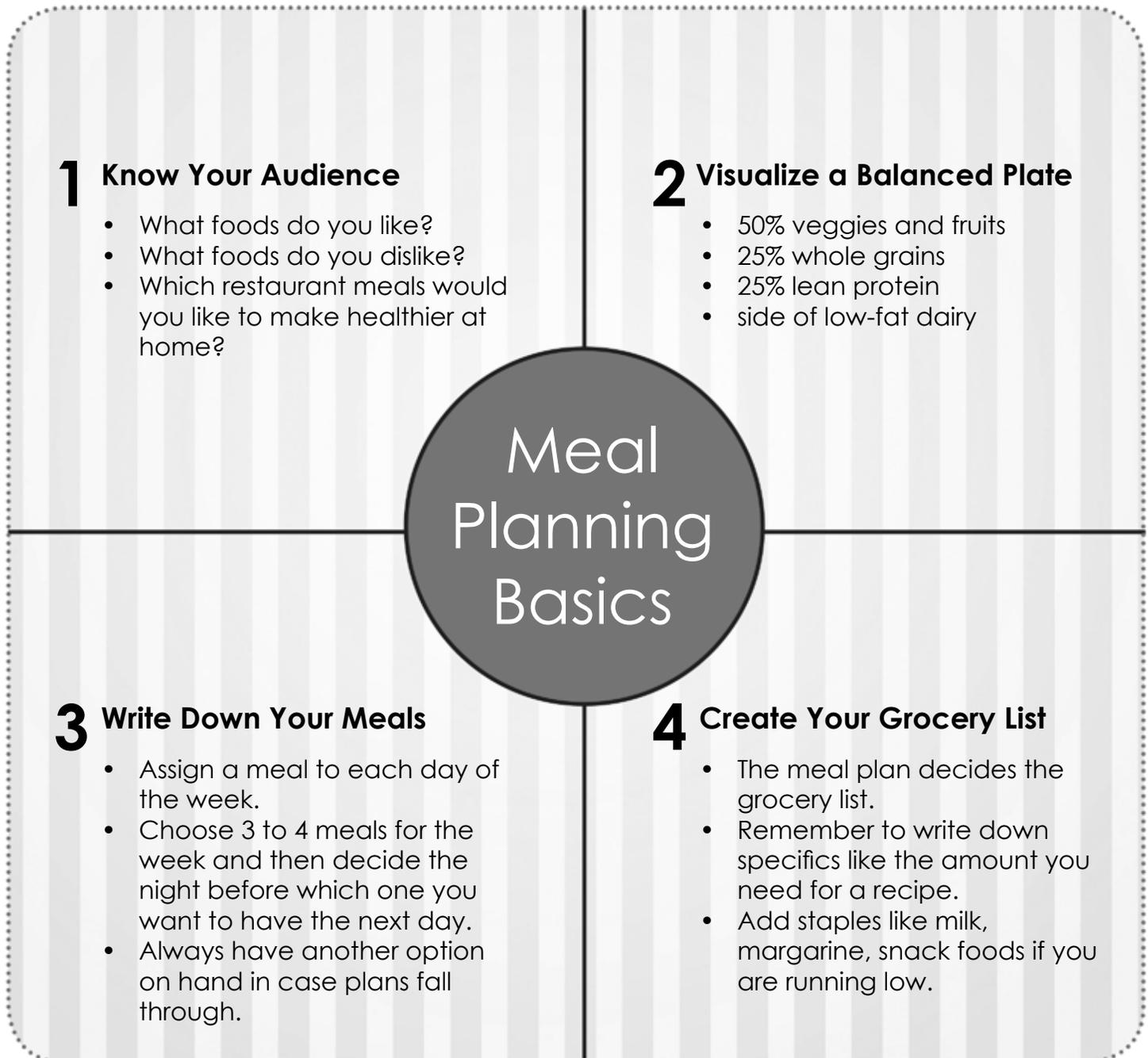


Meal Planning 101

Use the meal planning steps on the chart below to assist you as you create your personal meal plan for a week.



Meal Planning Resources Online

Here are free web sites that will assist you with your meal planning endeavors.

Ready Set Eat

<http://www.readyseteat.com/>

Give this website your zip code and it will point you toward recipes that feature items on sale at local grocery stores. You can get personalized meal ideas (how much time, how many ingredients, healthy or not) sent to your email address weekly.

Keep the Beat - Deliciously Healthy Eating

<http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/healthyeating/ingre.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

This website contains lots of heart healthy recipes and cooking tips for the inexperienced and experienced cook.

Fruits and Veggies More Matters, Healthy Meal Planning Guide

http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/?page_id=1635

Fruits and Veggies More Matters reviews the basics of meal planning and contains links to pre-made meal plans and shopping lists that will help you include plenty of fruits and vegetables in your meals.

Meal and Menu Planning for Two Weeks

http://lds.about.com/od/visualmusicalaids/a/meal_planning.htm

This helpful site includes several different meal planning charts and hundreds of simple meal ideas.

Meal Planning - MealsMatter.org

<http://www.mealsmatter.org>

Mealsmatter.org allows you to set up nutrition goals, organize your pantry, organize your recipes, and create shopping lists based on the recipes you choose for each meal. This free site is maintained by the Dairy Council of California.

