

MINIMALIST MEAL PLANNING

W O R K B O O K

Simplify meal planning once & for all!

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Intro

This workbook is designed to help you simplify your entire meal planning process, from meal ideas to grocery shopping, to cooking.

Read through the entire workbook, then follow along the step-by-step process the first time to make sure you fully understand the concepts and behind the scenes info.

Expect to spend about 30 minutes going through the process the first time, then each week after that should take you only 5-10 minutes!

There are a lot of pages with background info but the process itself is very simple!

Without reading and starting to implement the background knowledge, the process won't work as well so I highly recommend you read through all the info and choose a couple tips to take action on in addition to your new meal planning.

If you're committed to learning to meal plan once and for all, going through this workbook and taking action will get you over your meal planning stumbling blocks!

It will walk you through what minimalist meal planning is and how to do it, including a list of meal planning tips.

You'll find a list of meal ideas with space to fill in your family's favorite meals. You'll do it once then have it to refer back to each week. This step alone will save you TONS of time meal planning!

There's also a bunch of tips on how to simplify cooking and grocery shopping. If you're over complicating either of these parts of meal planning, that could be a huge reason why your best laid plans have always seemed to fall apart!

The minimalist grocery list is bound to save you time and mental energy by avoiding the effort of making a list from scratch each week or running back to the store because you forgot something!

You'll also find the meal planning templates to help you keep it all organized.

Print the workbook to make notes and customize any part of this to suit your own needs.

Once you're confident in your skills and have mastered the process, use the Minimalist Meal Planning Cheat Sheet as a quick reference to save time.

Let's get started!

Minimalist Meal Planning

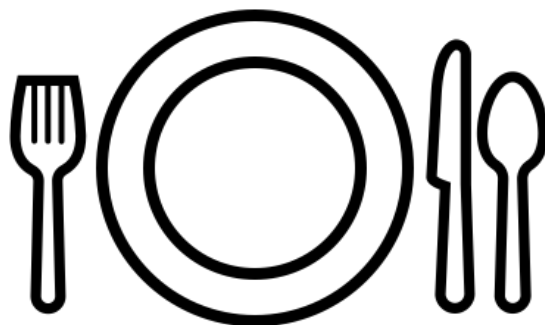
Traditional meal planning has you planning every meal, day-by-day, for weeks in advance.

Minimalist meal planning is the simplest, bare minimum plan to ensure you have the ingredients to make the meals you want to eat.

It's perfect for anyone who struggles with traditional meal planning, or anyone who is just looking for a simpler, less rigid way to choose what to eat.

So now that you're ready to get started, we'll go over what minimalist meal planning looks like. Then we'll go through each step in more detail.

Each step builds on the next, so don't skip ahead or else you'll miss out on important parts of the process!



Here's how to meal plan like a minimalist:

Start by brainstorming a master list of all the meals your family likes to eat (use the list of [minimalist meal ideas](#) for inspiration).



You only need to do this once but can edit it over time if you find new family favorites.

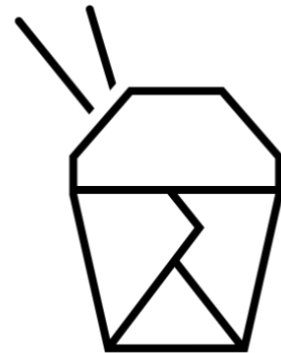
When you sit down to plan your meals, follow these steps each time:

1. Create a master list of meal ideas
2. Choose some meals from the list to make each week
3. Write down your meal ideas
4. Create your grocery list
5. Buy your groceries
6. Prepare your meals based on what you feel like eating, what needs to get used first, or what your plans are for the evening. Only pre-plan every day if it feels good for you.

Now that you see how easy it really can be, give it a go! Use this as a guideline and adapt it to your unique circumstances.

