

THE COMPLETE  
**MEAL  
PREP**

COOKBOOK FOR  
BEGINNERS

*Your Essential Guide To Losing Weight  
And Saving Time*



Delicious,  
Simple And  
Healthy Meals  
TO PREP AND  
GO!



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# Meal Prep

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*The complete meal prep cookbook for beginners: your essential guide to losing weight and saving time – delicious, simple, and healthy meals to prep and go!*

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## Introduction

Meal preppers, welcome! This book is *all about* meal prepping, from tips and tricks, benefits and secrets, all the way to recipes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If you have a goal to lose weight and trim down, you've started at the right place as meal prepping can really help you to reach your goals. There's something about being organized and dedicated which makes you really want to stick to your goals and eat the foods you know will deliver you to your healthiest weight yet.

These recipes are not “diet” recipes; they are healthy, nutritious, filling, and tasty recipes. I don't believe you need to cut out food groups or deprive yourself in order to lose weight. In fact, eating properly, eating enough, and eating foods that satisfy you will result in weight loss you can maintain and sustain. So, if you're looking for a particular diet or eating style, then this might not be the book for you! But I hope it is, as I know you'll love these recipes as much as I do.

Oh, I should add a bit about me! I am not a nutritionist or dietitian. But I am someone who has successfully lost weight through sensible and healthy eating, and of course, meal prepping! I want to pass on my recipes and my knowledge of meal prepping so you too can experience the same success and health benefits.

Please consult your doctor or nutritionist for advice and guidance if you are looking to lose large amounts of weight, or if you have health issues which might be affected due to a change in diet. This book is a friendly and supportive guideline to help you lose weight in a healthy way, without extreme changes or deprivation.

Now, let's get into the ins and outs of meal prepping!

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# Chapter 1: What Is Meal Prepping?

Meal prepping is the art of preparing your meals the night (or a few nights) before eating. It usually involves preparing a few portions of each meal, packing them away in airtight containers, and storing in the fridge. Many people prep their meals these days, because it saves time, encourages healthy eating, and controls portions. Sometimes, the meal is completely prepared and cooked in its entirety before being stacked away in the fridge or freezer until it is needed. Whereas sometimes, meals are only partially prepared so they can be cooked right before eating. For example, you can prep lasagna by cooking the sauces and layering it all up before covering and storing in the fridge, raw. You would then place the lasagna into a preheated oven before eating the next night. Whatever prepping method you choose, it's a great way to manage your time and your diet!

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## Chapter 2: Why Meal Prep?

There are countless reasons to get into the joys of meal prepping, but here are some of the top reasons:

### ***Saves time***

By setting aside a chunk of time to get all or most of your meals for the week prepped, you are saving yourself hours of frazzled and rushed cooking throughout the coming days. You can wake up in the morning, grab your prepped breakfast from the fridge, throw your prepped lunch into your bag (ready to eat as soon as you're ready!), and come home to a ready-made dinner you only need to heat in the oven or microwave. Not only do you save *cooking* time, you also save *thinking* time. I don't know about you, but thinking about what to have for breakfast, lunch and dinner always takes up far more of my time than it should!

### ***Saves money***

When you decide what to eat for lunch and dinner as you go through the week, you end up heading to the supermarket every couple of days, which increases your chance of spending money on things you don't really need. But when you make a plan of what you will eat for each meal for the entire week, you can do *one* shop where you buy only what you need for those particular meals. You will end up with far less unnecessary items, and more money in your wallet!

### ***Keeps you healthy with portion control and planning***

Meal prepping is all about packing away single servings of food for each meal. Therefore, you only make enough for a certain number of portions, with no leftovers. I'm sure you can sympathize with me when I say that leftovers are my absolute downfall! When I don't prep my meals, I end up eating far larger portions than I need, because it's right there in front of me! When you go to eat your breakfast, lunch and dinner, all you have to eat is the single portion you have made, nothing more.

Of course, this does mean you need to prepare sensible portion sizes in the first place, which I have aimed to provide in these recipes. You can adjust the



ingredient quantities to suit your personal portion-size preference for your BMI, calorie requirements and activity levels.

### ***Helps you to reach your goals***

Quite simply, prepping your meals helps you to remain in control of your eating habits in order to reach your weight loss and health-related goals. You can assess the calories and macros for each recipe and make sure they fit with your weight loss eating plan, so you know that each meal you enjoy is going to help you get to where you want to be.

### ***Gives you some “you time”!***

This works two ways! One: the actual meal-prepping process gives you some time for yourself to quietly potter away and enjoy being in the kitchen, with busy hands and lots of creating to do. Two: you will have so much more time to yourself (and for your loved ones) throughout the week when you would usually be rushing around trying to prepare meals from scratch.

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## **Chapter 3: Tips And Tricks**

### ***Get a scrap book to keep your favorite recipes and ideas***

Trying to think of things to have for each meal can be tiresome and draining, so it's great to have a compilation of your favorite dishes, and some new ones to try too! When you come across a dish you really love and you would like it to be a regular in your rotation, print or write it out and stick it in your homemade recipe book! Hopefully you'll find some new favorites in this book to add to your repertoire.