Meal Planning 101

<http://themealplanner.blogspot.com>

This personal blog is expertly done and has a huge following. It provides weekly plans for dinner meals plus meal planning, and money saving tips and techniques, all in an engaging, easy-to-use format.

In addition to the free web sites above, there are lots of meal-planning websites out there that will do the planning for you for a price. They will send you a menu of meals each week plus the shopping list for all items needed to prepare the week's meals. These vary in pricing and ability to customize based on your health goals and you and your family's likes and dislikes. The most reputable will have a Registered Dietitian on staff or will consult with one to ensure they are providing healthy meal options.

The Well-Equipped Kitchen

You don't need a fancy kitchen with expensive gadgets to cook healthy meals, but there are a few items that come in handy when cooking at home. Here's a list of the basics. As you do an inventory of your kitchen and find something is missing, add that item to a birthday or holiday gift wish list.

— Knives

- 3 or 4 inch paring knife (small knife used to peel fruits and vegetables)
- 8 or 10 inch chef's knife (large knife used to chop, dice, mince)
- Serrated knife (used to cut bread and tomatoes)

— Measuring cups and spoons

— Spoons (2 of each)

- Slotted spoon
- Wooden spoon
- Sturdy metal spoon
- Soup ladle

— Mixing utensils

- Hand held mixer (electric or manual)
- Wire whisk in different sizes

— Spatulas

- Straight spatulas
- Rubber scraper spatulas used to get batter off the side of a bowl

— Sieves and colanders (various sizes)

— Pots and pans (for the stove and the oven)

- Sauté pans of various sizes (at least one small and one large)
- Small and large pot for boiling water
- Two cookie sheets
- Muffin tin

— Casserole dish (various sizes)

— Microwave safe bowls (various sizes)

— Mixing bowls (various sizes)

— Storage containers for leftovers (various sizes)

— Miscellaneous

- Vegetable peeler
- Cheese grater
- Rolling pin
- Zester (like a cheese grater but much smaller holes)
- Can opener
- Kitchen timer
- Kitchen scissors



How to Choose a Recipe

There is nothing more frustrating in cooking than trying a new recipe only to be disappointed with how the dish turned out. Here are some things to consider when picking out recipes to try:



Top Things to Consider When Choosing a Recipe

- 1) Does the recipe sound good to you? Do the ingredients seem like things you and those you are cooking for will like?
- 2) Do you have all the kitchen equipment the recipe requires?
- 3) Do the ingredients fit your budget and are they currently available at your local grocery store?
- 4) If the recipe was reviewed by anyone, did it receive more positive than negative reviews?
- 5) Does the recipe have all the essential information:
 - a. Ingredients with exact measurements and consistencies listed in order of use?
 - b. Cooking time?
 - c. Preparation time?
 - d. Cooking method?
 - e. Cooking temperature?
 - f. Utensils and other cooking equipment needed?
 - g. Preparation instructions?
 - h. Number and size of servings?

If the answer is yes to these questions, it's a good recipe for you to try.

Best Places to Find Recipes

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| On the internet | Most websites allow recipe testers to submit reviews. These reviews help you to know if the recipe is good or not and what others did to improve the recipe. |
| On TV | Cooking shows are a great way to learn new cooking techniques. |
| At the library | Before you buy a new cookbook, see if it's available at your library. If you love it after testing it, you can buy it at a later date. |
| Friends and family | Some of your best childhood memories may involve certain dishes your family would make at home. Share these with your family and friends, including any changes you make to the recipe to make it healthier or different. |

'Go-to Foods' to Always Have On Hand

A well-stocked refrigerator and pantry can save you when your meal plans fall through, you didn't have time to plan ahead, or the meal that you prepared didn't turn out as expected. Here are some great foods to have on hand:

- Frozen fruits
- Bagged salad or other vegetables
- Frozen vegetables
- Salad dressing
- Frozen meat
- Eggs
- Frozen tortellini (whole wheat or spinach) or other frozen or fresh pasta
- Peanut butter or other nut butter
- Frozen veggie pizza
- Low-fat cheese and whole grain crackers
- Frozen dinners (healthier option = less than 500 mg sodium per serving, less than 12 grams of fat per serving)
- Whole wheat pasta
- Canned fish or chicken
- Spaghetti sauce
- Canned beans
- Whole wheat macaroni and cheese
- Canned fruit in own juices or light syrup
- Whole wheat baking mix (for pancakes, waffles, muffins, etc.)
- Canned diced tomatoes
- Quick cooking brown rice

From this list you can easily create 10 healthy, super fast meals:

- 1) Veggie pizza with a side salad and a fruit and yogurt parfait
- 2) Peanut butter sandwich, fruit, skim milk, and vegetables and dip
- 3) Beans and rice with frozen onions and peppers, and salad
- 4) Whole wheat cheese tortellini with frozen spinach, side salad, and canned fruit
- 5) Frozen chicken breasts with canned Italian diced tomatoes, frozen vegetables, and brown rice
- 6) Breakfast for dinner: scrambled eggs with your choice of veggies, and whole wheat blueberry pancakes with light syrup
- 7) Light tuna salad sandwich and side salad
- 8) Whole wheat tuna pasta salad with broccoli, fruit, and low-fat string cheese
- 9) Low-fat cheese and whole grain crackers, tuna salad, and fruit
- 10) Frozen cheese enchiladas, frozen broccoli with Mexican style canned tomatoes, and fruit

