EvenKeel

KITCHEN GUIDE



The *Spike-Smart* Kitchen

A 4-week meal plan, 40 simple recipes and weekly shopping lists built on the Plate rule — real US grocery food, no special products

GUIDE 02

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This guide is the full kitchen version of the **Plate** step of the Plate · Pace · Pause Method from *The 21-Day Even-Keel Plan*. It turns the Plate rule into four weeks of ordinary, affordable meals you can cook in a normal kitchen with normal groceries.

Recipe numbers (for example **#21**) are used throughout the meal plans and shopping lists so you can jump straight to the recipe.

READ THIS FIRST

BEFORE YOU START

This guide is for education only and is not medical advice. It does not diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease, and it does not replace care from your doctor or a registered dietitian.

- **Get a checkup.** Erection problems can be an early sign of heart disease, diabetes or high blood pressure. Please see a doctor, even if you feel fine otherwise.
- **Urgent care.** Call 911 or get emergency care for chest pain or pressure, fainting, or an erection lasting more than 4 hours.
- **Diabetes medicines and low blood sugar.** If you take medicine for diabetes — especially insulin or a sulfonylurea (such as glipizide, glyburide or glimepiride) — changing what, when or how much you eat, or walking after meals, can make your blood sugar drop too low. Talk with your doctor *before* you change your routine, learn the signs of low blood sugar (shakiness, sweating, confusion, fast heartbeat) and never change a dose yourself.
- **Type 1 diabetes or an eating disorder.** This plan is not designed for people with type 1 diabetes or a current or past eating disorder unless your care team has approved and adapted it.
- **Kidney disease.** If you have kidney disease, check your protein, potassium and sodium targets with your doctor or dietitian before using these recipes — some (beans, potatoes, tomatoes, dairy) may need adjusting.
- **New exercise.** If you have heart disease, another medical condition or have been inactive for a long time, get medical clearance before adding walks or other new activity.
- **Medicines.** Never stop or change any medicine without your doctor. Some foods interact with medicines (for example grapefruit with certain drugs, or leafy greens with warfarin) — ask your pharmacist if unsure.
- **Allergies.** Recipes include eggs, dairy, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. Swap freely to suit your needs.

Medicines for erections, such as PDE5 inhibitors, are a doctor-prescribed option for many men. Nothing in this kitchen competes with that. Everyday eating habits work *alongside* medical care, not instead of it.

This is not a diet. There are no calorie targets, no fasting windows, no keto rules, no supplements and no special products. If your doctor has given you a calorie or carbohydrate target, follow theirs — and if any target you've been given is under 1,500 calories a day, make sure it came from your own clinician.

CHAPTER 1

How to use this kitchen guide

Research links blood-sugar problems — prediabetes, diabetes and insulin resistance — with erectile difficulties, and researchers think stress on the thin inner lining of the blood vessels (the endothelium) is part of the shared pathway. The two hours after a meal, the **After-Meal Window**, is when blood sugar rises and falls. Large, repeated spikes are associated with stress on blood vessels. How you build a plate is one of the simplest daily levers you have for a smoother curve.

This guide does the planning for you. You don't need to count anything.

STEP 1

Stock the pantry

Spend one shopping trip on the basics in Chapter 3. Most last for months.

STEP 2

Cook on Sunday

Spend about 90 minutes cooking two or three recipes that carry you through the week.

STEP 3

Follow the week

Use the meal-plan table and shopping list. Swap any meal for another in the same group.

Rules that make it easy

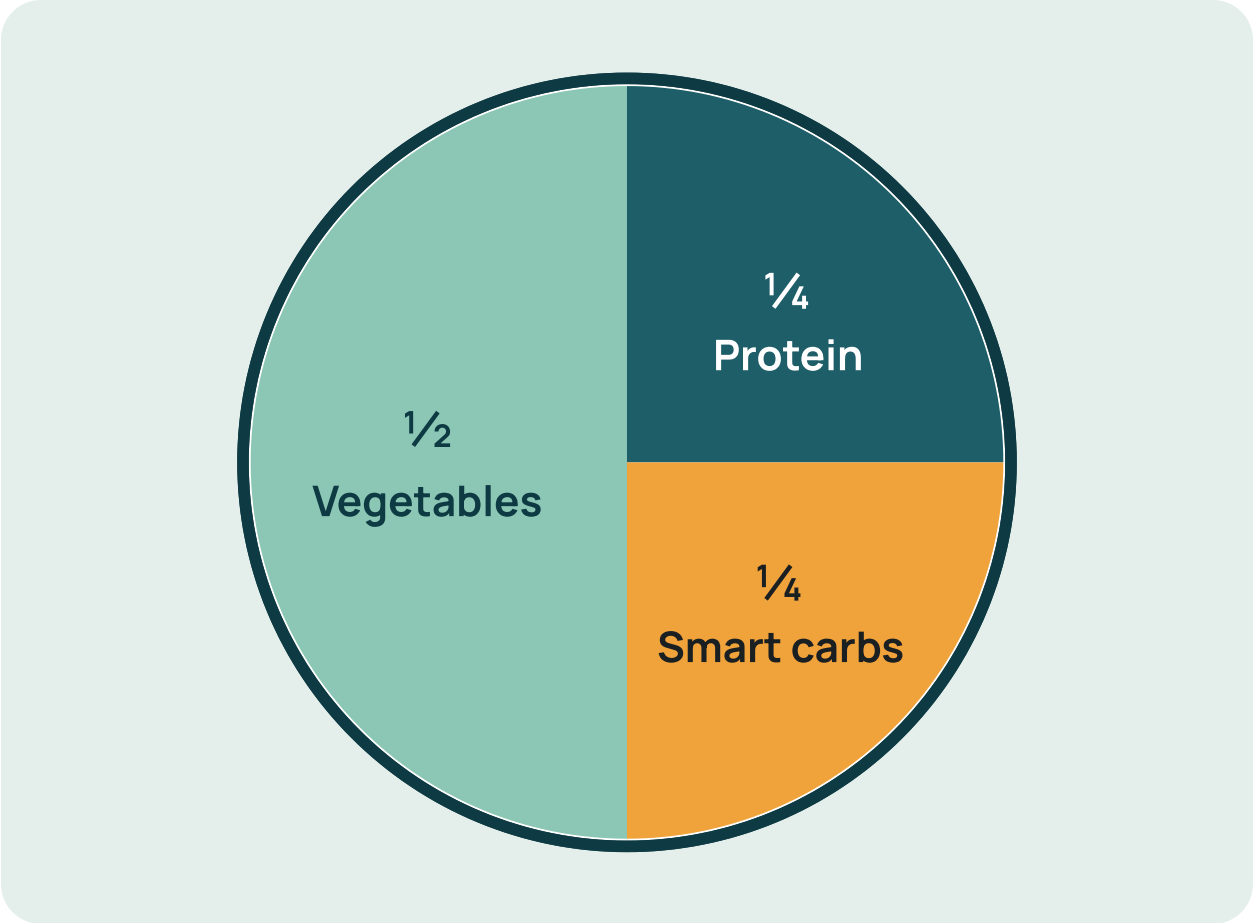
- **Swap freely.** Any breakfast can replace any other breakfast; the same goes for lunches and dinners.
- **Leftovers are planned.** Most dinners serve 4 so tomorrow's lunch is already made.
- **Portions are guides, not rules.** Recipes say "Serves 2" or "Serves 4" for average adult appetites. Eat until comfortably satisfied. Bigger, more active men can add more protein and vegetables first.
- **Pair meals with Pace.** When you can, take an easy 10-minute walk after your largest meal. Studies show short walks after eating can lower the rise in blood sugar.
- **Snacks are optional.** They are there for long gaps between meals, not as a requirement.

