



R.E.A.L GoalSM: Meal Prep and Recipe Ideas (*Realistic, Easy, Attainable, Life Goals*)

Example: I will meal prep one meal for 3 days of the week.

The benefits: Meal preparation allows for you to eat your favorite meals while pre-determined portion sizes ensure you don't overindulge and help you stay on track with your personal goals. With proper planning, you can prevent making unnecessary food purchases, saving you money and reducing food waste.

Quick tips:

- **Start off simple and pick one meal.** Pick the meal that gives you the most trouble – breakfast, lunch or dinner. Start with recipes you know how to make and know that you like.
- **Schedule it.** Write it on your calendar. Block off the time to prep. Then there are no excuses.
- **Make it part of your routine.** When you unpack your groceries, don't put fruits and veggies until you have cleaned and prepped them for the week.
 - **Washing fruit before storage** usually accelerates their deterioration, but for berries you can get around this by washing them in a diluted vinegar bath (1:3 vinegar/water ratio), which helps destroy bacteria and mold spores on the berries.
- **Use the right storage containers.** Refrigeration and freezing are an important step to successful meal planning; using the proper containers can make the difference in how long your meals will last.
 - **Refrigeration at 40°F or lower**
 - 1-2 days: Cooked ground poultry or ground beef
 - 3-4 days: Cooked whole meats, fish and poultry; soups and stews
 - 5 days: Cooked beans; hummus
 - 1 week: Hard boiled eggs; chopped vegetables if stored in air-tight container
 - 2 weeks: Soft cheese, opened
 - 5-6 weeks: Hard cheese, opened
 - **Freezing at 0°F or lower**
 - 2-3 months: Soups and stews; cooked beans
 - 3-6 months: Cooked or ground meat and poultry
 - 6-8 months: Berries and chopped fruit (banana, apples, pears, plums, mango) stored in a freezer bag
 - 8-12 months: Vegetables, if blanched first for about 3-5 minutes (depending on the vegetable)
- **Create your own shortcuts:** Learn what works for you and your family. Is it easier to buy a rotisserie chicken for your meals? Do you prefer precut fruits and vegetables vs cutting them yourself?
- **Have fun with prepping!** Listen to music, a podcast or a book to make the prepping process enjoyable for yourself.

Meal Ideas:

Breakfast:

Egg Bake:

2 c. Veggies (spinach, bell pepper
onion, mushroom, tomato)

24 beaten eggs
2 c. Milk or water

1 c. Cheese of your choice
Salt and Pepper to taste

Instructions: Bake at 350F for 1 hour and 20 min. Heat up a piece throughout the week for breakfast good in fridge for 4 days, serve with fruit

Almond Butter Honey Oat Bars:

2 c. rolled oats

2/3 c. Almond butter, or nut butter of
choice

¼ c. honey, or maple syrup

Instructions: In a medium bowl, add oats, nut butter, and honey or maple syrup, and mix until well combined. Spray baking dish with cooking spray. Pour in mixture and spread evenly. Cover and place in freezer until firm. Cut into bars. Keep in the fridge until ready to eat.

Pineapple Orange Mango Smoothie:

1 c. pineapple, cubed

1 mango, cubed

1 c. plain Greek yogurt.

1 orange sliced

1 1/2 c. milk of your choice

Instructions: Put fruit in a freezer bag. Seal and store in freezer for up to 3 months. When ready to use, put milk, Greek yogurt, and frozen fruit into a blender and mix until consistency is smooth. This will make 2 servings and can be divided into 2 freezer bags.

Lunch:

Wraps:

Use a wholegrain wrap or large leaf lettuce like butter/Boston/iceberg.

