

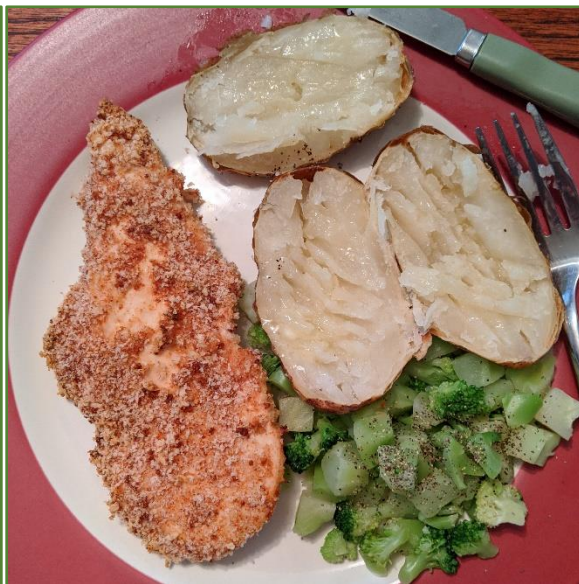
Comfort Food

Butter Lemon Tilapia + Rice + Salad

Orange Breaded Chicken + Baked Potatoes + Steamed Veggies

Noodles with Peanut Sauce and Veggies

Slow Cooker Chicken and Dumplings + Salad



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How to use this meal plan This meal plan is designed to make cooking delicious and healthy meals efficient and require as little brain power as possible. It includes:

- a shopping list of all the ingredients needed for all five meals
- detailed instructions for how to prepare the ingredients in one efficient session so that your daily chopping/measuring time is minimized
- instructions for putting the meal together the day you will eat it
- instructions for how to prepare the recipes one at a time in case you don't want to do the advance preparation

It may look like a lot of steps, but we have tried to write out every step so it is easy to follow and hard to miss anything. Meals are color-coded to help with the prep. Note that many of the ingredients on the shopping list are staples you may already have at home so check before you go to the store!

If you are going to do advance prep for all the recipes, go to page 4 and follow the instructions. Then on the day you are going to eat the meal, skip the "prep" section and go straight to the "recipe" section.

If you are going to prepare the recipes a day at a time, just follow the prep and then recipe section for each meal. You do not need to prepare them in the order presented, but do read all the instructions for each recipe before you start so no steps catch you off guard.

This meal plan includes 4 dinners, which leaves flexibility to eat leftovers, order takeout, or make sandwiches or something else you're craving on the other days. Recipes are designed for about 4 servings. Double the recipes (and shopping quantities!) if you have hungry teenagers or want to have extra leftovers.

Butter Lemon Tilapia + Rice + Salad

This is a delicious, simple fish recipe that can be used with any white fish, and would probably even work with salmon if you like. Fish contains heart-healthy unsaturated fats, including some omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for heart health, reducing inflammation, and protecting brain health. We recommend brown rice to get the good fiber, protein, and minerals from the whole grain, but you can use white rice, pasta, potatoes or to limit starches, steamed veggies (just make sure to add extra veggies to your list).

Orange Breaded Chicken + Baked Potatoes + Steamed Veggies

This is not like Orange Chicken from Panda Express, rather a breaded chicken using orange zest. This meal is flexible to use whatever veggies you prefer or have available. Use gluten-free breadcrumbs to make this gluten-free if you like.

Noodles with Peanut Sauce and Veggies

This recipe gives you flexibility to choose the vegetables and protein you prefer. Additionally, the recipe calls for whole wheat pasta, but you can use gluten-free pasta, rice pasta, or even veggie noodles.

Slow Cooker Chicken and Dumplings + Salad

This dairy-free, veggie-ful recipe uses canned coconut milk to provide creaminess. The coconut flavor is very mild and not intrusive (take it from someone who doesn't like coconut). The recipe uses a homemade biscuit mix that is cooked in the slow cooker, but you can substitute canned biscuits, serve the biscuits on the side, or leave them out entirely for a chicken stew that is still hearty and grain- and gluten-free.

