

# 20 QUICK AND HEALTHY FAMILY MEALS



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When life gets hectic and your schedule seems crazy, it's hard to stick to a healthy diet and cook healthy meals for your family. Despite your best intentions, you struggle to find the time it takes to plan, prep and cook those kinds of meals.

What you need on those busy, I-barely-have-time-to-cook days are two things – a list of easy, quick and healthy breakfasts, lunches and dinner and some staples in your pantry and refrigerator that will allow them to whip those meals up in minutes.

So here's a list of 20 meals that **stick to the basics and focus on simplicity**. No new recipes, no fancy ingredients - just quick-to-fix meals and simple instructions for making them. I hope you'll enjoy them, and that they'll make your life just a little bit easier.

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## Breakfast

- **Whole wheat toast, natural peanut butter, and milk** – This simple meal contains a good mix of complex carbohydrates, protein and fat. And most kids and adults are happy to eat it.
- **Yogurt and fruit** – You can make something like my [Yogurt, Fruit and Nut Bowl](#), or just toss some plain Greek 1% or 2% yogurt, a bit of natural sweetener, and some cut-up fruit or berries (frozen is fine) into a bowl. I eat this for breakfast almost every morning, and it always holds me until lunch.
- **Boiled eggs, buttered whole wheat toast and orange slices.** Boil eggs and slice oranges a day or two ahead of time and have them ready for busy mornings. That way you'll only need to pop some whole wheat bread in the toaster and butter it.
- **Banana, natural peanut butter, and milk.** Slice a banana for each person and put a dab of natural peanut butter on each slice.
- **Homemade energy bars and milk.** On the weekend, when you have a little more time, make a batch or two of [Homemade Energy Bars](#). On really busy mornings, kids (and moms!) can eat an energy bar and drink some milk on the way to school.
- **Homemade granola and milk** – Make a big batch of [homemade granola](#) on the weekend, adding some dried fruit and nuts for natural energy and healthy fat. Serve in a bowl with milk.



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## Lunch

- **Leftovers** – This is my all-time favorite lunch. I always try to make enough dinner to have leftovers for a day or two for lunch. Sometimes I make a lot and freeze some for future lunches.
- **Real food PB&J** – Use whole wheat bread, natural peanut butter, and jam or fruit spread without corn syrup, and suddenly the good old PB&J becomes a healthy lunch. And most kids and adults love it! Add an apple or some carrot sticks to round it out.
- **Salad** – Wash and cut up vegetables on the weekend, then make and package 2 or 3 salads. Add some grilled chicken, garbanzo beans, boiled egg or other source of protein to make them a complete and healthy lunch. Package them without dressing until you're ready to eat them. Then add a simple [homemade dressing with olive oil](#).
- **Grilled cheese** – A grilled cheese sandwich made with whole wheat bread, real cheese and a little bit of butter or olive oil in the pan is an easy real food lunch. Add some orange or apple slices and everyone is happy!
- **Mini Pizzas**. Preheat the oven to 400. Line a large baking sheet with foil (for easier clean-up) and place whole wheat flatbreads on the foil. (Keep some of these in the freezer for busy days.) Top with spaghetti sauce (or tomato sauce and dried Italian seasoning), grated cheese, and veggies or other toppings your family likes. Bake for about 12 minutes. Serve with simple salads, cut up vegetables, or sliced fruit. (These are great for dinner too!)



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## Dinner

- **Chicken, beef or pork in the Crockpot** – Put enough boneless skinless chicken breasts, London broil roast, or pork tenderloin to feed your family two meals into your Crockpot. Add a little bit of water, broth or sauce of your choice. Cook all day and serve it sliced that evening with simple sides, like brown rice with butter and steamed green beans.
- **Next-day tacos** – The next day, shred the rest of the chicken, beef or pork, mix with salsa and make tacos. Serve with as many or as few toppings as you like – just shredded cheese and more salsa is fine if you're really short on time. Add some fruit on the side.
- **Mediterranean Chicken Wraps** – For this simple meal, grill or pan sauté boneless, skinless chicken breasts. When done, let them cool a bit, then slice thinly. Warm pita breads or flatbreads in the oven, microwave or skillet. Set out hummus, feta or other cheese, [salad dressing or vinaigrette](#), and as many vegetables as you have time to fix (lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, olives, etc.). Let each person make his or her own wrap. Serve with orange slices or other fruit.
- **Sauteed Chicken Breasts, Baked Sweet Potatoes and Quick Brown Rice** - Heat olive oil or [salad dressing/marinade](#) in a large skillet. Add enough boneless, skinless chicken breasts to serve your family. Brown on both sides, then cover and cook until done. While the chicken is cooking, put a pot of water on to boil, following the instructions for the amount of quick/instant brown rice you'll need. Pierce sweet potatoes several times and place in microwave. Cook on high for 10 minutes or until soft all the way through. When water is boiling, add rice and cook as directed (usually about 10 minutes). When sweet potatoes are done, cut them open or in half and add butter. (Cinnamon is a nice addition too.) Add butter, salt and pepper to taste to the rice.
- **Soup and Grilled Cheese.** If you have some homemade soup in the freezer, great. If not, keep several cans or boxes of good-quality soups on hand, the kind that includes primarily real food ingredients. Organic is great; it's expensive, but not as



