

UW CODE LAVENDER

MEAL PLANNING GUIDE 



Simplify and take the stress out of meal planning and preparation, one step at a time.

This guide is for you if:

- You're overworked, overwhelmed, and are only able to grocery shop every few weeks
- Need some ideas on how to simplify and de-stress meal planning and preparation
- Not facing food insecurity right now

Why should I meal plan?



Save Time



Save Money



Stress Less

MEAL PLANNING 101

STEP 1: Take stock of what you have

Goals:

Stock your pantry and freezer with items from each of the main food groups.



Have seasonings and healthy fats on-hand to enhance flavor at the ready.



Include foods that you and your family enjoy eating!

Well-Stocked Pantry

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Proteins	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canned fruit (packed in water or 100% juice) - Dried fruit (no added sugar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canned or jarred vegetables (low/no sodium) - Canned or jarred tomato products (low/no sodium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whole grain cereals (oatmeal, shredded wheat) - Whole grains (brown rice, farro, bulgar, quinoa) - Whole-grain or chickpea pasta - Whole-grain crackers, popcorn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legumes (dried, or low/no sodium canned will save time) - Nut or seed butters - Pouches or cans of tuna, chicken, etc. - Nuts (dry roasted, low sodium) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canned/boxed soup (low/no sodium) - Milk (boxed, dried or evaporated) - Condiments, herbs, spices - Oil, vinegar

Well-Stocked Freezer

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Proteins	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frozen fruit (unsweetened) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frozen vegetables (plain) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frozen bread dough (whole grain) - Frozen waffles (whole grain) - Frozen rice (brown) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frozen chicken, seafood, beef, etc. (lean cuts, boneless/ skinless) - Frozen meat alternatives (keep an eye on the sodium content) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your family's favorite frozen treats!

If you're missing any of these items (and don't have any pertinent allergies), add them to your shopping list. In a pinch, you can mix & match these items to build a quick, balanced meal with all of the main food groups.

STEP 2: Come up with 1-2 weeks-worth of meals

Goal: Find meal inspiration (breakfast, lunch and dinner) based on how you plan & prepare.

Approach 1: Plan once, prepare as few times as possible		Approach 2: Plan once, prepare daily/semi-daily	
Strategy 1: Prepare large batch recipes, so you have leftovers for lunch and dinner	Strategy 2: Prepare large batch recipes that you can prepare now and freeze for later	Strategy 1: Make meals comprised of 5 ingredients or less	Strategy 2: Make meals using readily available pantry staples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big-batch inspiration from Bon Appetit and Food & Wine: here and here - Wintry big-batch recipes from Kitchn that bring comfort to the spring & beyond: here - Big-batch roundup from BuzzFeed: here - Healthy meal prep recipes from Bon Appetit: here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recipe inspiration from the Thirty Handmade Days blog: here - Tips, tricks and recipes from the Fed + Fit blog: here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 100s of 5-ingredient recipes from The Spruce Eats: here - 5-ingredient recipes from The Everygirl blog: here - 7-ingredient recipes from Minimalist Baker: here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pantry-friendly recipes from Cookie + Kate: here - Pantry+ recipes from Bon Appetit: here - NY Times Cooking pantry recipes, chickpea recipes, tuna recipes and bean/lentil recipes: here, here, here and here

Other Tricks of The Trade:

- When planning and preparing meals, try to use the foods that will perish soonest, first, and hold onto longer lasting foods until you've depleted your fresh and frozen foods
- Use time-saving cooking methods, such as slow cookers and InstaPots (recipe inspiration [here](#) and [here](#))
- Be open to fresh, frozen, canned and dried food options
- Have hardier fresh fruits and vegetables (e.g. apples, oranges, broccoli, potatoes), eggs, and cheese on hand
- Think creatively about ingredient substitutions ([here](#) and [here](#))
- Enlist your family to help, especially kids! ([here](#))
- Have your favorite snacks & foods that bring you pleasure or comfort on hand!



STEP 3: Organize your shopping list based on section of the grocery store

Goal: Prepare to get in & out of the grocery store as quickly as you can.



STEP 4: Ready, set... shop!

Goal: Keep yourself safe, while also keeping your neighbors and store employees safe.

Approach 1: Purchase groceries online for curbside pick-up or delivery, especially if you are sick ([here](#))

Approach 2: If you need to head to the store to shop in person, the [Washington State Department of Health](#) recommends the following:

1. Wash your hands before you leave your home
2. Wear a cloth face covering
3. Use hand sanitizer or wipes to clean grocery cart handles
4. Keep 6 feet away from other people, including in the checkout line
5. Don't purchase more than you need
6. Don't touch your face, and DO cover your coughs and sneezes
7. Wash your hands once you get home
8. Wash fresh produce as you normally would – do not disinfect your groceries (note: the FDA says you can wipe down your groceries as an extra precaution if you so choose)

*Pay attention to in-store signage. If there are in-store directional signs, follow directions!



STEP 5: Go home & get ready for the week

For more information on food safety, including what to do once you get home from the grocery store, read The Whole U's [RD Blog post](#) with Iwona Steplewska, MS, RD and Megan Nordlund, MS, RD.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

How to Find Local Takeout

Check out this interactive map, listing local restaurants offering takeout and/or delivery ([here](#)).

In order to stay safe when ordering takeout or delivery, the [CDC](#) recommends the following:

- Pay online or over the phone when possible
- Avoid person-to-person contact when accepting deliveries and maintain 6 feet of distance from the delivery person
- Wash your hands after accepting your food delivery

