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By Malia McKinnon Frame May 17th, 2013 Tags: Healthy Eating ★ Save this article 0 Comments Print

# Your Guide to Big Batch Cooking

Making a bunch of meals at once isn't as hard as you might think—and you'll save time, money and your waistline in the process.

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Cooking tips  
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Are you *that* person who frantically runs to the grocery store every afternoon because you have nothing for dinner? “Planning is the key to a balanced lifestyle, particularly when it comes to meals,” explains [Sharon Richter](#), registered dietician and [FITiST](#) expert based in New York City. “When you don’t plan, you gravitate towards high fat, processed items,” she says.

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But if you commit to making your own food—and cook a lot at once—you’ll know exactly what ingredients are in your dish, you’ll save money and you won’t find yourself hard-pressed for a meal at the last minute. Not sure where to start? All you need is a little how-to instruction on big batch cooking. And that’s where we come in:

### 1. Choose One Day a Week To Work

Designate two or three hours on a weekend or a non-busy week day or night to grocery shop and cook your staples for the week’s meals, suggests [Devin Alexander](#), celebrity chef of NBC’s “The Biggest Loser” and author of “[The Most Decadent Diet Ever](#).” After four days, you’ll need to ditch or freeze the leftovers and begin again.

### 2. Start With Your Proteins

Choose three to five different lean proteins for during the week and cook them all. A good variety might include: a dozen eggs, rotisserie chicken, steak, lentils and salmon.

### 3. Make Veggies All At Once

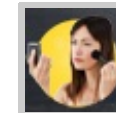
“Chop up a bunch of fresh vegetables, store in air tight containers or roast many different kinds at once,” advises Catherine McCord, mom of two and founder of the popular recipe site for adults and kids, [Weelicious](#). She uses whatever is in season—Brussels sprouts, carrots, zucchini and cauliflower—drizzles them with a touch of olive oil and sea salt, and roasts the vegetables on two foil covered cookie sheets at around 400 or 425 degrees for 20 to 45 minutes (everyone’s oven is different and convection ovens cut down cooking time). “Squeeze a little lemon juice on top of roasted veggies, then store them in containers or Ziploc baggies,” says McCord.

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### 4. Go For Some Grains

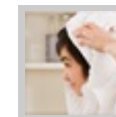
“Pick grains with the most fiber and make small portions, around ¾ cup per serving,” advises Richter. Cook up sweet potatoes, quinoa, farro, brown rice and whole wheat pasta on one day,

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then heat up each dish as needed.

## 5. Spice Things Up With Herbs

Tasty herbs to have on hand include basil, rosemary, chives, parsley and thyme so you can flavor dishes in a pinch (pardon the pun). Chop them up and put in salads, add chives or parsley to egg salad, or sprinkle some rosemary on roasted veggies.

## 6. Pick a Flavor

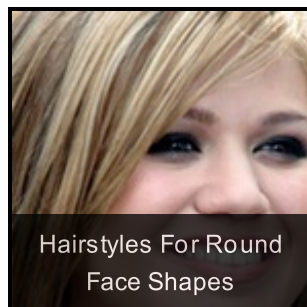
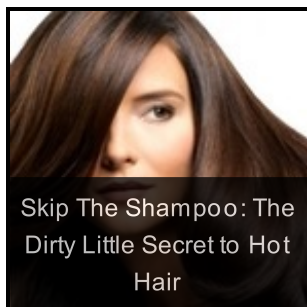
Vary your meals by choosing different international themes each night, suggests Alexander. For a Mexican dinner, have warm brown rice topped with chunks of your favorite protein, add vegetables, black beans, lime juice and fresh salsa. If you're in the mood for Greek food, substitute in feta cheese, red peppers, cucumbers, celery, olives and a squeeze of lemon juice on top of your rice and protein. For an Asian flair, add snap peas, red peppers, a dash of sesame oil, soy sauce and wasabi to your rice and protein.

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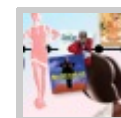
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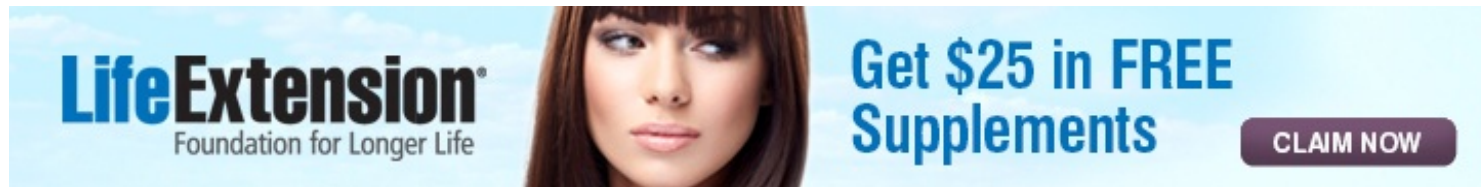
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