

Friday Plate

Healthy weeknight dinners, planned for you. Just shop, cook and gather.

SAMPLE WEEK · FAMILY OF 4

Hi friend, this week is already handled.

Five budget-friendly dinners, each under 30 minutes, plus one grocery list sorted by aisle and an optional Sunday head start. Dinner doesn't have to be perfect; what counts is sitting down together. — *Friday Plate*

Your plan, tailored

Family of 4

Nut-free

No mushrooms

This sample's example profile

When you sign up, tell us: family size of 4, 5 or 6 (every quantity and the grocery list scale to fit) · allergies · foods to avoid · gluten-free · dairy-free.

High-protein tweak (any plan): bigger protein portions plus easy add-ons.

Dinners centre on chicken, beef, turkey and pork, with fish about once every 2–3 weeks. Each recipe lists its main allergens plus gluten-free and dairy-free swaps.

★ **KIDS' HOME RUN** meals (1–2 a week) are kid favourites made healthier and budget-friendly.

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Five dinners, zero guesswork

MON	Sheet-Pan Honey Garlic Chicken Thighs with roasted baby potatoes & green beans	CHICKEN	26 min 22 w/ head start
TUE	Turkey Taco Rice Skillet black beans, corn, peppers & melty cheddar, all in one pan	TURKEY	22 min 17 w/ head start
WED	One-Pot Cheeseburger Pasta creamy, cheesy and secretly full of veggies	BEEF ★ KIDS' HOME RUN	27 min 23 w/ head start
THU	Baked Chicken & Sweet Potato Quesadillas with salsa, yogurt dip & crunchy veggies	CHICKEN ★ KIDS' HOME RUN	28 min 23 w/ head start
FRI	Pork Veggie Fried Rice a take-out-style favourite to finish the week	PORK	22 min 17 w/ head start

Is the Sunday head start worth it this week?

45 min
on Sunday

23 min
saved during the week

Plus
lunches ready, calmer nights

No guilt either way. Skipping it to enjoy Sunday evening with your family is a great choice, since every dinner still works in under 30 minutes.

Budget wins this week

- **Family-pack thighs:** cheaper than breasts and covers Mon, Thu and lunches.
- **Repeat ingredients:** beans, peppers, cheddar, tortillas.
- **Dry rice over pouches:** one Sunday pot covers Tue and Fri for less.
- **Block cheese:** shred it yourself, since it's usually cheaper than pre-shredded.
- **One-pot pasta and homemade taco seasoning:** pantry staples, no packets.
- **Leftovers become lunches:** fewer extra lunchbox groceries.

THE DINNERS Each serves 4 and takes under 30 minutes with no prep ahead. Items tagged **HEAD START** are already done if you did the optional Sunday head start.

MONDAY · CHICKEN

Sheet-Pan Honey Garlic Chicken Thighs

26 min, no prep
or 22 min with head start

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lb (900 g) boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut in 1" pieces
- 1½ lb (680 g) baby potatoes, quartered
- 1 lb (450 g) green beans, trimmed **HEAD START** (or frozen)
- 3 tbsp olive or canola oil, divided
- 3 tbsp honey · 2 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tsp salt + ¼ tsp pepper

STEPS

- 1 Heat oven to 450°F (230°C). Line a large sheet pan with parchment.
- 2 Microwave potatoes in a covered bowl with 1 tbsp water, 4 minutes.
- 3 Meanwhile, whisk honey, soy, garlic, pepper and 1 tbsp oil (or use your **HEAD START** jar). Toss chicken in half.
- 4 Toss potatoes with 1 tbsp oil and salt, and spread on the pan with the chicken and beans (tossed with the last oil). Roast 14–16 minutes, until chicken reaches 165°F (74°C).
- 5 Brush on the rest of the sauce and roast 1 more minute.

3 KID-FRIENDLY IDEAS

- **Dip it:** call them "honey chicken bites" and serve the sauce on the side.
- **Deconstruct:** keep chicken, potatoes and beans in separate piles on the plate.
- **Swap a veg:** not into green beans? Roast baby carrots on the same pan.

LEFTOVERS TIP

The extra ½ lb is on purpose. Set aside about 1½ cups of chicken for Tuesday's lunchbox wraps (idea #1).

