



MEAL PLAN

Meal Plan 1

A week of healthy, beginner-level meals with shopping lists

8 Chapters

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Generated with Claude

Contents

Chapter 1	Monday	2
Chapter 2	Tuesday	8
Chapter 3	Wednesday	15
Chapter 4	Thursday	20
Chapter 5	Friday	27
Chapter 6	Saturday	33
Chapter 7	Sunday	40
Chapter 8	Weekly Shopping	47

Meal Plan 1: Everyday Classics

Day 1 · Monday

Today at a glance. Three beginner recipes, about 1 hour 15 minutes of cooking in total, most of it hands-off. Tonight's chilli is cooked as **two portions**: one for dinner, one for *Tuesday's lunch* (a chilli-stuffed sweet potato). Every quantity below is for **one portion** unless the recipe says otherwise, in metric with UK names.

Breakfast

BREAKFAST

Cinnamon Banana Porridge

10 minutes

1 pan

4 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

40 g porridge oats

200 ml semi-skimmed milk (or water)

1 ripe banana

½ tsp ground cinnamon

METHOD

1. Put the oats and milk in a small saucepan and set it over a medium heat.
2. Stir often for 4 to 5 minutes, until the porridge is thick and creamy. Turn the heat down if it starts to stick.
3. While it cooks, peel the banana and slice it. Stir about half of the slices into the porridge for the last minute.
4. Spoon into a bowl, lay the remaining slices on top and sprinkle over the cinnamon.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY START

Oats are a wholegrain that release their energy slowly and add fibre. The banana sweetens the bowl, so no sugar is needed.

SWAPS

Use water for a lighter bowl, or a spoonful of peanut butter stirred in for more staying power. Frozen berries work in place of the banana.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

Lunch

LUNCH

Tuna and White Bean Salad

10 minutes

No cooking

5 ingredients

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 tin tuna in spring water (about 145 g)

120 g cannellini beans, drained and rinsed (about half a 400 g tin)

30 g red onion (about a quarter of a small one)

½ lemon, juiced

1 tbsp olive oil

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Peel the onion and slice it as thinly as you can. If you find raw onion sharp, leave the slices in a little cold water for 5 minutes, then drain.
2. Drain the tuna and the beans. Rinse the beans under cold water.
3. Put the beans, tuna and onion in a bowl. Add the lemon juice and olive oil.
4. Stir gently so the tuna breaks into flakes but the beans stay whole. Season with a pinch of salt and plenty of pepper, taste, and add more lemon if you like.

LEFTOVER BEANS

You will have half a tin of beans left. Tip them into a covered container, keep them in the fridge and use them within 2 days, for example added to a soup or salad later in the week.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY LUNCH

Tuna and beans are both high in protein, and the beans add fibre, so it keeps you full without being heavy. Tuna in spring water has little added fat.

SWAPS

Chickpeas instead of cannellini beans, a squeeze of lime instead of lemon, or a handful of rocket or spinach if you have some.

Shopping list for this recipe

Dinner

DINNER · BEEF

Beef Chilli with Rice

10 minutes prep

35 minutes cooking

Makes 2 portions

1 pan plus rice

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 2 PORTIONS: DINNER TONIGHT, LUNCH TOMORROW)

250 g lean beef mince (5% fat)

1 onion

2 cloves garlic

1 tsp olive oil

1 tsp mild chilli powder

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tin chopped tomatoes (400 g)

1 tin kidney beans in water (400 g), drained and rinsed

60 g brown basmati rice (tonight's portion only)

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Peel and finely chop the onion. Peel the garlic and crush or chop it finely.
2. Heat the oil in a large frying pan or saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring, until soft.
3. Add the garlic and stir for 30 seconds, then add the mince. Break it up with a wooden spoon and cook for 5 to 6 minutes, until there is no pink left.
4. Stir in the chilli powder and cumin and cook for 1 minute so the spices release their smell.
5. Add the tomatoes, the kidney beans and 100 ml of water. Season with a good pinch of salt and some pepper.
6. Bring to a gentle bubble, then turn the heat down. Simmer for 20 minutes with the lid half on, stirring now and then, until thick. Add a splash of water if it gets dry.
7. Meanwhile, cook the rice in plenty of boiling water following the packet (brown basmati usually takes about 25 minutes). Drain it.

8. Serve half of the chilli over the rice. Taste it first and add more salt, pepper or chilli powder if you want it hotter.

SAVING TOMORROW'S PORTION SAFELY

Put the other half of the chilli into a shallow covered container as soon as you can, let it cool for up to an hour, then keep it in the fridge. Eat it by Wednesday. When you reheat it on Tuesday, heat it until it is steaming hot all the way through.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY DINNER

Lean mince keeps the saturated fat down, and the kidney beans and tomatoes add fibre and vegetables to a dish that is mostly meat in many recipes. Brown rice has more fibre than white.

SWAPS

Use white basmati rice if you prefer (about 12 minutes). Add a grated carrot or a chopped pepper with the onion for extra vegetables, or half a tin of black beans instead of kidney beans.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

COMING UP TOMORROW

Tuesday's lunch is a baked sweet potato filled with tonight's chilli, so nothing extra is cooked tomorrow except the sweet potato itself. If you would like to put it in the oven before work, scrub the potato tonight and leave it ready.

