

DANIELLE WALKER

New York Times bestselling
author of *Healthy in a Hurry*

A Healthy Meal Prep
& Menu Planning Guide

MAKE IT EASY





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& Menu Planning Guide

Photographs by Erin Scott



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Introduction

HEALTHY MEAL PREPPING AND MENU PLANNING

Are you tired of scrambling to make dinner at the last minute (and resorting to unhealthy takeout or frozen dinners)? Does the thought of planning, shopping for, and making five to seven dinners a week stress you out? Well, here's some good news: By dedicating just a couple of hours each week to meal prepping and menu planning, you can have a variety of nutritious, homemade meals readily available without spending hours in the kitchen.

In this cookbook, I will help you transform your eating habits, save time, and reduce waste—while enjoying incredibly delicious and satisfying meals that also happen to be free from grains, gluten, and lactose. Did you know that the average American family of four throws out between \$1,600 and \$1,800 a year in produce alone? In the US, we waste more than \$408 billion in food annually, and a lot of that waste can be attributed to poor planning and impulse buying.

If you've long wanted to become a better menu planner and an advance meal prepper, I'm here to guide you through the process step-by-step. I'll provide easy-to-follow instructions, helpful tips, and foolproof recipes that have gotten the stamp of approval from gluten-free and paleo eaters, as well as from those who can eat whatever they want. I've served these recipes to kids and adults alike, and while everyone's palate and preferences are different, I am confident that everyone you cook these for will love them. (And they'll be asking you for the recipes and meal plans, too.)

My goal with this book is to eliminate the stress you feel about what to eat, and teach you how to plan meals that use a variety of ingredients to their full potential. Using the menu plans in this book and my tips on what to prepare ahead of time will allow you to spend less time in the kitchen every day, while providing yourself and those around your table with nourishing meals.

To begin, first read through the next few sections of the book to understand how and why the recipes are laid out the way they are, to discover some secrets for very quick

meals (hello, newly stocked freezer and ready-to-go pantry), and to learn more about the methods that will make you a meal planning superstar.

When it comes to the fifteen meticulously crafted meal plans and recipes, you don't have to start with Week 1, but if the recipes in that chapter speak to you, then jump right in! You can use the weekly meal plans in any order you like. Some of the plans utilize frozen, make-ahead meals or components that were prepared in previous weeks, but I've also explained how you can improvise if you end up skipping around the book.

Each weekly meal plan comes with an accompanying shopping list, along with a link to click so you can take a digital copy with you to the grocery store. After scanning, you will find an option to access the weekly meal plan shopping lists by recipe, too, in case you only want to cook three of the meals that week or you need to double a recipe.

These meal plans and recipes are intentionally designed to reduce waste, be sustainable, and use all the ingredients in your fridge. Say goodbye to spoiled bunches of herbs and forgotten jars of condiments hidden behind bottles on your fridge door, and hello to a pantry, freezer, and fridge stocked with tasty meals. By following these meal plans, you'll not only minimize waste but also take the guesswork out of menu planning. Shopping will be a breeze, as you confidently pick up the items you need, knowing they'll be used in delicious, healthy meals throughout the week.

I've designed these recipes to be family-friendly and cater to different flavor preferences and dietary needs. Whether you have picky eaters to feed or have your own special dietary requirements, you'll find recipes to satisfy everyone at your table. And I'll walk you through prepping ahead or even making whole components or dishes in advance. That means you can spend less time in the kitchen during the week and more time enjoying meals with your loved ones.

Get ready to experience the convenience, health benefits, and, honestly, the joy and satisfaction of meal prepping and menu planning. With this book as your guide, you'll be an expert in make-ahead and quick-to-the-table dinners in no time, giving you the kitchen confidence you've been seeking, the nourishment your body craves, and a repertoire of go-to meals your family returns to again and again.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Danielle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the beginning.



