

6-DAY GLUTEN-FREE *Prep-Ahead Meal Plan* FOR BUSY MOMS (AND DADS!)

This plan is meant to feed a family of four...with few leftovers. Adjust for your family size/desired amount of leftover food!

In the plan are five recipes and one frozen dinner option, all gluten-free. But any gluten eaters will love these meals, too. The recipes are kid-tested and all use basic ingredients you should be able to get ahold of easily. You're going to use a few hours on Sunday to prep the hard parts of the following meals, so throwing them together at dinnertime only takes a few minutes!

1. Chicken Bruchetta
2. Steak Tacos with Cilantro Lime Crema
3. Chicken Carbonara
4. Frozen Dinners
5. Cincinnati Style Chili
6. Easy Enchilladas

In this document, I've laid everything out for you that you need to buy or have on hand, the steps you need to take each day to cook, and the full recipes for each dish. Follow along for an easy week of dinners!

Shopping List

MEAT

4-5 lbs Chicken breast fillets
1 pound thin-cut steak such as shoulder tender
5 slices bacon
1 lb ground beef
1-2 lb beef stew chunks

DAIRY

1 cup Mozzarella cheese
1 cup shredded Mexican blend cheese
Sour cream
Butter
Queso fresco, crumbled

VEGETABLES

2 large zuchinni
1 green onion
1 medium onion
3 clove garlic, or jarred minced garlic
2 limes
Basil leaves, fresh (optional)
1/2 cup cilantro leaves
Fresh parsley
Red cabbage cut into thin strips
Diced tomatoes
Diced red onion
1 large spaghetti squash
1 bunch asparagus

OTHER ITEMS

Salt and pepper
Olive oil
1/4 cup mayonnaise
paprika
20-30 corn tortillas
chili powder
garlic powder
onion powder
cumin
thyme

OTHER ITEMS (cont.)

ground red pepper
marjoram
oregano
cinnamon
12 whole cloves
5 bay leaves
ground allspice (optional)
rosemary

CANNED GOODS

46 oz tomato juice
2 1/2 cups pre-prepared bruchetta topping
1 14-oz can quartered artichoke hearts
3 bags Frontera Red Chile Enchilada Sauce

Prepping for the Week

After our sport games and church are over on Sunday is usually when I get my meals together for the week.

Having everything prepped so I can throw good, wholesome meals together has made a world of difference in eating well and lowering dinnertime stress at our house!

To make things go quicker, while one thing is cooking, look to the next step to see what you can get started. Example, cooking chicken doesn't need to be waited on, and ground beef only needs to be checked on.

TASK 1: COOKING CHICKEN

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Set aside 4 chicken breasts for the chicken bruchetta. Put the rest of your chicken breasts in several large pans.

Sprinkle with salt and pepper and drizzle with coconut or olive oil. Put in the oven and set the timer for 35 minutes. Check to make sure the breasts are cooked through at this point, adding a little more time in the oven if they're still a bit pink.

Let the cooked chicken cool off once done.

TASK 2: COOKING BEEF

Brown ground beef while the chicken is cooking, adding a little salt and pepper. Transfer to a very large sealable container when browned. Add the raw stew meat to the container along with all the seasonings in the chili recipe on page 9. The liquids will go in when it's time to cook up the chili. Seal everything in the container and pop it in the fridge until Thursday!

TASK 3: COOKING SPAGHETTI SQUASH

You have two options here. You can roast it (about 45 minutes) or you can microwave it (about 10.) Pick whichever works for your pallet better. I usually get the chicken cooking, the beef browning and then pop the squash in the microwave and then tend to the ground beef. Multi-tasking will make this all go much quicker!

Once your spaghetti squash is cooked, use a fork to scrape out and remove the stringy squash. Place the separated squash in a sealable bowl for later in the week. You'll add a few more ingredients to this bowl in a minute!

TASK 4: SOUS CHEFFING and BACON

Your beef should have finished cooking by now! Wipe out the pan, and pop on your bacon. While this cooks, we're going to chop some veggies!

HOW TO COOK SPAGHETTI SQUASH

To roast: Preheat your oven to 375 F. Cut the spaghetti squash in two and, using a spoon, remove the seeds and stringy bits until the middle part is clean. Place in the oven, cut side down on a baking sheet, and cook 30 to 40 minutes or until the flesh of the squash is easily scraped off.

To microwave: Poke holes (lots of them!) in the skin of the squash. Microwave for 10 minutes. Check to see if the sides of the squash are slightly soft. If they are not, microwave for an additional 2 minutes at a time until done. Cut in half, scoop out the seeds.

Prepping for the Week 2

1. Slice up the zucchini and set to the side. This is for dinner tonight.

2. Dice the onion for the Chicken Carbonara. Check your bacon! Once it's done, remove the bacon from the pan and let cool. Drain off the bacon grease until there is about 2 tablespoons left in the pan. (This is what makes this dish taste so good--just be sure to use high quality bacon!) Throw the onion into the bacon grease and saute while you...