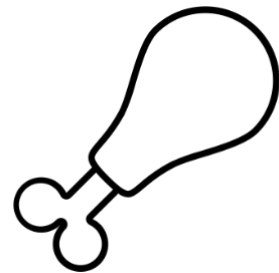
Meal Planning Tips:

- Don't worry about assigning specific meals to specific days of the week (unless you want to!)
- Be aware of what activities you have planned throughout the week. If you have soccer practice on Thursdays and need a quick meal, make sure there is something quick or premade on your list for the week. If it feels like you need a quick meal most days of the week, it's a sign you need to cut or streamline your activities to be less busy.
- Make a variety of freezer meals, you can choose which one to reheat the night of.
- Don't be afraid to include undefined variables like "takeout night" or "freezer meal night".
- Plan for leftovers to reduce the number of times you need to cook and clean each week. Make a double or triple batch to have enough for a few meals or freeze leftovers for future meals.
- Keep your pantry and freezer stocked with staples so you can easily throw together a decent meal if your plan goes out the window.
- Incorporate new recipes you want to try by simply adding the recipe to your list for the week. Keep it simple and include no more than one new recipe a week to avoid overwhelming yourself. If it's a hit, add it to your list of meal ideas.
- Incorporate a few new meals to keep from getting bored.



- Don't bother planning breakfasts, snacks, or lunches. Just make sure to have a few options on hand and choose what you feel like eating in the moment. For lunch, just eat leftovers, or one of a few different lunch options that are always on hand.
- Make at least one big batch meal each week. Eat some the day it's made, then freeze enough for at least one other meal. Soups, stews, chili and curry are perfect options. Reheat for a super quick meal on a busy night.
- Prep some foods when you get home from the grocery store. Chop some vegetables and marinate some meat before you even put it away.

I like to take a package of chicken pieces and divide it into bags. Each one gets a different marinade, then is frozen. Take it out of the freezer and leave in the fridge overnight and it should be thawed by the time supper is ready to be cooked the next day.



- Include recipes with similar ingredients within the same week so special ingredients like fresh herbs don't go to waste after being used in only one meal.
- Refer to the list of minimalist meal ideas for inspiration.
- Don't beat yourself up if something doesn't go as planned. Nothing good comes of rigid planning and super high expectations.

Step 1:

Brainstorm a List of Meal Ideas

Tools Required:

- Minimalist Meal Ideas List Printable
(Included below)
- Timer
- Pen

Minimalist Meals

Step one of minimalist meal planning is to start by creating a list of meal ideas to inspire your meal plan.

This saves so much time and mental energy compared to trying to think of meal ideas from scratch each week!

When you're trying to simplify your eating, choose foods and recipes with fewer ingredients.

Better yet if the meal is so simple you don't even actually need a recipe for it! While there is definitely a time and place for more complex dishes, keep your everyday meals simple to avoid overwhelm and burnout.

If you do choose to use a recipe, use ones you already know well, or that are simple.

Think: 10 ingredients or less, and no more than about 5 steps.

When searching for recipes online, use keywords like "simple", "1-pot", "easy", "10 ingredients or less", "sheet pan", "30 minute" in your search to find recipes that won't be complicated.

Look at the ingredients and make sure the recipe isn't calling for something that is already cooked, unless you have it on hand.

For example, if you don't have cooked chicken on hand, a recipe that calls for cooked chicken will take you longer to make than it states because you'll have to cook the chicken before starting.

It's one thing I find super misleading when you're looking for quick and easy recipes!

Start with the list of meal ideas on the next few pages for inspiration then add your own family favorites!

Creating Your Meal Ideas List

Set a timer for 10 minutes to read through the list of meal ideas.

Add your own dinner ideas to the blank spaces under each meal type. Focus just on dinner meals for this step.

Tips:

If you're not used to cooking much, you can fill it in with ready made foods. For example, under the pizza section, you can write your favorite brand of frozen pizza.

There is also an unfilled section at the end where you can add more ideas or start your own list from scratch.

