



what's cooking
THIS WEEK?

A guide to the art of meal planning

from Footprint Farm

MEAL PLANNING

or, the art of feeding your family without going crazy

Let's pretend for a second that you've just arrived home from work, or the gym, or have a car full of muddy kids straight from soccer practice. You step in the front door and immediately start to panic. It's 6pm, everyone is starving, and all you have is a fridge full of fresh vegetables that, let's be honest, take forever to assemble into a meal to please all palates and appetites. You scan the fridge one more time, willing a pre-made, super healthy meal to appear from behind a jar of pickles. You experience a moment of relief when you spot a frozen pizza in the freezer, warm it up, and collapse. And then kick yourself for having a fridge full of fresh veggies but not eating them. You promise yourself to cook something tomorrow, grab a glass of wine, and call it a night. If this sounds familiar, we are here to help! We are two overly busy farmers who have been eating burritos for breakfast, lunch and dinner for years because cooking more than that just took too long. Last year we moved closer to our rural farm, which meant that we took fewer and fewer trips to the local grocery store. Luckily we grow all sorts of vegetables, we have dozens of eggs, and we buy a pig's worth of pork each year. Limited access to easy-to-heat-up meals from the supermarket led to more cooking at home, but came with increased stress and grumbling from the cooks. Access to all the fresh vegetables you could want is an amazing resource, and yet cooking it takes forethought, a well stocked pantry, and the know-how to turn yet another butternut squash into something new and exciting. We've tested, scribbled, re-worked and magnetized dozens of resources to bring you what (we think) is a pretty great method for using your fresh veggies in a new and less stressful way. Enjoy!

MAKE ME A MEAL PLAN

Just follow these 5 easy steps, which are explained in detail on the next page.

1. Get Ready
2. What's on the calendar
3. What's in the fridge
4. Who's Eating
5. Write it out

(6. Shop and cook!)

Ok so I added a 6th step.

These quick steps should take you about 10 minutes once you get into a rhythm. I like to use this time for myself and pour a second cup of coffee, retreat to a cozy chair with my favorite cookbooks and recipe blogs and relax in meal planning bliss. Go ahead and try it. I think you deserve to spend a few minutes at the beginning of the week to plan for some stress-free meals this week.



1

GET READY

Grab a calendar, a pencil, a meal planning sheet, and a piece of scrap paper or sticky notes.



2

WHAT'S ON THE CALENDAR

Choose a start date for your first meal plan. (Mondays are usually good) First look at your calendar and put an X where you won't need to cook because you're eating out, going to an event, or a fairy god chef is fixing your meal.

3

WHAT'S IN THE FRIDGE

Do a quick scan of the fridge and make a list of ingredients that you'd like to use this week.



4

WHO'S EATING

In our house I make most of the meal plans, but Jake chooses what to eat on the weekends. You can have kids weigh in (when kids have a hand in planning and/or cooking a meal they are more likely to eat it too!), or see if anyone else is craving a specific meal.

5

WRITE IT OUT

Pencil in meals for each day of the week, then make a grocery list so that you will have all necessary ingredients on hand. Stick it on the fridge and rejoice!

TIP 1



Leftovers Rock

Chopping up a butternut squash for soup? Chop the whole thing, then you have pre-prepped squash for a thai curry later in the week. Or try doubling favorite recipes for easy leftover lunches the next day.

TIP 2

Aim for 4

Start with aiming to cook 1 meal at home this week. Then 2. Once you're comfortable, stick with a goal of 4 meals at home each week. If you surpass that, fantastic! If not, no worries.

TIP 3

Include the kids

Did you know that kids are about a million times more likely to eat meals that they helped plan, shop for, and prepare? Even if it's veggies.

TIP 4

Theme nights

To make meal planning even easier we go with themes. Tuesdays are always Mexican, for example. (Taco Tuesday, obviously) On Wednesdays we often make pizza or pasta. This framework takes out the guesswork, then I get excited about being creative within the category.

TIP 5

Keep basics nearby

I try to think ahead on prepping ingredients, or I prep extra for busy nights. For example, I always have my favorite spice mixes and salad dressings made before Thursdays, our busiest and toughest night of the week for cooking.



THAT'S IT!

Time to download our weekly meal planning sheet,
grab your favorite cookbook, and get cooking.

Find our own weekly meal plans, recipes, and more on our website.
www.footprintfarmvt.com



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