CONTAINS

soy, wheat/gluten (soy sauce)

GLUTEN-FREE SWAP

Use tamari or a gluten-free soy sauce.

DAIRY-FREE SWAP

Already dairy-free.

High-protein tweak · Roast 2 extra chicken thighs (about 1½ lb total for 4) and serve with a garlicky Greek yogurt dip.

TUESDAY · GROUND TURKEY

Turkey Taco Rice Skillet

22 min, no prep
or 17 min with head start

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb (450 g) lean ground turkey
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 onion + 1 red bell pepper, diced **HEAD START**
- 2 tbsp taco seasoning **HEAD START** or 1 tbsp chili powder + 1½ tsp cumin
- 1 can (19 oz / 540 mL) black beans, rinsed
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 3 cups cooked rice **HEAD START** or 2 microwave pouches
- 1 cup salsa + ½ cup water
- 1 cup shredded cheddar **HEAD START**

STEPS

- 1 Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Brown turkey 5–6 minutes until no pink remains. No head start? Dice onion and pepper and microwave the rice meanwhile.
- 2 Add onion and pepper; cook 3 minutes. Stir in taco seasoning for 30 seconds.
- 3 Add beans, corn, rice, salsa and water. Simmer 4–5 minutes (shred cheese now if needed).
- 4 Sprinkle cheddar on top, cover and turn off heat for 2 minutes to melt.
- 5 Serve with yogurt (our sour-cream swap) and green onions.

3 KID-FRIENDLY IDEAS

- **Less spice:** use 1 tbsp seasoning; adults add hot sauce at the table.
- **Mild scoop:** spoon some out before the salsa goes in.
- **Taco scoops:** serve with tortilla wedges or crackers to scoop up.

LEFTOVERS TIP

Pack a cup into a warm thermos for Wednesday's lunch (idea #2). Keeps 3 days in the fridge.

CONTAINS

dairy (cheddar, yogurt)

GLUTEN-FREE SWAP

Naturally gluten-free with our homemade seasoning. Check the salsa label.

DAIRY-FREE SWAP

Skip the cheddar and yogurt, or use dairy-free shreds. Extra salsa keeps it saucy.

High-protein tweak · Add an extra ½ lb ground turkey and a second can of black beans; top with Greek yogurt.

One-Pot Cheeseburger Pasta

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb (450 g) lean ground beef
- 1 onion, diced + 1 carrot, grated
- **HEAD START**
- 1 tsp garlic powder · 1 tsp paprika
- 2 tbsp tomato paste · 1 tbsp ketchup
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 3½ cups (875 mL) low-sodium broth
- 12 oz (340 g) macaroni or other short pasta
- ½ cup milk
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar **HEAD START**
- 1 cup frozen peas

STEPS

- 1 No head start? Dice the onion and grate the carrot first.
- 2 In a large pot over medium-high, brown beef with onion and carrot, 5–6 minutes. Drain any extra fat. Stir in garlic powder, paprika, tomato paste, ketchup and Dijon for 1 minute.
- 3 Add broth and pasta. Boil, then cover and simmer on medium-low 10–11 minutes, stirring often (shred cheese now if needed).
- 4 Stir in peas and milk for 2 minutes, then turn off heat.
- 5 Stir in cheddar until creamy and season to taste.

3 KID-FRIENDLY IDEAS

- **Hidden veg:** grate the carrot finely so it melts into the sauce.
- **Peas on the side:** skip stirring them in and serve them separately.
- **Mild & cheesy:** leave out the paprika and let kids sprinkle their own cheese.

LEFTOVERS TIP

Reheats with a splash of milk or water. Great in a thermos for Thursday lunch.

CONTAINS

wheat/gluten (pasta), dairy, mustard

GLUTEN-FREE SWAP

Use gluten-free pasta and check that the broth is labelled GF.

DAIRY-FREE SWAP

Skip milk and cheese (add a splash of broth), or use dairy-free shreds.

High-protein tweak · Use 1¼ lb lean ground beef and stir ½ cup cottage cheese into the sauce for extra creaminess.