I recommend starting with the included list of meal ideas that's for the first time. If there's a meal on there you know you'll never make, just cross it off for now.

Over time you can add to the list or write your own on the blank Meal Ideas List once you have it mastered, but keep it simple for now rather than trying to get it perfect the first time.

You don't need to have a lot of ideas to start with, but make sure there are at least 10 meal ideas you know your family likes before moving on to the next step.

Minimalist Meal Ideas List

Stir-fry

- Pad Thai
- Singapore noodles
- Teriyaki
- Sesame orange ginger
- Mix and match any protein, sauce, combo of veg, and rice or noodle
-
-



Pot roast/slow cooker/Instant Pot

- Mix and match any poultry/beef/lamb/pork roast with root veggies like potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, herbs & spices
-
-
-

Sheet pan dinner

- Italian roasted chicken legs, potatoes, and brussels sprouts
- Curry roasted chickpeas, potatoes, carrots
- Mix and match any protein, starchy vegetable, and non-starchy vegetable for a complete meal
-
-

Breakfast for dinner

- Eggs, toast, sliced tomatoes or sauteed greens
- French toast, waffles, or pancakes with Greek yogurt and fruit
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Protein, starch, & veggies

- Chicken, rice, carrots
- Ham, scalloped potatoes, peas
- Fish, fries, salad
- Mix and match any protein, starch and vegetable you like with any seasoning for unlimited combinations
-
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Main salad

- Chicken Caesar salad with garlic bread
- Mix and match any protein, starch, greens, dressing, and toppings you like for unlimited combinations
-
-
-

Sandwich

- Tuna/salmon/chicken/ham/chickpea/egg salad sandwich
- Grilled cheese
- BLT
- Burgers
- Mix and match any protein, greens, bread or wrap, and sauce for unlimited combinations
-
-

Leftovers

- Eat leftovers as they are, or put any of the above leftovers into a wrap like a tortilla or pita for a totally different meal

Tacos

- Taco
- Burrito
- Quesadilla
-



Freezer Meals

- Chili
- Curry
- Soup
- Casserole
- Crock pot dump meal
-
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Stew

- Chicken stew
- Beef stew
- Chickpea stew
- Any of the above in a pie crust for pot pies
- Chili
-

Soup

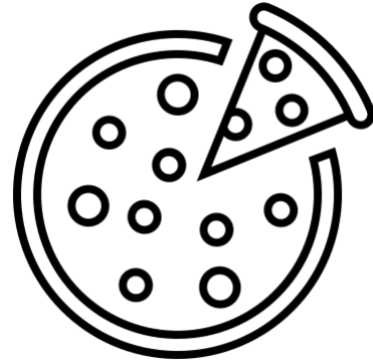
- Split pea and ham
- Curried butternut squash
- Vegetable
- Beef barley
- Chicken noodle
- Cream of (any) vegetable
- Tuscan white bean and kale
-
-

Curry

- Red curry
- Yellow curry
- Green curry
- Mix and match any curry sauce with protein like chicken, chickpeas, lentils, tofu, and any vegetables. Serve with rice or naan
-
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Pizza

- BBQ chicken pizza
- Margherita pizza
- Mix and match any toppings you like with crust, sauce and cheese
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Pasta

- Chicken alfredo
- Lasagna
- Pesto and penne
- Mix and match different kinds of pastas with different sauces and toppings for nearly unlimited combinations
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Other Ideas

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Step 2:

Choose Your Meals

Tools Required:

- Minimalist Meal Planning Template
Printable (Included below)
- Your day planner or calendar
- Pen

Notes:

Do not start step 2 until you've brainstormed a list of meal ideas (step 1)

Choosing Your Meals

Now that you have a solid list of meal ideas you know your family already likes, it's easy to refer to in order to choose your meals for the week without staring at a blank page wondering what to cook!

