

TIPS FOR

BUSY MEAL MAKERS

SAVE TIME, SAVE CASH WITH THESE HELPFUL HINTS FOR FAST MEALS

1 Make a game plan. Start by being realistic about how many meals you'll cook at home in a week, and whether you want leftovers for lunch. Next, decide what you want to eat that week, whether you pick menus, or just some main ingredients for each night. That's the start of a game plan.



4 Add pasta or rice. Got a few vegetables or a little meat—but not quite enough for dinner? Pasta and rice are cheap, wholesome pantry items that let you turn a few leftovers into a meal. Sauté peppers and onions and toss them with noodles, herbs and a little cheese; add rice to soup to make it more satisfying.

2 Keep canned beans on hand. You can toss beans with salads or pasta, add to stir-fries or soups or turn into an easy dip. Beans are packed with fiber and protein—and are fairly cheap. If you buy dried beans, cook a big batch and freeze the extra for later.

5 Stock up on frozen vegetables. Frozen vegetables are nutritious because they're picked at the peak of ripeness and then frozen to seal in their nutrients. And a bonus: they usually come pre-chopped and ready to prepare.



3 Love your potatoes. Russet potatoes are truly versatile and a great bargain. Plus, these tubers are a good source of fiber, potassium and vitamin C. Try baking them, then stuffing them with beans, vegetables and salsa; mash them; slice and roast them; or turn them into hash browns for breakfast.

6 Discover great ways to use canned fish. Just like fresh fish, canned salmon and tuna provide omega-3 fats, which help keep your heart healthy by lowering triglycerides and blood pressure. Think beyond mayo and celery: give tuna a new twist by adding white beans, cherry tomatoes, scallions and a squeeze of lemon. Toss salmon with roasted vegetables and a flavor-packed vinaigrette to serve on top of greens as a dinner salad.



7 Cook once, eat twice. Double your dinner recipes and you'll have dinner or lunch ready for later. The added benefit is it helps use up ingredients that you bought for that recipe (a bunch of herbs, for instance). Recipes that freeze well, such as stews and casseroles, are great ones to double. Also consider cooking an extra chicken or more meat than you need. The leftovers are great in soups, salads, quesadillas or hash later in the week.

8 Pack a lunch. When you're making dinner, make a little extra salad and put it in a container, undressed, for lunch the next day. Is there a some extra chicken left after dinner? Toss it in with your lunch salad. Packing lunch at night saves the stress of scrambling during the morning rush. It is also a great way to make sure you're not wasting any leftovers—helping you save money and eat better.



9 Keep leftovers fresh. Make sure you have sealable storage containers on hand to save leftovers. You can buy inexpensive clear plastic or glass ones at the supermarket. When they're clear you can tell what's in them at a glance, and may be more likely to eat the leftovers.

10 Plug in the slow cooker. A slow cooker will give you the same effect as braising (i.e., it gets tough, inexpensive cuts of meat meltingly tender), but you can plug it in, leave for the day and come home to a delicious dinner.

Facts Up Front helps busy shoppers by summarizing important nutrition information in a clear, simple and easy-to-use format on the front of food and beverage packages. In this voluntary labeling program, the facts are straight from the FDA-regulated Nutrition Facts panel on the side or back of food packages.

