

I think that planning out my meals (both at home and for work), definitely helps me stay on track with my dietary goals. I'd like to share some of those with you here.

I don't like spending all day in the kitchen to meal prep, and luckily I have a dishwasher and [fun gadgets](#) to help me along the way. But if you're limited in these, don't despair; you can do it all with minimal dishes/effort.

One thing I like to do is to prep anything I'm going to roast or bake while our dinner is cooking, and then pop it in the oven (since it's still hot) when our meal is done. It can cook while we're eating dinner, and that way, I'm not just waiting around for it to be done. Just be sure to set a timer. [I may have forgotten this step a few times. ;)]

I think that soups are a great option for lunches at work. They're really healthy thanks to all the veggies, and you can stir in whatever protein you want, if you want. For most soups, all you really need is a knife, cutting board, and soup pot/large saucepan. Most soups take about 30 mins to cook, and then you can immediately divide them into small bowl containers or leave in the pot and dish out each day as needed. (See our [nutrition/recipe page](#) for some great, easy, yummy recipes!)

If you're not into soups, then here are some more delicious, balanced ideas:

I'm a mostly-vegetarian/flexitarian (it's a thing, trust me), so I add tofu to my lunches for my protein option. If that's not your thing, chicken is a great option because it's easy to prep, reheats easily, and can be served cold. (We avoid lunch meat at all costs because it's packed with sodium and other preservatives/chemicals.)

- The economy packs of chicken breasts are a good option for meal prep and portion control in general; you just need some Ziploc bags and freezer space to divide them and use as needed.
- You can boil it (my hubby has done this as a quick way to cook it), then shred it and make either a light chicken salad for sandwiches or serve it over a lettuce salad.
- You can saute it, bake it in the oven, or grill it.
- There are lots of great seasonings (Weber Seasonings and McCormick Grill Mates are both great options) so that it's not bland. We shy away from sauces because they can be high in sugar.
- If you don't want to cook chicken *at all*, rotisserie chicken is a great option. (Just don't eat the skin; that's where the fat is). You can use a rotisserie chicken for multiple meals/soups, and it's relatively inexpensive. And it freezes well.

As for veggies, I like to roast mine (chop them, mix with a little avocado oil and seasoning of choice, and roast them at 375* til I can pierce them with a fork, or about 30-40 mins, depending on the type of vegetables).

If you *detest* chopping, you can always buy the bags of frozen veggies and [steam them](#) instead. "They" say frozen vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh because they're frozen quickly after being harvested and thus retain their nutrients.

- You can then season them after they're cooked and divide them into your containers.
- Try to avoid canned vegetables if at all possible. They're packed with salt, so if you must use them, rinse them first. :)

I also like kale. I de-stem it and then steam it in a pan with some garlic. Bags of pre-chopped kale are also an option, as is frozen. Frozen kale is also great to add to soups; it holds up better than spinach.

As for a grain option with your lunches, I prefer quinoa because it's a complete protein (it contains all the essential amino acids which is important to flexitarians). Other whole grains are great too, but try to avoid pasta if possible because it's processed/stripped of its nutrients. To give more flavor to my grains, I like to cook them in vegetable broth. Most grains have a general 1:2 ratio of grain to liquid. Just follow the directions on the back of the bag. If you find it's not cooked enough in the allotted time, just add more liquid and cook it longer. If it's done and there's liquid left, just drain it out. No harm, no foul. Quinoa is done when it looks like this (see how the outer edge separates a bit from the grain? It should be firm, but not crunchy/hard; just taste-test it like you would with pasta):



- I found this method of [cooking brown rice](#) that I love to use.

If you don't want to cook/chop *anything* for your lunches, then here are some ideas that require minimal time and effort:

- Peanut butter and banana on Ezekiel bread

- Hummus and baby carrots (or veggie of choice)
- Cheese sandwich on Ezekiel bread (go for any sliced cheese, just not the American type in the little plastic wrappers; it's too processed.). Add a squirt of mustard for flavor and some tomato/lettuce/onion etc on top for extra nutrition.
- Cooked egg/egg salad [ok, this does require a bit of cooking, but it's minimal. ;)]. An option for egg salad is to use light mayonnaise, or skip the mayo altogether and use avocado instead for a healthy-fat option (add a dash of lemon juice to keep it from turning brown.). You can also stir in a bit of spicy or yellow mustard to give it a bit more flavor, and top it with tomato/lettuce/onion.
- Protein shakes
- Cheese cubes with multigrain crackers
- Leftovers! My trick is to make an extra portion or two and immediately put it into containers when I'm dishing up our meal. It saves time later *and* helps with portion control at dinner time. A win-win.

Have any meal prep tips of your own? Please let us know! We'd love to hear them!