1. Choose 5-7 dinner meals you want to have for dinner for the week ahead and write them in the Minimalist Meal Plan Template on the next page.
 - You are only planning dinners for this step.
 - You might plan a meal for every day, plan for leftovers for several nights or just plan weeknights. Do what you think you'd like best.
 - Check the food you already have for what needs to be used up first and plan a meal around those foods.
 - Use the list of meal planning tips if you're stuck on what meals to choose!
2. Add notes about your schedule that might affect your meals.
Examples: use ground beef asap, note which evenings are busier than average, dinner party invite, company coming
3. **Optional:** Add anything to the grocery list section you know you need to get on your next grocery trip, but don't worry about filling it all in. This is meant to be used as a running list to quickly add something as you think of it, not the main list. We're doing the full grocery list in the next step!

Notes About Breakfast, Lunch, & Snacks:

- Keep the other meals of the day SIMPLE! No recipes required because you'll be eating leftovers or foods you always have on hand.
- Lunch will be leftovers or one of a few different lunch options made from food that you always have on hand.

Examples:

- Leftovers
 - Sandwiches
 - Soup
 - Salad
 - Freezer meals
- Have a few options on hand for snacks and breakfasts and choose what you feel like eating in the moment.

Examples:

- Fruit and cheese
- Veggies and dip
- Muffins
- Granola bars
- Oatmeal
- Breakfast cereal
- Eggs
- Toast

minimalist meal plan

MEALS FOR THE WEEK OF:

Curry chicken sheet pan meal
with broccoli + potato

Veggie pizza

Sesame orange chicken stir
fry

Freezer meal

Slow cooker chili + cornbread

GROCERY LIST

SAMPLE

Basmati rice

Soy sauce

Curry powder

NOTES

- Use broccoli asap!
- Use freezer meal for busy Thursday

minimalist meal plan

MEALS FOR THE WEEK OF:

GROCERY LIST

NOTES

Step 3:

Create your Grocery List

Tools Required:

- Minimalist Grocery List Template
(Included below)
- Completed Minimalist Meal Plan
Template from Step 2
- Pen

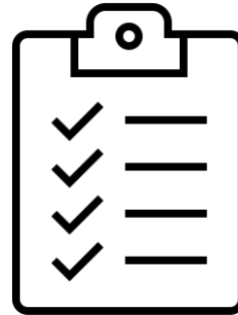
Notes:

Do not start step 3 until you've brainstormed a list of meal ideas and chosen your meals for the week (step 1 & 2)

Make a Minimalist Grocery List

The Minimalist Grocery List Template contains the staple ingredients you buy almost every shopping trip. Think:

- milk
- eggs
- bread
- fruit & veggies
- cheese
- meat



It doesn't list stock up items that you would typically buy less frequently than every couple of weeks. Things like:

- big bags of rice
- herbs & spices
- oil & vinegar
- baking supplies
- condiments
- household & personal care items

Obviously, you would still need to buy those things, but since you only get them occasionally, you don't need them to be on the list every week. You will add those items to the grocery list as they run out or before you do the weekly shop.

Using the minimalist grocery list in this way saves you a lot of time and mental energy because you're not starting a list from scratch each week! You'll also be much less likely to over buy, because you're intentionally building the list for what you need right now.

Filling Out Your Grocery List

1. Scan through the Minimalist Grocery List and cross off anything you know you don't need at a glance.
2. Look at the Minimalist Meal Plan Template you filled out in step 2. Add any ingredients you need for the meals you chose that aren't already on the grocery list.
3. Add any bulk or occasional foods you need to restock. This also includes sale items you'd like to stock up on.
Example: cake mix for upcoming birthday, big bag of rice, 2-for-1 sale on canned tomatoes
4. Buy your groceries!

