



THE DINNER DAILY RESOURCE GUIDE



The goal of the Dinner Daily has always been to help busy people save time, stress less, and eat healthy and affordable meals.

The purpose of this guide is to provide practical tips and ideas to make dinner easier. Whether you need to substitute an ingredient, make your own salad dressing, or figure out how to best store your produce, we have ideas for you:

- **Get dinner on the table faster and with less frustration**
- **Tips on storing fresh produce**
- **Our favorite kitchen tools**
- **Make your own kitchen staples**
- **Handy Ingredient Substitution Guide**

Your friends at The Dinner Daily ♥

GET DINNER ON THE TABLE FASTER WITH LESS FRUSTRATION

Make a Plan:

There are no shortcuts here. Reducing stress (and saving money) when it comes to dinner requires a plan. Having a well-thought-out plan for the week **before** you hit the store is our #1 tip for making dinner easier. If you are in the habit of just "winging it" while food shopping or making daily trips to the store, dinner is going to be more stressful than it needs to be. We get that this takes some time and organization up front, but if you really want dinnertime to be easier, you cannot skip this step.

Heading to the grocery store (in-store or online) without a plan will almost always result in wasted time or overspending due to impulse buys, not buying the right items or quantities, and ultimately food waste. Also, when you enter your store with just a vague idea of what you need, it is much more likely that you will be making unnecessary trips back to the store during the week. It is just one of those universal truths... planning saves time and money and reduces stress.

Shop Once a Week:

Once you have a plan and an organized list, head to the store (or shop online) just once a week. Really, just once. This not only will save time, but also keep overspending to a minimum.

- Invest the time to make sure your list is complete before heading to the store.
- Make sure to check your pantry too so you remember to buy any staples you need.
- If you run out of milk or bread (or other essentials during the week) consider going to your local convenience store vs the supermarket. It is quicker to get in and out and will keep you away from those impulse purchases, keeping your budget in check.

Although putting together a complete shopping list does take some time, it is really a critical part of shopping once a week. Of course, you could always sign up for our free trial and have us prepare the shopping list for you.

Make it ahead of time:

When you are rushing to get dinner on the table, doing just a few things in advance is a huge stress buster. Some of our favorite ideas:

- Dinner may be at 7 pm, but there is no reason to avoid getting a head start. Slow cookers recipes are the "go to" for this, but if you are home and find yourself having free time in the morning or afternoon, start cooking dinner then, let it cool, refrigerate and then re-heat as needed for dinner. It will still be perfectly fresh and delicious. Tip: if anything needs a crispy texture, re-heat under the broiler function.
- Freezer meals are your friend. Cook a double batch of dinner and freeze half for another night.
- Wash, dice and chop your fresh produce three days in advance. Then store them in containers lined with a damp paper towel. Your produce will be ready the moment you start cooking and as a bonus if the kids need a snack, then fresh fruit and vegetables are at the ready.
- Precook rice, beans, potatoes, quinoa and pasta and store in sealed containers or resealable bags. These are all things that hold well for at least 3 days in your refrigerator.

15 minutes of Prep to Calm the Chaos:

Either in the morning or the night before, take 10 to 15 minutes to do a few items of prep for dinner.

- Chop a couple of veggies and store in the fridge
- Lay out the required pots/baking dishes on the stovetop
- Make the salad, any marinades or quick sauces.
- Line up your spices called for in the recipe on your counter

All these little steps might seem insignificant, but they can make a big difference when energy levels are low at the end of the day. Plus, you can do this at a time that works for you, such as early am when your house is calm and quiet. This is far less stressful than rummaging through your spice cabinet or pot draw while your kids are trying to talk to you about their day.

Schedule a No-Cook Night:

Just because it is dinner, it does not always have to mean you are cooking a hot meal. While you are planning out your week, intentionally schedule a night with little to no cooking. Schedule a sandwich night, a dinner salad with some already cooked protein, or do "breakfast for dinner".

There is no need to always have a "fresh from the oven" meal on the table. What matters most is you are sitting down as a family for a healthy meal, your mind is present, and stress is kept to a minimum.