Shopping list:

- ☐ 4 tilapia fillets – you can use any white fish, salmon would likely work too
- ☐ 4 lbs boneless skinless chicken
- ☐ Your choice of protein for the Noodles with Peanut Sauce (a few extra chicken breasts, tofu, edamame, shrimp, or eggs)
- ☐ 1 egg
- ☐ ¼ cup Butter or margarine
- ☐ ½ cup Milk or alternative milk
- ☐ 4 cup chicken stock or veggie stock or enough boullion to make the equivalent
- ☐ 1 cup brown rice (dry)
- ☐ ½ lb whole wheat pasta
- ☐ 1 cup bread crumbs – you can buy these or toast up and crush some stale bread with a rolling pin. You can also use crushed plain cereal like cornflakes or rice krispies
- ☐ 2 Tbsp peanut butter
- ☐ 1 can full fat coconut milk
- ☐ 2 Tbsp vinegar
- ☐ 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- ☐ Your favorite salad dressing
- ☐ 1 tsp sugar (you can also use honey or maple syrup)
- ☐ All purpose and whole wheat flour (enough to make 3 cups)
- ☐ 1 Tbsp baking powder
- ☐ ½ tsp baking soda
- ☐ Salt
- ☐ Italian seasoning
- ☐ Paprika
- ☐ Bay leaf
- ☐ Cooking spray
- ☐ Cooking oil (your preferred type)
- ☐ 1 yellow onion
- ☐ 4-6 carrots (about 1 pounds) or 1 lb frozen carrots
- ☐ 4 stalks celery or 2 cups frozen
- ☐ 4 cloves garlic
- ☐ 4 medium potatoes
- ☐ 1 Lemon
- ☐ Lettuce or greens for 2 side salads
- ☐ 2 oranges
- ☐ About 4-5 cups of fresh or frozen vegetables (about 2 1-lb bags). Most of these will be the side for the orange chicken and some will go in the noodles with peanut sauce: Broccoli is a great choice for this, but most vegetables will work here
- ☐ 1 bag frozen peas (this will be going in the chicken and dumplings. If you do not like peas, substitute another frozen veggie – like green beans)
- ☐ Optionally: cornstarch, red pepper flakes, cocoa powder

Get ready to prep! This usually takes me around 2 hours, including the time to clean up, so put on a good playlist or podcast, one of those shows you can watch without watching or enjoy being alone with your thoughts 😊