Start small. If four weeks of new meals feels like a lot, use only the dinners for Week 1 and keep your usual breakfasts and lunches. Add more as it gets familiar.

CHAPTER 2

The Plate rule and food order — a recap

Every recipe in this book is built on one picture. You don't need a special plate; a regular 9–10 inch dinner plate works well.



The Plate rule: half non-starchy vegetables, a palm of protein, a fist of smart carbs.

THE THREE PARTS OF THE PLATE

PART	HAND GUIDE	EVERYDAY EXAMPLES
½ Non-starchy vegetables	Two open handfuls	Broccoli, green beans, cabbage, spinach, salad greens, cauliflower, bell peppers, onions, mushrooms, tomatoes, carrots, frozen mixed vegetables

PART	HAND GUIDE	EVERYDAY EXAMPLES
¼ Protein	Your palm (size and thickness)	Chicken, turkey, eggs, canned tuna or salmon, frozen fish, lean ground beef, pork loin, beans, lentils, tofu, Greek yogurt, cottage cheese
¼ Smart carbs	Your closed fist	Brown rice, oats, whole-wheat bread or pasta, quinoa, potatoes with skin, sweet potatoes, corn tortillas, beans and lentils (they count as both)
Plus a little fat	Your thumb	Olive or canola oil, peanut butter, nuts, seeds, avocado, cheese

Food order: fiber and protein first, starchy carbs last

Small studies show that eating vegetables and protein before the starchy part of the same meal can lower the after-meal rise in blood sugar. It costs nothing and changes nothing on the plate — only the order.

1. **First:** a few bites of vegetables or salad.
2. **Second:** the protein.
3. **Last:** the rice, bread, potato or pasta.

> **Drinks count.** Water, sparkling water, unsweetened tea and black coffee keep the plate's work intact. Regular soda, sweet tea, juice and large sweetened coffee drinks are among the biggest sources of added sugar in the US diet.

CHAPTER 3

Pantry setup and budget tips

A stocked pantry is what makes a 20-minute dinner possible on a tired Tuesday. Buy these once; top up as they run out. Store brands are fine for every item.

SHELF STAPLES

- [ ] Old-fashioned rolled oats (large canister)
- [ ] Brown rice and quinoa (or a bag of either)
- [ ] Whole-wheat pasta and whole-wheat tortillas
- [ ] Canned beans: black, pinto, white, chickpeas (low-sodium or rinsed)
- [ ] Dry lentils (brown or green)
- [ ] Canned tuna and salmon in water
- [ ] Canned diced tomatoes, tomato paste, a jar of marinara
- [ ] Low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- [ ] Natural peanut butter; walnuts or almonds; chia or ground flaxseed (optional)

FLAVOR SHELF

- [ ] Olive oil and canola oil; nonstick cooking spray
- [ ] Red wine or apple cider vinegar; low-sodium soy sauce
- [ ] Garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, cumin, paprika, Italian seasoning, cinnamon, black pepper
- [ ] Salsa, hot sauce, Dijon mustard, lemon juice

FREEZER

- [ ] Frozen broccoli, green beans, spinach, mixed vegetables, stir-fry mix, cauliflower
- [ ] Frozen berries (blueberries or mixed)
- [ ] Frozen fish fillets (tilapia, cod or salmon) and frozen shrimp
- [ ] Frozen corn and peas

Ten ways to keep the bill down

1. **Frozen vegetables are not second best.** They are picked and frozen at peak, last for months and cost less per serving than many fresh options.
2. **Buy chicken thighs and family packs.** Thighs are cheaper than breasts and stay moist when reheated. Portion and freeze the extra.
3. **Beans and lentils stretch meat.** Half beef, half beans in chili or tacos lowers cost and adds fiber.
4. **Eggs are one of the cheapest proteins** per serving in most US stores.
5. **Cabbage, carrots, onions and potatoes** are low-cost, keep for weeks and appear across many recipes here.
6. **Buy plain and flavor it yourself.** Plain yogurt, plain oats and plain rice are cheaper and have no added sugar.
7. **Check unit prices** on the shelf tag (price per ounce), not the package price.
8. **Shop the list.** The weekly lists here are built so ingredients carry over from recipe to recipe.
9. **Use the Sunday cook.** Planned leftovers mean fewer takeout lunches.
10. **SNAP and WIC.** Every food in this guide is ordinary grocery food and SNAP-eligible. Many stores also double SNAP dollars on produce through local programs.

CHAPTER 4

The batch-cooking Sunday plan

About 90 minutes on one day saves 20–30 minutes on most weeknights. Here is the order that keeps the oven, stovetop and fridge working at the same time.

A SAMPLE 90-MINUTE SUNDAY

TIME	TASK
0:00	Oven to 425 °F (220 °C). Start a pot of brown rice or quinoa (big batch, 3 cups dry).
0:10	Chop onions, peppers, carrots and broccoli for the week. Store in containers lined with a paper towel.
0:25	Sheet-pan recipe into the oven (for example #21). Soup or chili on the stove (for example #13 or #22).
0:35	Egg muffins (#4) or overnight oats (#3) for weekday breakfasts.
0:50	Hard-boil 6–8 eggs. Wash salad greens and spin dry.
1:05	Cool everything on the counter no more than 2 hours. Portion into lunch containers.
1:20	Label and date. Freeze anything you won't eat within 3–4 days.