Tips:

- I recommend starting with the pre filled list to make it easier for yourself.
 - If the pre filled list is quite different from what you normally eat, you can create your own version using the blank Minimalist Grocery List but note it is likely more work than starting from the template
- The Minimalist Grocery List is meant to be used as a template that is already partly done, saving you time and mental energy on your weekly grocery shop

- Don't worry about writing down the amounts of each food.
 - For perishable foods, just buy the amount your family would cook at one time or use up before your next shopping trip
 - For non-perishables, get the amount you like to have on hand of each item that you'll be able to use up before the next sale or best before date
- Print a new list each week
- Feel free to mark it up as you need to

Examples:

- Write the specific food item behind the generic one in the Minimalist Grocery List. Example: the list says frozen veggies but you specifically want frozen peas, just write peas
- Check out the Minimalist Grocery Shopping Tips for more ideas on how to simplify your grocery shopping experience!

Minimalist Grocery List

Vegetables

- potatoes
- sweet potatoes
- carrots
- onions
- green onions
- garlic
- cabbage
- squash
- cauliflower
- broccoli
- kale
- lettuce
- spinach
- celery
- cucumber
- bell peppers
- jalapeños/hot peppers
- beans
- tomatoes
- mushrooms
- frozen veggies
-
-

Fruits

- apples
- oranges
- bananas
- lemons
- limes
- grapefruit
- grapes
- kiwis
- pineapple
- berries
- mango
- pears
-
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Dry Goods

- nuts & seeds
- dried legumes
- dried fruit
- breakfast cereal
-
-
-
-

Grains

- oats
- pasta
- crackers
-
-
-

Bread & Baked Goods

- bread
- buns
- wraps
-
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Canned Foods

- Tomato sauce
- canned veggies
- canned fruit
- pickles
- pesto
- coconut milk
- canned fish
- canned beans/lentils
-
-
-

Prepackaged Snacks

- granola bars
- dark chocolate
- rice cakes
-
-
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-
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Dairy/Dairy Alternatives

- milk/plant-based milk
- yogurt/plant-based yogurt
- cheese
- butter
- eggs
-
-
-
-

Beverages

- coffee
- tea
- sparkling water
- wine
- beer
-
-
-

Meat/Plant Protein

- ground beef
- beef roast
- whole chicken
- chicken drums/thighs
- chicken breasts
- ground chicken/turkey
- tofu/tempeh
- salmon/trout
- white fish
- seafood
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Minimalist Grocery List

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Step 4:

Get Your Groceries

Tools Required:

- Completed Minimalist Meal Plan Template from step 2
- Completed Minimalist Grocery List Template from step 3
- Pen

Notes:

Do not start step 4 until you've chosen your meals for the week (step 2) and written out your grocery list (step 3)

Minimalist Grocery Shopping Tips

When you're trying to simplify your life, you really don't have time to be chasing pennies by clipping coupons and making trips to multiple stores just to save a few dollars.

You also don't want to be going back to the store to pick up something you forgot!

Aim to buy your groceries in one trip to last the week if possible.

Choose whichever day works best for you.

Check out the next few pages for tips to simplify your grocery shopping. These tips are the easiest ways to simplify grocery shopping experience and save you time!



Circle the tips you want to prioritize:

1. Compare prices at different stores and shop at the store with the best prices overall.
2. Try grocery pickup. Many places offer grocery pickup for free or for a very low fee.
3. Try grocery delivery. Most major grocery chains offer grocery delivery now. The delivery fee might be worth the major time savings!

Ordering groceries for pickup or delivery will prevent you from impulse purchases and makes the whole process super simple for busy parents (no more grocery store meltdowns!)

4. Plan your meals around what you have versus buying all new ingredients every time you shop.
5. Learn recipe substitution so you can adapt recipes to what you have instead of running to the store for that one ingredient you need.
6. Shop less often. Even if the store is only 5 minutes away, it will likely take at least 30 minutes round trip! Try to go no more than once a week.
7. Buy produce in season. It's usually fresher, tastier, and less expensive. Win-win-win!

