



# spring

4 weeks of meals  
to celebrate the season

COOKSMARTS

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CHIEF KITCHEN CHEERLEADER  
OF COOK SMARTS

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- 60 **Friday:** Baked Greek Potatoes with Sun-dried Tomato Pesto

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GUIDE TO FROZEN FOOD STORAGE

Hello Friend,

Thank you so much for purchasing this eBook of spring meal plans.

Spring is my favorite time in the kitchen. We're thawing out of the frigid temps of the winter and craving lighter, fresher, more colorful meals. We have a few months to still use our oven before the temperatures get too hot in the summer. There is a new abundance of produce to select from at the market. Whether you're just getting into a new cooking routine or just need some dinner ideas, I hope these new recipes help you enjoy all this season has to offer.

Our meal plan service, voted #1 by Lifehacker, has been helping home cooks cook more without the stress of dinner decisions since 2013. Over the years, we've learned a lot about the best way to organize meals to reduce food waste. We try to make efficient use of ingredients like herbs and even rye bread (as seen in Meal Plan #3), so that you're left with as little waste as possible at the end of the week.

Some menus also feature "make once, eat twice" components, like the chimichurri sauce in week 1. This not only makes better use of your time but also provides you with ideas for how you can stretch out your efforts in the kitchen. In addition, we also have recommendations for what you can do with leftovers and what meals (or meal components) freeze well to help you optimize your time even more.

Each meal plan is also designed to be quite flexible. While we encourage you to trust us and just make all 5 meals in a week, we realize that everyone has their own particular taste. If you want to leave an entire meal out of your menu for the week, simply cross out the grocery items with the corresponding letter for that meal.

You can also treat each of the recipes flexibly as well. If there's a protein that you just don't like, I encourage you to substitute it with a protein that you do enjoy. Don't care for the pork in the Pork & Asparagus Stir-Fry? Swap it out for chicken or tofu. Not a fan of asparagus? Try green beans or broccoli instead. You can follow each recipe or meal plan to a tee or simply use them as a jumping off point for your personal dinner operation - however you choose to use it, we hope that having your spring dinner planning done means you'll have more free time to enjoy the season.

If you love these meal plans and want to have access to our entire Archives of meal plans and recipes, head to [cooksmarts.com](https://cooksmarts.com) for a free trial.

Always your kitchen cheerleader,  
**Jess**

# BEFORE GETTING STARTED

## WEEKEND PREP

Since we are in the business of making everyday life streamlined and stress-free, one of our favorite ways of helping you accomplish that is with our Weekend Prep Steps. For each meal plan menu, we have instructions for ingredients and meal components (like sauces) that can be prepped over the weekend. These optional make-ahead steps for weekend go-getters will help every weeknight dinner come together in a flash. Each prep step also includes the number of days it can be done ahead of time, so even if you don't have the weekend to prep, you can still prep during the weeknights when you do have a few minutes to spare.

To really motivate you to get ahead of schedule, do your prep with an extra side of fun, like making it social with a friend, making it indulgent with a glass of wine, or making it “you time” with some music or podcasts!

## THINGS YOU ALREADY HAVE IN YOUR KITCHEN

For each of the weekly menus, we provide you with a handy grocery list to get you in and out of the store in record time. Since almost every household already has salt and black pepper in their kitchen, we don't clutter our grocery lists with those items.