! **Food safety.** Refrigerate cooked food within 2 hours. Eat cooked leftovers within 3–4 days or freeze them. Reheat to 165 °F (74 °C) until steaming hot. Cook chicken and turkey to 165 °F, ground beef and pork to 160 °F, whole pork chops and fish to 145 °F.

Containers worth having

- 8–10 matching glass or BPA-free plastic containers (about 3 cups each) — one per lunch
- 4–6 pint jars or small containers for oats, yogurt and dips
- Freezer bags and a marker

The "cook once, eat twice" habit. Every time you cook dinner, pack one portion for tomorrow's lunch before anyone sits down. It's the single habit that keeps this plan going.

CHAPTER 5

Your 4-week meal plan

Numbers refer to recipes. "Left." means leftovers from an earlier dinner. Snacks are optional. Sunday's dinner is usually the batch-cook recipe.

WEEK 1 — GETTING THE RHYTHM · SUNDAY BATCH: #21, #22, #4, #13

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK
Mon	#4 Egg muffins	#13 Lentil soup	#21 Left. sheet-pan chicken	#37
Tue	#2 Yogurt bowl	#11 Big salad (with #21 chicken)	#22 Left. turkey chili	#35
Wed	#4 Egg muffins	#22 Left. chili	#23 Salmon & green beans	—
Thu	#3 Overnight oats	#13 Lentil soup	#24 Beef & broccoli	#39
Fri	#4 Egg muffins	#24 Left. stir-fry	#27 Fajita sheet pan	#37
Sat	#1 Veggie scramble	#27 Left. fajita bowl	#31 Stuffed peppers	#40
Sun	#6 Bean burrito	#14 Turkey wrap	#26 Turkey meatballs (batch)	—

WEEK 2 — MORE FISH AND BEANS · SUNDAY BATCH: #26 (COOKED SUN WK 1), #19, #3, #36

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK
Mon	#3 Overnight oats	#26 Left. meatballs	#25 Lemon tilapia	#36
Tue	#5 Cottage cheese toast	#19 Chicken noodle soup	#28 Pork chops & cabbage	#35
Wed	#3 Overnight oats	#17 Chickpea salad	#26 Left. meatballs	—
Thu	#7 Savory oats	#19 Chicken noodle soup	#30 Shrimp fried rice	#39

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK
Fri	#3 Overnight oats	#12 Tuna-bean wraps	#34 Burger bowl	#36
Sat	#9 Turkey sausage hash	#15 Burrito bowl	#33 Chickpea curry	#40
Sun	#8 Apple parfait	#33 Left. curry	#29 Lentil shepherd's pie (batch)	#38

WEEK 3 — COMFORT FOOD, PLATE-STYLE · SUNDAY BATCH: #29 (COOKED SUN WK 2), #20, #4, #13

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK
Mon	#4 Egg muffins	#20 Peanut slaw	#29 Left. shepherd's pie	#37
Tue	#10 Spinach-feta omelet	#29 Left. shepherd's pie	#21 Sheet-pan chicken	#35
Wed	#4 Egg muffins	#16 Egg salad plate	#32 Chicken & white bean stew	—
Thu	#2 Yogurt bowl	#13 Lentil soup	#25 Lemon tilapia	#39
Fri	#4 Egg muffins	#32 Left. stew	#24 Beef & broccoli	#36
Sat	#6 Bean burrito	#18 Bean quesadilla	#31 Stuffed peppers	#40
Sun	#1 Veggie scramble	#14 Turkey wrap	#22 Turkey chili (batch)	#38

WEEK 4 — YOUR FAVORITES · SUNDAY BATCH: #22 (COOKED SUN WK 3), #19, #3, #36

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK
Mon	#3 Overnight oats	#22 Left. chili	#23 Salmon & green beans	#36
Tue	#7 Savory oats	#19 Chicken noodle soup	#27 Fajita sheet pan	#37
Wed	#3 Overnight oats	#27 Left. fajita bowl	#22 Left. chili	—
Thu	#5 Cottage cheese toast	#19 Chicken noodle soup	#28 Pork chops & cabbage	#35
Fri	#3 Overnight oats	#11 Big salad	#30 Shrimp fried rice	#39
Sat	#9 Turkey sausage hash	#17 Chickpea salad	#34 Burger bowl	#40
Sun	#8 Apple parfait	#12 Tuna-bean wraps	#33 Chickpea curry	#38

After Week 4. Repeat the four weeks in any order, or build your own week with the worksheet in Chapter 12. By now most men have 8–10 "house meals" they can cook without looking.

Pair it with Pace. Write "10-min walk" next to the meal you'll walk after each day — usually dinner. Even a slow loop of the block counts.

CHAPTER 6

Weekly shopping lists

Lists are for one to two adults and assume the pantry from Chapter 3 is stocked. For a family of four, roughly double the produce, protein and dairy. Tick items you already have before you go.

Week 1

PRODUCE

- [ ] Broccoli (2 heads or 2 bags florets) · 1 bag salad greens · 1 bag baby spinach
- [ ] Bell peppers (8: 4 for stuffing, 4 for fajitas) · 4 onions · 1 bulb garlic
- [ ] 1 lb carrots · 1 pint cherry tomatoes · 3 lb potatoes (small red or Yukon)
- [ ] 4 apples · 1 lemon · 1 lime · 1 avocado

MEAT & SEAFOOD

- [ ] 3 lb bone-in or boneless chicken thighs · 2 lb lean ground turkey
- [ ] 1 lb flank steak or sirloin · 1 lb salmon fillets (or frozen) · 8 oz sliced deli turkey

DAIRY & EGGS

- [ ] 2 dozen eggs · 32 oz plain Greek yogurt · 1 qt low-fat milk · 8 oz shredded cheese

BREAD, CANNED & DRY

- [ ] Whole-wheat tortillas · 2 cans black beans · 1 can kidney beans · 2 cans diced tomatoes · hummus (small tub)