- 1) Wash hands with soap and water
- 2) Collect:
 - a. 2-3 large containers (that hold around 6-8 cups) and label them: veggies for chicken and dumplings and rice for Tilapia (label another for the chicken to go with the Peanut Sauce noodles if you are going to pre-cook it now)
 - b. 3 medium containers (2-3 cups) and label them: Orange Chicken veggies, Noodles with Peanut Sauce veggies, biscuit mix
 - c. 3 small containers (about 1 cup) and label them: Butter Lemon Tilapia sauce, orange chicken breading, peanut sauce
 - d. and a large plastic bag – this is for your salad greens
 - e. If you don't have enough containers you can also use ziploc bags
- 3) Begin cooking 1 cup dry rice. If you are new to brown rice, my favorite method is:
 - a. Bring 2 ¼ cups water to a boil in a pot with a lid.
 - b. Once the water is boiling, add 1 cup brown rice and then turn down to a simmer.
 - c. Cover the pot and let simmer for 45 minutes without stirring. Meanwhile start on the next steps – but set a timer so you don't forget!
 - d. After 45 minutes, turn off the stove and let it sit for 15 more minutes without stirring.
 - e. Spread on a cookie sheet to cool (you can sprinkle with a little salt at this point if you like) Once it is cool, place in a container in the fridge.
 - f. But feel free to use whatever method you like best
- 4) **If you are using chicken as your protein for the noodles with peanut sauce, you can pre-cook it now OR just throw them in the oven when you bake the orange chicken. Either way, bake at 400 F until internal temperature reaches 165 F on food thermometer, allow to cool and then store in the refrigerator.** If you are using another protein, skip this step.
- 5) **Skip this step if you aren't using biscuits** or if you have canned biscuits: In a medium container or a medium ziploc bag, mix 3 cups flour (I like to do 1½ whole wheat and 1½ all purpose, but any combination will work), 1 Tbsp baking powder, ½ tsp salt, ½ tsp baking soda – this is your biscuit mix
- 6) In a small jar or container, mix 2 Tbsp peanut butter + 2 Tbsp and 2 tsp warm water + 2 Tbsp soy sauce + 1 Tbsp cider vinegar + 1 tsp sugar + optional dash of red pepper flakes – this is the peanut sauce for the noodles
- 7) Zest 1 orange and mix with 1 cup bread crumbs, 1 Tbsp paprika, and ½ tsp salt in a small container or medium ziploc. This is the breading for the orange chicken
- 8) Lettuce/salad greens:
 - a. **If you bought pre-washed greens you're done!** If not:
 - b. Wash, dry, and cut lettuce and store in a large plastic bag with a paper towel or clean cloth towel in the fridge
 - c. ½ will be served with the chicken and dumplings
 - d. ½ will be served with the lemon garlic tilapia

- e. If you have more lettuce than you think you will use for these two recipes, serve it as an additional vegetable serving with the other recipes, or with leftover chicken for a lunch salad
- 9) Get out a small microwave safe container or jar and add
- a. $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter
 - b. 4 cloves minced or pressed garlic
 - c. Juice from 1 lemon (or about 2 Tbsp)
 - d. 1 tsp Italian seasoning
 - e. This is the mixture that will go on top of the tilapia
- 10) Wash 4-6 carrots, 4 stalks celery, and any of the fresh vegetables you bought (for the orange chicken and noodles with peanut sauce) under running water
- 11) Skip if you bought frozen veggies**
- a. Cut your fresh vegetables :
 - b. About 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups in a small container – this is for the Noodles with Peanut Sauce
 - c. Put the rest – 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups in a medium container – this is for the Orange Chicken
- 12) Get out a large container with a lid and add:
- a. 4-6 chopped carrots (or about 3 cups)
 - b. 4 stalks celery chopped (or about 2 cups)
 - c. A yellow onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
 - d. Add 1 tsp salt and 1 bay leaf- this is your veggie mix for the chicken and dumplings

Make sure all your food is labeled and put in the fridge. Clean your dishes and then go put your feet up! You just prepped 4 dinners at once! Yay!

Garlic Lemon Butter Tilapia + Rice + Green Salad

(recipe loosely adapted from damndelicious.net)

Prep (remember, skip to the recipe part if you did the prep all at once):

- Wash hands with soap and water
- Begin cooking 1 cup dry rice. If you are new to brown rice, my favorite method is:
 - Bring 2 ¼ cups water to a boil in a pot with a lid.
 - Once the water is boiling, add 1 cup brown rice and then turn down to a simmer.
 - Cover the pot and let simmer for 45 minutes without stirring.
 - After 45 minutes, turn off the stove and let it sit for 15 more minutes without stirring.
 - Fluff with a fork and add a little salt and its ready to stir.