# MEAL PLAN CALENDAR

M

T

W

TH

F

MEAL PLAN 1



Tom Kha Gai Soup  
with Chicken



Chimichurri  
Burger with Green  
Bean "Fries"



Skillet Tortellini  
with Spinach,  
Zucchini & Roasted  
Red Peppers



Shrimp Tacos  
with Chimichurri  
& Black Bean  
Corn Salsa

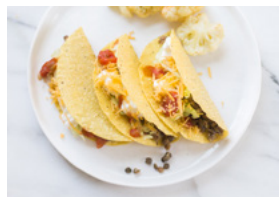


Pork & Asparagus  
Stir-Fry with  
Coconut Lime  
Smoothie

MEAL PLAN 2



Cumin-Spiced  
Beef Kebabs  
with Cucumber  
Tomato Salad



Crunchy Lentil  
Tacos with Roasted  
Cauliflower



Greek Chicken  
Quinoa Bowl with  
Creamy Lemon  
Dill Sauce

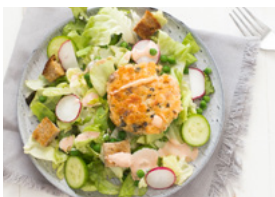


Quinoa Fried "Rice"  
with Ground Pork  
& Fried Egg



Tuna Melt  
with Tomatoes  
& Green Salad

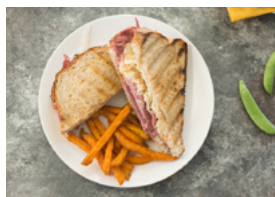
MEAL PLAN 3



Salmon Cakes over  
Spring Salad with  
Rye Croutons



Spring Pork Ramen  
with Snap Peas



Reuben Sandwich  
with Sweet Potato  
Fries & Snap Peas



Chicken with  
Mango Salsa,  
Sesame Asparagus  
& Coconut Rice



Spaghetti  
Carbonara with  
Bacon, Spinach  
& Mushrooms

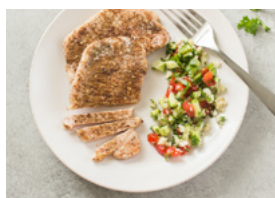
MEAL PLAN 4



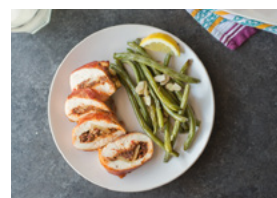
Sheet Pan  
Indian Chicken  
& Broccoli with  
Cauliflower Rice



Soy Ginger Salmon  
& Sesame Noodles  
with Bok Choy



Za'atar Rubbed  
Pork Chop with  
Cauliflower Rice  
Tabbouleh



Stuffed Chicken  
Breast with  
Tomato Pesto  
& Roasted  
Green Beans



Baked Greek  
Potatoes with  
Sun-dried  
Tomato Pesto

# MEAL PLAN 1

This week is full of fresh flavors and colorful veggies. We're focusing on saving money and time, while still bringing you delicious recipes you will want to add to your regular dinner rotation.



## MONDAY

### RECIPE A

Tom Kha Gai Soup with Chicken



## TUESDAY

### RECIPE B

Chimichurri Burger with Green Bean "Fries"



## WEDNESDAY

### RECIPE C

Skillet Tortellini with Spinach, Zucchini & Roasted Red Peppers



## THURSDAY

### RECIPE D

Shrimp Tacos with Chimichurri & Black Bean Corn Salsa



## FRIDAY

### RECIPE E

Pork & Asparagus Stir-Fry with Coconut Lime Smoothie

### DEPENDENCIES

- **Chimichurri** - Make a double batch of this Argentinian herb sauce to use in 2 different meals this week.

### EFFICIENCIES

- **Cilantro** - Use this fresh herb to top Monday's soup and to make chimichurri sauce.
- **Coconut milk** - Adds rich, creamy flavor to Monday's soup and Friday's smoothie.
- **Roasted red bell peppers** - Buy a jar of roasted red bell peppers and use them to top Tuesday's burger and to fold into Wednesday's tortellini skillet.

### RECOMMENDED MAKE AHEAD

- **Tom Kha Gai** - Can be made ahead and reheated when you're ready to serve.

