

## R.E.A.L Goal<sup>SM</sup>: Meal Plan/Prep on a Budget and Recipe Ideas

*(Realistic, Easy, Attainable, Life Goals)*

**Example:** I will meal prep one meal for three days of the week; I will spend at least 30 minutes, one day a week planning meals for the week.

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



### Quick tips:

- **Set a budget.** Be realistic with the amount you want to spend on food each week.
- **Create a shopping list and stick to it!** There are many free apps and templates you can use to create your list. Some of these apps and templates can be found on the websites listed below.
- **Plan your meals around items that are on sale.** Check store rewards programs and flyers, newspaper inserts, and online coupons. Be sure you are buying foods you and your family will actually eat.
- **Focus on shopping the perimeter of the store; this is where you will find your fresh produce, meats, eggs, and dairy products.** Check your store flyers for these items they are typically on sale or have a coupon to make sure you are getting the best price.
- **Check your pantry and fridge monthly.** Take inventory of what is expiring soon and use those first, so it does not go to waste
- **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 important steps to successful meal planning; using the proper containers can make a difference in how long your meals will last.
  - **Refrigeration at 40°F or lower**
    - One to two days: Cooked ground poultry or ground beef
    - Three to four days: Cooked whole meats, fish, and poultry; soups and stews
    - Five days: Cooked beans; hummus
    - One week: Hard-boiled eggs; chopped vegetables if stored in an air-tight container
    - Two weeks: Soft cheese, opened
    - Five to six weeks: Hard cheese, opened

- **Freezing at 0°F or lower**

Two to three months: Soups and stews; cooked beans

Three to six months: Cooked or ground meat and poultry

Six to eight months: Berries and chopped fruit (banana, apples, pears, plums, mango) stored in a freezer bag

Eight to twelve months: Vegetables, if blanched first for about three to five 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, or tomato)

24 Eggs, beaten  
2 c. Milk or Water

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

**Instructions:** Bake at 350° for one hour and 20 minutes. Heat a piece throughout the week for breakfast good in the fridge for four days, serve with fruit.

#### Almond Butter Honey Oat Bars

2 c. Rolled oats

$\frac{2}{3}$  c. Almond butter, or nut butter of choice

$\frac{1}{4}$  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 the mixture and spread evenly. Cover and place in the 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

$1\frac{1}{2}$  c. Milk of your choice

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

### Lunch

#### Chicken Burrito Bowls

1 tbs. Olive oil

2 large, boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed

1 c. brown rice, cooked

1 White onion, diced

15 oz black beans, drained and rinsed

Salsa

1 Clove of 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 for about three 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 five minutes or until the chicken is cooked through. Divide the mixture equally into four to six bowls and sprinkle over some thinly sliced green onions.

## Wraps

Wholegrain wrap or large leaf lettuce like butter, Boston, or iceberg.

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

Add veggies (spinach, tomatoes, peppers, onion)

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

## Dinner

### Turkey Meatloaf

½ c. Breadcrumbs	2 cloves minced garlic	⅓ c. Parsley, chopped
1 lb. Ground turkey	½ c. Crumbled feta	1½ tsp. Salt
2 Eggs, beaten with 2 tbs. milk	¼ c. Sun-dried tomatoes	1 tsp. Pepper

**Instructions:** Stir all ingredients together in a large mixing bowl. Spray cooking spray into a 9x5 loaf pan and add meatloaf mixture. Bake at 375° for 45 minutes or until the internal meatloaf temperature is 165°.

### One Tray Alfredo Pasta

2 c. pasta, cooked al dente	½ c. Broccoli	1 tsp Salt
½ c. carrot, sliced	¾ c. Alfredo sauce	1 tsp Pepper

**Instructions:** Preheat oven to 400°. Take two sheets of aluminum foil, about 12x12-inch, stack them on top of each other. Fold one side of the foil about ⅓ of the way across the sheet, repeat for the 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. 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, refrigerate for three to five days.

### Chicken Barley Soup

1 tsp Olive oil	2 Cloves garlic, chopped	1½ lbs. Skinless bone-in chicken breast, makes 14oz cooked
1 c. Chopped carrots	¼ c. Parsley, chopped	7 c. Reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 c. Chopped onions	2 Bay leaves	Black pepper, to taste
½ c. Chopped celery	⅔ c. Dry pearl barley	

**Instructions:** 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 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 nine 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 flatbread. Quesadillas, mini pizzas, chicken salad, sandwich

### Check out these websites to learn more:

- Foodsmart– For recipes ([offered by Prevea360](#))
- Skinny Taste – For recipes
- Northshore.org - Meal Preparation
- EatingWell – Beginners guide to meal prep
- The Balance - The 8 Best Coupon Apps of 2021
- Develop Good Habits - 19 Best Meal Planning Apps and Websites to Save You Time and Money
- WebMD - 4 Healthy Meal Plans From the Pyramid

To choose another goal, go to: [prevea360.com/realgoals](https://prevea360.com/realgoals)

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