



YOUR GUIDE

Guide to your mindful meal planning



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CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK



“One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well,”

- Virginia Woolf

Start small, be consistent, and change the way you think about mindful meal planning and healthy eating.

Let me be your guide in this journey through my knowledge and experience in this field. Food has been an essential part of my culture, most of my childhood memories are connected with aromas and pictures of my family and friends gathered around the table, or my parents preparing it for us. The food they cooked was always simple, yet healthy and tasty. After working as a personal chef, recipe developer, and cooking instructor for more than 10 years, I've mastered how to create simple, healthy, easy-to-prepare recipes that give your body, mind, and soul the nourishment you need. Healthy and budget-friendly food doesn't mean it should be tasteless and boring.

PLAN

If you plan well, and buy the right ingredients for the week, you will save money, waste no food, eat well, and feel good about all these things. What's more important than your well-being?

BE CONSISTENT

Consistency is the key! Pick a day of the week most convenient for your schedule and spend 30 minutes planning for the following week.

1. Use Your Planner Plan to plan your menu & groceries
2. Create a grocery list that includes seasonal produce, protein of the week, grains or legumes and herbs, and seasoning.
3. Check your pantry and fridge for anything you might already have and cross them off your list.
4. Go Shopping



ORGANIZE YOUR PANTRY



"Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are."

- Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

Keep your pantry simple and basic. You don't need every spice imaginable to cook tasty dishes.

| SEASONING ESSENTIALS | DRY GOODS | BAKING | FRESH | LIQUID ESSENTIALS |
|---|---|--|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Salt 2. Peppercorn 3. Oregano 4. Thyme 5. Basil 6. Rosemary 7. Coriander Seeds 8. Cumin Seeds 9. Chili flakes 10. Paprika | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chickpeas 2. Beans 3. Canned tuna 4. Tomato sauce 5. Farro 6. Quinoa 7. Rice 8. Pasta | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gluten-free or all-purpose flour 2. Corn meal 3. Yeast 4. Baking powder 5. Vanilla 6. Almond flour | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Onion 2. Garlic 3. Potatoes 4. Yogurt 5. Eggs 6. Kefir 7. Cheese 8. Cottage cheese/ricotta 9. Butter 10. Tahini 11. Oat milk 12. Mustard 13. Mayo | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Olive oil 2. Vinegar (apple cider, wine & balsamic) 3. Toasted sesame seed oil 4. Soy Sauce 5. Crunchy onion oil 6. Harissa 7. Miso paste 8. Canned coconut milk |



MINDFUL SHOPPING



*"Let food be thy
medicine and
medicine be thy
food."*

- Hippocrates

We all know junk food can harm, but how many of you believe that food can heal?

Food can cure autoimmune diseases, headaches, depression, arthritis, and insomnia. Food is the most powerful drug on the planet. It can cure most chronic diseases and works faster, better, and cheaper than any drug.

Most Americans eat factory-made, processed food, that contains trans fats, high fructose corn syrup, artificial sweeteners, and colorings, preservatives, antibiotics, and allergens caused by genetic breeding and engineering. If you look at the list of the ingredients of this “food” you probably have no idea how to even pronounce half of the ingredients.

Health is the most basic human right and cooking simple meals for yourself will empower you to feel good about your health and mind.

MINDFUL EATING

1. Have a shopping list
2. Buy ingredients, rather than pre-made food, and cook your own meals.
3. Read the labels behind your packaging, if there are more than three ingredients in pasta, you should not buy it.
4. Use ingredients for different recipes to avoid food waste and keep your meals exciting and new.



Be mindful of what your shopping cart looks like. If it's full of pre-packed foods, snacks, drinks, or frozen meals, you won't be able to make a meal of those things. But if you have some vegetables, meat, nuts, legumes, and grains, then you are good.



Do not over-buy the vegetables that don't have long shelf/fridge life. Pick two or three every week, maybe kale, carrots, and potatoes, play with colors, and always pick different colored vegetables, as they contain different nutrients and vitamins for your daily dose. You can use kale for salads, or throw a handful in stews, soups, or even scrambled eggs. A big bunch of kale will stretch a long way (avoid buying prepackaged chopped packaged kale), it's easy to clean, discard the stems, and keep in a zip-loc bag, use as you go. Same with carrots, buy a bunch instead of baby carrots. When the carrots have green, luscious stems on them, you know they are fresh. If you have access to farmer's markets, buy them there. It's not that expensive (\$3-\$4 a bunch) and you can use the leaves to make pesto, salad, or add to the soups and stews. It's very tasty and nutritious. Keep the cleaned carrots in a container and use them as you need, maybe snack on a few of them every day. Potatoes are always good to have, they don't go bad fast and you can make so many delicious things with them (potato tuna salad, potato salad, baked potatoes, add to your soups).