Add protein of choice (chicken, deli meat, bean spread, cheese, and or hummus)

Add veggies (spinach, tomatoes, peppers, onion)

Drizzle with condiment (low-fat dressing, vinaigrette, teriyaki)

Chicken Burrito Bowls:

1 tablespoon olive oil

2 large, boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed

1 cup brown rice, cooked

1 white onion, diced

15 oz black beans, drained and rinsed

Salsa

1 clove garlic, diced

1 bundle green onion, sliced, for garnish

Instructions: Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Toss in the onion with a pinch of salt and sauté until the onions have softened, about 3 minutes. Move the onions to the sides of the pan to create an open space in the middle. Add the cubed chicken into the center of the pan, season with salt and pepper, and sauté until the chicken has cooked almost all the way through. Add the garlic and mix until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Pour over salsa, black beans, and rice, and mix until everything in the pan is evenly combined. Let the mixture simmer for 5 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through. Divide the mixture equally into 4-6 bowls and sprinkle over some thinly sliced green onions.

Dinner:

Turkey Meatloaf:

½ c. breadcrumbs

2 cloves minced garlic

1 ½ tsp. salt

1/3 c. chopped parsley

2 beaten eggs w/ 2 Tbsp. milk

1 tsp. black pepper

¼ c. sun dried tomatoes

½ c. crumbled feta

1 lb. ground turkey Stir all ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Spray a 9x5 loaf pan with cooking spray and add meatloaf mixture to pan. Bake at 375F for 45 minutes or until internal meatloaf temperature is 165F.

One-Tray Alfredo Pasta:

2 cups pasta, cooked al dente ½ cup broccoli 1 teaspoon salt and pepper
½ cup carrot, sliced ¾ cup Alfredo sauce

Take two sheets of aluminum foil, about 12x12-inch (30x30 cm) and stack them on top of each other. Fold one side of the foil about ⅓ of the way across sheet, repeat for opposite side. Pinch the corner to form a point and then flatten it to the short side of the foil, forming a raised corner. Repeat for all four sides and make four of these. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Add all of the ingredients to one of the foil boats, then stir. Bake for 12 minutes. Allow to cool for 10 minutes. Eat or pack into Tupperware and refrigerate 3-5 days.

Chicken Barley Soup:

1 tsp olive oil 2 bay leaves 7 c. reduced sodium chicken
1 c. chopped carrots 2/3 c. dry pearl barley broth
1 c. chopped onions 1-1/2 lbs. skinless bone-in Fresh ground black pepper, to
1/2 c. chopped celery chicken breast, makes 14 oz taste
2 cloves garlic, chopped cooked
1/4 c. chopped parsley

Heat a large heavy pot or dutch oven on medium heat. Add the oil, carrots, onion, celery and garlic to the pot and stir. Add chicken, broth, parsley, and bay leaves and bring to a boil. When boiling, reduce heat to low and cover. Simmer covered over low heat until the chicken and vegetables are tender, about 30 minutes. Remove the chicken, shred or cut the meat, discard the bones and return the chicken to the pot along with the barley, adjust the salt if needed and add fresh ground pepper. Simmer an additional 30 minutes, or until the barley is cooked. Discard the bay leaves and serve. Makes about 9 cups.

Prep and Packing Tips for Kids:

- **Invest in sectional lunch containers:** This is an easy way to make the food you pack look appealing, portion control items, and helps you save on buying plastic baggies. Cut food into fun shapes if you have time!
- **Ask your child:** what parts of lunch they like. Sometimes there are items you are packing that go to waste and could be substituted with an option they actually like.
- **Items to pack:** fresh fruit, crunchy veggies with a dip (hummus, ranch, honey mustard), sliced meat, hardboiled egg, nut butter, string cheese or grated cheese, yogurt, milk, whole grain bread, pita or flat bread. Quesadillas, mini pizzas, chicken salad, sandwich

Check out these websites to learn more:

- Foodsmart – For recipes (offered by WellFirst Health)
- Skinny Taste – For recipes
- Northshore.org - Meal Preparation
- EatingWell – Beginners guide to meal prep

To choose another goal, go to: [wellfirstbenefits.com/realgoals](https://www.wellfirstbenefits.com/realgoals)

For help to translate or understand this, please call (800) 635-9233. (TTY dial 711)