



Shaping Up America's Kitchens!

Your Mealtime Planner

Preparing meals at home offers many benefits!

It lets you control food quality and portion sizes—plus, it gives you control over your health and your future! Remember, healthy meals build healthier families!

Planning menus and making a shopping list sounds pretty old-fashioned to some and time-consuming to others—but it is essential to success. According to Ben Franklin, ***failing to prepare, is preparing to fail.***

Using the Menu Planner

1. Visualize your meals—what will they look like? What do you need?

- ✓ The healthiest meals emphasize grains, vegetables, and fruits--- serve them in the greatest amounts.
- ✓ Meat portions should be smaller---this will save \$\$ and help keep saturated fat and cholesterol in check. Try a meatless meal, like chili with beans.

2. What resources (time, \$\$, cooking skill, help from your family) do you have for each meal?

- ✓ **Plan simple meals for busy nights.** On days with more time, preparations can be more elaborate. Or, use the extra time (10 minutes may be enough) to double a recipe and freeze it. On super busy nights, pop it in the microwave oven and serve!
- ✓ **Use shortcuts.**
 - Washed and precut salad greens and salad bar ingredients speed up preparation.
 - Canned and frozen vegetables save washing and chopping time for stir-frys, fancy omelets, and pizza toppings.
 - Pureed canned beans make broths thick and creamy (lots of fiber and almost fat free!).
 - Supermarket roasted chicken shaves an hour off cooking time.
- ✓ **Multi-task to get in and out of the kitchen fast.** While the lasagna bakes, make the salad and set the table. When you have a break, put away ingredients and wash dirty equipment or put it in the dishwasher.

3. What do you need to make each meal?

- A. List the menus in the first column.
 - B. List all food items needed to make each meal in the remaining columns. These columns are organized by section of the supermarket to help speed up grocery shopping.
 - C. Place an "X" beside any ingredient already in stock
 - D. Take the meal planner to the food store and put it to use!
 - E. When you get home, use the meal planner to organize food storage. Group non-perishable ingredients for each dinner meal together in a separate box or basket labeled with the day of the week it is to be served. For example, if you are having a pasta night, put a box of spaghetti, can of crushed tomatoes, can or pouch of clams, jar of dried oregano, and loaf of Italian bread in a basket. When it is time to make the meal, just grab the basket and retrieve fresh ingredients, such as parmesan cheese, low-fat salad dressing, and prewashed salad mix, from the refrigerator.
- ✓ Customize the meal planner by
 - Adding or removing sections in the grid to make it fit your household and the layout of your favorite supermarket.
 - For items you buy each time you shop, keep a master shopping list and photocopy it weekly.

When you're Ready and Set...It's easy to get Cooking!

RUTGERS

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Example

Day	Menu	Produce	Dairy/Eggs/ Refrigerated Food	Meat-Seafood	Canned/Bottled & Boxed	Frozen	Baked Goods	Other
Monday Dinner	Spaghetti & Meat sauce (double the sauce!) Salad	1 bag Romaine 1 bag Carrots 1 box Grape Tomatoes	2 oz. Parmesan Cheese	8 oz. Lean Ground Beef	2 large cans Crushed Tomatoes 1 box spaghetti		1 loaf French Bread	Oregano Salad Dressing
Tuesday Dinner	Chicken Quesadillas Frozen juice pops	2 Tomatoes 1 head Lettuce ½ pound Broccoli	4 oz. Cheddar Cheese	2 Chicken Breasts	1 can Black beans 1 jar Salsa	100% Juice Pops	12 Flour Tortillas	
Wednesday Dinner	Frittata Rice Ice Cream & Berries	1 Onion	8 Eggs		1 box Instant Brown Rice	Light Ice Cream 1 bag Mixed vegetables 1 bag strawberries		
Thursday Dinner	Lasagna (using frozen Meat sauce leftovers) Salad Peaches & 'Cream'	1 bag salad greens Carrots (leftover from Monday)	4 oz. Lowfat cottage cheese 4 oz. Parmesan cheese		1 can Peaches 1 can Evaporated Skim Milk 1 box Lasagna noodles		4 Garlic rolls	Lowfat salad dressing
Friday Dinner	Tuna Salad Sandwiches Slaw Watermelon	1 bag Celery ½ Watermelon 1 head Cabbage			2 cans Tuna Sweet Pickle Relish Nonfat Mayonnaise		Whole Wheat Bread	
Saturday Dinner	Dinner at Grandma's! Take Dessert		Butter		Brown Sugar 1 can Mandarin Oranges		Angelfood Cake	
Sunday Dinner	Pizza Pear Salad	Mushrooms Green pepper Garlic	Lowfat Mozzarella cheese		1 can Tomato paste 1 can Roasted red peppers 1 can Pear Halves		Pizza crust	
Weekday Breakfasts	Cereal	Bananas	2 gallons Lowfat Milk		2 cans Apple Juice Cheerios Raisin Bran Granola	1 bag Blueberries		
Weekend Breakfasts	Waffles	Orange Juice			Blueberries	Whole wheat waffles		Maple Syrup
Weekday Lunches	Kids: eat at school Parents: eat at work							
Weekend Lunches	Bagel-wiches and Soup	1 bag Grapes		Peanut Butter	2 large cans Bean Soup	8 Whole Wheat Bagels		
Snacks		Raisins Tangerines Carrot sticks Celery sticks	Milk		Whole wheat crackers Tomato Juice Applesauce			
Other Food Items			Butter		Sparkling Water Lemonade Mix Olive oil			Dog food
Household supplies	Paper towels Plastic wrap Window cleaner							

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