8. Consider frozen versus fresh fruit and veggies. They're often less expensive and are already prewashed and chopped.
9. Don't be brand loyal. That way you can get whichever brand is available instead of having to go to another store if your favorite is out of stock.
10. Avoid shopping on an empty stomach. You'll be more likely to overbuy things you don't really need.
11. Keep a well-stocked pantry. This allows you to cook a variety of meals at home. It will also limit unnecessary grocery store runs because you'll always have something to eat.

Step 5:

Prepare Your Meals

Tools Required:

- Completed Minimalist Meal Plan Template from Step 2
- Groceries you bought for the week

Notes:

Read through the minimalist cooking tips and choose one or two to try.

Do not start preparing your meals, step 5, until you've chosen your meals for the week and gotten the groceries!

Minimalist Cooking Tips

Read through the minimalist cooking tips on the next few pages for tips to simplify, streamline, and save time on cooking.

Implement one new tip at a time and practice it until it becomes a habit. Then add another tip to continue to build on your good habits.

You'll have more success doing small changes rather than trying to change everything at once!

These cooking tips are sure to save you time and effort in the kitchen!



Cook double or triple batches

Eat that meal for a few days or eat once and freeze leftovers for a quick meal a different day.

This allows you to cook and clean much less! Now you're only cooking a few times per week instead of cooking something new each meal. You will only have to clean up the pots, pans, cutting board, etc. when you cook every few days instead of every day.

Change up leftovers

In addition to eating leftovers as the same meal you originally cooked, try serving leftovers in different ways. This way you don't have to eat the exact same meal multiple times if you don't want to.

For example, cook roasted chicken and vegetables the first night. Eat chicken sandwiches for lunch the next day, then chicken and roasted veggies on pizza for supper. Use the chicken bones to make chicken stock to use in another meal.

Choose simple recipes

Recipes with 10 or fewer ingredients and 5 or fewer steps are ideal. Even the best chefs know that simple is often just as good (or better) than complicated dishes.

Especially when we're cooking everyday meals, we don't need intricate steps with a lot of ingredients. Try looking for recipes with "simple" or "easy" in the description.

I also recommend looking for recipes that are 30 minutes or less or use hands-off cooking methods.

Make meals without recipes

Even better than simple recipes are meals that don't require you to follow a recipe at all!

As you become more experienced in the kitchen, you'll need to rely on recipes less and less.

Once you know how to cook a roast or a stir-fry, you really don't need recipes for them anymore.

Sure, you CAN look at a recipe for inspiration or to try something new, but it makes it so much simpler if you have a variety of core meals you can make without having to follow a recipe every time.

Use “hands off” cooking methods more often

These methods of cooking just require prep time, then you are free to do other things while the food is cooking.

Roasting, baking, and boiling, or cooking in the slow cooker/Instant Pot are pretty hands-off because you just put the food in, set the timer and wait.

More hands-on cooking methods would be dishes like frying, stir frying, or recipes like risotto where you have to be constantly stirring the dish.

There’s nothing wrong with these types of meals, but there is no doubt that they do tend to take more hands-on time which can feel like more work than other cooking methods.

Choose one pot/pan recipes

This is my favorite way to cook because I get to enjoy good food without as much effort! These types of recipes make fewer dirty dishes, so reduce clean up time.

They are also generally pretty hands-off and include sheet pan meals, stir-frys, slow cooker/Instant Pot meals, skillet meals, or any recipe that has “one pot” in the title.

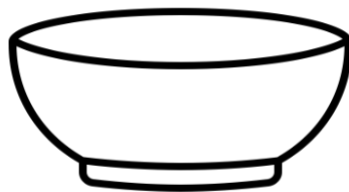
Keep your kitchen minimal

Maintaining a minimalist kitchen includes only having the utensils and cooking appliances you use regularly. It also includes keeping the kitchen organized and tidy as much as possible as well!