FROZEN

- [ ] Green beans · berries · stir-fry vegetables

Week 2

PRODUCE

- [ ] 1 head green cabbage · 1 bag coleslaw mix · 1 bag salad greens · 1 bag baby spinach
- [ ] 3 onions · 1 bulb garlic · 1 lb carrots · 1 bunch celery · 2 tomatoes · 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- [ ] 1 lb sweet potatoes · 5 apples · 2 lemons · 1 bunch green onions · fresh ginger (small piece)

MEAT & SEAFOOD

- [ ] 1 lb tilapia or cod (fresh or frozen) · 4 boneless pork chops · 1 lb chicken breast or thighs
- [ ] 1 lb frozen shrimp · 1 lb 90% lean ground beef · 8 oz turkey breakfast sausage

DAIRY & EGGS

- [ ] 1 dozen eggs · 16 oz cottage cheese · 32 oz plain Greek yogurt · 1 qt milk · 4 oz feta

BREAD, CANNED & DRY

- [ ] Whole-grain bread · 3 cans chickpeas · 1 can white beans · 1 can black beans · 1 can tuna · 1 can light coconut milk · curry powder

FROZEN

- [ ] Peas and carrots · cauliflower · berries · corn

Week 3

PRODUCE

- [ ] Broccoli (2 heads) · 1 bag coleslaw mix · 1 bag salad greens · 1 bag baby spinach · 8 oz mushrooms
- [ ] 4 bell peppers · 4 onions · 1 bulb garlic · 1 lb carrots · 1 bunch celery · 2 lb potatoes
- [ ] 4 apples · 2 lemons · 1 bunch green onions

MEAT & SEAFOOD

- [ ] 3 lb chicken thighs · 1 lb ground turkey (for #31) plus 1½ lb for Sunday chili (#22)
- [ ] 1 lb tilapia or cod · 1 lb flank steak or sirloin · 8 oz deli turkey

DAIRY & EGGS

- [ ] 2 dozen eggs · 32 oz plain Greek yogurt · 4 oz feta · 8 oz shredded cheese

BREAD, CANNED & DRY

- [ ] Whole-wheat tortillas · whole-grain crackers · 2 cans white beans · 2 cans black beans · 1 can kidney beans · 2 cans diced tomatoes · shelled edamame (frozen aisle) · hummus

FROZEN

- [ ] Cauliflower · peas · stir-fry vegetables · berries

Week 4

PRODUCE

- [ ] 1 head green cabbage · 2 bags salad greens · 1 bag baby spinach · 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- [ ] 4 bell peppers · 4 onions · 1 bulb garlic · 1 lb carrots · 1 bunch celery · 1 lb sweet potatoes
- [ ] 5 apples · 2 lemons · 1 lime · fresh ginger · 1 bunch green onions

MEAT & SEAFOOD

- [ ] 1 lb salmon · 2 lb chicken thighs or breast · 4 pork chops · 1 lb frozen shrimp · 1 lb lean ground beef · 8 oz turkey sausage

DAIRY & EGGS

- [ ] 1 dozen eggs · 16 oz cottage cheese · 32 oz plain Greek yogurt · 1 qt milk · 4 oz feta

BREAD, CANNED & DRY

- [ ] Whole-grain bread · whole-wheat tortillas · 3 cans chickpeas · 1 can white beans · 1 can tuna · 1 can light coconut milk

FROZEN

- [ ] Green beans · peas and carrots · berries · corn

Shop the edges, then the middle. Start in produce, then meat and dairy, then the canned and dry aisles for beans and grains. Skip the snack and soda aisles unless something is on your list.

CHAPTER 7

Recipes 1–10: Breakfasts

A breakfast with protein and fiber, rather than a sweet pastry or cereal alone, is one of the easiest Plate habits to start with. Each one below has a protein anchor.

1 · Veggie scramble with whole-grain toast

Serves 2 · 15 min · Plate: veg + protein first · toast last

INGREDIENTS

- 5 eggs
- 1 cup chopped bell pepper and onion
- 2 handfuls baby spinach
- ¼ cup shredded cheese
- 2 slices whole-grain bread
- 1 tsp olive oil; pepper

STEPS

1. Cook pepper and onion in oil over medium heat for 4 minutes.
2. Add spinach until wilted.
3. Pour in beaten eggs and stir gently until just set; top with cheese.
4. Serve with toast; eat the eggs and vegetables first.

2 · Greek yogurt bowl with berries and walnuts

Serves 1 · 5 min · Plate: protein + fruit + nuts

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- ½ cup frozen berries, thawed
- 2 tbsp chopped walnuts
- 1 tbsp chia seeds or ground flaxseed (optional)
- Pinch of cinnamon

STEPS

1. Spoon yogurt into a bowl.
2. Top with berries, walnuts, seeds and cinnamon.
3. If you want it sweeter, mash the berries into the yogurt instead of adding sugar.

3 · Peanut butter overnight oats

Makes 4 jars · 10 min + overnight · Plate: smart carb + protein

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
- 2 cups low-fat milk or unsweetened soy milk
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 4 tbsp natural peanut butter
- 2 tbsp chia seeds (optional)
- 1 cup frozen berries; cinnamon

STEPS

1. Divide oats, milk, yogurt and chia between 4 jars.
2. Stir 1 tbsp peanut butter and a pinch of cinnamon into each.
3. Top with berries, cover and refrigerate overnight (keeps 4 days).

4 · Sheet-pan egg muffins

Makes 12 · 30 min · Plate: protein + veg

INGREDIENTS

- 10 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 2 cups chopped spinach, peppers and onion
- ½ cup shredded cheese
- ½ tsp garlic powder; pepper
- Cooking spray

STEPS

1. Heat oven to 350 °F (175 °C) and spray a 12-cup muffin tin.
2. Divide vegetables and cheese between the cups.
3. Whisk eggs, milk and seasonings; pour over to ¾ full.
4. Bake 20–22 minutes until set. Cool, refrigerate up to 4 days; reheat 30–45 seconds. Eat 2–3 with a piece of fruit or a slice of toast.

5 · Cottage cheese and tomato toast

Serves 1 · 5 min · Plate: protein + veg + smart carb

INGREDIENTS

- 2 slices whole-grain bread
- ¾ cup low-fat cottage cheese
- 1 tomato, sliced (or a handful of cherry tomatoes)
- Black pepper, dried oregano
- 1 tsp olive oil

STEPS

1. Toast the bread.
2. Spread cottage cheese thickly on each slice.
3. Top with tomato, pepper, oregano and a drizzle of oil.