### IDEAS FOR LEFTOVERS

- What freezes well this week: Soup; Burger patties; Hamburger buns; Green beans; Tortellini; Shrimp; Tortillas; Pork; Cooked rice; Chopped asparagus. Refer to the [Guide to Frozen Food Storage](#) for more freezing smarts.
- Chop leftover burger patties from Tuesday and add to Wednesday's pasta for some extra protein.
- Use Thursday's leftover shrimp to top a salad. You can even thinly slice leftover tortillas and toast them in the oven to add extra crunch!

# GROCERY LIST – WEEK 1

## RECIPES BAKING

<b>A</b>	Brown sugar	2 tsp
<b>E</b>	Cornstarch	2 tsp
<b>C</b>	Flour, all-purpose	2 Tbsp
<b>E</b>	Honey	1 tsp

## BOXED AND CANNED GOODS

<b>D</b>	Beans, black (14 oz / 397 g)	1 can
<b>B D</b>	Capers	2 Tbsp
<b>A E</b>	Coconut milk, light	2 cups
<b>B C</b>	Roasted red peppers, jarred	1-1/2 cups
<b>A C</b>	Stock, any type	4-1/2 cups

## BREAD AND BAKERY

<b>B</b>	Hamburger buns	4
<b>D</b>	Tortillas, taco-sized corn or flour	8

## DAIRY

<b>C</b>	Butter	3 Tbsp
<b>B</b>	Cheese, Swiss (sub any sliced cheese)	4 slices
<b>C</b>	Cheese, parmesan	2 oz
<b>E</b>	Yogurt, plain or Greek	1/2 cup

## FROZEN

<b>C</b>	Artichokes, frozen	6 oz
<b>D</b>	Corn, frozen (sub canned)	1-1/2 cups

## GRAINS, PASTAS, AND NUTS

<b>E</b>	Rice, uncooked white or brown	1 cup
<b>C</b>	Tortellini, any type	1 lb

## MEATS

<b>B</b>	Beef, ground	1-1/2 lbs
<b>A</b>	Chicken breasts, boneless and skinless	1 lb
<b>E</b>	Pork chops, boneless	1 lb
<b>D</b>	Shrimp, peeled and deveined	1 lb

## RECIPES OILS, VINEGARS, AND SAUCES

<b>A</b>	Fish sauce	2-1/2 Tbsp
<b>A</b>	Hot sauce (opt)	As needed
<b>B</b>	Mayonnaise	1/4 cup
<b>A B D E</b>	Oil, cooking	5 Tbsp + 2/3 cup
<b>E</b>	Oil, toasted sesame	2 tsp
<b>E</b>	Oyster sauce (sub Hoisin sauce)	1 Tbsp
<b>E</b>	Soy sauce, low-sodium	3 Tbsp
<b>B D</b>	Vinegar, red wine	2 Tbsp
<b>E</b>	Vinegar, rice	1 Tbsp
<b>B</b>	Worcestershire sauce	2 tsp

## PRODUCE

<b>E</b>	Asparagus	10 oz
<b>D</b>	Avocados	1
<b>C</b>	Baby spinach	5 oz
<b>E</b>	Bananas	1
<b>A B D E</b>	Cilantro	3/4 bunch + 2 Tbsp
<b>A B C D E</b>	Garlic	13 cloves
<b>A E</b>	Ginger, fresh	3/4 inch
<b>B</b>	Green beans	1 lb
<b>A B D</b>	Jalapenos	3
<b>B</b>	Lemon juice	2 tsp
<b>A</b>	Lemongrass	3 stalks
<b>B D E</b>	Lime juice	8 tsp
<b>A</b>	Limes	1/2
<b>A</b>	Mushrooms, any brown (look for pre-sliced to save time)	8 oz
<b>B D</b>	Parsley	1/2 cup
<b>B D</b>	Shallots	2 cloves
<b>A</b>	Tomatoes, medium	1
<b>A C</b>	Zucchini	18 oz

## SPICES

<b>D</b>	Chili powder	1/2 tsp
<b>D</b>	Coriander, ground	1/2 tsp
<b>D</b>	Cumin	1/2 tsp
<b>C</b>	Oregano, dried	1/2 tsp
<b>E</b>	Red pepper flakes (opt)	1/2 tsp

# WEEKEND PREP STEPS – WEEK 1

Do these optional prep steps over the weekend and watch each weeknight dinner come together in mere minutes!