If you like to freestyle some of your meals and forgo the use of a recipe, make sure you write down the ingredients you used and a rough rundown of the method, so you can recreate it another time! You'll end up with your very own, self-curated recipe book.

### ***Get your partner or family in on the meal-prep fun***

If you're prepping for a partner or for your family as well as for yourself, don't take on all the work! Get your family or loved one involved, and treat it as a chance for some quality time for talking and laughing as you prep. If you have kids, give them an easy job so they can practice their food-prep skills while making them feel useful and appreciated in the kitchen with Mom or Dad. This will help to establish meal-prep time as a fun and relaxing thing to do, which means you'll be far more likely to keep the routine up!

### ***Make a dedicated meal-prep box to keep in the pantry***

In my pantry, you will find a large box filled with containers, measuring cups and spoons, and a range of regularly-used ingredients. I keep oats, nuts, seeds, canned goods such as beans and corn, olive oil, salt, pepper, herbs, spices, and more. When I embark on each meal-prep session I place this box on the counter and it has all of the essentials I need to create many meals. All I need to do is get my fresh produce, meat and dairy from the fridge and I'm good to go. This makes life quicker and easier as it means you don't need to rummage around in cupboards, shelves, and drawers to find utensils, containers, and ingredients.

### ***Choose a meal-prep day and make sure it's a relaxing experience***

If you plan your meal prepping days right, you will begin to really look forward to each meal prep session. It shouldn't be a stressful, rushed, or cumbersome activity, so choose a day when you've got a large chunk of time all to yourself. I find that Sunday afternoons and evenings are the best, as there are rarely social or work activities on Sunday (and there should never be!). I start at 2pm and just meander through the process for as long as it takes and I find it really does relax me. I usually put a podcast or movie on my computer and watch or listen as I quietly work – it's a great time to binge watch a great show! The great thing about Sunday is that you wake up on Monday morning with all of your meals planned and prepped. Choose a day and time that works best for you and do whatever you can to make the experience enjoyable. You could even invite a friend or two around to chatter away with you as you prep (perhaps a nice glass of wine while you're at it?).

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## Chapter 4: 9 Rules For Successful Meal Prepping

### 1. *Keep it simple*

Start with simple recipes with minimal ingredients. Most of the recipes in this book are simple and easy to make, without many fancy ingredients or tricky steps. Don't overwhelm yourself by prepping complicated or fiddly dishes – keep it simple until you feel confident to branch out. This will save time and money, and it will make your first prepping experiences easy and enjoyable.

### 2. *Utilize the freezer*

Frozen prepped meals are a lifesaver during busy and chaotic times. A good way to utilize the freezer is to double the recipe for a particular meal and put half of the servings in the fridge for the consequent days, and put the other half in the freezer for later down the track. You'll be very pleased you did so, especially during times when your meal-prep game schedule is slipping!

### 3. *Keep your macros in mind: proteins, carbs, fats*

You don't want to sit down to your prepped lunch only to find that it's too filling or not filling enough due to unbalanced macros. Remember to include a portion of protein, some good fats, and some healthy wholegrain carbs for optimum energy and satiety. Most of the recipes in this book have a great balance of macros, but you can adjust them to suit your needs and preferences.

### 4. *Stock-up on flavor-packing non-perishables*

Herbs, spices, vinegars, oils, and natural flavorings can turn any simple dish into a tasty masterpiece, with very little added calories. What's more, they last a very long time in the pantry so you don't need to worry about using them up before their best-before date. Splash out on a big haul of natural, flavor-giving ingredients to pack into your meal-prep box. This means that you can use simple base ingredients, and adjust the flavors with the addition of healthy and low-cal seasonings.

### 5. *Invest in storage equipment*

This is an important one. To successfully prep, you need containers to store your meals in. High-quality plastic or glass containers with airtight lids are ideal,

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especially if you can find a set which includes different sizes. Small, single-serve containers are really handy for breakfasts such as oats and chia pudding, and snacks such as fruit and nut mix. Pyrex bowls which have airtight lids are ideal for large salads and soups. Have a shop around and find yourself a few value packs, and allocate a special box, drawer, or cupboard, especially for your meal-prep containers.

### **6. *Get creative with color***

During my own meal prepping journey I found that using bright and varied colors really helped me to get excited about making, and eating my prepped meals. A pile of red cabbage with bright red bell peppers and some vibrant green cilantro – beautiful! Rich yellow corn kernels, inky black beans, glossy red chili, and pale green avocado, it looks as amazing as it tastes. If you're like me, then you'll get a kick out of putting together beautiful and fresh-looking meals to fill your containers. Fresh fruits, veggies, herbs, and rich spices are the best sources of edible color.

### **7. *Predict your cravings and prep accordingly***

If you don't feel like eating a particular meal, then don't prep it. Don't think that you must eat a certain type of dish simply because it seems like the healthiest option. You can make any dish healthy! Even if it's traditionally a junk food. For example, you will find recipes for burgers and rich pastas in this book, but they are nutritious versions which fit in with your weight loss plans. If you've got a craving for sweeter dishes, then try a yummy oatmeal with dates for breakfast! If you feel like something a bit heavier for dinner (tiredness, hormones, and overindulgence can make us crave comfort foods) then choose a recipe for dinner with sweet potatoes and beans to fill you up. The bottom line? Prep foods you want to eat that particular week! This way, you'll avoid seeking other foods or snacks to satisfy you in between meals.