Re-heat the right way

Eating leftovers for dinner is an obvious route for solving the "what's for dinner?" question. It also helps minimize the needless cost of wasted food. Here are a few tips on making use of leftovers:

- After placing leftovers in the fridge, keep a list somewhere handy in your kitchen, or use a list on your phone, so you don't forget what you have. Whether it is leftover veggies, salad, or some chicken or fish having a visual reminder of what is inside your fridge (and the date) will help make sure you use it up. It is also a great reminder for lunch when working from home.
- If something requires a crispy texture, like roasted potatoes, place them on a sheet tray and underneath the broiler.
- For reheating rice, quinoa and pasta use the microwave, but be sure to cover with a damp paper towel to keep it from drying out while it heats up.

Make your everyday special

Lastly, try to remember that dinnertime is time to connect with your family or those around you. It is oh so easy to get caught up in the hustle of just getting it all done and not slowing down and making an event out of something ordinary. Take the opportunity to use the nice plates, glass and silverware. Spread out a tablecloth. Play music. Make a toast at dinner. Light a candle. You don't have to do all these things, but being a little bit fussy every now and then can lead to dinner being something the whole family looks forward to every night. Even just a tiny gesture can go a long way for you and your family's, morale.

TIPS FOR STORING FRESH PRODUCE

IF IT HAS BEEN PREPPED OR CHOPPED IN ADVANCE, THEN REFRIGERATE

If you are prepping in advance, then wash, cut, and store your produce in a sealed container lined with a damp, but not wet paper towel. Use within 3 days.

IF IT IS LEAFY, THEN REFRIGERATE

- Leafy greens and herbs are delicate and wilt quickly without some moisture. That's why grocery stores often use open refrigerators with overhead sprayers that mist them periodically. You can recreate this by first gently washing and drying your greens. Then store them in the refrigerator, wrapped in a damp paper towel that is then placed inside a sealed container or resealable plastic bag. If you are going to use your greens within the next 2 days, you can skip this process, but keep them in their plastic bag in the crisper drawer.
- Basil is an exception, store it at room temperature with its stems in a glass of water.

IN GENERAL, KEEP FRUITS AND VEGETABLES SEPARATE FROM ONE ANOTHER

- Many fruits (especially bananas, apples, melons, pears and peaches) release a gas called ethylene which hasten the ripening and eventual rot of other produce. So keep your fruits separate from your vegetables (which tend to be ethylene sensitive). You may even want to keep the aforementioned super ethylene producers away from each other, unless you are using them to help ripen other fruits.
- Avoid mixing your fruit in a bowl. Store on an open platter to provide circulation. By keeping things separated you can easily monitor what is in your inventory and use them before they spoil.

REFRIGERATION SLOWS DOWN THE RIPENING PROCESS

If fruit is unripe, don't refrigerate. However, once ripe you can refrigerate if not eating it right away

FRUITS TO ALWAYS REFRIGERATE

- Berries are very delicate. Use them right away or keep them in the refrigerator and consume them within the next 2 days. You can extend their life by removing them from their package, washing them and laying them in a single layer on a tray or plate lined with paper towel.
- Apples will keep their crunchiness in the crisper longer. If left out, they produce a mealy texture.

PRODUCE STORAGE CHEAT SHEET

STORAGE METHOD	TYPES OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
Store at room temperature	unripe bananas (kept away from other produce), basil (with stems in a cup of water), cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, onions, potatoes including sweet (in a dry and cool cabinet), shallots, watermelon, winter squash (butternut, spaghetti), zucchini, tomatoes
Store at room temperature until ripe, then chill in refrigerator	avocados, mangoes, pineapple, bananas, apricots, kiwis, peaches, pears, plums
Store in the refrigerator	apples, asparagus, beets, bell peppers, blueberries, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, cherries, cilantro, corn (in the husk), chives, leafy greens, grapes, green beans, leeks, lemons, lettuce, limes, mushrooms (in a paper bag), parsley, raspberries, strawberries, summer squash, thyme, rosemary

OUR FAVORITE KITCHEN TOOLS

Cooking can definitely be a labor of love. Luckily, there are plenty of tools to help improve the experience. Adding new tools and equipment to your kitchen arsenal can certainly help, but with so many gadgets and appliances on the market it's hard to know which ones are really worth the money or the valuable space in your kitchen. Here is a collection of our favorite tools to help you save time and effort.

DIGITAL ASSISTANTS (AKA ALEXA OR GOOGLE NEST)

The future has arrived! These digital assistants can be a life saver. You can set multiple timers and reminders. Now there's no excuse for forgetting about the sauce reducing on the stove, the roast in the oven, or the bread proofing on the counter.

Creating shopping lists is another great feature. It is so easy to forget to add those random ingredients or household items to a written list. Now your digital assistant can remind you what to add to your Dinner Daily shopping list so everything you need to purchase is all in one place.

