cost more than purchasing the larger container and portioning them out yourself.
- Eat less meat. Try using vegetarian sources of protein to save money on meat. Beans, for instance, are very nutritious and tasty but much less expensive than meat. They’re also very easy to incorporate into a variety of dishes such as casseroles and soups.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture did a great report showing that potato chips (and other less healthy options) are almost twice the price of carrots (and other healthier options), per serving! Being healthy doesn't need to be pricey!



HEALTHY MONEY SAVING SWAPS

- **Fresh fruit for packaged fruit:** packaged fruit can be over \$10 per pound compared to \$1-\$3 for fresh, uncut produce!
- **Frozen berries for fresh:** fresh berries can be expensive, especially when out of season. Frozen cost much less and are just as nutritious! PLUS they won’t go bad so there’s no wasted food!
- **Beans for beef:** Beans are less than \$2 per pound, canned or dry, vs beef which can be up to \$5 per pound!
- **The cannister of oats for the instant oatmeal packets:** Save money AND cut back on added sugar and calories!
- **Tofu for protein powder:** protein powder can be so expensive, and tofu blends right into your smoothies for a fraction of the price!
- **Canned protein for fresh:** canned fish and chicken are inexpensive and last a long time on the shelf!

Wishing You Success!

I am wishing you all of the success with your meal prep journey! Please keep in mind that there is no “right” or “wrong” way to meal prep! This guide is intended to get you started and give you ideas for your own meal prep schedules and plans. Give it a few weeks before giving up, and modify the prep and schedule as you go—you will learn what type of prepper you are very quickly! If you are honest with yourself and cater to your specific needs, you will set yourself up for success. Meal prep takes time, being healthy takes time, but it is manageable with a little organization and practice. Don't beat yourself up over not being your ideal “perfect” prepper— just do what you can, and you'll begin see the benefits of meal prep affect your life and lifestyle!

I invite you to now check out the recipe book portion of this eBook— easy, affordable, portable and of course delicious meals to help with your journey and lifestyle! The legend to the right is your key for dietary restrictions, and appropriate ones appear on each recipe.

Remember that you can always head to www.mindovermunch.com for all of my other easy recipes updated daily! We've worked hard to create great search features to make your recipe hunting an easy process.

For comments, questions, recipe requests, or anything else please feel free to email me at hello@mindovermunch.com!

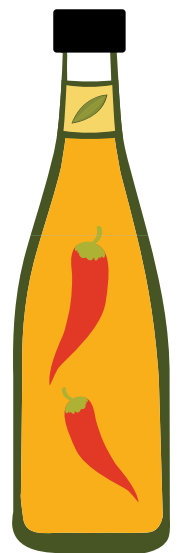
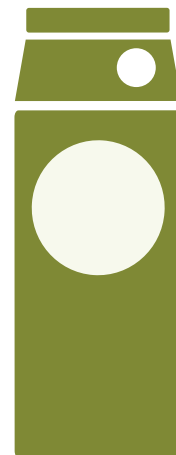
Dietary Preference Guide

- V** vegan
- VEG** vegetarian
- GF** gluten-free
- P** paleo

For gluten free on recipes with oats be sure to use a brand that is certified gluten-free



When you see this stamp on a recipe page, get excited! It signifies that the recipe uses 5 main ingredients or less!
(does not include basic seasonings, essentials or optional ingredients)



Freezer Breakfast Burritos

breakfast 

Yields 12 burritos

These burritos are satisfying, nutritious and delicious! Grab-and-go to heat up at the office or take just a few minutes before you leave to prepare and enjoy. Customize these using 3–4 cups of any vegetables you prefer!



INGREDIENTS

½ cup (80g) chopped onions
1 cup (70g) diced mushrooms
2 cups (80g) chopped spinach
2 cups eggs (480g) (I use 4 eggs and 1 cup egg whites, but any combo will work!)
taco seasoning (packet or homemade)
1 cup (100g) diced tomatoes
12-16 oz (340–450g) cooked ground turkey/sausage
12 tortillas (low-carb, sprouted grain and whole wheat are all great light options)
low fat cheese, optional

PROCEDURE

- Sauté onions in a little cooking spray until translucent and tender, just a few minutes. Add mushrooms and spinach. Allow spinach to wilt.
- Whisk eggs and egg whites together. Pour into heated skillet and scramble eggs until cooked.
- Add meat, taco seasoning, and tomatoes, stirring well to combine and coat.
- Fill tortillas with mixture and top with a pinch of low fat cheese if desired.
- Fold tortillas into burritos, tucking in the sides so the filling is fully enclosed, and wrap in plastic wrap to maintain form. Freeze!
- When you're ready to enjoy, reheat in microwave for about 1–2 minutes, turning halfway.