Hi, and thank you so much for picking up this book! I'm Danielle, and I've authored six other books containing grain-free, paleo, and gluten-free meals:

Against All Grain: Delectable Paleo Recipes to Eat Well and Feel Great

Danielle Walker's Against All Grain Meals Made Simple: Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, and Paleo Recipes to Make Anytime

Danielle Walker's Against All Grain Celebrations: A Year of Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, and Paleo Recipes for Every Occasion

Danielle Walker's Eat What You Love: Everyday Comfort Food You Crave

Food Saved Me: My Journey of Finding Health and Hope through the Power of Food

Danielle Walker's Healthy in a Hurry: Real Life. Real Food. Real Fast.

Find me at daniellewalker.com and join me over on social media for videos, tutorials, and daily life:

[Instagram.com/daniellewalker](https://www.instagram.com/daniellewalker)

[Facebook.com/againstallgrain](https://www.facebook.com/againstallgrain)

[Youtube.com/againstallgrain](https://www.youtube.com/againstallgrain)

[Pinterest.com/daniellewalker](https://www.pinterest.com/daniellewalker)

Once you've cooked your way through the book or if you're feeling inspired and creative, be sure to download my free app, Shop the Book (shopthebook.com). It allows you to craft your own weekly menu plans and create shopping lists using the recipes in this book—and from all five of my other cookbooks!—with just the touch of a button. If you choose to make the meal plans as designed in this book, you can also add all of the ingredients to your digital shopping lists and take your device with you to the store instead of this heavy book.



daniellewalker.com/shopthebook

Part 1

Getting Started



Meal-Prepping Personas: Which Type Are You?

The traditional meal-prepping approach of cooking all the main components of multiple meals during one designated prep day might not be feasible for everyone, especially if you have a busy schedule or a large family. That's why I've taken multiple circumstances into account and organized this book a little differently from most. Instead of one-size-fits-all meal prepping, I've divided the chapters into full weekly meal plans and included copious notes and tips at the bottom of each recipe that take different types of meal prepping into account—because, hey, our needs change depending on the time of year, the age of our kids, the size of our family, or the levels of stress that come with work, life, and parenting.

If you have some extra time in your life (that's wishful thinking for me, but a woman can dream!) and love to be ultra-organized, perhaps you are a Component Prepper, who preps ahead to create dump-and-stir meals during the week. You set aside a day at the beginning of the week to cook a variety of proteins, vegetables, and starches that can be used in different meals all week. This way, you have the flexibility to mix and match these prepared components into quick and delicious lunches or improvised dinners.

On the other hand, if you find yourself caught up in work, sports, or school activities, you might be a Semi-Homemade Prepper, who relies on the recipe tips that help you shave off time in the kitchen. This means relying on store-bought shortcuts like jarred sauces, precut vegetables, premade meatballs, or a rotisserie chicken, alleviating the pressure to make every single component from scratch.

Following are the six meal-prepper personas I have identified among myself, my friends, and my readers. Chances are, you can relate to at least one of these approaches, if not a few of them, depending on what your life looks like today. But even if you don't see yourself here or feel like you change your persona from week to week (I do!), the meal prepping and menu planning methods in this book will work for you, I promise.

THE COMPONENT PREPPER

This person focuses on preparing individual components of meals in advance. They take the time to perform tasks like browning a large amount of ground beef or roasting multiple chickens at once. By doing so, they have ready-to-go ingredients that can be used in various dishes throughout the week. The Component Prepper also complements their components with precut vegetables and premade or jarred sauces, enabling them to quickly assemble meals when needed.

If you are a Component Prepper, you'll like these recipes:

[Egg Roll Bowls](#)

[Shredded Carnitas Pork](#)

[Southwestern Chicken Bowls with Avocado Ranch Dressing](#)

[Fridge Clean-Out Veggie and Shrimp Meal-Prep Bowls](#)

[Cheats Minestrone](#)

[Shredded Beef](#) Ⓢ

[Beef and Zucchini Enchiladas Verdes](#)

[Steak and Eggs Breakfast Tacos](#)

[Chicken Tinga](#) Ⓢ

[Cheesy Nacho Sauce](#)

[Sausage Skillets, Four Ways](#)

[Four Quick-Grilled Chicken Marinades](#) Ⓢ

THE BATCH COOKER

This person takes the concept of meal prepping to the next level by cooking large quantities of food and freezing it in individual portions or full meals to reheat later. This approach provides ready-made meals for those days when time is scarce or a quick solution is needed. The Batch Cooker might often be cooking for only one or two people because, by cooking in bulk and freezing portions, they can efficiently manage their meals and easily defrost and reheat them as needed.