**RECIPE A: Tom Kha Gai Soup**

**RECIPE B: Chimichurri Burger**

**RECIPE C: Skillet Tortellini**

**RECIPE D: Shrimp Tacos with Chimichurri**

**RECIPE E: Pork and Asparagus Stir-Fry**

## PREP PRODUCE

### RECIPES: A

- Lemongrass - 3 stalks, mashed
- Ginger, fresh - 1/2 inch, thinly sliced
- Garlic - 3 cloves, chopped
- Mushrooms, any brown - 8 oz, thinly sliced (look for pre-sliced to save time)
- Jalapenos - 1, thinly sliced
- Cilantro - 1/4 bunch, leaves torn
- Limes - 1/2, wedges

#### Steps

Prep as directed. Combine lemongrass, ginger, and garlic. Store remaining ingredients separately. (Can be done up to 3 days ahead)

### RECIPES: B

- Roasted red peppers, jarred - 1 cup, sliced
- Jalapenos - 1, diced
- Green beans - 1 lb, trimmed

#### Steps

Prep as directed. Store separately. (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)

### RECIPES: C

- Artichokes, frozen - 6 oz, chopped
- Zucchini - 10 oz, cubed
- Garlic - 4 cloves, chopped
- Roasted bell peppers, jarred - 1/2 cup, chopped

#### Steps

Prep as directed. Store separately. (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)

### RECIPES: D

- Jalapenos - 1, diced

#### Steps

Dice jalapenos. (Remove seeds if you prefer less spice.) (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)

### RECIPES: E

- Asparagus - 10 oz, trimmed and chopped

#### Steps

Prep as directed. (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)

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## PREP CHICKEN

### RECIPES: A

- Chicken breasts, boneless and skinless - 1 lb, chopped
- Fish sauce - 2 tsp
- Brown sugar - 1 tsp

#### Steps

Chicken - Chop into bite-sized pieces. Toss with fish sauce and brown sugar. Tenderize with a fork. (Can be done 1 day ahead)

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## COOK RICE

### RECIPES: E

- Rice, uncooked white or brown - 1 cup

#### Steps

For white rice, rinse until clear. Fill a saucepan or Dutch oven (or rice cooker) with rice, water (use 2:1 ratio for water to rice), and some salt. Cover with lid and bring to a boil. Once water boils, stir, lower heat to a low-medium, and cover. Check white rice after ~20 min; brown at ~45 min. Rice is done when it's absorbed all the water. If it's not done, leave the cover on until all water has been absorbed. Take cover off to release steam and fluff with a wooden spoon after 5 minutes. (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)



## WEEKEND PREP STEPS – WEEK 1 (CONT'D)

### MAKE CHIMICHURRI

#### RECIPES: B D

- Cilantro - 1/2 bunch, chopped
- Parsley - 1/2 cup, chopped
- Garlic - 4 cloves
- Shallots - 2 clove
- Capers - 2 Tbsp, drained and rinsed
- Vinegar, red wine - 2 Tbsp
- Lime juice - 4 tsp
- Salt - 1 tsp
- Oil, cooking - 2/3 cup

#### Steps

Make chimichurri sauce - Combine cilantro, parsley, garlic, shallots, capers, vinegar, lime juice, salt, and oil in a food processor. Add more oil if it's too thick. Season to taste with salt or more lime juice. (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)

This makes enough chimichurri for both B and D recipes. If you're skipping one of these recipes, simply halve the amount or save the other half for something else.