NUTRITION per burrito

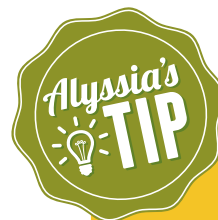
Yields 12 burritos

206 calories | 34g carbs | 4g fat | 11g protein



**Vegetarian if meat/sausage is omitted*

***Gluten free if a GF tortilla is used*



If you choose to make some of the burritos with cheese and some without, be sure to label them with a permanent marker on the plastic wrap!

Overnight Oats

Yields 1 jar

This is my FAVORITE meal prep breakfast. It's easily customizable and always tasty! You'll need to do a little trial and error to find the exact recipe that works for you, but starting with equal parts oats and milk are a great base!

breakfast 



INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup (40g) oats (any kind will do!)
- ½ cup (120mL) almond milk (or milk of choice)
- 1 scoop chocolate protein powder (optional)
- ¼ cup (75g) mashed banana
- 2–3 Tbsp Greek yogurt
- 1 Tbsp peanut butter
- stevia, honey or sweetener of choice, to taste (optional, may not need if using sweetened protein powder)



PROCEDURE

- Combine all ingredients in a jar, adjusting sweetness and texture to taste.
- Place jar in refrigerator overnight, or for at least 4 hours.
- Remove from refrigerator and devour cold!
- Make up to 5 days in advance and store in the fridge.

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 1 jar

431 calories | 50g carbs | 12g fat | 35g protein

VEG GF



For a more delicious overnight oats experience, make your dish in an almost-empty peanut butter jar! You won't regret it!!!

Vegetarian Breakfast Bake

breakfast 

Yields 12 servings

This dish is packing the protein considering it's vegetarian! A serving gets you a perfect balance of your macronutrients for minimal calories! Delicious warm, leftover and reheated, or even cold! Prep at night, bake in the morning!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (160g) onion, chopped
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 4 oz (115g) sliced mushrooms
- 1 package frozen spinach, or 1 bag fresh (254g)
- 1 10 oz (280g) bag frozen broccoli, thawed
- 4 slices (112g) whole wheat or sprouted grain bread, cut into cubes (about ½")
- 4 eggs
- 3 cups (720g) egg whites/substitute
- 2 cups (480mL) almond milk
- ½ cup (60g) swiss cheese
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ¾ tsp salt (to taste)
- ½ tsp pepper (to taste)
- ½ cup (60g) low fat cheddar cheese

PROCEDURE

- Sauté onion, garlic, mushrooms and spinach in a skillet using cooking spray (you can use oil but nutritional data will differ). Combine with thawed broccoli. Set aside.
- Spread bread cubes over bottom of baking dish.
- Whisk together eggs, egg whites/substitute, almond milk, swiss cheese, nutmeg, salt & pepper.
- Layer vegetables over bread, maintaining 2 layers to the best of your ability.
- Pour egg mixture over entire baking dish, completely covering both layers of bread/vegetables.
- Cover and refrigerate over night (about 8 hours).
- In the morning, preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Top the bake with cheddar cheese. Bake 50–60 minutes, until cheese begins to brown and eggs are cooked through.
- Devour warm, save to reheat, or enjoy cold later on!
- Lasts 5 days in the fridge, or 3–4 months in the freezer.

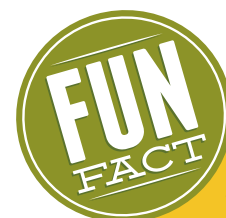
NUTRITION per serving

Yields 12 servings (1/12 breakfast bake)

150 calories | 11g carbs | 5g fat | 15g protein



*Gluten-Free if a GF bread is used



Frozen vegetables are a great option to make your healthy lifestyle easier– they retain the same nutrients that fresh varieties also offer!

Superfood Granola Bars

breakfast



Yields 16 bars

Store bought granola can be deceiving! Touted as a health food, it's often packed with added sugars that aren't necessary for a tasty final product. Make your own delicious vegan granola bars, and add some superfood satisfaction while you're at it!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 mashed bananas
- ½ cup (125g) nut butter
- ½ cup (75g) nuts, lightly pulsed in processor
(I love almonds and walnuts)
- ⅓ cup (40g) seeds (I love sunflower and chia)
- ¼ cup (40g) raisins
- ¼ cup (40g) low sugar raisins
- 1 ¼ cup (100g) oats
- 1-2 tsp coconut sugar or sweetener of choice
(optional– these are sweet on their own!)



PROCEDURE

- Heat nut butter and bananas in a small pot over the stove and stir until combined. Set aside to cool.
- Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl, and then add that mixture to the banana/nut butter mixture.
- Evenly spread entire mixture into an 8x8" baking dish (sprayed, or lined with foil/parchment paper).
- Bake at 350°F (180°C) for 18–22 minutes.
- Allow to cool before cutting into bars. Enjoy!
- Lasts 4–5 days on the counter or a week in the fridge.