Meal Plan 1: Everyday Classics

Day 2 · Tuesday

Today at a glance. Three beginner recipes, about 1 hour 15 minutes of cooking in total, and the traybake does most of its own work in the oven. Lunch uses the **chilli left over from Monday**. Tonight's traybake is cooked as **two portions**: one for dinner and one for *Thursday's lunch*. Every quantity below is for **one portion** unless the recipe says otherwise, in metric with UK names.

Breakfast

BREAKFAST

Spinach Scrambled Eggs on Toast

10 minutes

1 pan

4 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2 eggs

40 g baby spinach (a large handful)

2 slices wholemeal bread

1 tsp olive oil

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Crack the eggs into a bowl, add a pinch of salt and some pepper, and beat them with a fork until the whites and yolks are mixed.
2. Put the bread in the toaster when the pan goes on the heat, so the toast is ready at the same time as the eggs.
3. Heat the oil in a small non-stick frying pan over a low to medium heat. Add the spinach and stir for about a minute, until it has wilted down.
4. Pour in the eggs. Leave them for 20 seconds, then stir gently with a spatula, pulling the set egg from the edges into the middle.
5. Keep stirring slowly for 1 to 2 minutes, until the eggs are just set but still look soft and glossy. Take the pan off the heat, because they keep cooking in the pan.
6. Serve on the toast straight away.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY START

Eggs are a good source of protein, and wholemeal bread adds fibre. The spinach counts towards your vegetables before 9 a.m. for almost no effort.

SWAPS

Cook the eggs without spinach if you are in a rush, or stir in a handful of halved cherry tomatoes. Use a splash of milk in the eggs if you like them creamier.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

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LUNCH · USES MONDAY'S CHILLI

Chilli-Stuffed Sweet Potato

10 minutes

Microwave or oven

1 new ingredient

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 medium sweet potato (about 250 g)

1 portion beef chilli left over from Monday

METHOD

1. Scrub the sweet potato and prick it all over with a fork, 5 or 6 times.
2. **Microwave:** cook on high for 6 to 8 minutes, turning it over halfway. **Oven:** bake at 200 °C (180 °C fan) for 45 to 50 minutes. It is ready when a knife slides in easily and it feels soft when squeezed (use a tea towel, it will be hot).
3. While the potato cooks, reheat the chilli in a small pan or the microwave, stirring once or twice. It must be steaming hot all the way through. Add a splash of water if it has thickened too much.
4. Cut the potato open lengthways, squash the flesh gently with a fork, and spoon the chilli over the top.

REHEAT ONLY ONCE

Reheat the chilli once and eat all of it, rather than reheating and cooling it again. Monday's portion should be eaten by Wednesday at the latest.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY LUNCH

Sweet potato is a filling, fibre-rich carbohydrate with a lot of vitamin A, and the chilli adds protein and beans. It uses what you have already cooked, so there is nothing to buy but the potato.

SWAPS

A spoonful of plain natural yoghurt on top cools the chilli down. A regular baking potato works if you prefer it.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

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DINNER • CHICKEN

Chicken and Vegetable Traybake

15 minutes prep

45 minutes in the oven

Makes 2 portions

1 tin

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 2 PORTIONS: DINNER TONIGHT, LUNCH ON THURSDAY)

4 skinless boneless chicken thighs (about 450 g)

400 g baby potatoes, halved

2 carrots

1 red onion

1 small head of broccoli (about 200 g)

2 tbsp olive oil

2 tsp smoked paprika

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200 °C (180 °C fan). Find a large roasting tin.
2. Halve the baby potatoes (leave the tiny ones whole). Peel the carrots and cut them into chunks about the size of the potato halves. Peel the red onion and cut it into 6 wedges.
3. Put the potatoes, carrots and onion in the tin with 1 tbsp of the oil, 1 tsp of the paprika and a good pinch of salt. Toss well and spread out in one layer. Roast for 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, put the chicken in a bowl with the remaining oil and paprika, some salt and pepper, and turn it until every piece is coated. Cut the broccoli into small florets.
5. Take the tin out, push the vegetables to the sides and add the chicken. Roast for 15 minutes.
6. Add the broccoli to the tin, stir everything round, and roast for a further 12 to 15 minutes. The chicken is cooked when it has no pink inside and the juices run clear. Cut into the thickest piece to check.
7. Serve half the chicken and vegetables hot, straight from the tin.

SAVING THURSDAY'S PORTION SAFELY

Put the other half in a covered container as soon as the tin has stopped steaming, let it cool for up to an hour, then keep it in the fridge. Eat it on Thursday at the latest, and do not leave cooked chicken out at room temperature for longer than two hours.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY DINNER

Skinless thighs are lean, and the tin holds three different vegetables, so half your plate is vegetables without any extra cooking. Roasting needs very little oil.

SWAPS

Chicken breast works but dries out faster, so cut it into large chunks and check it after 20 minutes. Use courgette or peppers in place of the carrots, or cooked-from-raw sweet potato in place of the baby potatoes.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

COMING UP TOMORROW

Wednesday is the vegetarian day: a hummus wrap for lunch and a chickpea and spinach curry for dinner. Nothing needs preparing tonight.

Meal Plan 1: Everyday Classics

Day 3 · Wednesday

Today at a glance. The vegetarian day. Three beginner recipes, about 45 minutes of cooking in total, and only dinner uses the hob. Breakfast and lunch need no cooking at all. Tonight's curry makes **two portions**; the second one goes in the freezer for another week. Every quantity below is for **one portion** unless the recipe says otherwise, in metric with UK names.