### MAKE CHIMICHURRI MAYO

#### RECIPES: B

- Chimichurri sauce (ingredients listed separately) - 1/4 cup
- Mayonnaise - 1/4 cup

#### Steps

Make chimichurri mayo - Whisk together chimichurri sauce with mayonnaise. (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)

### MAKE SPICE MIX

#### RECIPES: D

- Cumin - 1/2 tsp
- Coriander, ground - 1/2 tsp
- Chili powder - 1/2 tsp
- Salt - 1/2 tsp

#### Steps

Combine cumin, coriander, chili powder, and salt. (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)

### MAKE STIR-FRY SAUCE

#### RECIPES: E

- Garlic - 2 cloves, chopped
- Ginger (opt) - 1 tsp, grated
- Oyster sauce - 1 Tbsp (sub Hoisin sauce)
- Soy sauce, low-sodium - 2 Tbsp
- Water - 1/4 cup
- Oil, toasted sesame - 2 tsp
- Honey - 1 tsp
- Red pepper flakes (opt) - 1/2 tsp

#### Steps

Chop garlic and grate ginger. Combine garlic, ginger, oyster sauce, soy sauce, water, toasted sesame oil, honey, and red pepper flakes. (Can be done up to 5 days ahead)

MONDAY

## TOM KHA GAI SOUP WITH CHICKEN

Tom Kha Gai is a coconut milk soup from Thailand. This one-pot, low-calorie meal has a sweet, sour, savory, and spicy flavor that comes from lime, ginger, and lemongrass. We packed this soup with lots of vegetables, but feel free to swap in the ones you love best.



MONDAY

# TOM KHA GAI SOUP WITH CHICKEN

ACTIVE COOKING TIME 30 MIN

TOTAL COOKING TIME 30 MIN

SERVINGS 4

## INGREDIENTS

Lemongrass - 3 stalks, mashed  
Ginger, fresh - 1/2 inch, thinly sliced  
Garlic - 3 cloves, chopped  
Mushrooms, any brown - 8 oz, thinly sliced (look for pre-sliced to save time)  
Jalapenos - 1, thinly sliced  
Cilantro - 1/4 bunch, leaves torn  
Limes - 1/2, wedges  
Chicken breasts, boneless and skinless - 1 lb, chopped  
Fish sauce - 2 tsp + 1-1/2 Tbsp  
Brown sugar - 1 tsp + 1 tsp  
Zucchini - 8 oz, thinly sliced  
Tomatoes, medium - 1, thinly sliced  
Oil, cooking - 1 Tbsp  
Coconut milk, light - 1 cup  
Stock, any type - 3 cups  
Hot sauce (opt) - to taste

## PREP STEPS

- 1 **Lemongrass / Ginger / Garlic / Mushrooms / Jalapenos / Cilantro / Limes** - Prep as directed. (Can be done up to 3 days ahead)
- 2 **Chicken** - Chop into bite-sized pieces. Toss with first part of fish sauce and first part of brown sugar. Tenderize with a fork. (Can be done 1 day ahead)
- 3 **Zucchini / Tomatoes** - Prep as directed.

## MAKE STEPS

- 1 **Heat** a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add oil and then lemongrass, ginger, and garlic. Saute until fragrant, ~1 minute.
- 2 **Add chicken** to aromatics and saute until golden, 2 to 3 minutes.
- 3 **Fold in mushrooms and saute** for another 2 to 3 minutes until mushrooms start to turn golden.
- 4 **Pour** in coconut milk, stock, and second parts of fish sauce and brown sugar. Cover and bring to a boil and then simmer uncovered for 4 to 6 minutes.
- 5 **Fold in zucchini and tomatoes.** If you sliced zucchini super thin, the residual heat will cook the zucchini and you can just turn off the heat. Otherwise, simmer for another 2 to 3 minutes to cook the zucchini.
- 6 **Season** with hot sauce and more fish sauce if it's not savory / salty enough.
- 7 **Divide** into bowls and serve with jalapenos, cilantro, and lime wedges.