



21

balanced dinners,
with a shopping list
for each week

Meal-planning toolkit

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Planning ahead makes it easier to enjoy a home-cooked, healthy dinner every night of the week. This plan follows the guidelines of the [Mediterranean diet](#) and features Heart & Stroke recipes.

Inside:

Three weeks of yum: Simple, delicious dinners with a grocery list for each week

Make your plate: The easiest way to balance the nutrients you need

6 kitchen shortcuts: Handy hacks when you're pressed for time



Heart
&Stroke™

Healthy meal planner

Week one

Sunday

Lemon roasted halibut and asparagus

Baked asparagus

🕒 Under 30 min

Monday

Chickpea curry

Brown basmati rice

Sautéed kale

Tuesday

Broccoli lentil pasta

Tossed green salad with almonds

🕒 Under 30 min

Wednesday

Salmon, bean and orzo salad

Mixed greens with olive oil and balsamic

**Use leftover salad from Tuesday*

🕒 Under 30 min

Thursday

Store-bought rotisserie chicken

Sweet potatoes

Asparagus

🕒 Under 30 min

Friday

Tofu stir-fry with bok choy and red peppers

Quinoa

**Not a fan of tofu? Use leftover chicken in stir-fry*

Saturday

Make your own take out!

Veggie and cheese pizza

Mixed green salad with vinaigrette

**Use leftover veg for pizza toppings*

🕒 Under 30 min

All underlined recipes can be found at

heartandstroke.ca/recipes

Shopping list

Produce

- ☐ kale
- ☐ zucchini
- ☐ sweet potatoes
- ☐ asparagus
- ☐ arugula
- ☐ red peppers
- ☐ bok choy
- ☐ salad greens
- ☐ orange pepper
- ☐ broccoli
- ☐ tomatoes
- ☐ fresh parsley
- ☐ shiitake mushrooms
- ☐ limes
- ☐ lemons

Grains and pasta

- ☐ brown basmati rice
- ☐ quinoa
- ☐ whole grain orzo
- ☐ whole grain rotini
- ☐ whole grain pizza crust

Nuts, seeds, beans, lentils and tofu

- ☐ no-salt-added chickpeas
- ☐ no-salt-added red kidney beans
- ☐ lentils
- ☐ tofu
- ☐ almonds

Canned goods

- ☐ coconut milk
- ☐ canned tomatoes
- ☐ salsa
- ☐ pizza sauce

Dairy

- ☐ mozzarella cheese

Fresh meat and fish

- ☐ salmon fillets
- ☐ halibut pieces
- ☐ rotisserie chicken

Frozen foods

- ☐ corn niblets

Healthy meal planner

Week two

Sunday

Lemony sole

Millet with herbs

Carrot and sweet pepper stir-fry

🕒 Under 30 min

Monday

Skillet quinoa with black beans, cilantro and feta

Tomato, cucumber and spinach salad

🕒 Under 30 min

Tuesday

 Breakfast for dinner!

Scrambled eggs

Whole grain toast

Sliced tomatoes

Fruit salad

🕒 Under 30 min

Wednesday

Greek lentil salad

on a bed of baby kale greens

Whole grain pita and hummus or tzatziki

🕒 Under 30 min

Thursday

Mango chicken salad

Thai inspired salad

🕒 Under 30 min

Friday

Sautéed garlic shrimp on whole grain linguine

Broccoli

🕒 Under 30 min

Saturday

 Make your own takeout!

Thai beef salad rolls

Thai shrimp and noodle soup

**Use linguine noodles and shrimp from Friday*

Shopping list

Produce

- ☐ carrots
- ☐ tomatoes
- ☐ cucumbers
- ☐ spinach
- ☐ red peppers
- ☐ yellow pepper
- ☐ cauliflower
- ☐ broccoli
- ☐ baby kale greens
- ☐ celery
- ☐ cilantro
- ☐ mint
- ☐ parsley
- ☐ lemon
- ☐ black olives
- ☐ strawberries
- ☐ grapes
- ☐ apples
- ☐ limes
- ☐ mangoes
- ☐ oranges
- ☐ romaine lettuce
- ☐ hot pepper
- ☐ red onion

Grains and pasta

- ☐ millet
- ☐ quinoa
- ☐ whole grain bread
- ☐ brown rice noodles
- ☐ rice paper wrappers
- ☐ whole grain linguine

Nuts, seeds, beans and lentils

- ☐ no salt-added black beans
- ☐ walnuts
- ☐ lentils

Dairy

- ☐ feta cheese

Fresh meat, fish and eggs

- ☐ sole fillets
- ☐ eggs
- ☐ beef striploin steaks
- ☐ shrimp
- ☐ extra lean ground chicken

