How To Make Your Own Meal Plan

Learning how to meal plan on your own comes in handy, and it's a skill I hope you take away from this meal plan. Here's how I do it step by step. It's easiest if you also use the excel grids provided!

1. **Look at your schedule for the week.** How many *planned* breakfasts, lunches and dinners do you have? (Dates, meetings, events, catered lunches at work, parties, dinners with friends and family, etc). If you don't have anything planned, what meals are you going to be spontaneous? Planning when to be spontaneous is a good trade off if you want to stay on track with healthy eating! Fill in each event or meal you have already planned in your meal planner, like below.

After filling that in, your meal plan should look like this:

Sunday	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				BREAKFAST MEETING		
			PIZZA AT WORK			BRUNCH WITH MOM
		TACO NIGHT			DATE NIGHT	

2. **Check out your pantry, freezer and fridge.** Before you make a grocery list or look at recipes to make, check out what's already in your kitchen.This helps you save money at the grocery store and avoid pantry and freezer overflow! It also allows you to use up any leftover produce instead accidentally buying fruits and veggies you already have. Take note of what ingredients you want to use up.

3. **Hit Google/Pinterest/Yummly.** Now that you know what ingredients you want to use up, you can search for recipes that HAVE those ingredients in them. Look for recipes with around 10 ingredients that make 3-4 servings if cooking for 1 person.

4. **Fill in the rest of your plan with the meals you're making based on recipes you chose**. Below is an example of a basic meal plan which you can totally use! This also gives you a really good birds eye view of your week. You have the chance to ask yourself, is what I'm eating healthy this week?

Sunday	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	peanut butter	peanut butter	peanut butter		peanut butter	
	banana	blueberries	banana	BREAKFAST MEETING	blueberries	fruit smoothie
	overnight oats	overnight oats	overnight oats		overnight oats	
	nuts	crackers	nuts	crackers	nuts	
	apple	avocado	apple	avocado	apple	
	chickpeas	chickpeas		stir fry tofu	stir fry tofu	
	kale, zucchini	kale, zucchini		broccoli, carrots	broccoli, carrots	
	sweet potato	sweet potato	PIZZA AT WORK	brown rice	brown rice	BRUNCH WITH MOM
	avocado	avocado		peanuts	peanuts	
	tahini sauce	tahini sauce		stir fry sauce	stir fry sauce	
	hummus		hummus		hummus	
	1/2 red pepper	protein bar	1/2 red pepper	protein bar	1/2 red pepper	
	black beans		chickpeas	black beans		
	kale, salsa, corn		kale, zucchini	kale, salsa, corn		
	quinoa	TACO NIGHT	sweet potato	quinoa	DATE NIGHT	
	avocado		avocado	avocado		
	cilantro lime sauce		tahini sauce	cilantro lime sauce		

5. Write your grocery list. Now what meals you want to make, you simply need to write a list of only what ingredients are needed. Don't forget about adding ingredients for snacks, breakfast and dessert if you're a dessert person!

If you use my meal plan grids, there's a space to write your grocery list ON the grid. If you use Google Sheets and download the Google Sheets app on your phone, you'll have seamless access to your list. (This is what I do)

PRO TIP: Make your list on your phone, or at least take a photo of your list so you don't have to carry around a piece of paper.

PRO TIP 2: Organize your grocery list by food category (produce, freezer, canned goods etc) so that way you're not running all over the store. It helps you save time!

GRCOERY LIST
oats
bananas
berries
nuts
3 apples
4 avocados
chickpeas
kale
zucchini
sweet potato
black beans
salsa
corn
quinoa
cilantro
lime
2 red peppers
hummus
tofu
broccoli
carrots
brown rice
2 protein bars

6. Head to the grocery store with your list. Allow yourself no more than ONE impulse buy. If you see more than one thing you want that wasn't on your list, there's always next week! Your wallet will thank you.

7. Prep away!

PRO TIP: if you use a grid like I do, you can start separate tabs to keep old meal plans (so you can come back to them easily) and you can also create a tab to collect recipes you want to try in the future (or keep track of ones you liked). Grids makes everything easy! The key is keeping it all in one place.