

# Meal Prep Tips

With our busy lives, meal prepping can save so much time and take away stress. But are you tired of the meal prep ideas that just consist of chicken, rice, and broccoli? Meal prepping does not have to be boring. Preparing fun, nourishing meals can be easier than you think.

## How to Meal Prep

Meal Prepping does not have to be super labor intensive. It may involve preparing an entire meal and having it ready to grab and go, or it may involve prepping components of a meal ahead of time to save time during the cooking process. Whatever it looks like for you, it will help save time and money. Here is a way you can begin meal prepping to find what works for you.

1. Meal plan. Spend a day each week planning meals to ensure you have a plan each day. Writing this out or keeping a note in your phone will help you stay organized and consistent with the process.
2. Make your shopping list. I always like to check my pantry first to ensure I have all the staples and see if I have any other items that can be used as a substitute before buying anything new. This can help you save money and reduce food waste.
3. Start your prepping. I find it's best to do this on the day of grocery shopping or the day right after so the ingredients are fresh.
  - a. Wash and cut your fruit and vegetables. Carrots and celery keep for at least a week when stored in a container with water.
  - b. Dice peppers and onions. I tend to use these in most of my recipes, so it is easy to just grab a baggy of them and dump them in a pan with some oil and seasoning. They also freeze nicely.
  - c. Cook rice. Rice reheats well in the microwave covered with an ice cube placed in the center. The ice cube will add moisture back to the rice without melting entirely.
  - d. Roast a big batch of potatoes. This is an easy way to incorporate starch into your meals and can be made into big batches to last the week.
  - e. Boil eggs. Add these on top of salads, into a snack box, or to get some protein into your breakfast.
  - f. Prepare overnight oats for breakfast.
  - g. Cook pasta to have prepped for pasta salad.
  - h. Bake a couple chicken breasts and cut them up.
  - i. Cook a pound of ground beef or turkey to be added to a variety of recipes.

## Other Prep Tips

- Take advantage of frozen produce. Frozen vegetables make a great side dish and an easy way to incorporate more color into a meal. They also cook nicely in stir fry or soup. Frozen fruit goes great with overnight oats, yogurt, and in smoothies.
- Think about prepping two different starches and two different proteins for the week.

- Making batches of muffins, waffles, or pancakes once every couple weeks will freeze nicely and can be reheated for an easy breakfast.
- Think about having a carbohydrate, protein, and fat at every meal, then adding color with your favorite fruits and vegetables.
- Prep a dressing every week to add to a green salad, pasta salad, or grain bowl.

By following these steps and implementing this prep work into your routine, you will find that you save a lot of time cooking and can grab meals and snacks without much thinking when you are in a rush.

## Meal Prep Ideas

- Avocado toast with boiled egg
- Overnight oats
- Pasta salad with chicken
- Taco salad (season the ground beef with taco seasoning)
- Yogurt bowls
- Chicken salad sandwiches (using baked chicken)
- Chicken wraps
- Stir fry
- Greek bowls (starch, chicken, feta, veggies, Greek dressing)
- Fajita bowls (Peppers, onions, protein, rice, guac, salsa)