Shop seasonally. I can't emphasize enough how important it is to eat food that is in season. Fruit and vegetables in season have so much flavor that you don't need to add much to make them tasty. Tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, and zucchini are the best in summer and fall. If you have farmer's markets around, check them out. Always buy them there rather than in supermarkets. Fall is great for squashes, brussel sprouts, cabbage, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and beets.





"Food is art, and food is love. And we should show love and appreciation for those who cook it by eating it with relish."

- Mark Bittman

You don't need a hundred tools in the kitchen to make a simple healthy meal, a good knife and a quality cutting board are the best way to start.

You can do most of the prep using those tools. Once you master the knife technique and become more skilled, you find the process therapeutic. Good music and a glass of wine always make the experience even better. Although, it's still good to have a few other equipment and tools that will help you in the kitchen. Here are a few:



FOOD PROCESSOR

Food processor or even Nutri bullet, good for making sauces, pestos, dressings, hummus, smoothies, even pasta dough and pancake batter. Nutri bullet can also be used for grinding the spices.

LINK:



ZESTER/GRATER

good for zesting the citrus, for grating garlic, and ginger for dressings or other needs. Those simple ingredients add flavor to your dishes and take them to another level.

LINK:





HAND BLENDER

Great for making creamy soups. This way you won't need to move the hot soup in a blender and be afraid of burning yourself.

LINK:



PEELER

Peeler, one of the tools that has been in my kitchen since I was very young and we were using it all the time to peel potatoes, carrots, apples and anything else that needed peeling.

LINK:



CITRUS JUICER

Citrus juicer, if you are planning to incorporate lemon/lime juice in your daily diet and I strongly recommend it, it's a perfect tool for extracting the juice from lemons and limes.

LINK:



POTS & PANS

One small, one medium, and one large saucepan and pots. If you have a family and kids, you might need more cookware, but for one or two people, keep it simple. Focus on quality. Something with a thick bottom so that the heat is divided evenly and the food doesn't get burned. They don't have to be super expensive and last forever.

LINK:

OTHER GADGETS

As for the crockpots, rice cookers, air fryers and all other trendy new equipment that takes space and does the same job that you can accomplish using a stove, oven and a good pot, I wouldn't recommend to get them. You can make the perfect rice in a pot faster than in rice cooker, cook a perfect stew, which will take longer than the crockpot, but the good thing with making the stew is that you can make it once a week and enjoy it for few days, they get better and lasts well in the fridge.





*"Food is memories." -
- José Andrés*

CHOOSE A DAY AND PREP THE PRODUCE TO LAST LONGER

When you buy a whole bunch of kale, carrots, beets, or head of romaine, it takes some time to clean and prep them for future use, but, trust me, it's fresher than already chopped and packed kale/romaine, lasts longer and gives you more flavor and health benefits. I recommend buying these veggies at a farmers market, but if you don't have access to one, buy them at your store. Just make sure, they are fresh and you are buying them in season. It only takes a few minutes, to wash, peel, cut, and place in containers.

If you rather pick a day and do some chopping for the rest of the week's meals, that's perfectly fine. In that case, you can dice carrots, celery, and onions (don't keep onions long in the fridge though, they start smelling funky, same with garlic).

KALE

Kale, discard the stems (keep the stems for soups, stew, or frittata) wash and dry the leaves and place them in a ziplock bag, keep them in the fridge. Use as you need for salad, soups, and stews.

ROMAINE

Cut the end and washed the leaves well. Dry with a paper towel and place in a bowl or ziplock bag, lasts almost a week in the fridge. Great for making quick tuna salad with chopped nuts and dried fruits.

CARROTS

Carrots, wash, peel, cut into sticks, and place in a container. Use it for a snack while you are making your meal. A few sticks a day is a perfect source of vitamins A, C, and potassium, wonderful for your vision, digestion, and glowing skin.

FRESH IS ALWAYS BETTER THAN CANNED

Even though I love to have cans of chickpeas and beans in my pantry (not much though), you can save money on buying dried beans, cooking them once, portioning, and keeping them in the freezer in small containers or ziplock bags. When you decide to cook the legumes, soak them overnight, that will save you a few hours of boiling on the stove.





YOUR GUIDE

Hope you enjoyed!