3. Chop the asparagus. You'll want it in 1-inch or so segments. After you finish with this, toss 2 tablespoons of garlic in with the onions on the stove and saute another minute. Put the garlic and onions in the bowl with the spaghetti squash.

Put the asparagus in a microwavable bowl and add a tablespoon of water. Cover with plastic wrap and microwave for 3 minutes. This will make the asparagus tender-crisp. Put this in the bowl with the spaghetti squash.

TASK 5: MAKE SUNDAY DINNER

Your chicken should be way done by now and hopefully on its way to being cool. Which also means the oven is ready to be filled.

In a Layer the zucchini in the bottom of a 9x13 baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Evenly distribute artichoke hearts over zucchini.

Place chicken breasts on top of vegetables, and top with bruschetta mixture. Bake at 375 degrees for 60 minutes. It's a good idea at this point to check to make 100% sure your chicken is cooked through. If it isn't, add 5 more minutes at a time in the oven until the chicken is done.

Remove pan from oven and sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Bake for an additional 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Sprinkle with strips of basil for garnish.

TASK 6: LAST OF THE CHOPPING

You're going to prep the chopped up stuff for tacos tomorrow. Chop slivers of cabbage, dice tomatoes, red onion, chop cilantro, crumble cheese, cut 1 lime into wedges. If you're planning on using avocados, wait till you serve them to slice. Place in the refrigerator in container(s).

TASK 7: CREMA SAUCE

Follow the recipe on page 7 for the Cilantro Lime Crema. If you have a bullet blender or similar, that's the perfect way to make it! Refrigerate.

TASK 8: CHOPPING CHICKEN

The rest of the cooked chicken will be used for 2 things: Enchiladas and the Carbonara.

Chop 3 of the chicken breasts into cubes. Place the cubed chicken in with the spaghetti squash and place the container in the fridge.

The other 3 chicken breasts should be fork shredded. Put the chicken in a bowl to be mixed for enchiladas in a moment.

TASK 9: ROLLING ENCHILADAS

Follow the directions on page 6 to make your pan(s) of enchiladas, using the chicken you just shredded. Refrigerate when done!

TASK 10: SLICE AND SEASON STEAK

Follow the direction on page 7 for "For the Steak." Slice the steak and mix it with seasonings, then put in a sealed bowl and into the refrigerator to be ready to cook tomorrow.

Day of Meal Prep

SUNDAY

CHICKEN BRUCHETTA

Made while you are prepping for the rest of the week! Great for family dinner on a Sunday.

MONDAY *(No activity day)*

STEAK STREET TACOS

1. Cook seasoned steak in a hot pan in batches.
 2. Place cooked steak in a bowl.
 3. Wipe out your pan with a paper towel (careful—it's still hot!) and heat your corn tortillas a few at a time. We keep ours in an aluminum foil wrap to keep them warm while we're waiting.
 4. Bring all the ingredients to the table. I like to place all taco toppings on a large cutting board for serving to save on dish washing.
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TUESDAY *(Dinnertime practice)*

CHICKEN CARBONARA

Place your spaghetti squash, cubed chicken, bacon and onion/asparagus mixture in a large frying pan. Season heavily with pepper and heat through before serving.

WEDNESDAY *(Double header activities!)*

MICHAEL ANGELO SEAFOOD FROZEN DINNERS! Quick, quick, quick food today between practices!

THURSDAY *(Home at dinner)*

CINCINNATI STYLE CHILI

In the morning, place your spiced meat in a medium to large sized crock pot. Add the tomato sauce and water. Set temperature to low and cook until dinnertime (6 to 8 hours).

FRIDAY *(Dinnertime practice)*

EASY ENCHILADAS

You've already done the prep work for these, just sprinkle a little cheese on top, then pop the casserole in the oven for 25 minutes at 350 degrees! We serve ours with sour cream and sliced avocados.

Recipes

CHICKEN BRUCHETTA

If you prefer to prepare your own bruchetta topping, check out the original recipe for the how-to here.

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups pre-prepared bruchetta topping
Salt and pepper to taste
3 chicken breast fillets
2 large zuchinni, sliced
1 14-oz can quartered artichoke hearts, drained
1 cup mozzarella cheese
Olive oil for drizzling
Basil leaves, fresh, for garnish (optional)

Instructions

Preheat your oven to 375 degrees.

Layer the zucchini in the bottom of a 9x13 baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Evenly distribute artichoke hearts over zucchini. Place chicken breasts on top of vegetables, and top with bruschetta mixture. Bake at 375 degrees for 60 minutes.

Remove pan from oven and sprinkle with mozzarella cheese. Bake for an additional 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Sprinkle with strips of basil for garnish.

EASY CHICKEN ENCHILADAS

Ingredients

3 cooked shredded chicken breasts (about 1.5 lbs)
3 bags Frontera Red Chile Enchilada Sauce
10-15 corn tortillas
1 cup shredded Mexican blend cheese

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Combine shredded chicken and 1 pouch of the Frontera enchilada sauce in a large bowl. Place two spoonfuls of chicken mixture down the center of a corn tortilla. Roll the tortilla into a tube and place into a 9x13 pan seam side down. Repeat until all the chicken mixture is used.