NUTRITION per bar

Yields 16 bars

123 calories | 13g carbs | 8g fat | 3g protein



Store-bought granola bars can rack up a whopping 12–15g sugar! These homemade granola bars have only 6g natural sugar!

Freezer Breakfast Sandwiches

breakfast 

Yields 6 sandwiches

These will totally satisfy your breakfast sandwich craving, and you are in control of the ingredients so they are easily lightened up to be not only guilt-free, but also nutritious! Healthy carbs, fat, and protein for a balanced breakfast!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups eggs (360g) or egg whites/substitute, seasoned with salt & pepper
- 6 english muffins (whole wheat or sprouted grain)
- 12 slices deli chicken or ham
- 6 slices thinly sliced cheddar cheese



PROCEDURE

- Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
- Spray down 6 small ramekins with cooking spray and pour ¼ cup (60g) egg mixture into each. Bake for 15–20 minutes, until completely set. Set aside and allow to cool.
- Once cool to the touch, assemble sandwiches. Place egg patty on bottom of English muffin, followed by 2 slices of deli meat, 1 slice of thin cheddar cheese, and the top of the muffin.
- Wrap in plastic wrap and transfer to a larger plastic storage bag or plastic storage container.
- Repeat with remaining 5 sandwiches.
- Freeze!
- When you're ready to eat, reheat in microwave for about 1–2 minutes, turning halfway.

NUTRITION per sandwich

Yields 6 sandwiches

218 calories | 23g carbs | 5g fat | 18g protein



**Vegetarian if deli meat is omitted*

***Gluten Free if a GF English muffin is used*



These homemade breakfast sandwiches save you almost 100 calories and 10g fat when compared to a fast food breakfast sandwich!

Banana Nut Mini-Muffins

breakfast



Yields 24 mini muffins

Breakfast muffins/breads are one of my weaknesses. They're delicious, but I just don't need a whole large muffin (nutritionally, anyway...). These portion controlled minis are lower in fat, and are gluten free and refined sugar free for a healthier alternative!



INGREDIENTS

- 2 bananas, mashed
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup (60g) oat flour
- 2 Tbsp peanut butter
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ¾ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1–2 Tbsp stevia or granulated sweetener of choice, to taste
- ¼ cup (30g) crushed walnuts, plus additional for topping if desired

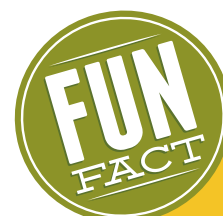
PROCEDURE

- Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
- Mix all ingredients together, combining well. Adjust sweetness to taste– the bananas are a great natural sweetener so you may not need much!
- Transfer to mini muffin tin that has been sprayed with cooking spray, filling about ¾ of the way full.
- Bake 10–12 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean and they are a light golden brown.
- Allow to cool slightly before removing from pan and devouring!
- Lasts 1 week in the fridge, or 2–3 months in the freezer.

NUTRITION per mini muffin

Yields 24 mini muffins

38 calories | 4g carbs | 2g fat | 1g protein



The Greeks called walnuts "karyon," meaning "head," because the shell looks like a skull, and the kernel looks like a brain!

Turkey Meatloaf Muffins

snack



Yields 24 mini meatloaf muffins

These meatloaf muffins are great warm or cold, for a meal or as an on-the-go snack! The first 3 ingredients are the only ones necessary for this recipe to work, so get creative and add any veggies that you prefer!



INGREDIENTS

20 oz (600g) extra lean ground turkey breast
½ cup (120g) egg whites
½ cup (40g) oats
1 tsp yellow mustard
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 cup (40g) chopped spinach
½ cup (80g) onion
¼ cup (45g) red bell pepper
¼ cup (25g) celery
1 tsp minced garlic
½ tsp garlic powder
salt and pepper to taste

PROCEDURE

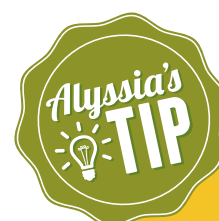
- Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
- Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
- Divide meat mixture into mini muffin tin sprayed with cooking spray – a 1-Tbsp cookie scooper works well to distribute.
- Bake for about 15-20 minutes.
- Enjoy!
- Lasts 5 days in the fridge, or 3-4 months in the freezer.

NUTRITION per mini muffin

Yields 24 mini muffins

24 calories | 1g carbs | <0.5g fat | 4g protein

GF



Some of my recipes use "20 oz" of meat because many store-bought brands come pre-packaged in that size!

