

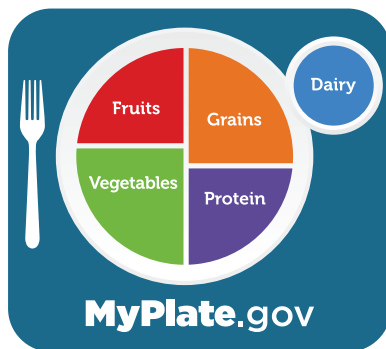
Delicious Meals in Minutes

In today's fast-paced world, preparing quick, nutritious, and budget-friendly meals that everyone in the family will enjoy is more important than ever. But making meals that are both quick and enjoyable takes planning. To make delicious meals come together in minutes, consider these tips:

- Spend time each week planning and organizing your meals. Make a grocery list while planning your meals for the week. Consider flipping through a cookbook for recipe ideas, searching for recipes on the Internet to use ingredients you have on hand, or using the recipe concepts below to build a variety of meals from kitchen staples.
- While shopping, consider different varieties of the same foods that fit into your budget and health needs. Fresh, frozen, dried, and canned varieties are available for many common foods.

When building meals, keep MyPlate in mind. Try to have a protein, vegetable, fruit, whole grain, and dairy source at each meal.

- If you're making a meal that does not have all the food groups, try enjoying them before or after a meal. For example, if vegetables don't fit in your meal, enjoy a vegetable with a dip for an appetizer. Or if fruits aren't meshing with your dinner plans, enjoy them with a sweet treat as a dessert.



When you're ready to prepare the meal, assemble all the ingredients and equipment needed.



- If you're using a recipe, read it over before you start to identify tasks you might need to do at the same time. If you're making multiple recipes and want to have them ready at the same time, work backward from cooking and prep times. Identify the recipes with the longest time and start with that dish.
- Clean and chop all fruits and vegetables.
- Open all packaged products at one time.
- Clean as you go. When you're waiting on water to boil or the oven to heat, clean the dishes you are finished with to allow them to air dry while you finish tasks of the recipe.

Organization is the best tool you have to save time.

- Store your utensils and equipment close to where

you will use them, and in an orderly manner, so they are easy to find and use. For example, keep oven mitts close to the oven and store strainers near the sink.

- Buy equipment you can use for more than one job, such as freezer-to-oven-to-table bakeware.
- Avoid buying hard-to-clean items or those which break, rust, or stain easily. Wooden utensils generally last a long time when cared for properly.
- A food processor, blender, and microwave oven can save time if you know how to use them. Consider reading the owner's manual to better understand all the functions the equipment can do. For example, a blender can be used to make more than smoothies, like pureeing pasta sauce or making soup.

Eating is a sensory experience. A delicious meal depends on a blend of flavors, textures, temperature, and a variety of colors and shapes. A pleasant eating environment can enhance the appeal of food. Planning ahead can reduce stress leading up to the meal. This provides a chance for your family to sit down together to enjoy mealtime, which benefits everyone involved. Consider the recipe concepts below when making your next grocery list. Do you have any of the staples on hand? Can you cook one of the staples in bulk and incorporate it into different recipes throughout the week? What other recipes do you have that can incorporate the staples?

If this is overwhelming for your current lifestyle, start small. Planning and practicing can help you be more efficient in the kitchen. Changing habits and behaviors takes practice and time.

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Start with stock or broth

Stocks, broths, and liquids form a base for most soups. The most commonly used stocks include vegetable, chicken, and beef. At the grocery store, you can find these items as liquid broth and stock, concentrated in jarred varieties, or in dried form like bouillon cubes. Having stock or broth on hand allows you to use your imagination and what is in your kitchen to put together a quick, tasty, and nutritious meal. Adding rice and pasta to soup can also stretch the number of servings and add more nutrients. When adding grains, you might need more liquid. Below are basic guidelines for building a soup in minutes.

To make your own soup, you will need:

- One onion
- A protein or dairy food
- Vegetables
- Broth or stock
- Seasoning

Step 1: Chop a medium onion

Step 2: Choose 1 protein or dairy food

- 1 16-ounce can of beans (kidney, pinto, black, white, chickpeas, etc.)
- 1 pound ground or minced beef, chicken, ham, sausage, etc.
- 1 16-ounce can of beef, chicken, ham
- 1 cup of grated cheese

Step 3: Choose 1 or more fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables — 2-3 cups chopped

- Celery
- Green pepper
- Green beans
- Carrots
- Peas
- Corn
- Zucchini
- Squash
- Mushrooms
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower
- Cabbage

Step 4: Choose 1 or more types of stock, broth, or liquid — at least 4 cups

- 2 16-ounce cans of vegetable, chicken, or beef broth
- 4 cups of water and 4 cubes of vegetable, chicken, or beef bouillon
- 1 16-ounce can of crushed or diced tomatoes and 2 to 3 cups of water
- 4 cups of milk and 4 cubes bouillon

