

Food Preparation and Meal Planning Tips

Ideal for Anyone Who Wants to Decrease Time Spent in the Kitchen

Prepared by Andrea R.

<http://www.4bedtimestories.wordpress.com>

Useful tools

- Crock pot
- Roaster
- Freezer/deep freezer
- Delay timer (on oven or bread machine)
- Freezer bags and rigid containers
- Ice cube trays

General Meal Streamlining Tips

- Make weekly or monthly meal plans/rotate
- Do prep-work ahead of time
- Utilize weekends
 - Bake breads or sweets
 - Do all the prep work for the meals ahead
- Memorize your favorite recipes; prepare them often
- Cook first, change clothes (wear a full apron or duster)/relax later
- Make entrees larger—double or triple the recipe (e.g. lasagna, hot dish/casseroles, soup) freeze the rest
- LEFTOVERS! Make meals that end in leftovers. Use for lunches or refrigerate/freeze for supper another day
- Use time in the mornings to start prep work, clean kitchen, set out pots, utensils, seasonings for the evening's meal
- Make sure your kitchen is clean. This way you know everything you need is available, it's less frustrating, and easier to move quickly
- You don't need a fancy vacuum sealer to seal meals for long-term storage. Partially zip seal the storage bag. Place the plastic bag in water, do not fully submerge. The pressure of the water will force out the air. Complete seal before removing from pot or bowl of water.
- Stock up on sale items
 - Prepackaged meals, like frozen pizzas could be a reasonable option when in a pinch
- Cook meat/chop veggies once
 - When browning ground beef, cooking roasts or whole chickens, make more than what you need for the recipe. Freeze the rest in recipe-sized portions

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- When cutting veggies for a recipe, take a little extra time to cut more than you need for the recipe. Freeze the rest.
- Have you ever made shepherd's pie? I can give you the recipe—gr. beef w/ mixed veggies in a casserole, covered w/ a layer of mashed potatoes (gr. beef has garlic, onion, worst. sauce, beef broth, etc...). This freezes well and is super good.

Meal Tips/Ideas

- Salads are a quick, easy, and nutritional side or main dish option
- Fish and boneless chicken cook in 15-20 minutes and can be prepared in a variety of ways
- Make muffins and freeze some
- Freeze pesto or stocks in ice cube trays. Cook pasta, stir in pesto, and eat.
- Have a fruit or veggie tray ready for the kids to munch while waiting for supper
- Keep prepared/homemade pasta sauce on hand. Add pre-browned ground beef and boil noodles. Serve with garlic bread, which can be made ahead, and a salad.
- Pot roast one night, use leftover meat to make stew for another.
- Roast chicken with potatoes one night. Chicken soup (or some variation) another.