6 · Black bean breakfast burrito

Serves 2 · 15 min · Plate: protein + beans + veg

INGREDIENTS

- 4 eggs
- ½ can black beans, rinsed
- ½ cup chopped bell pepper and onion
- 2 whole-wheat tortillas (8 inch)
- ¼ cup salsa
- 2 tbsp shredded cheese

STEPS

1. Cook pepper and onion in a nonstick pan for 3 minutes; add beans to warm.
2. Add beaten eggs and scramble until just set.
3. Fill warmed tortillas, top with cheese and salsa, and roll up.

7 · Savory oats with egg and spinach

Serves 1 · 10 min · Plate: smart carb + protein + veg

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup old-fashioned oats
- 1 cup low-sodium broth or water
- 1 handful spinach
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp grated Parmesan; pepper; hot sauce

STEPS

1. Simmer oats in broth for 5 minutes, stirring.
2. Stir in spinach until wilted.
3. Top with a fried or soft-boiled egg, Parmesan, pepper and hot sauce.

8 · Apple-cinnamon yogurt parfait

Serves 2 · 10 min · Plate: protein + fruit + fiber

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups plain Greek yogurt
- 1 apple, diced
- ½ cup rolled oats, toasted in a dry pan 3 minutes
- 2 tbsp chopped walnuts or almonds
- 1 tsp cinnamon

STEPS

1. Toss diced apple with cinnamon.
2. Layer yogurt, apple, toasted oats and nuts in two glasses.
3. Serve right away so the oats stay crunchy.

9 · Turkey sausage and pepper hash

Serves 2 · 25 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ smart carb

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz turkey breakfast sausage, crumbled
- 1 small sweet potato, diced small
- 1 bell pepper and ½ onion, diced
- 2 handfuls spinach
- 2 eggs (optional)
- 1 tsp oil; paprika

STEPS

1. Cook sweet potato in oil, covered, over medium heat for 8 minutes.
2. Add sausage, pepper and onion; cook 8 minutes until sausage is browned and cooked through.
3. Stir in spinach and paprika; top with a fried egg if you like.

10 · Spinach and feta omelet

Serves 1 · 10 min · Plate: protein + veg · toast or fruit on the side

INGREDIENTS

- 3 eggs
- 1 big handful spinach
- 2 tbsp crumbled feta
- 4 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tsp olive oil; pepper
- 1 slice whole-grain toast or 1 apple

STEPS

1. Wilt spinach in oil over medium heat; set aside.
2. Pour beaten eggs into the pan, tilt to cover, and cook until nearly set.
3. Add spinach, feta and tomatoes to one half, fold and serve with toast or fruit.

CHAPTER 8

Recipes 11–20: Lunches

Lunches are built to pack. Most keep 3–4 days in the fridge and travel well in a lunch container.

11 · Big chicken and bean salad

Serves 2 · 10 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ beans

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups salad greens
- 1½ cups cooked chicken (leftover #21 works)
- 1 cup black beans, rinsed
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes and shredded carrot
- ¼ avocado, diced
- Dressing: 2 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp vinegar, ½ tsp Dijon

STEPS

1. Whisk the dressing in the bottom of a jar or container.
2. Layer beans, vegetables, chicken, then greens on top.
3. Shake or toss just before eating.

12 · Tuna and white bean lettuce wraps

Serves 2 · 10 min · Plate: protein + beans + veg

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (5 oz) tuna in water, drained
- 1 can (15 oz) white beans, rinsed
- ½ cup diced celery and red onion
- 2 tbsp plain Greek yogurt + 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 head romaine or butter lettuce
- Pepper; dried dill

STEPS

1. Mash half the beans with yogurt and lemon.
2. Fold in remaining beans, tuna, celery, onion and seasonings.
3. Spoon into lettuce leaves, or onto a whole-wheat tortilla if you want more carbs.

13 · Lentil vegetable soup

Serves 6 · 45 min · Plate: lentils (protein + carb) + veg · freezes well

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups dry brown or green lentils, rinsed
- 1 onion, 2 carrots, 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
- 6 cups low-sodium broth
- 3 cups spinach or chopped cabbage
- 1 tbsp olive oil; 1 tsp cumin; 2 garlic cloves

STEPS

1. Cook onion, carrot and celery in oil for 6 minutes; add garlic and cumin for 1 minute.
2. Add lentils, tomatoes and broth; simmer 25–30 minutes until lentils are tender.
3. Stir in greens for the last 3 minutes. Add a squeeze of lemon and pepper.

14 · Turkey, hummus and crunchy veg wrap

Serves 1 · 5 min · Plate: protein + veg + smart carb

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole-wheat tortilla (10 inch)
- 3 oz sliced turkey (low-sodium if available)
- 2 tbsp hummus
- 1 handful spinach
- ½ cup sliced bell pepper and shredded carrot

STEPS

1. Spread hummus over the tortilla.
2. Layer spinach, turkey and vegetables.
3. Roll tightly, cut in half and wrap in foil. Add a side of baby carrots or an apple.

15 · Chicken burrito bowl

Serves 2 · 15 min (with leftovers) · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ rice + beans

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups cooked chicken, diced
- ¾ cup cooked brown rice
- ½ cup black beans and ½ cup corn
- 2 cups shredded lettuce or cabbage
- ½ cup salsa; 2 tbsp Greek yogurt
- ½ tsp chili powder; lime

STEPS

1. Warm chicken, beans and corn with chili powder.
2. Fill bowls with lettuce first, then rice, then the warm mix.
3. Top with salsa, yogurt and lime. Eat from the lettuce side first.

16 · Egg salad plate with crackers

Serves 2 · 10 min (with boiled eggs) · Plate: protein + veg + smart carb

INGREDIENTS

- 5 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 3 tbsp plain Greek yogurt + 1 tsp Dijon
- ¼ cup diced celery; pepper; paprika
- 4 cups salad greens
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes or bell pepper strips
- 12 whole-grain crackers

STEPS

1. Mix eggs, yogurt, mustard, celery and seasonings.
2. Serve on greens with tomatoes or peppers.
3. Add crackers on the side — eat them last.

17 · Greek chickpea salad

Serves 3 · 10 min · Plate: chickpeas + veg + cheese

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans (15 oz) chickpeas, rinsed
- 2 tomatoes, diced
- 1 bell pepper and ¼ red onion, diced
- ¼ cup crumbled feta
- 3 tbsp olive oil + 2 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp dried oregano; pepper

STEPS

1. Whisk oil, vinegar and oregano in a large bowl.
2. Add everything else and toss.
3. Serve over greens; keeps 3 days and tastes better on day two.