Other features include providing weather updates. Maybe grilling outside or dining Al fresco is in the cards! Finally, these things play music. Music makes everything more fun, especially cooking.

SLOW COOKER

If you have one of those days (or weeks) where you know that meal preparation will be a struggle, the slow cooker is here to the rescue! Throw everything in one pot, turn it on, and a few hours later you've got melt in your mouth braised stews ready for dinner. On your menu, use the search box with the key words "slow cooker" to peruse our variety of easy and delicious recipes.

SUPER BLENDERS LIKE VITAMIX OR BLENDTEC

A bit pricier than some of the other tools on this list, but completely worth it if you have kids (or adults) who don't enjoy "bits" in their smoothies. In addition, the blades in these super blenders spin so quickly that you can start with cold ingredients and in a matter of minutes produce hot soups and sauces.

OVEN THERMOMETER

If you have ever wondered why your roasted chicken is not properly browned or your cake pitifully risen, the fact is most home ovens are not accurate. Some are as much as 100 degrees off! For better results with your baking and cooking, buy one of these and save yourself a lot of heartache.

BREAD KNIFE

Useful for cutting bread, of course —but also melons, squash, fruits and vegetables like pineapples or tomatoes. In a pinch, slice meatloaf or carve roasts! Using a traditional chef's knife in certain situations (such as cutting squash) can actually be dangerous if the knife is dull or slips. A bread knife's teeth grip the surface of what it is cutting and makes prep tasks quick and easy. One could make the argument that the bread knife is the essential knife in a kitchen.

MICROPLANE

Nothing gets the job done faster than this hand held grater for a bit of minced garlic or ginger for your marinade, parmesan to top your pasta, or for a sprinkle of fresh nutmeg on your hot creamy beverage of choice. You might not use it every day, but when you need one, nothing else will do.

SCISSORS

A couple pairs of good kitchen scissors comes in handy for cutting through raw chicken, portioning out pizza and even tearing through lobster shells with ease.

SHARPIE AND MASKING TAPE

Storing leftovers? Tear off a small square and label your food so you know how old it is. Stay on top of your leftovers and you'll see less in the trash and more in your wallet. It also comes in handy to note the date opened on the carton of unused chicken stock or a jar of pasta sauce. Low tech but indispensable.

MAKE YOUR OWN KITCHEN STAPLES

Here are a few great staple recipes to have in your back pocket for those days when you are short on time and just want to stick to the basics. The good news is that you are likely to already have the ingredients in your pantry!

JUST THE BASICS

Use these simple sauces and stocks for many of our Dinner Daily recipes.

Easy Pantry Salsa	Quick Pasta Sauce	Hummus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 oz can diced tomatoes (slightly drained) • 4 oz can diced fire roasted green chili pepper • 2 cloves minced garlic • ½ Tsp dried cilantro • juice of ½ lime • salt & pepper to taste <p>Directions: Combine ingredients in bowl</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Tbsp Olive Oil • 3 minced garlic cloves • 1 Tsp dried basil or oregano • 28 oz can crushed tomatoes • 1 Tbsp tomato paste • 1 Tsp of sugar if desired • salt & pepper to taste <p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over medium heat sauté garlic in oil until slightly browned, be careful not to burn. 2. Add crushed tomatoes, tomato paste and basil. Simmer until slightly thickened. 3. Season with salt, pepper and sugar (optional) to taste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 oz can chickpeas • ¼ C Tahini • ¼ C lemon juice • 1 minced garlic clove • 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil • ½ Tsp ground cumin • 2-3 Tbsp water <p>Directions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put chickpeas, Tahini, lemon juice, garlic and cumin in food processor. Pulse until chopped. 2. Slowly drizzle in olive oil until smooth. 3. If necessary add water and blend until desired texture. 4. Season with salt to taste.

Chicken Stock

Making chicken stock is a technique, so there is no need for exact measurements. Most recipes will call for vegetables and herbs but this one is bare bones--chicken, water and oil. You can use chicken wings or backs from your grocery store butcher or even a leftover roast chicken carcass. Use this stock for soups, sauces, stews, braises or to substitute water in most recipes.