Step 5: Choose 1 or more seasonings

- 2 to 3 teaspoons of dried herbs (oregano, basil, cumin, chili powder, thyme, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, etc.)
- Bay leaf
- 2 to 4 or more tablespoons of fresh herbs
- 2 to 3 cloves minced garlic
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Wash your hands with warm water and soap.
2. Place a large pot over medium heat. Spray it with cooking spray.
3. Add onion and cook, stirring frequently until slightly browned. Add 1/4 cup of water to prevent sticking, if necessary.
4. If using a meat as the protein, add to the onion and brown.
5. If using cheese for the dairy in step 2, add during the last five minutes of cooking.
6. Add remaining ingredients (except fresh herbs).
7. Cover pot and simmer 20 to 30 minutes until meat is cooked and vegetables are tender.
8. Add more liquid as needed.
9. Add fresh herbs and/or cheese, if using. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
10. Simmer another 5 minutes. Serve.

Pulled from Plan.Eat.Move Make Your Own Soup: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/make-your-own-soup>

The following recipes provide options for making soup in a variety of ways:

1. Chunky Vegetable and Pasta Soup



- Onion
- Beans (pinto, white, garbanzo)
- Tomato, zucchini, mushrooms
- Vegetable stock
- Small shell macaroni
or any small-sized pasta

Total estimated time: 25 to 30 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/streamlined-minestrone-soup>

3. 10-Minute Bean Soup



- Onion
- Bratwurst, sausage, ham
- Beans (lima, navy, great northern) or split peas
- Chicken stock
- Garlic
- Salt and pepper

Total estimated time: 10 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/10-minute-bean-soup>

2. Lasagna Soup



- Onion
- Lean ground beef
- Chopped spinach (fresh, frozen and thawed,
or canned and drained)
- Marinara sauce
- Low-sodium chicken, vegetable, or beef broth
or stock
- Lasagna noodles or other small pasta shapes like
rigatoni, tortellini

Total estimated time: 25 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/lasagna-soup>

4. Chicken or Turkey Soup



- Onion
- Skinned, boned chicken breast or turkey
- Carrot, celery
- Chicken stock
- Brown rice or egg noodle
- Parsley, salt, pepper

Total estimated time: 40 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/chicken-and-dumpling-soup>

Start with pasta

Pasta is the perfect staple to have on hand for a quick dinner for family or guests. You can cook a simple sauce before the pasta is finished cooking. Try meat sauce, cheese sauce, clam sauce, marinara sauce, broccoli pesto sauce, or mushroom-zucchini sauce. A general rule of which shape of pasta to use is to serve thinner sauces with the longer, finer pastas and thicker sauces with short pastas. One pound of dried pasta will make four to six entrée servings. Below are general guidelines for building a pasta dish in minutes.

To make your pasta, you will need:

- 5-6 quarts of water
- 4 teaspoons salt
- 1 (16 ounces) package of whole-wheat pasta (any shape)

Estimated time: 15 minutes

Directions:

1. Wash hands with warm water and soap.
2. Pour water into a large pot. Place pot on high heat.
3. Add salt. Bring water to a full rolling boil.
4. Add pasta. Stir pasta to prevent it from sticking. Make sure pasta is fully submerged in the water.
5. Return water to a rolling boil. Reduce heat to medium-high. Cook pasta according to the package time. Check the pasta with 2 to 3 minutes remaining in the cook time. Remove a piece of pasta and test that it is tender but still has a slightly firm bite, meaning it is done.
6. Once pasta is cooked, drain into a colander in the sink. (Note: Reserve about a cup of the pasta water to use to thin or thicken the sauce, if desired).
7. If serving a warm pasta dish, do not rinse the pasta as this helps the sauce stick. If serving a cold pasta dish, such as pasta salad, rinse pasta with cold water until it is cool to stop the cooking process.
8. If serving pasta with sauce, have sauce warming in a separate pot. Add pasta to the sauce and warm for about 2 minutes. Or spoon sauce over the pasta. (Note: You need about 1 1/2 cups of sauce for 16 ounces of pasta).
9. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Pulled from Plan.Eat.Move How to Make Whole Grain Pasta:

<https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/how-to-cook-whole-grain-pasta>

Additional recipe details are included in the link.

*Total estimated time for recipes is calculated using cooked pasta from recipe above.

The following recipes provide options for cooking pasta in a variety of ways:

1. Chicken Caesar Pasta



- Pasta
- Chicken breasts
- Lettuce
- Caesar dressing

Total estimated time: 10 to 15 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/chicken-caesar-pasta>

3. Italian Shrimp Skillet Pasta



- Linguini or angel hair pasta
- Frozen, peeled, and deveined shrimp thawed
- Mushrooms, fresh spinach
- Dry Italian dressing mix

Total estimated time: 10 to 15 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/italian-shrimp-pasta>

2. Easy Peasy Mac and Cheesy



- Shell or macaroni pasta
- Evaporated milk
- Mild or sharp shredded cheddar cheese
- Low-sodium peas (thawed or drained canned)
- Water-packed tuna (drained can)
- Garlic powder, salt, pepper

Total estimated time: 12 to 15 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/easy-peasy-mac-and-cheesy>

4. Pasta Primavera



- Pasta of choice
- Evaporated milk
- Parmesan cheese
- Assorted vegetables (any combination of fresh or frozen)
- Italian seasoning, salt, pepper, garlic powder

Total estimated time: 9 to 12 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/pasta-primavera>

Start with roasted chicken

A roasted chicken is a great start to a quick and nutritious meal. A fully cooked 3 1/2 pound chicken will serve four. Either cook your own or buy a rotisserie chicken already cooked from the grocery or supermarket. Remove the skin and bones from the chicken before using it in your recipe. Below are general guidelines for preparing a roasted chicken to use in a variety of recipes.