Breakfast

BREAKFAST

Greek Yoghurt with Berries and Oats

3 minutes

No cooking

3 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

150 g plain Greek-style yoghurt

100 g mixed berries (fresh or frozen)

20 g porridge oats

METHOD

1. If your berries are frozen, tip them into a bowl a few minutes ahead, or microwave them for 30 seconds, so they soften and release some juice.
2. Spoon the yoghurt into a bowl and sprinkle the oats over it.
3. Add the berries and all their juice. Leave for a minute or two so the oats soften slightly, then eat.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY START

Greek-style yoghurt is high in protein, the berries add fibre and natural sweetness, and the raw oats make the bowl filling.

SWAPS

A teaspoon of honey if you want it sweeter. Sliced banana or apple instead of berries. Cover and chill it overnight and the oats soften into an overnight-oats style pot.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

Lunch

LUNCH · VEGETARIAN

Hummus, Carrot and Cucumber Wrap

8 minutes

No cooking

4 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 wholemeal tortilla wrap

3 tbsp hummus (shop-bought, about 60 g)

1 medium carrot

80 g cucumber (about a third of one)

1 small handful baby spinach (optional, left over from Tuesday)

METHOD

1. Peel and coarsely grate the carrot. Cut the cucumber into thin sticks.
2. Lay the wrap flat and spread the hummus over it, leaving a gap of about 2 cm round the edge.
3. Put the spinach (if using), carrot and cucumber in a line across the middle, a little closer to you than the centre.
4. Fold in the two sides, then roll the wrap up tightly from the bottom. Cut in half diagonally.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY LUNCH

Hummus is made from chickpeas, so it brings protein and fibre. The raw carrot and cucumber give crunch and keep it light.

SWAPS

Add a handful of grated cheese or a boiled egg if you want it more filling. Sliced pepper or shredded cabbage work in place of the cucumber. Wrap it in baking paper and it keeps well in a lunchbox.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

Dinner

DINNER · VEGETARIAN

Chickpea and Spinach Curry

10 minutes prep

25 minutes cooking

Makes 2 portions

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 2 PORTIONS: DINNER TONIGHT, ONE FOR THE FREEZER)

1 onion

2 cloves garlic

1 tbsp olive oil

1 tbsp medium curry powder

1 tin chopped tomatoes (400 g)

1 tin chickpeas in water (400 g), drained and rinsed

80 g baby spinach

60 g brown basmati rice (tonight's portion only)

Salt

METHOD

1. Peel and finely chop the onion. Peel the garlic and chop it finely.
2. Heat the oil in a saucepan over a medium heat. Cook the onion for about 5 minutes, stirring, until soft. Add the garlic for 30 seconds.
3. Stir in the curry powder and cook for 1 minute. If it sticks, add a splash of water.
4. Add the tomatoes, chickpeas, 150 ml of water and a pinch of salt. Bring to a gentle bubble and simmer for 15 minutes with the lid half on, stirring occasionally.
5. With the back of a spoon, squash a few of the chickpeas against the side of the pan. This thickens the sauce.
6. Stir in the spinach a handful at a time. It will fill the pan at first but wilts in 1 to 2 minutes. Taste and add salt if needed.
7. While the curry simmers, cook the rice in plenty of boiling water following the packet (brown basmati usually takes about 25 minutes). Drain it, and serve half of the curry over the rice.

SAVING THE SECOND PORTION

Put the other half in a shallow container, let it cool for up to an hour, then freeze it within a few hours. Freeze it without rice, label it with the date, and use it within 3 months. Defrost it in the fridge overnight and reheat it until it is steaming hot all the way through.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY DINNER

Chickpeas give protein and fibre without any meat, and the tomatoes and spinach add vegetables. It is lower in fat than many curries because there is no cream or coconut milk.

SWAPS

Stir in two tablespoons of plain yoghurt at the end for a creamier sauce. Use a different mix of spices such as 1 tsp each of cumin and turmeric if you have them, or add a pinch of chilli flakes for heat.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

COMING UP TOMORROW

Thursday brings banana oat pancakes, a salad bowl made from Tuesday's leftover chicken traybake, and a beef and broccoli stir-fry. Remember that the chicken portion needs to be eaten by Thursday.

Meal Plan 1: Everyday Classics

Day 4 · Thursday

Today at a glance. Three beginner recipes, about 55 minutes of cooking in total. Lunch uses the **chicken traybake portion left over from Tuesday**, which has to be eaten today. Dinner is the second beef dish of the week, and a stir-fry goes fast, so have everything chopped before you turn the heat on. Every quantity below is for **one portion**, in metric with UK names.

Breakfast

BREAKFAST

Banana Oat Pancakes

15 minutes

1 pan

4 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION, ABOUT 4 SMALL PANCAKES)

1 ripe banana

2 eggs

40 g porridge oats

1 tsp olive oil

METHOD

1. Peel the banana, put it in a bowl and mash it with a fork until there are almost no lumps. The riper the banana, the sweeter the pancakes.
2. Beat in the eggs, then stir in the oats. Leave the batter for 5 minutes so the oats soak up some of the liquid and it thickens.
3. Heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium-low heat. Spoon in the batter in 4 small rounds, about the size of a digestive biscuit.
4. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until the edges look set and bubbles appear on top. Turn them carefully with a spatula and cook for another 1 to 2 minutes, until golden and cooked through.