Expensive as going out to dinner on a busy evening! While the soup is heating, make sandwiches with whole wheat bread and real cheese and toast them in a pan with some olive oil or butter. Serve with carrot sticks, grapes, or apple slices.

- **Scrambled Eggs, Whole Wheat Toast and Fruit.** Breakfast for dinner can be quick and healthy. Cut up whatever fruit you have on hand - even apples and bananas are fine - and make a simple fruit salad, crack enough eggs to serve your family and mix with a bit of milk, salt and pepper. Whisk together (a stick blender does this really quickly). Melt butter in a large skilled and scramble eggs. While eggs are cooking, begin making toast. Butter it as it comes out of the toaster and put it in the oven to keep warm. Serve eggs, toast with jam or fruit spread and fruit salad. (My friend Christina at Juggling Real Food and Real Life has [great tips for enjoying real food breakfasts for dinner.](#))
- **Whole Wheat Pasta with Cheese and Pick-up Vegetables.** Put a pot of water on to boil. While it's heating, grate your family's favorite cheese. (We like extra sharp cheddar on pasta.) Then start pulling together a plate of pick-up vegetables - baby carrots or carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, slices of cucumber, strips of red or orange pepper, whatever you have on hand. When the water boils, add enough whole wheat pasta to serve your family and cook according to the package directions. Drain the pasta and add butter or olive oil to coat lightly and salt to taste. Divide among plates and top with grated cheese. Place the vegetable plate on the table and allow family members to choose from it.
- **Spaghetti.** Keep several jars of high-quality spaghetti sauce on hand - look for brands that contain primarily tomatoes and just a few other ingredients - and little or no sugar. (Some spaghetti sauces list sugar as the second or third ingredient!) Or make a big batch of your own one weekend and freeze dinner-size portions that you can grab on hectic days. While whole grain spaghetti is cooking, make a simple salad or cut up vegetables for a simple veggie plate with some [salad dressing](#) on the side as a dip.



- **Chicken Fajitas with Fruit.** Heat olive oil in a large skillet. Add enough boneless, skinless chicken breasts for your family and cook until done. Remove from pan to a cutting board to cool slightly. While chicken is cooking, slice onions and red/orange/yellow peppers. Add more olive oil to the pan and saute vegetables. Grate cheese (or, even better, take previously-grated cheese out of the refrigerator or freezer). Slice apples, oranges or other fruit. When chicken is cool enough to handle, cut into strips. Place sliced chicken and cooked peppers and onions on a large platter and cheese in a bowl. Warm whole wheat tortillas in the microwave. Open a jar of salsa. Place all the ingredients on the table and let each person make his or her own fajitas. Serve with fruit.



- **Black Beans and Quick Brown Rice with Sliced Fruit.** Heat olive oil in a large saucepan or Dutch oven. Coarsely chop an onion and saute it in the olive oil. While the onion cooks, open cans of black beans (enough for your family) plus one or two cans of diced tomatoes. Rinse and drain the beans. In the meantime, start water for brown rice heating in another pot, according to the package directions. Add beans and tomatoes to cooked onions, and season according to your family's tastes (salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, cumin, chili powder, Tabasco, etc.). Cook for 10 minutes. Add rice to boiling water and cook as directed (usually about 10 minutes). While the beans and rice cook, slice oranges, apples or whatever fruit you have on hand. Serve beans on top of rice, with fruit on the side.

Could you use a Healthy Pantry Staples Checklist to help you get organized for cooking quick and healthy meals? You can download one for free from our [CalmHealthySexy resources store](#).