Bean Salsa Salad

snack



Yields about 8 cups

An amazing salsa to eat on almost anything – eggs, sandwiches, soups, tacos, salads, pastas, whole grain chips – or by itself! Packed with protein and fiber! This salsa is easily customizable, so adjust recipe using your preferred ingredients!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 15 oz can (425g) black beans, drained/rinsed
- 1 15 oz can (425g) garbanzo beans or white beans, drained/rinsed
- 1 15 oz can (425g) yellow corn, drained/rinsed
- 1 10 oz can (280g) diced tomatoes and chiles
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic (more or less to taste)
- ½ cup (115g) chopped green onion (more or less to taste)
- 2 Tbsp cilantro (more or less to taste)
- ½ cup (240mL) mojo marinade (found in the ethnic/international foods aisle; feel free to omit & sub a squeeze of lemon juice)

PROCEDURE

- Mix all ingredients together in a bowl.
- Allow to chill in the refrigerator for a few hours.
- Lasts up to a week in the fridge.

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 32 servings (¼ cup)

36 calories | 6g carbs | <0.5g fat | 2g protein



I generally purchase low-sodium variations of canned goods such as beans and corn, but I still drain and rinse them so I can be in complete control of the sodium in a dish!

Tropical Quinoa Smoothie

snack



Yields 1 smoothie

Smoothies are great as snacks or even for breakfast! This tropical take uses quinoa to give you great whole grains, protein and fiber without using any supplements! And no, it doesn't taste like you're drinking pasta—Instead, it adds a pleasant "nuttness"!



INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup (45g) cooked quinoa
- ¼ cup (60mL) light coconut milk (or milk of choice)
- ⅓ cup (50g) frozen mango chunks
- ⅓ cup (45g) frozen pineapple chunks
- ½ frozen banana
- 1 Tbsp unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 Tbsp coconut sugar, to taste
- ½ tsp vanilla

PROCEDURE

- Combine all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Adjust consistency to taste by adding more milk for a thinner smoothie, and ice or a bit of yogurt for a thicker smoothie.
- Enjoy!

NUTRITION per smoothie

Yields 1 smoothie

251 calories | 60g carbs | 4g fat | 4g protein



NASA proposed quinoa as the perfect in-flight snack for astronauts on long-term missions because it's mineral rich, gluten-free and contains all essential amino acids!

Homemade Hummus

snack



Yields about 2 cups

This hummus is lightened up using no oil and less tahini than you'll find in original recipes, but sacrifices no flavor at all! This is great as a dip for veggies, or a spread on protein and wraps, or sandwiches!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 15 oz can (425g) chickpeas, drained/rinsed (reserve liquid)
- ¼ cup (60mL) of the chickpea can liquid (or sub water)
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp tahini
- 1 ½ Tbsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp cumin
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp paprika
- ⅛ tsp cayenne, to taste
- ⅛ tsp pepper, to taste

PROCEDURE

- Combine all ingredients in a food processor.
- Scrape down the sides halfway through and adjust seasonings to taste.
- Chill and enjoy!
- Lasts about 2 weeks in the fridge.

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 16 servings (2 Tbsp each)

28 calories | 5g carbs | 1g fat | 2g protein



If you don't have chickpeas on hand, you can create a makeshift "hummus" using your favorite can of beans as a substitute!

Trail Mix

Yields about 2 cups

Making your own trail mix is so easy! You'll save on the price AND the nutritional stats! Get creative and add/sub your favorite nuts, seeds and dried fruit for a completely customized trail mix. Dark chocolate chips are optional, but recommended.

snack



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (15g) popped popcorn
- ¼ cup (40g) roasted peanuts
- ¼ cup (40g) roasted almonds
- ¼ cup (40g) pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup (35g) dried blueberries, no added sugar (or sub other dried fruit)
- 2 Tbsp dark chocolate chips (optional)
- pinch of cinnamon (optional)
- pinch of salt

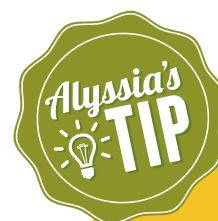
PROCEDURE

- Toss all ingredients together, adjusting cinnamon and salt to taste if desired.
- Store in an airtight container.
- Lasts up to 2 weeks in the pantry.

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 6 servings (⅓ cup)

127 calories | 11g carbs | 8g fat | 3g protein



I love using popcorn in trail mix to add volume and whole grains without an excess of calories or fat!