BEGINNER TIP

These pancakes are softer and more delicate than flour ones, so keep the heat low and make them small. If one breaks while you turn it, just push it back together; it still tastes the same.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY START

There is no added sugar or flour. The banana sweetens the batter, the oats add fibre and the eggs add protein, so it keeps you going for hours.

SWAPS

Serve with a few berries or a spoonful of Greek yoghurt if you have some left from yesterday. A pinch of cinnamon in the batter is nice. Blend everything with a stick blender for a smoother, more pancake-like texture.

Shopping list for this recipe

Lunch

LUNCH · USES TUESDAY'S TRAYBAKE

Chicken Traybake Salad Bowl

10 minutes

No cooking

3 new ingredients

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 portion chicken and vegetable traybake left over from Tuesday

40 g baby spinach or mixed salad leaves

½ lemon, juiced (left over from Monday if it is still fresh)

1 tsp olive oil

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Take the container out of the fridge. Smell and look at the chicken; if it smells off or is slimy, throw it away.
2. Put the leaves in a bowl. Cut the chicken into bite-sized pieces and add it to the bowl with the potatoes, carrots, onion and broccoli.
3. Whisk the lemon juice and olive oil together in a cup with a pinch of salt and some pepper. Pour it over the bowl and toss.
4. Eat it cold, or, if you prefer it warm, heat the chicken and vegetables in the microwave until steaming hot all the way through and then add them to the leaves. Do not reheat it twice.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY LUNCH

It is a ready-made lean meal with plenty of vegetables, and the lemon dressing uses only a little oil. All you add is some fresh leaves.

SWAPS

Add any cucumber left from Wednesday, or a spoonful of hummus on the side. Use a splash of vinegar if you do not have a lemon.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

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DINNER • BEEF

Beef and Broccoli Stir-Fry

15 minutes prep

30 minutes with rice

1 portion

1 pan plus rice

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

150 g	lean beef steak (sirloin or rump)
150 g	broccoli (about half a medium head)
1 clove	garlic
1 cm	fresh root ginger
1½ tbsp	reduced-salt soy sauce
2 tsp	olive oil
60 g	brown basmati rice

METHOD

1. Put the rice on first. Cook it in plenty of boiling water following the packet (brown basmati usually takes about 25 minutes), then drain.
2. Trim any hard fat from the steak. Slice it across the grain into thin strips about 3 mm thick. Put the strips in a bowl with 1 tsp of the soy sauce and mix.
3. Cut the broccoli into small florets, and slice the stalk into thin coins. Peel and finely chop the garlic. Peel the ginger with a spoon edge and grate it.
4. Mix the rest of the soy sauce with 2 tbsp water in a cup. This is your sauce.
5. Heat a large frying pan or wok over a high heat until it is very hot. Add 1 tsp of oil, then the beef in a single layer. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, turning once, until browned, then tip it onto a plate.
6. Add the remaining oil and the broccoli to the pan with 3 tbsp water. Stir-fry for 3 to 4 minutes, until the broccoli is bright green and tender with a little bite.
7. Add the garlic and ginger and stir for 30 seconds. Return the beef and any juices to the pan, pour in the sauce and stir for 1 minute until everything is hot and glossy.
8. Serve over the rice at once.

WHY THE HOT PAN MATTERS

A very hot pan browns the beef quickly, so it stays tender. Cooking it in two batches if your pan is small keeps it browning instead of steaming in its own juices. If the pan smokes heavily, turn the heat down a little.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY DINNER

Lean steak gives protein and iron, and the broccoli is a good source of vitamin C and fibre. Little oil is used, and reduced-salt soy keeps the salt down.

SWAPS

Egg noodles cook in about 4 minutes instead of the rice. Use pak choi or green beans in place of the broccoli, or add a sliced carrot with it for colour.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

COMING UP TOMORROW

Friday is the fish day, a baked salmon dinner with potatoes and green beans. Fresh salmon should be bought on the day or the day before, or buy frozen fillets and defrost them in the fridge overnight tonight.

Meal Plan 1: Everyday Classics

Day 5 · Friday

Today at a glance. Fish day. Three beginner recipes, about 1 hour of cooking in total. Breakfast takes five minutes, lunch is a soup that mostly looks after itself, and dinner is a one-tray fish supper. Every quantity below is for **one portion**, in metric with UK names.

Breakfast

BREAKFAST

Peanut Butter and Apple Toast

5 minutes

Toaster only

3 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2 slices wholemeal bread

2 tbsp peanut butter (about 30 g, 100% peanuts if you can)

1 apple

METHOD

1. Put the bread in the toaster.
2. While it toasts, cut the apple into quarters, remove the core and slice each quarter as thinly as you can.
3. Spread the peanut butter over the hot toast so it melts a little. Lay the apple slices on top, overlapping them.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY START

Peanut butter brings protein and healthy fats, and the apple adds fibre and a fresh, sweet crunch. Choose a peanut butter with no added sugar or palm oil where you can.

SWAPS

Sliced banana instead of apple. A pinch of cinnamon on top. Another nut butter such as almond if you prefer it.

