

Meal Planning – Examples and Support



Creating or using a meal plan is a really easy way to save time (and often money) and can help you stick to healthy habits.

You can **write it down and change it weekly**, or just have a weekly schedule in mind which doesn't change often. This **takes away the decision-making process**, meaning you can dive straight into prep without trying to work out what you can make for dinner.

It can **also save you money**, as you can plan for meals which use similar ingredients during the week, making sure you **use everything** you buy before it goes bad (e.g. a whole chicken, a whole broccoli, a bag of peppers). You can also have days where you change it up and cook something new to keep it exciting!

Once you have planned your meals, you can write a list and buy everything in one shop. This may save you time as well, as you'll be able to cut down on all the mini-shops you do during the week.

You may still need to pop in for bread and milk, but see if you can buy enough to last the week in one shop. It may take a bit of practice to get used to knowing how much fruit and veg you'll need for a whole week, but you'll work it out in no time.

Remember the deal with dates on food:

- Use-by dates **are usually** important and should be adhered to (or frozen in advance if appropriate). They refer to the safety of the food product, and should always be followed with meat and fish products.
- Best before dates refer to the **quality, not safety** of the food. If a product is past its best before date, it is usually still safe for consumption but may not be as high quality or fresh as previously. You can continue to use food after its best before date.

Note: check if the date shown is a 'use-by' or 'best before' date, and if it doesn't say then check the 'Storage' instructions on the packaging. For fruit and veg, just use your eyes and nose! It'll almost always be perfectly fine after its date if stored correctly, so try not to throw away any delicious veggies unless absolutely necessary.

Below are some of our go-to meal plans.

These are just examples based on our personal preferences and schedules – you can adapt them based on the foods you like to eat, what you like to cook and how much variety you prefer on a daily basis.

You'll see they are quite different, and that's why it's okay for yours to look different, too! There's no right or wrong way to do it – the best way to do it is the way that works for you and that you'll stick to.

When you're ready, download our meal planner template [here](#) and have a go at your own!

Hettie's weekly menu: most of these meals have videos to show you how on our YouTube channel - [Zing Somerset - YouTube](#)

Hettie's ideal meal is packed with veggies, plenty of protein and always some quality carbs – but it HAS to be quick and easy! She goes for one-pan wonders wherever possible, and is a BIG fan of weekly prep for breakfasts, lunches and snacks. 1-2 hours on a Sunday morning is all Hettie needs to get the fridge set for the next 5 days, so healthy food is on hand whenever hunger strikes during a busy day, and evening meals take only 30 minutes from prep to plate.

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Evening Meal	Additional...
Monday	<p>Overnight oats (cocoa, coffee, or cinnamon) with fruit (banana or berries) and nuts.</p> <p>Dry ingredients prepped on weekends, milk/yoghurt added night before.</p>	<p>Chicken, salmon, smoked mackerel or turkey mince, with roasted veg or salad, and chickpeas.</p> <p>Boiled eggs with lunch or as snacks.</p> <p>Prepped on Sundays.</p>	Chicken and veg stir fry with noodles	Stir fry veg packs are often reduced when we do our shopping at the weekend – they last easily until Monday evening. Cooked chicken can be thrown in at the end to heat through.
Tuesday			Baked fish, jacket/roast potatoes and greens	Nothing special, just wrap your fish fillets in foil and bake for 15-20 mins – simple!
Wednesday			Fajita rice bowl with chicken and veg	Still using chicken cooked on Sunday. Use any veg you fancy and as much as possible!
Thursday			Ultra-packed omelette with jacket potato and cottage cheese	More like a frittata with loads of chopped veggies, but cooked in a frying pan, filled with grated cheese and flipped in half.
Friday			Fajitas or pasta	Use up last of cooked chicken if still going, and use up last of veg in fridge (literally almost anything can go in these dishes! Don't worry about being conventional).
Saturday	Chocolate spread and banana on toast - yum!	Fish finger and salad wraps	TBC – this is the 'wild card' night.	Food shop day! Stocking up on veggies, filling the freezer and cupboards, ready to prep on Sunday.
Sunday	Overnight oats	Scrambled eggs on toast with salad.	Usually chilli, curry or stew – either batch cooking or using previously batch cooked portions from the freezer.	Slow cook a whole chicken for use in lunches and meals through the week. Hard boil 6-8 eggs for snacks/lunches during the week.