Oil-Free Pesto

snack



Yields about 2 cups

Pesto lightened up using no oil, walnuts in place of pine nuts, and added spinach for nutrition! A great lower fat/calorie and higher protein option! It's super flavorful, delicious and EASY! Great for pastas, sandwiches, protein marinades, salads, and more!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ cups (60g) fresh basil
- 1 ½ cups (60g) fresh spinach
- 1 15 oz (425g) can white beans, drained/rinsed (great northern, cannellini, or other)
- 2 Tbsp walnuts
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp garlic
- salt and pepper to taste



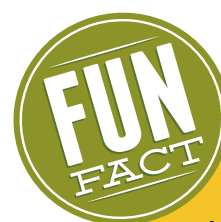
PROCEDURE

- Place all ingredients in a food processor and process until well combined and desired consistency is reached.
- Refrigerate after making.
- Lasts 1-2 weeks in the fridge.

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 32 servings (1 Tbsp)

20 calories | 3g carbs | <0.5g fat | 1g protein



"Pestare" is Italian for "to pound or crush" in reference to the original preparation method of pesto!

Egg Muffins

Yields about 12

Egg muffins are a great way to get in those veggies! Low carb, high protein, and totally satisfying. With only 2 simple ingredients, this recipe can easily be made on meal prep day, or throughout the week as you go!

snack



INGREDIENTS

- 3–4 cups (540–720g) mixed veggies, diced (I use red, green and yellow bell peppers and spinach)
- 2 cups (480g) of egg whites/substitute (or eggs), seasoned with salt & pepper

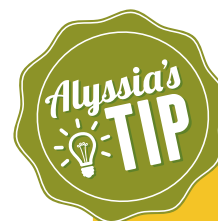
PROCEDURE

- Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
- Distribute mixed vegetables of your choice in sprayed muffin tin, filling up about ½ way.
- Pour eggs into tins, filling ⅔ way to the top.
- Bake for about 15 minutes, until completely set.
- Enjoy warm or chill and enjoy cold! These are also great reheated.
- Lasts about 3 days in the fridge, or 2–3 months in the freezer.

NUTRITION per muffin

Yields 12 muffins

36 calories | 3g carbs | 0g fat | 5g protein



These egg muffins are tasty warm, but many people actually prefer them cold!

Tofu Bites

Yields 4 servings

These tofu bites are great as a snack, on salads, mixed in with protein meals, or on pasta! The main ingredient is tofu, making these easy and nutritious! Get creative with your choice of seasonings to flavor these as you'd like!

snack



INGREDIENTS

1 14 oz (400g) package extra firm tofu
cooking spray
salt & pepper
additional seasoning (I love garlic powder)

PROCEDURE

- Drain your tofu: Place the tofu on top of a few folded paper towels on a plate. Place another few folded paper towels on top of the tofu with another plate. Place a can of food on top of the plate for added weight, and allow the tofu to sit for about 30 minutes.
- Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
- Cut the pressed tofu into cubes or strips, as you prefer.
- Toss lightly with a little cooking spray and seasonings, to taste. Transfer to a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
- Bake for about 45 minutes, turning halfway through.
- Cool slightly before devouring or storing.
- Lasts 5–7 days in the fridge (but is best served fresh).

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 4 servings (about ½ cup)

90 calories | 3g carbs | 5g fat | 10g protein



Tofu has been around for over 2,000 years! It was first developed in China around 200 B.C., and it is thought that very early Buddhist monks ate it as part of their strict vegetarian diets.

Chicken Salad

entrée



Yields 1 serving

This bedless salad is easily customizable– start with your main ingredients: chicken and Greek yogurt– and go from there! Get creative with add-ins, such as different nuts, fruits (apples are great!) and extra veggies that blend right in (like spinach)!



INGREDIENTS

- 4 oz (115g) chicken breast, shredded or cubed
- 2 Tbsp Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp yellow mustard
- 2 Tbsp green onion
- 3 Tbsp grapes, halved or quartered
- 3 Tbsp chopped celery
- 2 Tbsp chopped walnuts or pecans
- 1 tsp tarragon
- salt and pepper to taste



PROCEDURE

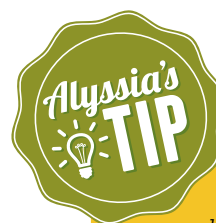
- Mix all ingredients together.
- Chill and enjoy!
- Lasts about 5 days in the fridge.

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 1 serving

274 calories | 8g carbs | 10g fat | 36g protein

GF



This dish can easily be made in bulk on meal prep day for the week. Using canned chicken is a great way to get the recipe going quickly and affordably!

Veggie-Packed Frittata

entrée



Yields 1 serving

Frittatas are my go-to meal for getting my veggies in. I use my pre-cut vegetables from my meal prep day to make this meal quick and easy. Add your favorite cooked protein to make this meal even more satisfying and delicious!