18 · Black bean and corn quesadilla with side salad

Serves 2 · 15 min · Plate: veg first · bean quesadilla second

INGREDIENTS

- 2 whole-wheat tortillas (8 inch)
- 1 cup black beans, lightly mashed
- ½ cup corn and ½ cup diced peppers
- ½ cup shredded cheese
- 4 cups salad greens with salsa as dressing

STEPS

1. Spread beans on half of each tortilla; add corn, peppers and cheese; fold.
2. Cook in a dry skillet 3 minutes per side until crisp.
3. Serve with the salad first and the quesadilla second.

19 · Chicken vegetable noodle soup

Serves 6 · 40 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ noodles · freezes well

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb chicken breast or thighs
- 1 onion, 3 carrots, 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 8 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup whole-wheat pasta (small shapes)
- 2 cups frozen peas and green beans
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning; 1 tbsp oil

STEPS

1. Cook onion, carrot and celery in oil for 6 minutes.
2. Add broth, seasoning and whole chicken pieces; simmer 20 minutes. Remove and shred chicken.
3. Add pasta and frozen vegetables; cook 8 minutes. Return chicken to the pot.

20 · Peanut slaw with edamame

Serves 3 · 15 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · add rice if wanted

INGREDIENTS

- 1 bag (14 oz) coleslaw mix
- 1½ cups shelled edamame, thawed
- 3 green onions, sliced
- Dressing: 3 tbsp peanut butter, 2 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce, 2 tbsp vinegar, 1 tsp grated ginger, water to thin
- 2 tbsp chopped peanuts

STEPS

1. Whisk dressing until smooth, adding water a spoon at a time.
2. Toss with slaw, edamame and green onions.
3. Top with peanuts. Add ½ cup brown rice or leftover chicken for a bigger meal.

CHAPTER 9

Recipes 21–34: Dinners

Most dinners serve 4 so that one or two portions become lunch. Serve the vegetables on the plate first — and if you can, step out for a 10-minute walk afterward.

21 · Sheet-pan chicken thighs, broccoli and potatoes

Serves 4 · 45 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ smart carb

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lb chicken thighs (boneless or bone-in)
- 1 lb small potatoes, quartered
- 2 heads broccoli, cut into florets
- 1 red onion, wedged
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp paprika, 1 tsp garlic powder; pepper; lemon

STEPS

1. Heat oven to 425 °F (220 °C). Toss potatoes with half the oil and roast 10 minutes.
2. Rub chicken with spices; add chicken, broccoli and onion with remaining oil.
3. Roast 25–30 minutes until chicken reaches 165 °F. Squeeze lemon over everything.

22 · Weeknight turkey and bean chili

Serves 6 · 40 min · Plate: protein + beans + veg · freezes well

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lb lean ground turkey
- 1 onion and 2 bell peppers, chopped
- 2 cans (15 oz) beans (kidney, black or pinto), rinsed
- 2 cans (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
- 2 tbsp chili powder, 2 tsp cumin
- 1 cup frozen corn or diced carrot

STEPS

1. Brown turkey in a large pot; add onion and peppers for 5 minutes.
2. Stir in spices, then tomatoes, beans and corn with 1 cup water.
3. Simmer 20–25 minutes. Top with Greek yogurt and shredded cheese; serve with a side salad.

23 · Baked salmon with green beans and brown rice

Serves 4 · 25 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ smart carb

INGREDIENTS

- 4 salmon fillets (4–5 oz each), fresh or thawed
- 1 lb green beans (frozen is fine)
- 2 cups cooked brown rice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 lemon; 1 tsp garlic powder; dried dill; pepper

STEPS

1. Heat oven to 400 °F (205 °C). Toss green beans with half the oil on a sheet pan.
2. Place salmon in the middle, brush with remaining oil and season.
3. Bake 12–15 minutes until fish flakes (145 °F). Serve with rice and lemon.

24 · Beef and broccoli stir-fry

Serves 4 · 25 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ rice

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb flank steak or sirloin, thinly sliced
- 4 cups broccoli florets + 1 bag frozen stir-fry vegetables
- 3 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tbsp cornstarch mixed with ½ cup water
- 2 garlic cloves, 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 tbsp canola oil; 2 cups cooked brown rice

STEPS

1. Sear beef in hot oil in batches, 2 minutes each; set aside.
2. Stir-fry vegetables with garlic and ginger for 5 minutes.
3. Return beef, add soy sauce and cornstarch mix; stir until glossy. Serve over ½ cup rice per person.

25 · Lemon-garlic tilapia with roasted cauliflower and quinoa

Serves 4 · 30 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ smart carb

INGREDIENTS

- 4 tilapia or cod fillets (fresh or frozen)
- 1 bag (16 oz) cauliflower florets
- 1 cup dry quinoa
- 2 tbsp olive oil; 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 lemon; paprika; pepper

STEPS

1. Cook quinoa in 2 cups water, covered, 15 minutes.
2. Roast cauliflower with half the oil at 425 °F for 20 minutes.
3. Add fish to the pan for the last 10–12 minutes, topped with garlic, oil, lemon and paprika.

26 · Turkey meatballs in marinara with spinach

Serves 4 · 40 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ whole-wheat pasta

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb lean ground turkey
- 1 egg + ⅓ cup rolled oats (as binder)
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning, ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 jar (24 oz) marinara (choose one without added sugar)
- 1 bag (6 oz) baby spinach + 2 cups frozen broccoli
- 6 oz whole-wheat spaghetti

STEPS

1. Mix turkey, egg, oats and seasoning; roll into 16 balls. Bake at 400 °F for 18 minutes.
2. Warm marinara; add meatballs and simmer 10 minutes. Stir in spinach to wilt.
3. Serve over a small nest of spaghetti with steamed broccoli on the side.

27 · Chicken fajita sheet pan

Serves 4 · 30 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ tortillas

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lb chicken breast or thighs, sliced
- 4 bell peppers and 2 onions, sliced
- 2 tbsp oil
- 2 tsp chili powder, 1 tsp cumin, 1 tsp garlic powder
- 8 small corn or whole-wheat tortillas
- Salsa, Greek yogurt, lime

STEPS

1. Heat oven to 425 °F. Toss chicken and vegetables with oil and spices.
2. Spread on two pans; roast 20 minutes, stirring once.
3. Serve in warm tortillas with salsa and yogurt, or over lettuce as a bowl for lunch.