All underlined recipes can be found at
heartandstroke.ca/recipes

Healthy meal planner

Week three

Sunday

Tofu kebabs
Grilled vegetables
Whole grain couscous

Monday

Lentil millet burgers

Grilled vegetable and spinach salad
**Use yesterday's grilled vegetables*

Tuesday

Vegetarian chili with kidney beans

Whole grain couscous
Mixed green salad
**Use couscous from Sunday*

Wednesday

Chicken and vegetable ratatouille pasta

Can be enjoyed on its own or with
pasta or rice for a family meal

Thursday

Toasted barley and wild rice salad

Roasted broccoli and cauliflower
**Use leftover chicken from Wednesday*

Friday

Sandwich night!
Tuna on whole grain bread
Arugula and Parmesan salad with lemon vinaigrette
🕒 Under 30 min

Saturday

Roasted trout with avocado-mango salsa

Quinoa
Green beans
🕒 Under 30 min

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Shopping list

Produce

- ☐ red pepper
- ☐ zucchini
- ☐ eggplant
- ☐ green onion
- ☐ cilantro
- ☐ tomatoes
- ☐ broccoli
- ☐ cauliflower
- ☐ red pepper
- ☐ yellow pepper
- ☐ green pepper
- ☐ spinach
- ☐ salad greens
- ☐ arugula
- ☐ green beans
- ☐ lemons
- ☐ mango
- ☐ avocado
- ☐ limes

Grains

- ☐ whole grain couscous
- ☐ millet
- ☐ coarse bulgur
- ☐ pot barley
- ☐ wild rice
- ☐ quinoa
- ☐ brown rice
- ☐ whole grain bread
- ☐ whole-wheat rotini pasta

Nuts, seeds, beans, lentils and tofu

- ☐ lentils
- ☐ no salt added chickpeas
- ☐ no salt-added navy beans
- ☐ tofu

Canned goods

- ☐ tomato paste
- ☐ diced tomatoes
- ☐ canned tuna

Dairy

- ☐ cheddar cheese (19% MF)
- ☐ Parmesan cheese

Fresh meat, fish and eggs

- ☐ eggs
- ☐ cooked chicken or turkey
- ☐ skinless, boneless
- ☐ chicken breasts
- ☐ trout fillets

Frozen foods

- ☐ corn niblets



Make your plate

A simple way to balance nutrients and portion sizes

Healthy eating begins one plate at a time. Instead of counting calories or food groups as you plan meals, choose foods that fill your plate in a healthy and balanced way. Here's how:

When you sit down for your next meal, look at your empty plate and take a moment to strategically plan what you will put on it. Divide it in half. Then follow these guidelines:

- Fill half your plate with vegetables and some fruit.
- Use a quarter of the plate for whole grains such as quinoa, brown rice, pot barley or whole grain pasta.
- Add a source of protein to the remaining quarter. Protein choices include bean, lentils, eggs, chicken, fish, meat, tofu or Greek yogurt.

Of course, you won't always have a meal that splits nicely into those quadrants, and that's okay. You can still use the plate model to figure out if anything is missing. For example, if you are eating spaghetti and tomato sauce, you'll have more than a quarter-plate of grains, will be missing protein, and won't have half a plate of vegetables. A more balanced plate would be spaghetti with lentil-tomato Bolognese, broccoli, cauliflower and carrots.

For your beverage, water is the best choice. It quenches your thirst without the calories and sugar that are found in pop, juice and other sweetened beverages.

Learn more with this interactive [Eat Well Plate](#) from Health Canada.

6 shortcuts to make dinner faster



It's a whole lot easier to make meals in under 30 minutes if your kitchen is filled with the right ingredients and you take time to plan ahead. Here are 6 tips to consider when you shop and cook:

Befriend your butcher. On-site butchers in grocery stores can trim your meat, fish or poultry to your exact specifications. Here are some time savers you can ask for:

- Butterflied chicken breasts. They will cut cooking time in half.
- Diced or bite-sized meat to use in recipes such as
- Chicken, turkey or salmon strips for recipes like
- Filleted fish (to remove dense skin) for fast and fabulous dishes such as

Check the cooking time when buying rice, noodles and other grains.

- Select small or thin whole grain pasta shapes, such as spaghetti or macaroni. They can shave 10 minutes off your prep time compared with rotini or linguine. Try cooking up a quick
- Choose parboiled brown rice, which cooks in 10 minutes vs. 50 minutes for brown rice. Pair rice with
- Try quinoa, which cooks in just 15 minutes. Try it in

Buy an inexpensive mandolin (\$10) for quick and easy vegetable slicing. In less than five minutes, you can have a bowl brimming with thinly sliced carrot, parsnip, celery, beet, cucumber and red pepper. Add these vegetables to salad greens or dress them as-is for a crunchy, lettuce-free salad. Simple! You can also use these ingredients as a base for stew or soup, such as

Do some prep work on your day off. Fill containers with peeled carrots, washed lettuce, celery, broccoli and cauliflower florets, sliced mushrooms and peppers. Then use them to create simple salads or stir-fries on busy week nights.

More free time on your day off? Cook batches of easy-to-freeze dinner options. Try

Embrace seafood. From sole and haddock to quick-cooking shrimp and scallops, you can have a homemade dinner in about 10 minutes (including the brown rice and side salad). Try

All underlined recipes can be found at