NUTS

This breakfast contains peanuts. If someone else is eating with you, check with them before serving it.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

Lunch

LUNCH

Red Lentil and Vegetable Soup

10 minutes prep

25 minutes cooking

1 pan

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 LARGE BOWL)

50 g dried red split lentils

1 small onion

1 carrot

1 clove garlic

½ tsp ground cumin

½ reduced-salt vegetable stock cube

1 tsp olive oil

350 ml boiling water

Black pepper

METHOD

1. Peel and finely chop the onion. Peel the carrot and cut it into small cubes, about 1 cm. Peel and chop the garlic.
2. Put the lentils in a sieve and rinse them under cold water until the water runs clearer.
3. Heat the oil in a small saucepan over a medium heat. Cook the onion and carrot for 5 minutes, stirring, until they begin to soften. Add the garlic and cumin and stir for 30 seconds.
4. Crumble in the stock cube, add the lentils and pour in the boiling water. Bring to a simmer.
5. Simmer for 20 minutes, partly covered, stirring now and then, until the lentils have collapsed and the carrot is soft. If it gets too thick, add a splash of water.
6. Season with black pepper. Taste before adding salt, because the stock cube already has some. For a smoother soup, blitz half of it with a stick blender, or mash it with a fork.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY LUNCH

Lentils are cheap, high in protein and fibre, and need no soaking. The soup is mostly vegetables and pulses, with very little fat.

SWAPS

A squeeze of lemon at the end brightens it. Chilli flakes add some heat.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

Dinner

DINNER • FISH

Baked Salmon with New Potatoes and Green Beans

10 minutes prep

25 minutes cooking

1 portion

Oven plus 1 pan

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

1 fillet salmon (about 130 g, skin on or off)

200 g new potatoes

100 g green beans

½ lemon

2 tsp olive oil

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200 °C (180 °C fan). Line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Wash the potatoes and cut any large ones in half so they are all roughly the same size. Put them in a saucepan, cover with cold water, add a pinch of salt and bring to the boil. Simmer for 12 to 15 minutes, until a knife slides in easily.
3. Meanwhile, put the salmon on the tray. Rub it with 1 tsp of the oil, squeeze over a little of the lemon juice, and season with salt and pepper.
4. Bake the salmon for 12 to 15 minutes. It is ready when it flakes easily with a fork and is opaque, not glassy, all the way through. Thicker fillets need the longer time.
5. Trim the stalk ends from the green beans. Add them to the potato pan for the last 4 minutes of cooking. Drain both.
6. Toss the potatoes and beans with the remaining oil, a pinch of salt and pepper, and a squeeze of lemon. Serve with the salmon and the remaining lemon cut into a wedge.

BUYING AND STORING FISH

Fresh fish should smell clean and of the sea, not strongly fishy, and should be cooked the day you buy it or the next. Frozen fillets are just as good: defrost them overnight in the fridge on a plate, never on the worktop.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY DINNER

Salmon is an oily fish, a good source of protein and of the omega-3 fats that most people eat too little of. With potatoes and beans, one tray and one pan make a balanced plate.

SWAPS

Use the other half of Thursday's broccoli in place of the green beans. A cod or haddock fillet works too if you prefer white fish, though it will need a shorter bake. Sprinkle some chopped fresh parsley on top if you have any.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

COMING UP TOMORROW

Saturday has baked eggs in tomato sauce, a chickpea and feta salad, and homemade beef burgers with sweet potato wedges. Nothing needs preparing tonight.

Meal Plan 1: Everyday Classics

Day 6 · Saturday

Today at a glance. A weekend day with a bit more time. Three beginner recipes, about 1 hour 10 minutes of cooking in total. Breakfast and lunch each use half a tin of something, so the leftovers are noted in the recipes. Dinner is the third beef dish of the week. Every quantity below is for **one portion**, in metric with UK names.

Breakfast

BREAKFAST

Baked Eggs in Tomato Sauce

15 minutes

1 pan

5 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2	eggs
200 g	chopped tomatoes (half a 400 g tin)
1 clove	garlic
½ tsp	smoked paprika
1 tsp	olive oil
1 slice	wholemeal bread, toasted

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Peel and finely chop the garlic.
2. Heat the oil in a small frying pan that has a lid, over a medium heat. Add the garlic and paprika and stir for 30 seconds.
3. Pour in the tomatoes, add a pinch of salt and some pepper, and let them bubble gently for 6 to 8 minutes, stirring now and then, until the sauce is thick and no longer watery.
4. With the back of a spoon make two small dips in the sauce. Crack an egg into each one.
5. Cover the pan with the lid, turn the heat down to low and cook for 5 to 6 minutes, until the whites are completely set. The yolks will still be soft; cook for 2 minutes longer if you prefer them firm.
6. Slide onto a plate and serve with the toast for dipping.

LEFTOVER TOMATOES

Tip the other half tin into a covered container, keep it in the fridge and use it within 2 days, or freeze it in a small freezer bag for the next time you need a splash of tomato sauce.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY START

Eggs give protein, the cooked tomatoes are rich in a plant compound called lycopene, and the whole thing uses almost no oil.

SWAPS

Wilt in a handful of spinach with the tomatoes, or add a pinch of chilli flakes for heat. If you have no lid, cover the pan with a flat baking tray or large plate.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

Lunch

LUNCH

Greek-Style Chickpea and Feta Salad

10 minutes

No cooking

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

120 g chickpeas, drained and rinsed (about half a 400 g tin)

100 g cucumber (about a third)

100 g cherry tomatoes

30 g red onion (about a quarter of a small one)

40 g feta cheese

1 tbsp olive oil

½ lemon, juiced

½ tsp dried oregano

Black pepper

METHOD

1. Cut the cucumber into small chunks and halve the cherry tomatoes. Peel the onion and slice it very thinly.
2. Drain and rinse the chickpeas and tip them into a bowl with the cucumber, tomatoes and onion.
3. Mix the olive oil, lemon juice, oregano and some black pepper in a cup and pour it over the salad. Toss.
4. Crumble the feta on top. You do not need extra salt, because feta is already salty.