If you are a Batch Cooker, you'll like these recipes:

[Creamy Gnocchi Soup](#) *

[Teriyaki Meatballs](#) *

[Shredded Carnitas Pork](#)

[Granny's Spaghetti with Meat Sauce](#) *

[Italian Cottage Pie](#) *

[Shredded Beef](#) *

[Cheesy Broccoli Soup](#)

[Sheet-Pan Chicken Fajitas](#) *

[Greek Lemon Chicken with Artichokes](#) *

[Chicken Tinga](#) *

[Bacon-Spinach Sandwiches](#) *

THE SEMI-HOMEMADE PREPPER

This person prefers simplicity and convenience, relying on store-bought meal-prep options. They focus on meals with ten ingredients or fewer, swap store-bought sauces for homemade, pull apart a rotisserie chicken rather than roasting their own, and purchase pre-cut vegetables to minimize time spent in the kitchen. By utilizing already prepared ingredients from the store, the Semi-Homemade Prepper enjoys delicious and nutritious meals without extensive cooking or preparation.

If you are a Semi-Homemade Prepper, you'll like these recipes:

[Brussels and Apple Salad with Bacon Vinaigrette](#)

[Creamy Gnocchi Soup](#) *

[Chicken Parm Meatball Skillet](#)

[Cranberry-Poppy Seed Chicken Salad](#)

[Fried Pineapple and Pork Rice](#)

[Pizza Night](#)

[Meatballs Marsala with Mashed Roots](#)

[Greek Lemon Chicken with Artichokes](#) *

[Green Goddess Cobb Salad with Crispy Chicken Skin Croutons](#)

THE FREEZER PREPPER

This person follows a strategy of cooking meals in advance and freezing them for later consumption. Like the Batch Cooker, they cook meals in larger quantities but with the intention of eating some of them at a later time. This method is particularly useful for individuals who have busy schedules or want to have a variety of meals readily available. This allows them to save time and effort during busy periods while still enjoying home-cooked meals. The Freezer Prepper often creates two meals at once, a method I describe as a freezer kit in this book (see also [this page](#)). The recipes are simple enough to not require precise measurements and can be divided into two meals—one to cook now, and one to store in the freezer for later.

If you are a Freezer Prepper, you'll like these recipes:

[Creamy Gnocchi Soup](#) *

[Teriyaki Meatballs](#) *

[Orange-Sesame Chicken and Broccoli](#) *

[Granny's Spaghetti with Meat Sauce](#) *

[Italian Cottage Pie](#) *

[Shredded Beef](#) *

[Sheet-Pan Chicken Fajitas](#) *

[Greek Lemon Chicken with Artichokes](#) *

[Chicken Tinga](#) *

THE PANTRY PREPPER

This person does not engage in meal prepping. They rely on their pantry and food supplies in their freezer to create meals spontaneously without any preplanning or preparation. This approach may not work for every meal, but the Pantry Prepper really knows how to forage through their kitchen and use up the ingredients they have.

If you are a Pantry Prepper, you'll like these recipes:

[Magic Meatball Pasta](#)

[Creamy Dill-Sardine Salad with Capers](#)

[Coconut-Pumpkin Curry](#)

[Mediterranean Salmon Salad](#)

[Tomato Soup and Grilled Prosciutto-and-Pear Cheese Sandwiches](#)

[Tuna Casserole](#)

[Breakfast-for-Dinner: Sheet-Pan Pancakes and Bacon](#)

[Tuna Salad with Apples and Pumpkin Seeds](#)

[Lemony Shrimp Pasta with Artichokes](#)

[Sausage Skillets, Four Ways](#)

[Spiced Sweet Potato Soup](#)

[Baked Pesto Gnocchi and Sausage](#)

THE MORPH-MEAL COOK

This person leans on their creativity and resourcefulness when it comes to cooking. They excel at repurposing leftovers into new and distinct dishes and may intentionally make extra portions for just this purpose. By transforming cooked ingredients, the Morph-Meal Cook minimizes food