Directions:

1. Cut bones at joints and toss on roasting pan with canola oil. Use enough oil to lightly coat the bones.
2. Roast at 400 degrees, turning them occasionally with tongs until evenly browned. Approximately 45 minutes.
3. Scrape bones and fond (browned bits) on the roasting pan into a stock pot.
4. Fill the pot with enough water to just barely cover the bones.
5. Bring water to a boil and reduce to a simmer. Simmer for 1.5 hours.
6. Remove and discard the bones with a slotted spoon
7. Strain the remaining liquid through a fine mesh sieve.
8. You can use the liquid right away or you can continue to reduce the liquid in a pot to concentrate the flavor.
9. Cool and freeze for a month or store in refrigerator for 5 days.

EASY SALAD DRESSINGS

Directions:

Just whisk these ingredients together in a bowl.

*** double as great marinades for poultry, beef, pork and fish.

Lemon Vinaigrette ***

- 2/3 C Olive Oil
- 1/3 C fresh lemon juice
- Season with salt & pepper
- optional handful of fresh chopped herbs (parsley, chives, thyme, cilantro, rosemary, tarragon and basil are all excellent)

Savory Tahini

- 2 Tbsp Tahini
- 2 Tsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 Tsp sesame oil
- splash of water
- season with salt & pepper

Yogurt & Pesto

- ¼ C whole Greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp pesto
- thin with water to desired consistency
- season with salt & pepper

Asian Ginger-Soy***

- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp minced fresh ginger root
- 1/2 C canola oil
- ¼ C sesame oil
- 1/3 C rice vinegar
- ¼ C soy sauce
- 3 Tbsp honey
- ¼ C water

INGREDIENT SUBSTITUTION GUIDE

The recipes on the Dinner Daily are designed to be quick and simple to prepare. But sometimes you might find yourself short on certain ingredients. Or maybe your grocery store is out of the exact item you need. No problem! You can still have fantastic results by using our substitution guide.

BEEF	SUBSTITUTE
flank steak	beef skirt steak, beef flat iron steak
flat iron steak	beef skirt steak, beef flank steak
lean beef stew meat	cubed pork butt
boneless round roast	pork loin roast, boneless leg of lamb
boneless chuck roast	boneless pork shoulder
stir fry beef	sauteed diced firm tofu, diced chicken (boneless skinless thighs or breasts), ground chicken, pork tenderloin, ground pork, shrimp
lean ground beef	ground chicken or pork or lamb or turkey
bone in or boneless steak	pork tenderloin, bone in or boneless pork chops, chicken breast or tenders

CHICKEN	SUBSTITUTE
boneless chicken breast	pork tenderloin, tofu
boneless chicken breast, thin & cutlets	pork tenderloin, turkey tenderloin, firm tofu
boneless chicken breast tenders	pork tenderloin, turkey tenderloin, firm tofu
boneless chicken thighs	tofu, bone in or boneless pork chops
chicken drumsticks or thighs	chicken leg quarters (cut between bones to separate)
split (bone-in) chicken breasts	boneless chicken breasts (reduce cook time)
ground chicken	ground beef or pork or lamb or turkey
fully cooked chicken sausage	kielbasa (beef or pork), bratwurst (sauté or roast if uncooked), Italian sausage (sauté or roast if uncooked)
precooked chicken meatballs	precooked pork or beef or turkey meatballs

PORK	SUBSTITUTE
pork tenderloin	chicken breasts or tenders
boneless pork sirloin steaks	pork tenderloin, boneless chicken breasts or tenders
pork roast (no shoulder or butt)	beef round roast
boneless pork chops	chicken breasts, pork tenderloin, firm tofu
pork chops, any variety (including boneless)	chicken breasts, pork tenderloin, bone in loin lamb chops
ribs (spare, back, baby back, St. Louis)	bone in or boneless country style ribs
ground pork	ground beef or chicken or turkey

TURKEY	SUBSTITUTE
turkey cutlets	chicken breast or tenders, boneless pork chops
ground turkey	ground beef or chicken or lamb or pork
turkey tenderloins	chicken tenders, pork tenderloin, boneless pork chops

SEAFOOD	SUBSTITUTE
cod fillets	haddock, pollock
haddock fillets	cod, pollock
tilapia fillets	cod, haddock, pollock, flounder
salmon fillets	steelhead trout
shrimp, raw	tofu

LAMB	SUBSTITUTE
ground Lamb	ground beef or chicken or pork or turkey
lamb chops	bone in pork chops, boneless chicken thighs

TOFU	SUBSTITUTE
tofu (<i>Tip: if desired, freezing and thawing tofu before cooking makes it chewier and more comparable to meat's texture</i>)	chicken (any boneless skinless variety), boneless pork chops (cut into bite sized pieces if stir fried), stir fry beef.