LEFTOVER CHICKPEAS

Keep the other half tin of chickpeas in a covered container in the fridge and use it within 2 days. Sunday's roast vegetables suggest a good place for them.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY LUNCH

Chickpeas make the salad filling and add fibre and protein, while the fresh vegetables keep it light. Feta gives a lot of flavour from a small amount.

SWAPS

Add a handful of olives if you like them. A splash of red wine vinegar can replace the lemon. Add a wholemeal pitta on the side if you are very hungry.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

Dinner

DINNER • BEEF

Homemade Beef Burger with Sweet Potato Wedges

15 minutes prep

35 minutes cooking

1 portion

Oven plus 1 pan

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

150 g lean beef mince (5% fat)

1 medium sweet potato (about 250 g)

1 wholemeal burger bun

½ tomato, sliced

1 small handful salad leaves or spinach

2 tsp olive oil

½ tsp smoked paprika

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200 °C (180 °C fan). Line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Scrub the sweet potato and cut it lengthways into wedges about 2 cm thick. Put them on the tray with 1 tsp of the oil, the paprika and a pinch of salt, and toss until coated. Spread in one layer, skin side down where you can.
3. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, turning them over once halfway, until browned at the edges and soft inside.
4. About 15 minutes before the wedges are done, put the mince in a bowl with a good pinch of salt and some pepper. Mix it with your hands, as little as you can, then shape it into a patty about 2 cm thick. Press a shallow dip into the middle with your thumb, which stops it puffing up. Wash your hands well.
5. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan over a medium-high heat. Cook the burger for 5 to 6 minutes on each side. It must be cooked all the way through: no pink in the middle, and the juices run clear.
6. Split and lightly toast the bun, on the pan after the burger if you like. Fill it with the salad leaves, tomato and burger, and serve with the wedges.

COOK MINCE ALL THE WAY THROUGH

Unlike a whole steak, minced beef can carry bacteria all through the meat, because the outside gets mixed into the middle. Always cook burgers until there is no pink left, and wash your hands, the board and anything else the raw mince touched.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY DINNER

Lean mince and a wholemeal bun make a burger with much less saturated fat than a takeaway one, and baking the wedges instead of frying them uses a fraction of the oil. The sweet potato adds fibre and the salad adds some vegetables.

SWAPS

Wrap the burger in a large lettuce leaf instead of using a bun. A teaspoon of mustard or ketchup in the bun adds flavour. Use ordinary potatoes for the wedges if you prefer.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

COMING UP TOMORROW

Sunday brings apple and cinnamon baked oats, a mushroom and spinach omelette and a roast pork tenderloin with root vegetables. The pork needs about 40 minutes in the oven, so plan dinner a little earlier than usual.

Meal Plan 1: Everyday Classics

Day 7 · Sunday

Today at a glance. The last day of the week and the slowest. Three beginner recipes, about 1 hour 30 minutes of cooking in total, nearly all of it in the oven. Breakfast bakes while you get ready, lunch is a quick omelette, and the roast cooks itself while you do something else. Dinner makes **two portions**, so the second can go in a sandwich or salad tomorrow. Every quantity below is for **one portion** unless the recipe says otherwise, in metric with UK names.

Breakfast

BREAKFAST

Apple and Cinnamon Baked Oats

5 minutes prep

25 minutes in the oven

5 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

50 g porridge oats

1 egg

150 ml semi-skimmed milk

1 apple

½ tsp ground cinnamon

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 180 °C (160 °C fan). Find a small ovenproof dish or large ramekin that holds about 350 ml.
2. Core the apple. Grate half of it on the coarse side of a grater, and cut the other half into thin slices.
3. In a bowl, beat the egg with the milk and cinnamon. Stir in the oats and the grated apple.
4. Pour the mixture into the dish and lay the apple slices on top.
5. Bake for 25 minutes, until the top is golden and the middle is set. A knife pushed into the centre should come out clean. Let it stand for 2 minutes, because it will be very hot.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY START

It tastes like a pudding but contains no added sugar. The oats and apple give fibre, and the egg and milk add protein, so it keeps you going until lunch.

SWAPS

A teaspoon of honey or a few raisins if you like it sweeter. Use a pear or half a banana in place of the apple. A spoonful of Greek yoghurt on top makes it creamier.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

The image consists of a solid dark blue background. A thin, horizontal orange line is positioned near the top edge. In the upper-left corner, the word "Lunch" is written in a white, sans-serif font.