28 · Pork chops with skillet cabbage and apples

Serves 4 · 30 min · Plate: ½ veg · ¼ protein · ¼ sweet potato

INGREDIENTS

- 4 boneless pork chops (about 1 inch thick)
- ½ head green cabbage, thinly sliced
- 1 apple and 1 onion, sliced
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 small sweet potatoes, cubed and microwaved 5–6 min
- 1 tbsp oil; paprika; pepper

STEPS

1. Season chops and sear in oil 4–5 minutes per side until 145 °F; rest on a plate.
2. In the same pan, cook onion, cabbage and apple 10 minutes until soft; add vinegar.
3. Serve chops on the cabbage with sweet potato on the side.

29 · Lentil shepherd's pie with cauliflower-potato mash

Serves 6 · 60 min · Plate: lentils + veg + light mash · freezes well

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups dry lentils (or 2 cans, rinsed)
- 1 onion, 2 carrots, 8 oz mushrooms, chopped
- 2 tbsp tomato paste + 2 cups low-sodium broth
- 1 lb potatoes + 1 bag (16 oz) frozen cauliflower
- ½ cup milk; 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup frozen peas; 1 tsp thyme

STEPS

1. Simmer lentils in water 20 minutes until tender; drain.
2. Boil potatoes and cauliflower together until soft; mash with milk and 1 tbsp oil.
3. Cook onion, carrot and mushrooms in 1 tbsp oil; add tomato paste, broth, thyme, lentils and peas; simmer 10 minutes.
4. Spread in a 9×13 dish, top with mash and bake at 400 °F for 20 minutes.

30 · Shrimp and vegetable fried brown rice

Serves 4 · 20 min · Plate: veg-heavy · protein · ¼ rice

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb frozen shrimp, thawed and peeled
- 2 cups cooked brown rice (cold, day-old is best)
- 3 cups frozen peas and carrots + 2 cups chopped cabbage
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 3 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tbsp oil; 3 green onions; 1 tsp ginger

STEPS

1. Cook shrimp in oil 2–3 minutes until pink; remove.
2. Stir-fry vegetables and ginger 5 minutes; push aside and scramble the eggs.
3. Add rice, soy sauce and shrimp; toss until hot. Top with green onions.

31 · Turkey and rice stuffed peppers

Serves 4 · 50 min · Plate: veg shell · protein · ¼ rice

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large bell peppers, tops cut off and seeded
- 1 lb lean ground turkey
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
- 1 cup chopped spinach; ½ onion
- ½ cup shredded cheese; 1 tsp Italian seasoning

STEPS

1. Heat oven to 375 °F (190 °C). Brown turkey with onion; stir in tomatoes, spinach, rice and seasoning.
2. Fill peppers and stand them in a baking dish with ¼ cup water.
3. Cover with foil and bake 30 minutes; uncover, add cheese, bake 10 more. Serve with a green salad.

32 · Chicken and white bean stew

Serves 6 · 45 min · Plate: protein + beans + veg · freezes well

INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lb chicken thighs, cut into chunks
- 2 cans (15 oz) white beans, rinsed
- 1 onion, 2 carrots, 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 4 cups low-sodium broth + 1 can diced tomatoes
- 4 cups chopped spinach or cabbage
- 1 tbsp oil; 1 tsp thyme; 2 garlic cloves

STEPS

1. Brown chicken in oil; remove. Cook vegetables 6 minutes, then garlic and thyme.
2. Return chicken; add broth, tomatoes and beans. Simmer 25 minutes.
3. Stir in greens for 3 minutes. Serve with a slice of whole-grain bread if you like — eaten last.

33 · Chickpea and spinach coconut curry

Serves 4 · 30 min · Plate: chickpeas + veg · ¼ rice

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans (15 oz) chickpeas, rinsed
- 1 can (13.5 oz) light coconut milk
- 1 can (14.5 oz) diced tomatoes
- 1 onion; 2 garlic cloves; 1 tsp ginger
- 2 tbsp curry powder
- 1 bag (6 oz) spinach + 2 cups frozen cauliflower

STEPS

1. Cook onion in a little oil 5 minutes; add garlic, ginger and curry powder for 1 minute.
2. Add tomatoes, coconut milk, chickpeas and cauliflower; simmer 15 minutes.
3. Stir in spinach. Serve with ½ cup brown rice per person; add leftover chicken for extra protein.

34 · Burger bowl with crispy potato wedges

Serves 4 · 35 min · Plate: ½ salad · ¼ beef · ¼ potato

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb 90% lean ground beef
- 1 lb potatoes, cut into wedges
- 1 head romaine, chopped
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes; ½ red onion; pickles
- ½ cup shredded cheese
- Sauce: ¼ cup Greek yogurt, 1 tbsp mustard, 1 tbsp ketchup

STEPS

1. Toss wedges in 1 tbsp oil and paprika; roast at 425 °F for 25–30 minutes.
2. Brown beef with garlic powder and pepper until cooked through (160 °F).
3. Build bowls: lettuce, tomatoes, onion, pickles, beef, cheese, a few wedges and sauce.

CHAPTER 10

Recipes 35–40: Snacks and desserts

Snacks are optional. When you have one, pair a carb with a protein or fat — it tends to keep you fuller than a carb on its own.

35 · Apple slices with peanut butter

Serves 1 · 3 min · Fruit + fat/protein

INGREDIENTS

- 1 apple, sliced
- 1½ tbsp natural peanut butter
- Pinch of cinnamon
- 1 tsp chopped peanuts (optional)

STEPS

1. Slice the apple and sprinkle with cinnamon.
2. Dip in peanut butter; top with peanuts if you like.
3. For work, pack the peanut butter in a small container and squeeze lemon on the slices.

36 · Crispy roasted chickpeas

Makes 4 servings · 35 min · Fiber + protein

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cans (15 oz) chickpeas, rinsed and patted very dry
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp paprika, ½ tsp garlic powder, ½ tsp cumin
- Pinch of salt

STEPS

1. Heat oven to 400 °F. Toss chickpeas with oil and spices.
2. Roast 25–30 minutes, shaking the pan twice, until crunchy.
3. Cool completely; store loosely covered up to 4 days. A serving is about ⅓ cup.