DAIRY	SUBSTITUTE
sour cream (low fat)	Greek yogurt
Plain Greek yogurt, low fat	sour cream
shredded parmesan cheese	goat or feta cheese (if topping salad), shredded cheddar or mozzarella (for melting)
shredded cheddar cheese, low fat	shredded mozzarella
shredded mozzarella	shredded cheddar, shredded provolone
shredded Mexican cheese, low fat	sour cream (if used as topping), shredded cheddar and Monterey jack
feta cheese	shredded parmesan, goat cheese
goat cheese	shredded parmesan, feta cheese
fresh mozzarella cheese	provolone
ricotta cheese, part skim	cottage cheese
hummus	canned chickpeas tossed with olive oil, salt and pepper
eggs	As a protein substitute (chicken, pork, beef, fish, shrimp, canned beans)

SALAD, LETTUCE, SLAW	SUBSTITUTE
romaine lettuce hearts	spinach, kale
head iceberg lettuce	spinach, kale
broccoli slaw mix	chopped broccoli and shredded cabbage
coleslaw mix	shredded cabbage and carrots
baby arugula	kale, spinach
baby kale	spinach, arugula

VEGETABLES	SUBSTITUTE
asparagus	green beans, broccoli
avocados	nut butters, chickpeas, egg
fresh green beans	asparagus, broccoli
bok choy	spinach, romaine lettuce
broccoli	asparagus, green beans
Brussels sprouts	broccoli
green cabbage	red cabbage
red cabbage	green cabbage
cauliflower	broccoli
carrots	butternut squash (if steamed, sauteed or roasted), if raw (cucumbers, beets, parsnips)
celery	cucumbers (in salad), leeks or broccoli stems (if saute)
corn (ears)	frozen corn
cucumbers	green beans, asparagus
eggplants	tofu, mushrooms
garlic (clove)	dried garlic (1 clove equals ½ tsp powder or 1 ½ tsp minced)
green onions/scallions	shallots, chopped red onion
kale	spinach, broccoli rabe, green beans, asparagus
leeks	celery, chopped onion
mushrooms including baby portabella	tofu
mushrooms - shiitake	white or baby bella
red onions	shallots, white onion
snow peas	green beans
sugar snap peas	green beans
green peppers	red peppers
colored peppers - red/yellow/orange	green, red, yellow, orange
baby or fingerling potatoes	any potato cut bite sized
red potatoes	gold, yellow, white
sweet potatoes	butternut squash, plantains
butternut squash	spaghetti squash, sweet potatoes, plantains
spaghetti squash	butternut squash, sweet potatoes, plantains
squash - yellow/summer	zucchini
squash - zucchini/green	yellow squash
tomatoes - grape/cherry/cherubs	any tomatoes
tomatoes - roma	any tomatoes
tomatoes	any tomatoes

GROCERY ITEMS	SUBSTITUTE
beef broth	water
chicken broth	water
vegetable broth	water
red kidney beans	black beans
white/cannellini beans	chickpeas
black beans	red kidney beans
pinto beans	white kidney/cannellini beans
chickpeas/garbanzo beans	white kidney/cannellini beans
canned re-fried beans	mashed pinto beans, mashed black beans, mashed kidney beans
pasta	bread, rice, legume pasta, potatoes
pasta - lasagna noodles	jumbo shells
pasta - jumbo shells	lasagna noodles
pasta - egg noodles	rice, bread, potatoes, fettuccine, linguine
quinoa	rice, bread, orzo, potatoes
diced tomatoes	tomato paste with water/stock, chopped fresh tomatoes
crushed tomatoes	tomato paste with water/stock, chopped fresh tomatoes
tomato pasta sauce	tomato paste with water/stock (season with salt, pepper, dried Italian seasoning if available)
tortillas (burrito size)	rice, bread (crusty, also pita and other flatbread), quinoa, pasta
canned tuna	canned chicken, chickpeas, sauteed tofu

FRUIT	SUBSTITUTE
blueberries	blackberries, raspberries
strawberries	raspberries
cantaloupe	watermelon
grapes	blueberries, blackberries, raspberries
lemon juice	vinegar (white, champagne, apple cider, red)
lemon zest	zest of lime
lime juice	vinegar (white, champagne, apple cider, red)
lime zest	zest of lemon
mango	peach, pineapple
pineapple	mango, peach
watermelon	cantaloupe