INGREDIENTS

- 1–2 cups (180–360g) diced vegetables (I love mixed bell peppers and broccoli)
- ½ cup (20g) spinach, chopped
- ¾ cup (180g) egg whites/substitute (or eggs), seasoned with salt & pepper
- Salsa for topping



PROCEDURE

- Pre-heat oven to broil.
- Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Spray with nonstick cooking spray.
- Add vegetables and spinach. Sauté in skillet for 3-5 minutes until veggies are tender and spinach is wilted.
- Pour egg mixture into skillet. Allow bottom to set (3-4 minutes). Use your spatula to go around the perimeter of the frittata, and lift the set egg, allowing the liquid egg flow to the bottom of the skillet and cook.
- Once the bottom is completely set and top has little liquid, place the skillet in the broiler for 3 minutes.
- Carefully remove and plate. Cut and serve with salsa!

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 1 serving (entire frittata)

172 calories | 14g carbs | 0g fat | 22g protein



If you're a "ketchup and eggs" person, this is a great recipe to add ketchup to as a final topping! Delicious!

Tex-Mex Quinoa

entree



Yields 12 servings

Your slow cooker does all the work to give you loads of flavor in this recipe! Mexican goodness with NO guilt! Quinoa is used instead of rice for added nutrition. As is the case with any slow cooker dish, there aren't really any rules— so get creative!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (180g) uncooked quinoa, rinsed
- 1 lb (450g) extra lean ground turkey breast
- 1 15 oz can (425g) black beans, drained/rinsed
- 1 15 oz can (425g) sweet corn, drained/rinsed
- 1 10 oz can (285g) diced tomatoes and green chiles
- 1 10 oz can (285g) red enchilada sauce (or green if you prefer!)
- 1 ½ cup (350mL) chicken/vegetable broth or water
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- ½ cup (80g) chopped onion
- 2 jalapeños, seeded
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp taco seasoning

PROCEDURE

- Add everything to the slow cooker. Stir well to combine.
- Turn heat to low. Allow to cook for 6-8 hours, slow and low. Stir once or twice throughout the duration of the cooking time. (Cook on high for 4 hours if you're in a time crunch).
- Serve with Greek yogurt as a sour cream substitute, salsa, and avocado or guacamole!
- Enjoy!
- Lasts about a week in the fridge, or 4 months in the freezer.

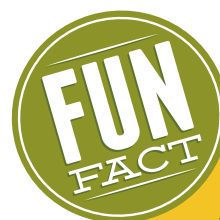
NUTRITION per serving

Yields 12 servings (about 1 cup)

185 calories | 24g carbs | 2g fat | 12g protein



**For vegan and vegetarian, omit meat, and use vegetable broth.*



Slow cookers have two heat settings: low, at 200°F (95°C) and high at 300°F (150°C)!

Easy Meatballs

entrée



Yields about 18 meatballs

These meatballs are so easy—only 3 ingredients are really needed! Start with your turkey, oats, and an egg and then have fun with your seasonings and add-ins to make these your ultimate favorite meatballs! Great warm with a meal, or as an on-the-go snack!



INGREDIENTS

- 20 oz (600g) extra lean ground turkey breast
- ½ cup (40g) oat flour
- 1 egg
- 2 cups (80g) spinach, chopped (optional)
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- ¾ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper



PROCEDURE

- Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
- Mix all ingredients in a bowl.
- Roll meat into golf ball sized meatballs and transfer to a sprayed 9x13" (30x20cm) baking dish.
- Bake for 15 minutes, remove and flip the meatballs, and then bake for another 5 minutes.
- Enjoy!
- Lasts 5 days in the fridge, or 3–4 months in the freezer.

NUTRITION per meatball

Yields 18 meatballs

47 calories | 2g carbs | 1g fat | 8g protein

GF



Meatballs are not attributable to any one country despite the fact that almost all countries claim them as their own!

3-Ingredient Soup

entrée



Yields 8 servings

This soup couldn't be easier and has SO much flavor! It can be more brothy or hearty, depending on how you like it. Make it on meal prep day to last you the week, or whip it up on a week night for a family meal!



INGREDIENTS

- 2 15 oz (425g each) cans of beans (I use one can of black beans and one can of white beans), drained/rinsed
- 1 15 oz (425g) can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup (235mL) chicken/vegetable broth
- salt & pepper to taste



PROCEDURE

- Combine all ingredients in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil.
- Once boiling, cover and turn down to a simmer for 25 minutes.
- Use your immersion blender (or transfer to a normal blender/processor in batches) to puree the soup to your desired consistency (I like it a little chunky!).
- If your soup is too brothy for your taste, allow it to simmer a little longer uncovered, about 15 minutes.
- Serve warm with Greek yogurt as a sour cream substitute, low fat cheddar cheese and green onion!
- Lasts up to 5 days in the fridge.

