

# Healthy Meals for One

Easy, delicious, and budget-friendly



## Pre-Prep Prowess

When cooking for just yourself, a little planning is key.

- Set aside a couple of hours (Sundays are popular) to plan meals for the week.
- Look for recipes and meal ideas that incorporate the same ingredients. For example, fresh spinach can be used for salad on Monday, in a burrito on Tuesday, and in a soup on Wednesday.
- Be mindful of spoilage. Carrots can last several weeks in the fridge, but mushrooms just a few days. Use up the fast-spoiling ingredients first.
- Cook up one whole grain each week to use a few times.
- Keep 1-2 high-protein foods ready to use -- cooked beans, tofu, fish, or poultry -- in the fridge for quick meals.



## One-Pot Wonders

One of the most effective ways to eat healthfully and affordably is batch cooking.



Seek plant-forward recipes like bean soups and vegetable-based stews. Portion out in airtight containers and store in the fridge (up to a week) or freezer (up to 3 months).

## The Freezer is Your Friend!

Freezing foods is the perfect solution for those grocery items that will spoil before you can eat them, and for quick meals when you don't feel like cooking.

- Wrap extra bread (sliced first) in air-tight plastic wrap. Use it for toast, breadcrumbs, and croutons.
- Healthy, pre-portioned prepared frozen foods can turn into dinner--fast! Veggie burgers, falafel, or turkey meatballs can be heated in the microwave and enjoyed with salad greens and whole grains for a quick, hearty meal.
- You can pre-portion and freeze cooked whole grains, beans, and vegetables. Use airtight containers or bags, and pop into the microwave (on a microwave safe dish) when ready to use.
- Soups, chilis, stews are perfect to store in the freezer for a quick heat-and-eat lunch or dinner.



## Smart Shopping to Prevent Food Waste

One of the challenges of cooking for one is buying only the ingredients you need at a given time. Some tips:

- Buy in-season produce for max freshness. Think apples in autumn, squash in winter, tomatoes in summer, and asparagus in spring.
- Don't fall for the "quantity discounts" (unless you can store the food long-term). If you have to throw away spoiled food, you're not getting a bargain.
- Stick to your list and buy only what you need for the next few days.

## Keep it Simple



Not all meals need to follow a special formula, One of the benefits of cooking for one is that you can make your own rules! A healthy meal can be a peanut butter banana sandwich, eggs

with whole grain toast and fruit, a baked white or sweet potato stuffed with your favorite fillings, or a medley of leftovers served on salad greens. Be sure to include at least one fruit or vegetable!

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## Meal Ideas and Recipes



### Un-bowl-ievably Tasty

"Power bowls" are one of the easiest and healthiest meals for one. Keep a rotating assortment of each ingredient type on hand for quick meal creations.



Finally, please your own palate with your favorite flavors -- a little olive oil, flavored vinegar lemon juice, hot sauce, dried fruits, herbs, spices, etc. Using already seasoned cooked ingredients (like garlic roasted peppers, chili beans, or marinated tuna) is great way to marry and enjoy delicious flavors.

### Pantry Proficiency

A well-stocked pantry is a must for quick, healthy meals. Here are a few items to always have on hand.

- Canned beans. 1 15-oz can will cover 2 meals. Add to salads, pasta, grains, or sautéed with onions and tomatoes. Store in the fridge for up to a week or in the freezer for several weeks.
- Jarred salsa. Spice up burritos, tacos, quesadillas, and more. Also a wonderful ingredient in sauces and chili.
- Canned tuna/sardines/chicken (if you're not vegetarian). Each 5-oz can is one or two servings, depending on other components in your meal.
- Canned tomatoes. Perfect for chili, soups, and red sauces. One 15-oz can covers 1-2 meals.
- Boxed veggie or chicken broth. Your go-to base for soup and other one-pot meals. Once opened, broths last about a week in the fridge. You can freeze in ice cube trays and add to meals as you cook.
- Pasta and other grains (preferably whole grains). Use only what you need.



### Three 5-Ingredient Quick Plant-Based Meals for One

**Curry in a Hurry:** 1/2 cup brown rice • 1 small onion • 1 5-ounce bag of spinach • 1/2 can chick peas • 2 tbsp curry powder. Cook rice in 1 cup water. Sauté onion and spinach in a little oil. Add chickpeas, curry, a pinch of salt, and a bit of water. Serve over rice.

**Pasta Primavera:** 1/4 pound whole wheat pasta • 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables • 1 cup vegetable broth • 2 cloves garlic, sliced • juice of 1 lemon. Cook pasta in 1 quart of water. Sauté vegetables in a little olive oil. Add broth and garlic and cook until broth is cooked off. Add lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper. Toss with drained pasta.

**Anytime Breakfast Burrito:** 1 large whole grain flour tortilla • 1 egg or 1/4 block mashed tofu • 1/2 cup salsa • 1/2 can black beans, rinsed & drained • 1 oz shredded cheese (dairy or plant-based). Cook egg or tofu in a small pan sprayed with cooking spray. Place in tortilla along with salsa, beans, and cheese. Heat in pan.