Jem's monthly menu: lots of these dishes are also on our YouTube channel! [Zing Somerset - YouTube](#)

Jem sets a meal plan for 4 weeks, then it gets changed up for new ideas – below is just one of those blocks. Jem tends to cook her meals in bulk, then leftovers are used for healthy lunches or portioned out and frozen for later – perfect for a 'ready meal'! Most of her prep is done first thing in the morning, so that the evening meal is quick and easy at the end of a busy day. Sunday roast leftover meat is always used up on Monday nights, so nothing goes to waste.

WEEK + DAY	ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR
MON	CHICKEN STIR FRY	BEANY MINCE	MEAT BALLS	SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE
TUES	CHICKEN PASTA	COTTAGE PIE	HUNTERS RISOTTO	CHICKEN OR BEEF KEBABS
WED	BEEF OR CHICKEN CHILLI	BEEF OR CHICKEN RISOTTO	STUFFED PEPPERS	COTTAGE PIE
THURS	BEEF OR CHICKEN TACO'S OR WRAPS	BEEF OR CHICKEN STIR FRY	PORK OR CHICKEN RAGU	CHICKEN OR BEEF WRAPS
FRI	STUFFED PEPPERS	GRILL UP	GRILL UP	BUTTERFLY CHICKEN + SALAD
SAT	GRILL UP	SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE	CHICKEN NOODLES	GRILL UP OR TAKE AWAY
SUN	ROAST	ROAST	ROAST	ROAST

Lauren's weekly plan: lots of these dishes are also on our YouTube channel! [Zing Somerset - YouTube](#)

Lauren has a busy family with lots of bodies to feed at home, so she wants quick, healthy ideas to suit everyone. Her favourite go-to dishes are either quick to whip up for everyone, or are perfect for making in big batches. Enjoying the same meals a few times in the same week makes shopping much easier, as fewer ingredients are needed (just more of them!).

Date.....	Meal Planner			
Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Naughty Snacks	Healthy Snacks
Monday: Pomdige	Soup + Roll	fishcake + Stirfry		
Tuesday: Porridge	Soup + Roll	Turkey mince Cottage pie		
Wednesday: weetabix	Soup + Roll	Salmon, egg toast		
Thursday: weetabix	Beans on toast	Chicken Stirfry + noodles		
Friday: fruit + yoghurt	egg on toast	Chilli + rice		
Saturday: Toast	Beans on toast	wrap A33a + Salad		
Sunday: Toast	Brunch low fat SWSageo, egg, bacon, beans toms, mushrooms, toast			

Paula's weekly plan: lots of these dishes are also on our YouTube channel! [Zing Somerset - YouTube](#)

Paula's menu works for a very active family of four, while working part time. Most effort is put into meals on days off in the week, which sometimes even follow a recipe! Paula will often double up her portion sizes when cooking, to put in the freezer for an easy 'ready meal' at a later date.

Day	Lunch	Dinner
Monday	Chicken soup with bread. A pear.	Homemade veggie sausages with pasta and veg. (Cannellini beans, cheese, onion, breadcrumbs, spices and garlic – mix well and form into sausages. Coat with egg and breadcrumbs before shallow frying)
Tuesday	Tuna salad wrap (wholemeal for extra fibre)	Spanish omelette and salad (sliced sausage, peppers, mushrooms, onion and cheese)
Wednesday	Hummus and marmite on toast (quick and filling when on the go!) An apple.	Cottage pie with veg (using pre-cooked mince and lentils from freezer)
Thursday	Cheese and beetroot sandwich. Melon slices	Salmon, rice and veg/salad
Friday	Hummus and marmite on toast. Melon slices	Pizza with sweetcorn, mushrooms and peppers Baked beans
Saturday	Homemade leek and potato soup (from freezer) Bread.	Chicken and veg stir fry
Sunday	'If it's...' If it's in the fridge, finish it up before the week is out. A great way to empty the fridge before a new shop and stop any produce from being forgotten about!	Boiled gammon joint, with sauté potatoes and veg. (leftover gammon used for sandwiches on Monday)