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 8 servings (about ½ cup)

100 calories | 17g carbs | <0.5g fat | 7g protein



*Vegan if vegetable broth or water is used



Beans are a good source of fiber, protein, iron, folic acid and potassium!

Slow Cooker Salsa Turkey

entrée



Yields 6 servings

Another quick and easy meal where you leave the work to your slow cooker! Let a delicious jar of salsa do all of the flavoring for you! Be sure to taste your salsa, as you may not need to add any salt & pepper at all!



INGREDIENTS

20 oz (600g) extra lean ground turkey breast
1 15.5 oz jar (440g) of salsa
salt & pepper to taste (optional)



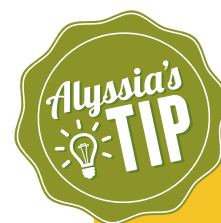
PROCEDURE

- Add your ground turkey and salsa to your slow cooker.
- Turn heat to low. Allow to cook for 6-8 hours, slow and low. Stir once or twice throughout the duration of the cooking time. (Cook on high for 4 hours if you're in a time crunch).
- Serve with additional cold salsa, Greek yogurt as a sour cream substitute, cheese or green onion!
- Lasts 5 days in the fridge, or 3-4 months in the freezer.

NUTRITION per serving

Yields 6 servings (about ½ cup)

122 calories | 4g carbs | 1g fat | 22g protein



"Extra lean ground turkey breast" and "ground turkey" are not the same! Both can be incorporated into a healthy lifestyle, but one has less calories and fat than the other.

Burrito-Bowl-In-A-Jar

entrée



Yields 1 Jar

Meals-in-a-jar are great for storing or as portable meals! Customize this burrito bowl with your favorite Mexican ingredients. Be sure to layer your liquid ingredients on the bottom so they don't get the other ingredients soggy!



INGREDIENTS

- 2 Tbsp salsa
- ¼ cup (40g) beans/bean salsa
- ⅓ cup (60g) cooked rice/quinoa
- 3 oz (85g) cooked extra lean ground turkey, chicken, or protein of choice
- 2 Tbsp low fat cheddar cheese
- 1 ½ cups (60g) lettuce/greens
- 1 Tbsp Greek yogurt ("sour cream")
- ¼ avocado

PROCEDURE

- Layer all of your ingredients into the jar. (I recommend only adding Greek yogurt if consuming day-of or next-day— otherwise I'd wait until eating to keep other ingredients fresh).
- Store for eating at a later time.
- When ready to eat, pour the jar onto a plate or bowl to mix up and devour!
- Lasts 4–5 days in the fridge.

NUTRITION per jar salad

Yields 1 jar salad

394 calories | 33g carbs | 13g fat | 38g protein

GF



With salads-in-a-jar for meal prep, I recommend putting dressings in the bottom, or leaving out until the time of eating so your other ingredients stay fresh and crisp!

No-Bake Cookie Dough Balls

dessert



Yields about 25

This no-bake recipe is super easy and delicious, with wholesome, guilt-free ingredients. Leave them in the freezer throughout the week so you can just pop one on the occasion that a craving hits, and you're good to go!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (140g) cashews
- ½ cup (40g) oats
- 1 ½ Tbsp honey
- 1 Tbsp peanut butter
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 3 Tbsp chocolate chips (I use mini dark)



PROCEDURE

- In a food processor, combine oats and cashews until they reach a flour consistency.
- Add in remaining ingredients except for chips. Process for a few minutes, until a doughy consistency forms. It may still seem a bit crumbly, but will feel like dough when you press it.
- Mix in chocolate chips.
- Form and press into 1"-sized balls and transfer to a plate. The chocolate may melt a bit since the dough will be warm from the processor- this is OK!
- Refrigerate before devouring for best results. Store in the freezer throughout the week. Allow the cookie dough ball to thaw slightly before devouring.
- Lasts about 2 weeks in the freezer.

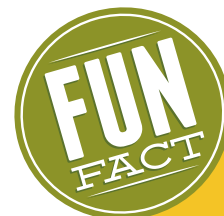
NUTRITION per cookie dough ball

Yields 25 cookie dough balls

50 calories | 4.8g carbs | 3g fat | 2g protein



*For vegan, sub agave for honey



Cashews are in the same family as poison ivy and poison sumac! The shell of the nut contains chemical irritants, so it is removed before the cashews are sold!