### **8. *Make a plan and stick to it***

This is where you need to be a bit strict and structured. Decide on a day to complete your prepping, set the time aside, and stick to it. Get your shopping done on the same day so your produce and meats are fresh, then set aside a couple of hours to prep, prep, prep! If you end up missing a prep day and you don't have the time to make up for it, you might find you slip back into day-to-

day meals and the unhealthy choices and unbalanced portion sizes may creep back. Once the routine has been established it will be so easy!

### 9. *Make it fun*

Cooking should be as fun as eating, in my opinion! And the same goes for prepping. If you enjoy yourself, you'll get into a positive mindset about meal prepping, and a positive mindset about food will follow on. There are many ways to make meal-prep sessions fun! Play music, have a glass of wine, watch your favorite TV show, anything that relaxes you and puts you at ease as you work. Weight loss needn't be a drag, it can actually be an enjoyable and nourishing experience if you make the process work in a way that you enjoy.

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## **Chapter 5: How To Meal Prep Like A Pro**

You will get into your own meal-prep rhythm, but here is a step-by-step guide to meal prepping like a pro which you can use to guide you when you first get started.

### ***Schedule your prep day***

Take a look at your diary or calendar (or app on your phone you use to schedule your days!) and find a day when you can set aside a good 3 hours for prepping. Weekends are ideal, especially Sundays, so you can prep for the entire week coming. Set time aside for meal planning, shopping, and prepping. Don't double-book yourself, treat it like an important appointment you must keep.

### ***Write your meal plan***

Sit down with a pad and paper and write down what you want to eat for breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the week ahead. Try to keep it to 2 variations per week. For example: 2 different options for breakfast, lunch and dinner, as opposed to a different meal every day, or the same thing every day.

Write out a shopping list based on your meal plan, taking into account the items you already have in your kitchen.

### ***Go shopping***

Head to the supermarket and strictly follow your shopping list! Don't be tempted to stray and buy items you don't need. When you get home, unpack your groceries and place them in easy-to-find places, or even leave them on the bench if you're going to prep immediately. Remember to refrigerate meats and dairy. If you have a "prep box", put your dried or nonperishable goods into it so they're ready to go for prepping.

### ***Prep***

First, figure out which steps you can multi-task. If you need to cook something in the oven, prepare to get another task done as it cooks. If you need to let something soak or cool, use that time to complete other steps. Figure out which meals are the most time-consuming and get started on those first, using little bits

of spare time in the process to complete quicker tasks such as mixing granola or slicing fresh veggies.

### ***Pack, label and store***

Before you begin, it's a good idea to clear a shelf in your fridge (and freezer, if using) so you don't have to shuffle things around and pack things into awkward places when it comes time to store.

Use the most compact container you can when it's time to store your meals. This is when having a range of different sizes will come in very handy!

If you like, you can label your containers by sticking a removable, plain sticker onto the lid and marking it with a marker. Write down the date you cooked/prepped the meal so you know how long it has been in the fridge. This will help you to ensure your meals are always fresh.

Pack away your prepped meals, clean up, sit back, and relax!

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## Chapter 6: Weight Loss – Nutrition, Calories, Macros and Micros

### *How weight loss works – with a personal story to match!*

This will have to be a simplified version of the weight loss process! And keep in mind, not everyone is the same and some people lose weight more easily than others, and others may keep weight on for various health reasons. Make sure you see your doctor first if you are aiming to lose weight, as they can look through your medical history and point out any potential patterns or issues, which could help you to find the best method for you. Now that that's out of the way, we can get into the general rules and sciences behind weight loss.

So, when you eat food, you are taking in energy (calories). When you move and exercise, you are burning calories. When you burn more calories than what you are eating, you will lose weight. Keep in mind that your body needs a basic number of calories in order to survive and keep your organs running, which is why it's very important to eat enough. I add this because when I first started to consider calories I was a bit taken aback by the notion of “burning more calories than you take in”, thinking I would have to burn 1800 calories worth of exercise a day! But perhaps that was just my very silly mistake; you are probably a lot more intelligent than that!

When you reach a calorie deficit, your body begins to turn to energy sources, which are already in your body, i.e. stored fat. Sometimes, muscle can also be used for energy, which does result in weight loss, but it also results in muscle loss and a less-toned physique. You can remedy this by incorporating strength training into your fitness routine, as well as high intensity cardio. By doing this, you are helping your body to burn fat as well as building muscle at the same time. You also need to eat properly to give your body enough protein and energy to get through those workouts and repair those muscles properly afterward!

Some people opt for the low-calorie method of weight loss, and I have also done that. It worked for a while but I couldn't sustain it, so I had to turn to another method. I decided to ramp-up my workouts and eat a more well-rounded diet, full of nutritious foods, and enough of them. By training with weights and high intensity cardio, my metabolism became faster and more efficient, and my

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