This helps simplify cooking because you won't need to clean up the kitchen before you start cooking supper (because it's already clean!).

It will also save you time because you won't have to search for the thing you want to use (you'll know exactly where it is, and it isn't shoved in behind other things).

Plus, with fewer things in your kitchen, you'll have fewer things to clean! Guaranteed if you have 4 spatulas, you'll just take a clean one out of the drawer and create an even bigger mess to clean up at the end of your cooking session.



Use prepared foods

Prepared foods are foods that are basically ready to eat or just need to be heated. There is no additional steps required.

Generally if you're eating like a minimalist you tend not to eat many packaged or prepared foods because you like to stick to foods with simple ingredient list and minimal processing.

BUT there are actually a lot of minimally processed foods that are simple, healthy, and will help you save time!

Use healthy prepared foods like:

- frozen veggies
- frozen fruit
- pre-chopped & washed fresh produce
- bagged salad mix
- canned beans & lentils
- canned fish
- dried pasta
- jarred pasta sauce
- grated cheese
- rotisserie chicken
- minced garlic

Learn to use core ingredients in multiple ways

You can easily make multiple meals with just a minimalist grocery list of core ingredients like meat, veggies, fruit, dairy, and grains.

Prepare the foods in different ways by seasoning or presenting it differently. Think how versatile chicken is. You could use it in recipes from almost every culture and prepare it in almost any way imaginable.

Most vegetables are even more versatile! Change the way you cut them, cook them, and season them and you have a completely different experience with the same core food.

Food prep

Doing some simple food prepping can really help you simplify the time you actually spend cooking.

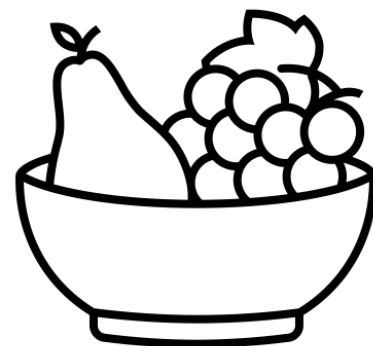
When you have some parts of meals and snacks already prepared, it greatly reduces the amount of time you need to prep right before each meal you cook.

It also reduces the amount of cleaning you need to do. For instance, if you prepped all the veggies you're going to eat in the next few days, you only have to wash the knife and cutting board once, versus having to clean it after every time you use it to cut a couple things each time.

If you wash all your fruit and veggies for the week you will save time in not having to do it before each time you eat.

Some ways I like to food prep are:

- boil eggs
- roast chicken
- wash veggies and fruit
- chop some veggies and fruit (don't chop it all at once because it will go bad faster)
- marinate meat
- batch cook some grains like rice or quinoa
- make a batch of muffins, energy bites, or granola bars for easy snacks



Meal prep

It's common to think of meal prep and food prep as the same, but I think they are different enough to be mentioned separately.

Food prep focuses only on preparing individual foods, whereas meal prep focuses on preparing the entire meal in advance.

I can see how meal prep can be really handy especially for packed lunches. But I personally don't love it as it encourages eating the exact same thing every day of the week. That seems super uninspiring.

Not to mention cooking for a whole week in advance is more likely to cause food waste, or in the worst case scenario, give yourself food-borne illness.

Most leftovers are only good 3-4 days in the fridge, and some foods should be tossed even before then.

If you are going to meal prep like this, only do a few days at a time.

Freezer Meals

Another way to meal prep but avoid this problem is to create freezer meals that are easy to simply thaw and cook, without having to prep anything.

If you have enough freezer space, you could prepare a batch of a single recipe, freeze them, then cook once every few weeks.

If you have a few recipes like this stored in the freezer it could definitely help come mealtime.

This method saves a lot of time because all the prep is done at once, but personally I prefer to just cook a large batch of meals at once then freeze leftovers.

Then you have ready-made meals for the days when you don't have time to cook!