LUNCH

Mushroom and Spinach Omelette

12 minutes

1 pan

4 ingredients

Vegetarian

INGREDIENTS (1 PORTION)

2 eggs

80 g button or chestnut mushrooms

30 g baby spinach

2 tsp olive oil

Salt and black pepper

METHOD

1. Wipe the mushrooms clean with a damp piece of kitchen paper, rather than washing them, and slice them.
2. Heat 1 tsp of the oil in a small non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and cook for 4 to 5 minutes, stirring, until they are golden and the water has gone. Add the spinach and a pinch of salt and stir for 30 seconds until it wilts. Tip the filling onto a plate.
3. Beat the eggs in a bowl with a pinch of salt and some pepper.
4. Return the pan to a medium heat with the remaining oil. Pour in the eggs and tilt the pan so they cover the base. Let them set for about 30 seconds, then pull the cooked edges towards the middle with a spatula and tilt to let the raw egg run to the edge. Repeat for 1 to 2 minutes, until the top is just set.
5. Spoon the filling over one half, fold the other half over, and cook for another 30 seconds. Slide onto a plate.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY LUNCH

Eggs give protein, and mushrooms and spinach give you two vegetables for very few calories. Cooking them first without much oil keeps it light.

SWAPS

Add a spoonful of grated cheese with the filling. A slice of wholemeal toast makes it more filling. Cherry tomatoes or a few chopped spring onions work in place of the spinach.

Shopping list for this recipe

Dinner

DINNER · PORK

Roast Pork Tenderloin with Root Vegetables

15 minutes prep

40 minutes in the oven

Makes 2 portions

1 tin

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 2 PORTIONS: DINNER TONIGHT, A COLD PORTION FOR TOMORROW)

1	pork tenderloin (about 350 g)
2	carrots
2	parsnips
1	red onion
1	apple
1½ tbsp	olive oil
1 tsp	dried thyme
120 g	cooked chickpeas, left over from Saturday (optional)
Salt and black pepper	

METHOD

1. Heat the oven to 200 °C (180 °C fan).
2. Peel the carrots and parsnips and cut them into chunks about 3 cm long, cutting any thick ends in half lengthways so the pieces are about the same size. Peel the onion and cut it into 6 wedges. Core the apple and cut it into 8 wedges, but leave the skin on.
3. Put the carrots, parsnips and onion in a large roasting tin with 1 tbsp of the oil, half the thyme and a pinch of salt. Toss well and spread in one layer. Roast for 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, trim any hard fat and the thin silvery skin from the pork. Rub it with the remaining oil, thyme, a good pinch of salt and some pepper.
5. Heat a frying pan over a high heat until very hot. Brown the pork for about 5 minutes in total, turning it until all sides are golden.
6. Take the tin out of the oven and push the vegetables aside. Put the pork in the middle, add the apple wedges and the chickpeas (if using), and return to the oven for 20 to 25 minutes.
7. The pork is cooked when there is no pink in the centre and the juices run clear. If you have a probe thermometer, it should read at least 70 °C in the thickest part. Cover

loosely with foil and rest it for 5 minutes.

8. Slice the pork into rounds about 1.5 cm thick. Serve half of the slices with half of the vegetables and apple.

SAVING TOMORROW'S PORTION SAFELY

Slice and put the other half of the pork and vegetables in a covered container as soon as the steam stops, let it cool for up to an hour, then keep it in the fridge. Eat it within 2 days, cold in a sandwich or on a salad, or heated until steaming hot all the way through.

WHY IT IS A HEALTHY DINNER

Pork tenderloin is one of the leanest cuts you can buy, and the plate is mostly vegetables. The apple roasts into a light sauce, so no gravy is needed.

SWAPS

Swede, sweet potato or celeriac can replace the parsnips. Use a teaspoon of wholegrain mustard rubbed over the pork for a stronger flavour. If you only want one portion tonight, ask the butcher for half a tenderloin.

[Shopping list for this recipe](#)

THAT IS THE WEEK

You have cooked a full week of healthy, beginner meals with three beef dinners, a fish dinner and a vegetarian day. The next chapter pulls every ingredient into one weekly shopping list, grouped by aisle, so you can shop once.

Meal Plan 1: Everyday Classics

Chapter 8 · Weekly shopping list

How to use this list. It merges the shopping lists of all 21 recipes from Monday to Sunday, so you can shop once. Amounts are totals for the week, and the last column says where each item is used. Check the cupboard section before you go, because oil, salt and spices are probably already at home. Every recipe is for one portion except the chilli, the traybake, the curry and the pork, which make two. Each recipe page still has its own list.

DOWNLOAD

A plain-text copy of this whole list is here: [Weekly shopping list \(text file\)](#)

Meat and fish

ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Lean beef mince (5% fat)	1 pack, 500 g	Mon 250 g (chilli), Sat 150 g (burger). 100 g spare
Lean beef steak (sirloin or rump)	150 g	Thu (stir-fry)
Skinless boneless chicken thighs	4 thighs, about 450 g	Tue (traybake, 2 portions)
Salmon fillet	1 fillet, about 130 g	Fri (baked salmon)
Pork tenderloin	1, about 350 g	Sun (roast, 2 portions)
Tuna in spring water	1 tin, about 145 g	Mon (salad)

Fruit and vegetables

ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Bananas	2	Mon (porridge), Thu (pancakes)
Apples	3	Fri (toast), Sun (baked oats, roast)

ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Lemons	2	Half each on Mon, Thu, Fri, Sat
Baby spinach	2 bags, about 225 g in all	Tue 40 g, Wed 15 g + 80 g, Thu 40 g, Sat 20 g, Sun 30 g. Open the second bag on Thursday
Carrots	6	Tue 2, Wed 1, Fri 1, Sun 2
Onions (brown)	3	Mon (chilli), Wed (curry), Fri (soup, small)
Red onions	3	Tue 1, Sun 1, and one for the quarters on Mon and Sat
Garlic	1 head (7 cloves)	Mon 2, Wed 2, Thu 1, Fri 1, Sat 1
Fresh root ginger	1 small piece (1 cm)	Thu (stir-fry)
Broccoli	2 heads (1 small, 1 medium)	Tue 200 g, Thu 150 g. Half of the second head is spare
Baby or new potatoes	1 bag, 750 g	Tue 400 g, Fri 200 g
Sweet potatoes	2 medium	Tue (stuffed potato), Sat (wedges)
Parsnips	2	Sun (roast)
Cucumber	1	Wed 80 g, Sat 100 g
Cherry tomatoes	1 small punnet, 100 g	Sat (salad)
Tomato	1	Sat (burger), half used
Green beans	100 g	Fri (salmon)
Mushrooms (button or chestnut)	1 small punnet, 80 g	Sun (omelette)
Dairy and eggs		
ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Eggs	1 box of 10	9 needed: Tue 2, Thu 2, Sat 2, Sun 1 + 2
Semi-skimmed milk	500 ml	Mon 200 ml, Sun 150 ml

ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Plain Greek-style yoghurt	1 small pot, 150 g	Wed (breakfast)
Feta cheese	1 small block	Sat 40 g
Hummus	1 small tub	Wed 60 g

Bread and bakery

ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Wholemeal bread	1 small loaf	5 slices: Tue 2, Fri 2, Sat 1
Wholemeal tortilla wraps	1 pack	Wed (1 wrap)
Wholemeal burger buns	1 pack	Sat (1 bun)

Frozen

ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Mixed berries	1 small bag, 100 g or more	Wed (breakfast)

Tins, jars and bottles

ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Chopped tomatoes (400 g tin)	3 tins	Mon 1, Wed 1, Sat half
Kidney beans (400 g tin)	1 tin	Mon (chilli)
Chickpeas (400 g tin)	2 tins	Wed 1, Sat half, Sun half
Cannellini beans (400 g tin)	1 tin	Mon half
Peanut butter	1 jar	Fri 30 g
Reduced-salt soy sauce	1 small bottle	Thu 1.5 tbsp

Dry goods

ITEM	BUY	USED IN
Porridge oats	1 bag	150 g: Mon 40 g, Wed 20 g, Thu 40 g, Sun 50 g
Brown basmati rice	1 bag	180 g: Mon, Wed and Thu, 60 g each
Red split lentils	1 small bag	Fri 50 g
Reduced-salt vegetable stock cubes	1 small box	Fri, half a cube

Cupboard check

You probably have these already. Check the amounts, then add to the trolley whatever has run out.

- **Olive oil:** about 165 ml (11 tbsp) over the week
- **Salt and black pepper:** used in most recipes
- **Ground cinnamon:** 1 tsp (Mon, Sun)
- **Mild chilli powder:** 1 tsp (Mon)
- **Ground cumin:** 1.5 tsp (Mon, Fri)
- **Smoked paprika:** 3 tsp (Tue, Sat)
- **Medium curry powder:** 1 tbsp (Wed)
- **Dried oregano:** 1/2 tsp (Sat)
- **Dried thyme:** 1 tsp (Sun)

Equipment

- Baking paper (Fri, Sat)
- Kitchen foil (Sun)
- A large roasting tin (Tue, Sun)
- A small ovenproof dish or ramekin, about 350 ml (Sun)
- A frying pan with a lid (Sat)

- 2 or 3 shallow containers with lids and a few freezer bags (batch portions and leftovers)

If you shop once: freeze and defrost

Raw meat and fish should not wait several days in the fridge, so buy them on your shopping day, freeze them at once, and take each one out the evening before you cook it. Defrost on a plate on the bottom shelf of the fridge, never on the worktop. Check the use-by date on the pack: if it falls before the day you need the item, freeze it. Do not refreeze raw meat that has defrosted.

ITEM	COOK ON	TAKE OUT OF THE FREEZER
Chicken thighs	Tue	Mon evening
Beef steak	Thu	Wed evening
Salmon fillet	Fri	Thu evening
Pork tenderloin	Sun (dinner)	Sat evening
Beef mince (150 g, frozen on Monday)	Sat	Fri evening

SPLITTING THE MINCE

Buy one 500 g pack. On Monday use 250 g for the chilli, and wrap and freeze 150 g for Saturday's burger straight away. That leaves about 100 g spare, which you can freeze too, or add to the chilli. If you would rather not freeze it, buy 150 g of fresh mince on Saturday instead and buy only 250 g on your first trip.

Using up leftovers

- Half a tin of cannellini beans (Monday): use within 2 days, or freeze in a small bag.
- Half a tin of chopped tomatoes (Saturday): use within 2 days, or freeze it.
- Half the second head of broccoli (Thursday): swap it for the green beans on Friday.
- Feta, hummus and the second bag of spinach: keep chilled and use within the date on the pack.
- Spare bread, wraps and buns: freeze in a bag and take out what you need.

- Chilli (Mon), traybake (Tue), curry (Wed) and pork (Sun) each make a second portion; the recipes say where it goes.

THAT COMPLETES MEAL PLAN 1

Three beef dinners (Monday, Thursday, Saturday), a fish dinner on Friday, a vegetarian dinner on Wednesday, and a shopping list to match. Swap any recipe that does not suit you, and tell me what you would change before the next plan.