Salted “Caramels”

dessert



Yields about 40

These salted “caramels” are gluten free, refined sugar free and dairy free! If I’m going to indulge when a craving hits, I want it to be something made of wholesome ingredients that I can feel good about eating! Healthified salted caramels? Yes please!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup (175g) packed, pitted dates, soaked
- 2 Tbsp (15g) nut butter
- 2 Tbsp (15g) tahini
- 1 Tbsp (13g) coconut oil
- 1 tsp (4g) vanilla
- pinch of salt



PROCEDURE

- Add all ingredients to your food processor.
- Blend until nice and creamy.
- Line a loaf pan with plastic wrap.
- Add your blended “caramel” to the loaf pan and spread out evenly.
- Top with a sprinkle of sea salt.
- Place in freezer for about 3 hours.
- Remove, and cut your block of caramel into squares.
- Store in the freezer and enjoy!
- Lasts about 2 weeks in the freezer.

NUTRITION per caramel

Yields 40 caramels

27 calories | 3g carbs | 2g fat | <0.5g protein



Tahini is certainly an odd ingredient for a dessert... but I promise you don't taste it! It gives the caramels their beautiful creamy texture!

Homemade Seasonings

seasoning



Yields about 3 Tbsp, or about 1 store-bought packet

Taco and ranch seasonings are a great way to get your meals flavorful while keeping them light and healthy, but many store-bought packets contain an excess of sodium. I like to make my own so I can add salt to taste and be in control of exactly what goes into the meal!

Taco Seasoning



INGREDIENTS

2 tsp chili powder
1 tsp paprika
1 tsp onion powder
½ tsp salt
½ tsp garlic powder
½ tsp cumin
¼ tsp oregano
¼ tsp black pepper
pinch of cayenne

Ranch Seasoning



INGREDIENTS

2 tsp parsley
1 ½ tsp dill
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp onion powder
1 tsp onion flakes
1 tsp chives
½ tsp salt
½ tsp black pepper
½ tsp paprika

PROCEDURE

- Mix all seasonings together.
- Use immediately, or store for later use.



Remember, you can adjust any of these seasonings to your preference! If you want to omit or add anything, feel free!

Conversions:

Metric & Imperial

Volume Conversions		Weight Conversions		Temperature Conversions	
<i>Imperial</i>	<i>Metric</i>	<i>Ounces</i>	<i>Grams</i>	<i>Fahrenheit</i>	<i>Celsius</i>
1 tsp	5 mL	½	15	225	120
1 Tbsp	15 mL	1	30	300	150
¼ cup	60 mL	3	90	325	160
⅓ cup	75 mL	4	115	350	180
½ cup	125 mL	8	225	375	190
⅔ cup	150 mL	12	350	400	200
¾ cup	175 mL	1 pound	450	425	220
1 cup	250 mL	2 ¼ pounds	1 Kg	450	230

Baking Pan Conversions	
<i>American</i>	<i>Metric</i>
8 x 1 ½ inch round baking pan	20 x 4 cm cake tin
9 x 1 ½ inch round baking pan	23 x 3.5 cm cake tin
11 x 7 x 1 ½ inch baking pan	28 x 18 x 4 cm baking tin
13 x 9 x 2 inch baking pan	30 x 20 x 5 cm baking tin
2 quart rectangular baking dish	30 x 20 x 3 cm baking tin
15 x 10 x 2 inch baking pan	30 x 25 x 2 cm baking tin (Swiss roll tin)
9 inch pie plate	22 x 4 or 23 x 4 cm pie plate
7 or 8 inch springform pan	18 or 20 cm springform or loose bottom cake tin
9 x 5 x 3 inch loaf pan	23 x 13 x 7 cm or 2 pound narrow loaf tin or pate tin
1 ½ quart casserole	1.5 liter casserole
2 quart casserole	2 liter casserole

Handy Conversions		US–AUS Conversions	
		<i>US</i>	<i>AUS</i>
3 tsp -----	1 Tbsp	1 Tbsp	1 dsp + 1 tsp
4 Tbsp -----	¼ cup	¼ cup	3 Tbsp
5 Tbsp + 1 tsp -----	⅓ cup	⅓ cup	⅓ cup + 1 Tbsp
8 Tbsp -----	½ cup	½ cup	⅓ cup + 2 Tbsp
10 Tbsp + 2 tsp -----	⅔ cup	1 cup	¾ cup + 2 Tbsp + 1 dsp
12 Tbsp -----	¾ cup	3 cups	2 ¾ cup + 1 Tbsp
16 Tbsp -----	1 cup	5 cups	4 ¾ cup
1 dash -----	6 drops		
3 tsp -----	½ oz		
48 tsp -----	1 cup		
1 pint -----	16 oz/2 cups		
1 Quart -----	2 pints/4 cups		
1 Gallon -----	4 qt/16 cups		
1.2 tsp (US) -----	1 tsp (UK)		

***All conversions are approximate and rounded to the nearest value*

YOUR JOURNEY STARTS **NOW!**

AND REMEMBER, IT'S ALL A MATTER OF MIND OVER MUNCH™





Recipes, Design and Photography by Alyssia Sheikh.