But feel free to use whatever method you like best
- Mince 4 cloves garlic
- Squeeze juice of ½ lemon
- Melt ¼ cup butter
- Mix melted butter, minced garlic, lemon juice, and 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- Wash, dry, and cut lettuce

INGREDIENTS

- Butter
- Garlic
- Lemon
- Italian seasoning
- Rice (you can also use pasta)
- Lettuce for 1 side salad
- Dressing of choice
- 2-4 tilapia fillets

Recipe

- Wash hands with soap and water
- Preheat oven to 425 F
- Line a pan (I like to use foil for fish so I can just ball the foil up and throw it away when it's done cooking)
- Warm up butter mixture until it is liquid by microwaving for 10 seconds at a time
- Place tilapia fillets on lined baking sheet
- Pour the garlic lemon butter mixture over the fish – if you like, reserve a little bit to pour over the rice
- Use a fork or spoon or pastry brush to make sure most of the fish is covered with the butter
- Wash hands and utensils after touching raw fish. Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods (that's why you have to reserve it if you want to put it on the rice)
- Bake the fish in the oven for 11-15 minutes until internal temperature is 145 F on food thermometer and flakes easily with a fork
- Meanwhile warm up your rice
- Toss the salad with your favorite dressing
- Serve fish over rice with salad – if you reserved extra butter, you can toss this through the rice as well

Orange Chicken + Baked Potatoes + Steamed Veggie *(This recipe is from my Noni)*
If you are making this before you make the Noodles with Peanut Sauce and you are using chicken for the protein in that dish, bake a couple extra plain chicken breasts at the same time as the orange chicken to save yourself a step for that recipe

Prep (remember, skip to the recipe part if you did the prep all at once):

- Wash hands with soap and water
- Zest 1 orange and mix with 1 cup bread crumbs, 1 Tbsp paprika, and ½ tsp salt. This is the breading for the chicken
- Wash and cut broccoli if needed and any other veggies you have that you want to steam

Recipe

- Wash hands with soap and water
- Preheat oven to 400 F
- Scrub 4 potatoes with a clean vegetable brush under running water
- Pat the potatoes dry, **poke holes in them with a fork** and then rub them with a little oil, salt, and pepper (this makes the skin crispy)
- Once the oven is preheated, place the potatoes directly on the oven rack and bake for 45-50 minutes, until easily poked through with a fork
- Meanwhile, spray a large baking pan with nonstick spray
- Place the breadcrumb mixture in a shallow dish
- Juice 2 oranges into another shallow dish and add 1 egg and beat until combined
- Wash hands with soap and water after touching raw egg
- Dredge 2 lbs chicken first in the juice mixture, then in the crumb mixture before placing in the pan. Do not rinse raw poultry, but wash hands and utensils with soap and water after touching it
- Spray the top of the chicken with nonstick spray as well
- Bake chicken for 30 minutes, then flip
- Your potatoes should be finishing up sometime around now, so poke them with a fork. If the fork pierces the easily, take them out and allow to cool
- Continue baking chicken until internal temperature reaches 165 F on a food thermometer (could be anywhere from 5 minutes -25 minutes depending on size and thickness of pieces)
- Meanwhile, steam vegetables by microwaving in a covered bowl with 2 Tbsp of water or by placing in a steamer over boiling water for 3-5 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper

INGREDIENTS

- 4-6 potatoes
- Cooking oil
- Salt
- Pepper
- Eggs
- 2 oranges
- 3-4 lbs boneless skinless chicken
- Nonstick spray
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- Paprika
- 2 ½ -3 ½ cups veggies: fresh or frozen

Noodles with Peanut Sauce + Veggies (from Cookingmatters.org)

Prep (remember, skip to the recipe part if you did the prep all at once):

- Wash hands with soap and water
- Mix sauce: 2 Tbsp peanut butter + 2 Tbsp and 2 tsp warm water + 2 Tbsp soy sauce + 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar + 1 tsp sugar + optional dash of red pepper flakes
- Wash and cut veggies if applicable (about 1 ½ cups fresh)
- If using chicken or another meat, cook it now: Cook chicken breasts until internal temperature reaches 165 F on food thermometer, allow to rest and then slice