Top rolled tortillas with remaining two bags of enchilada sauce, spreading the sauce evenly over all the tortillas. Sprinkle shredded cheese over all tortillas. Bake for 20 minutes, or until heated through.

Serve with sour cream and guacamole or avocado slices.

STEAK TACOS WITH CILANTRO LIME CREMA

Original Author: Funny Love Blog

*I adapted this recipe a bit for our use, but must give credit to **Funny Love Blog** for the original!*

Ingredients

FOR THE CILANTRO LIME CREMA

1/4 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1 green onion, cut into pieces
1 clove peeled garlic, or 1 tablespoon jarred minced garlic
zest plus juice of 1/2 lime
1/2 cup cilantro leaves
salt, to taste

FOR THE TACOS

1 pound thin-cut steak such as shoulder tender, very cold (I stick it in the freezer for 10 minutes before using)
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon chili powder
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon onion powder
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon butter

FOR SERVING THE TACOS

Corn tortillas
Red cabbage cut into thin strips
Diced tomatoes
Lime wedges
Queso fresco, crumbled
Chopped cilantro
Diced red onion

Instructions

For the crema, combine all ingredients in a small blender or food processor. Pulse to puree and taste: add salt or more lime juice to your taste.

Turn a large skillet to medium-high heat with the olive oil. For the steak, very thinly slice the steak into strips against the grain. Sprinkle with the spices and let sit for a few minutes while the pan preheats.

When the pan is very hot, add the butter. When the butter melts and foams, add the steak in one layer (not too close together, you might need to cook a few batches of meat) and let cook for 3 minutes until the bottom is brown and crispy.

Flip the steak and let cook for 2-3 minutes on the second side until the meat is crispy and nearly cooked through. Repeat with the remaining meat, if necessary.

Build tacos as you like with the beef and cilantro sauce. Enjoy!

CHICKEN ASPARAGUS CARBONARA

Original Author: Paleo Leap

We're gluten free, and so is Paleo eating. The Paleo Leap site has a million amazing recipes to try! Our family as seriously loved almost all of them we've made.

Ingredients

1 large spaghetti squash
2 chicken breasts cut into small cubes
2 cups of asparagus cut into 1-inch pieces
5 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled
1 medium onion, minced
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 tbsp fresh parsley, finely chopped
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbsp Paleo cooking fat
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Instructions

Preheat your oven to 375 F.

Cut the spaghetti squash in two and, using a spoon, remove the seeds and stringy bits until the middle part is clean. Place in the oven, cut side down on a baking sheet, and cook 30 to 40 minutes or until the flesh of the squash is easily scraped off.

While the squash is cooking, preheat the cooking fat in a skillet over a medium-high heat. Cook the chicken cubes for 5 to 8 minutes, until just cooked through, and set aside.

Steam the asparagus for 5 to 10 minutes depending how crunchy you like them. If you don't have a steamer, cook them in salted boiling water for 5 to 8 minutes and set aside.

Once the squash is ready, let it cool a few minutes just so it's cool enough to handle and then use a fork to scrape out the flesh and set it aside.

Preheat 1 tbsp. of cooking fat in a large skillet over a medium high heat. Add the onions and garlic and sauté until the onions soften, about 4 minutes.

Stir in the spaghetti squash flesh, the cooked bacon, the chicken, the asparagus, 2 tbsp. of the chopped parsley, and the olive oil. Season to taste with sea salt and ground pepper.

Combine everything well together until it's all warmed up. Don't be shy on the black pepper here, it really adds some punch to the final dish. Garnish with the remaining parsley to serve.

CINCINNATI STYLE CHILI

Ingredients

1 lb ground beef
1-2 lb beef stew chunks
46 oz tomato juice
3 tablespoon instant onion flakes
2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon chili powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
1/2 teaspoon thyme
1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper
1/4 teaspoon marjoram
1/4 teaspoon oregano
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
12 whole cloves
5 bay leaves
1/4 teaspoon rosemary
0-7 whole 1" dried chili peppers (optional)
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice (optional)
0-1 qt water (as needed)
1 tablespoon salt (to taste)

Instructions

Brown ground beef and drain. Place back in stock pot and add all the remaining ingredients except the water. Cook for three hours adding water a little at a time as necessary on stove or in crock pot.

Traditional way to serve is over spaghetti with kidney beans, chopped onion, grated cheese and oyster crackers. I put out two of my own touches - guacamole or chopped avocado and sour cream.

Note on dried peppers if you use them... (I usually leave them out for the kids) Use three to start, cook at least 30 minutes to an hour and taste, then add more if needed. I break up the peppers which adds more heat. If you put them in whole and don't break them up too much you won't get nearly as much spice - just be sure to remove them and the bay leaves before serving. You can always add more heat so go carefully!

You can also use the red pepper flakes or even more ground red pepper for heat - it's all about the same taste.