37 · Veggie sticks with herb yogurt dip

Serves 4 · 10 min · Veg + protein

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp dried dill, ½ tsp garlic powder, 1 tbsp lemon juice
- Baby carrots, bell pepper strips, celery and broccoli florets
- Or swap the dip for ½ cup hummus

STEPS

1. Stir yogurt with dill, garlic powder, lemon and pepper.
2. Portion dip into 4 small containers.
3. Pack vegetables alongside; keeps 4 days.

38 · Frozen berry yogurt bark

Makes 8 pieces · 10 min + 3 h freezing · Dessert with protein

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup blueberries or mixed berries
- 3 tbsp chopped almonds or walnuts
- 1 tbsp dark chocolate chips (optional)

STEPS

1. Line a sheet pan with parchment. Stir vanilla into the yogurt and spread ½ inch thick.
2. Scatter berries, nuts and chips on top.
3. Freeze 3 hours, break into pieces and keep frozen in a bag.

39 · Hard-boiled eggs with cherry tomatoes

Serves 1 · 2 min (with eggs made Sunday) · Protein + veg

INGREDIENTS

- 2 hard-boiled eggs
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes or bell pepper strips
- Pepper, paprika or everything-bagel seasoning
- A few whole-grain crackers (optional)

STEPS

1. Peel eggs and season.
2. Pack with tomatoes or peppers.
3. To boil: cover eggs with cold water, bring to a boil, turn off heat, cover 11 minutes, then cool in ice water.

40 · Baked cinnamon apples with walnuts

Serves 4 · 35 min · Warm dessert, no added sugar needed

INGREDIENTS

- 4 apples, cored and cut in half
- ¼ cup rolled oats
- ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- 1 tbsp melted butter or oil
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Plain Greek yogurt to serve

STEPS

1. Heat oven to 375 °F. Place apple halves cut side up in a baking dish.
2. Mix oats, walnuts, butter and cinnamon; spoon onto the apples.
3. Add ¼ cup water to the dish and bake 25–30 minutes until tender. Serve with a spoonful of yogurt.

CHAPTER 11

Eating on a budget and feeding a family

When money is tight this week

Lean on the lowest-cost proteins and vegetables in the book. A "budget week" can be built almost entirely from these:

LOW-COST BUILDING BLOCKS

GROUP	CHEAPEST RELIABLE CHOICES	RECIPES THAT USE THEM
Protein	Eggs, dry lentils, canned beans, chicken thighs, canned tuna	#1, #4, #6, #12, #13, #21, #29, #32
Vegetables	Cabbage, carrots, onions, frozen broccoli and mixed vegetables	#13, #20, #28, #30
Smart carbs	Rolled oats, brown rice, potatoes	#3, #7, #21, #30

- Cook a double pot of #13 lentil soup or #22 chili and freeze in single portions — your "emergency lunch" supply.
- Buy the whole chicken or the family pack of thighs on sale and freeze in 1 lb bags.
- Rotate fewer recipes. Four or five dinners repeated is perfectly fine and cuts waste.
- Look up local food banks and pantries, and check whether you qualify for SNAP — both are there for exactly this.

Cooking for a family

None of these recipes is "diet food," so there's no need to cook two meals. A few habits make the Plate rule family-friendly:

- **Serve "build your own."** Burrito bowls (#15), fajitas (#27) and burger bowls (#34) let everyone choose portions from the same pans.
- **Vegetables on the table first.** Put out a salad or a plate of raw vegetables while dinner finishes. People eat what's in front of them when they're hungry.
- **Kids' portions.** Children need different amounts from adults; serve them by age and appetite and let them decide how much to eat. Talk with their pediatrician about any specific needs.

- **Make it the default, not a rule.** Water on the table, sweet drinks as an occasional choice — without lectures.
- **Walk together.** A 10-minute family walk after dinner is a simple habit for everyone, not just you.

> **Talk to a professional.** A registered dietitian can adapt this plan to diabetes, kidney disease, heart disease, allergies or cultural food preferences. Medicare and many insurance plans cover medical nutrition therapy for diabetes and kidney disease — ask your doctor for a referral.

CHAPTER 12

Build-your-own-plate worksheet

Use this page to turn your own favorite meals into Plate-rule meals. Pick one dish you already like and rebuild it.

WORKSHEET

MY MEAL MAKEOVER

The meal I eat often:

½ plate — vegetables I could add or increase:

¼ plate — my protein (palm-size):

¼ plate — my smart carb (fist-size):

One swap I'll try (drink, side, bread, sauce):

I'll eat this first:

and this last:

I'll walk 10 minutes after:

WORKSHEET

MY WEEK AT A GLANCE

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	WALK AFTER?
Mon				
Tue				
Wed				
Thu				
Fri				
Sat				
Sun				

Example makeover. Spaghetti night: keep the sauce, add a bag of spinach to it, switch to whole-wheat pasta and serve a fist-sized portion, add meatballs or beans for protein, and start with a side salad.

SOURCES

References

This guide draws on public guidance from the organizations below and on peer-reviewed research topics. We cite by organization and topic; please see each organization's website for current guidance.

- American Diabetes Association — Standards of Care in Diabetes, nutrition therapy and the Diabetes Plate Method (recent editions).
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIH/NIDDK) — Erectile dysfunction: causes and symptoms; diabetes and healthy eating; kidney disease eating guidance.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — National Diabetes Prevention Program; healthy eating for people with prediabetes.
- US Department of Agriculture and HHS — Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025; MyPlate.
- USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service — Safe minimum internal temperatures and leftovers guidance.
- American Heart Association — Healthy eating patterns, sodium and added-sugar guidance.
- American Urological Association — Guideline on erectile dysfunction (recent editions).
- Mayo Clinic and Cleveland Clinic — Patient information on erectile dysfunction, prediabetes and low blood sugar (hypoglycemia).
- Peer-reviewed studies on food order (vegetables and protein before carbohydrates) and after-meal blood-sugar response, 2015–2024.
- Peer-reviewed reviews and meta-analyses on short walks after meals and post-meal glucose, 2016–2023.
- Peer-reviewed research on lifestyle change, Mediterranean-style eating and erectile function, including an Italian randomized trial in men with obesity (early 2000s).
- US Food and Drug Administration — Public warnings about "male enhancement" products containing hidden drug ingredients.

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