Recipe

- Wash hands with soap and water
- Boil ½ lb whole wheat pasta (or your preferred pasta) according to the package directions
- Meanwhile, steam 1½ cups frozen peas (or your alternative vegetable) and the 1 ½ cups of fresh vegetables (or 1 ½ cups of frozen vegetables – about ½ a bag) by microwaving in a covered bowl with about 2 Tbsp water or in a steamer over boiling water for 3-5 minutes
- Finish preparing your protein: this can be warming up and/or slicing chicken or meat, steaming edamame, warming or frying tofu, or scrambling a few eggs
- Warm the peanut sauce if it was made ahead
- Drain pasta and toss with warmed peanut sauce.
- Either toss chicken, vegetables, and pasta altogether, or allow each person to assemble their own bowl from the ingredients.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ lb whole wheat pasta
- Peanut butter
- Soy sauce
- Cider vinegar
- Sugar
- 1 bag frozen veggies (or ~ 2 cups fresh)
- 1-2 chicken breast or other protein like tofu, eggs, edamame, shrimp

Slow Cooker Chicken and Dumplings + Salad (adapted from realfoodwholelife.com)

Prep:

- Wash your hands with soap and water
- For the veggie mix:
 - Chop 1 yellow onion
 - Chop 4-6 carrots
 - Chop 4 celery stalks
 - Add 1 tsp salt and 1 bay leaf
- **Skip this part if you have canned biscuits or aren't using biscuits** For the biscuit part mix 3 cups flour (I use 1 ½ cups whole wheat and 1 ½ cups all purpose but any combination should work), 1 Tbsp baking powder, ½ tsp salt, ½ tsp baking soda
- Wash, cut and dry salad greens if needed

Recipe:

- Wash hands with soap and water
- Add the veggie mix and 4 cups broth to the slow cooker and stir
- Add 2 lbs chicken and 1 bay leaf to the slow cooker
- Wash hands and utensils and counters with soap and warm water after coming into contact with raw poultry
- Cook on high 3-5 hours or low 6-7 hours (but it's not done yet)
- Shred or cut the chicken into pieces
- Add 1 cup frozen peas to the slow cooker
- Shake the can of coconut milk, and stir ¾ **cup** into the slow cooker
 - Optionally at this point, you can mix about 1 cup of the broth/coconut milk liquid with 2 tsp corn starch, then stir this mixture back into the crockpot – it is fine without it, but this will give you a thicker sauce
- **Skip to the star if you are using biscuits on the side, or not using biscuits:** In a small bowl, add 1 Tbsp vinegar to ½ cup milk and stir
- Add this soured milk and ¼ cup oil to the biscuit mix and stir
- Form the dough into balls and place into the slow cooker (if you're using canned biscuits, put them in now)
- *Re-cover the slow cooker, turn it to high and cook for 1 more hour
- Serve with a green salad

INGREDIENTS

- All purpose and whole wheat flour
- Baking powder
- Baking soda
- Salt
- Milk
- Vinegar
- Cooking oil
- Onion
- Carrots
- Celery
- 2 lb chicken breasts
- 4 cup chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 can coconut milk (full fat)

Bonus chocolate mousse! from that extra coconut milk. Recipe from nestandglow.com

This is what we did with our leftover coconut milk – again, I don't like coconut and I didn't find the taste to be strong enough that it bothered me – especially if it's chilled and you add extra chocolate chips. It is also dairy and gluten-free – use maple syrup to make it vegan

- Add ~1/2 can (or whatever is left) coconut milk to a bowl and whisk until well combined
- Add 1 heaping tablespoon cocoa powder, 1 generous tablespoon honey, ½ teaspoon vanilla, and a pinch of salt
- Whisk for 2-3 minutes, then place in fridge for at least 2 hours
- If it hasn't set, you can also freeze it, just give it a brief stir every 30 minutes or so. Or if you don't want to stir it, it will just be a little more ice-y and will need to thaw a little before enjoying
- Sprinkle with chocolate chips or stir them in (makes 2 small servings)