To make a roasted chicken, you will need:

- 1 (5 to 6 pound) whole chicken
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened
- 2 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 lemon, cut in half
- Salt and pepper to your liking

Prep in advance!

Estimated time: 1 hour and 20 minutes

Directions:

1. Wash hands with warm water and soap, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds.
2. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
3. Remove the giblets and neck from the chicken. Often, these parts are packaged and left in the body cavity.
4. Rub the entire chicken with butter.
Wash hands after handling raw poultry.
5. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
6. Stuff the garlic and lemon halves into the chicken's body cavity. Tie the drumsticks (leg) together with a piece of clean kitchen string or use foil to hold together.
7. Place chicken in a roasting pan or ovenproof skillet. Bake for 1 hour or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165 degrees F on a meat thermometer. Let the chicken rest at least 10 minutes.
8. Remove string. Carve and serve.
9. Store leftovers in the refrigerator within 2 hours.

Pulled from Plan.Eat.Move Roasted Chicken:

<https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/roasted-chicken>

*Total estimated time calculated using cooked chicken from recipe above.

The following recipes provide options for using roasted chicken in a variety of ways:

1. Chicken Salad



- Chicken
- Mayonnaise or salad dressing
- Seedless red grapes
- Chopped celery
- Chopped pecans
- Crackers or bread for serving

Total estimated time: 5 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/easy-chicken-salad>

3. Easy Barbecue Chicken Sandwich



- Chicken
- Barbecue sauce
- Hamburger buns

Total estimated time: 2 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/easy-chicken-barbecue-sandwich>

2. Chicken Chili



- Chicken
- Diced tomatoes with green peppers and onions
- Low-sodium kidney beans
- No-salt-added tomato sauce
- Chili powder, garlic powder, salt, and pepper

Total estimated time: 20 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/chicken-chili>

4. Ranch and Chicken Wrap



- Chicken
- Light ranch dressing
- Tortillas
- Fresh spinach or lettuce
- Shredded cheese

Total estimated time: 5 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/ranch-and-chicken-wrap>

Start with ground meat

Ground beef, pork, chicken, and turkey are common grocery staples for families. They are versatile, and you can use them in a variety of meal ideas. They also cook quickly in their ground form, which allows you to pull together meals in minutes. Below are basic guidelines for cooking ground meats and adding them to meal ideas.

To prepare ground meats:

1. In a skillet or pot, cook ground meat on medium-high heat. Break up meat as it cooks.
2. Cook over medium heat and stir until browned. Cook ground beef and pork to an internal temperature of 160 degrees F and ground turkey or chicken to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F.
3. Beef and pork will have more grease in the pan compared to ground chicken and turkey. Drain excess grease into a disposable glass or metal container. Let cool and dispose. Do not pour grease down a drain.
4. Allow meat to cool for about 20 minutes. Meat can be refrigerated for 3 to 4 days to use in recipes or packed into 1-cup freezer containers, labeled, dated, and placed in the freezer for up to four months.
5. The recipes below have additional instructions and other methods for preparing ground meat.

Adapted from Plan.Eat.Move Make Ahead
Beef Mix: [https://www.planeatmove.com/
recipes/recipe/make-ahead-beef-mix](https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/make-ahead-beef-mix)

The following recipes provide options for using ground meat in a variety of ways:

1. Tasty Taco Salad



- Ground turkey
- Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- No-salt-added canned corn
- Low-sodium black beans
- Salsa
- Cheddar cheese
- Chili powder, cumin

Total estimated time: 20 to 25 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/tasty-taco-salad>

3. Beef and Broccoli Stuffed Potatoes



- Lean ground beef
- Baked potatoes
- Frozen chopped broccoli
- Cheddar cheese
- Garlic powder, onion powder

*Total estimated time: 20 to 25 minutes
(if using pre-baked potatoes)*

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/beef-and-broccoli-stuffed-potatoes>

2. Eggroll in a Bowl



- Ground turkey or pork
- Low-sodium soy sauce
- Coleslaw mix
- Egg
- Garlic powder, ground ginger

Total estimated time: 20 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/eggroll-in-a-bowl>

4. Chicken Burgers



- Ground chicken
- Green onions and celery
- Barbecue sauce
- Garlic powder and salt
- Hamburger buns
- Romaine lettuce and tomato

Total estimated time: 20 to 25 minutes

Full recipe: <https://www.planeatmove.com/recipes/recipe/chicken-burgers>