Notes:

Minimalist Meal Planning Cheatsheet

Follow these steps, in order, each time you sit down to plan your meals for the week:

1. **Choose 5-7 meals** from your filled out Minimalist Meals Ideas List to make this upcoming week
2. **Write down your meals** on the Minimalist Meal Plan template.
3. **Create your grocery list** using the Minimalist Grocery List
4. **Buy your groceries.** Refer to the Minimalist Grocery Shopping Tips
5. **Prepare your meals** using the Minimalist Cooking Tips

Repeat the process each week.

Make this a habit by doing it repeatedly and personalizing it as you go along. If something works, do it again!

If something doesn't work, don't give up! Simply try a different way next time.

Meal Planning Troubleshooting

Now that you have your meals planned and groceries bought for the week, the last step in successful meal planning is following through with your plan!

If you find yourself still struggling or resorting to takeout, check in with yourself on these common hang ups to see how you can get passed this issue.

Also be gentle with yourself. Remember that you're learning a new skill! You're not going to get it perfect the first time or even ever!

Life is so complex and there are always things that come up that we could never have planned for, so don't beat yourself up about it.

Even if you slipped up, you're still moving in the right direction by continuing to try and make small, incremental improvements over time!

Family didn't want to eat what I planned

- Best practice in feeding kids is that the parents choose what to eat, the kids choose whether to eat and how much. Try including at least one food into each meal you know they'll like
- Try including the family in the meal planning, grocery shopping and cooking process. They're more likely to eat it if they chose it or cooked it themselves

Meals take too much time to make

- Choose simpler recipes next time. Think: “5 ingredient”, “15 minute meals”
- Incorporate more ready made food

Forgot something I needed and had to go back to the store

- No worries, it happens to the best of us! Be adaptable
- substitute another ingredient if possible
- or do without. It’s only a few days until your next grocery trip.
- If it’s something really essential, make another trip to the store this time
- Take note and be sure to include it in your master copy of the minimalist grocery list so you don’t forget it next time!

Bought way too much food

- No worries! Simply incorporate those foods into the next weeks meals
- Try to eat up anything perishable first, then save the heartier foods for next week. Freeze what you can’t eat in time
- If some of the food went to waste, now you know how much you’ll need next time and can buy less

I want to shop for groceries less often than every week

- You can easily adapt this system to work for more than one week at a time by just adding more meals to your meal plan
- Note that there is less room for error if you miss an ingredient because you're shopping less often

Frozen meat wasn't thawed in time

- Try a quick thawing method that is food safe:
 - the defrost setting on the microwave
 - thawing in the sink with cold running water
- Try cooking it from frozen. Baking fish or frying ground meat work well for cooking from frozen

Something unexpected prevented me from cooking what I had planned

- Make sure to have some freezer meals on hand for next time. This can be store bought ready-made foods (ex: frozen pizza) or homemade frozen meals (meal prep)
- If you find yourself only able to use premade foods, check in with your schedule and see if you can cut unimportant things that are taking up your time. Also this might be the only way to get food on the table for many people and that's ok if that's your situation
- Try to use the groceries you bought before they go bad

About Frugal Minimalist Kitchen

Hey, I'm Bri!

On my blog, [Frugal Minimalist Kitchen](#) I help you simplify and save money in the kitchen.

I'm a Registered Dietitian with a love of cooking and experimenting in the kitchen!



I've studied food and nutrition for over 12 years so you can be confident you're getting quality advice that fits into real life.

FOOD & WINE

chime

EVERYDAY HEALTH

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In

Taste of Home

Reader's
Digest

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REAL SIMPLE

Use any or all of these easy, foolproof tips and you'll be well on your way to simplifying your cooking, grocery shopping and eating routine in no time!

If you would like more tips and resources, make sure you're on my email list!

Sign up at frugalminimalistkitchen.com/join-email-list

For even more resources like this, check out my store: payhip.com/FrugalMinimalistKitchen