Baked Chicken, Sweet Potato & Black Bean Quesadillas

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb (450 g) boneless chicken thighs, in ½" dice
- 1 tbsp oil + more for brushing
- 2 tsp taco seasoning **HEAD START** or 1 tsp chili powder + ½ tsp cumin
- 2 cups roasted sweet potato **HEAD START** or 1 large, peeled, in ½" cubes
- 1 can (19 oz / 540 mL) black beans, rinsed
- ½ red bell pepper, diced **HEAD START**
- 8–10 medium (8") flour tortillas
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar **HEAD START**
- To serve: salsa, yogurt, veggie sticks

STEPS

- 1 Heat oven to 425°F (220°C). In a skillet over medium-high, cook chicken in oil with seasoning 6–7 minutes, to 165°F (74°C).
- 2 Meanwhile, microwave sweet potato cubes covered with 2 tbsp water 6–7 minutes until soft (head start: just warm 1 minute).
- 3 Mash with beans and pepper. Spread on half of each tortilla, top with chicken and cheese, and fold.
- 4 Brush lightly with oil on 2 parchment-lined pans. Bake 8–10 minutes, flipping halfway. All at once beats skillet batches.
- 5 Cut into wedges and serve with salsa, yogurt and veggies.

3 KID-FRIENDLY IDEAS

- **Keep it simple:** kids' ones with just chicken and cheese.
- **Less spice:** cook some chicken plain, before seasoning.
- **Build your own:** set out the fillings and let kids spread and fold.

LEFTOVERS TIP

Make 2 extra and refrigerate. Cold wedges with salsa make Friday's lunch (idea #4).

CONTAINS

wheat/gluten (tortillas), dairy (cheddar, yogurt)

GLUTEN-FREE SWAP

Use corn tortillas labelled GF, warmed first so they fold.

DAIRY-FREE SWAP

Skip the cheese. The mashed filling holds it together.

High-protein tweak · Add 1 extra cup shredded chicken to the filling and serve with a Greek yogurt dip.

Pork Veggie Fried Rice

22 min, no prep
or 17 min with head start

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb (450 g) lean ground pork
- 4 cups cold cooked rice **HEAD START** or 2–3 microwave pouches
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups frozen peas + ½ cup frozen corn
- 1 carrot + ½ onion, finely diced **HEAD START**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tbsp oil • 1 tsp sesame oil (optional)
- 3 green onions, sliced

STEPS

- 1 No head start? Dice onion and carrot, microwave the rice and spread it on a plate to dry a little.
- 2 In 1 tsp oil over medium, softly scramble the eggs; set aside.
- 3 Add 1 tbsp oil, turn heat to medium-high and brown pork with onion, carrot and garlic, 6–7 minutes, until no pink remains (160°F / 71°C).
- 4 Add the last oil and the rice; sizzle 2–3 minutes, then toss in peas and corn for 3 minutes.
- 5 Return eggs, add soy sauce and sesame oil, toss and top with green onions.

3 KID-FRIENDLY IDEAS

- **Take-out night:** set out chopsticks and small bowls.
- **Bento style:** serve pork, rice, egg and veg in separate piles.
- **Go light:** use 2 tbsp soy sauce and let kids add a drizzle. Swap peas for corn if needed.

LEFTOVERS TIP

Packs well in a thermos for Monday's lunch.
Keeps 3 days in the fridge.

CONTAINS

egg, soy, wheat/gluten (soy sauce), sesame

GLUTEN-FREE SWAP

Use tamari or a gluten-free soy sauce.

DAIRY-FREE SWAP

Already dairy-free.

High-protein tweak • Scramble 2 extra eggs into the rice and add ¼ lb more ground pork or a cup of edamame.

FOR THE KIDS

5 lunchbox ideas

Built from this week's groceries and leftovers. No extra trip, and all nut-free for school.

1 Honey Chicken Wraps

Leftover Monday chicken, shredded cheddar and a smear of yogurt rolled in a tortilla, sliced into pinwheels. Add cucumber sticks and an apple.

Tuesday • uses Monday's leftovers

2 Warm Taco Rice Thermos

Heat the turkey taco rice until steaming, pack in a pre-warmed thermos, and add a few crackers for scooping, plus carrot sticks and a banana.

Wednesday • uses Tuesday's leftovers

3 Build-Your-Own Snack Box

A hard-boiled egg, cheddar cubes, whole-grain crackers, red pepper strips and apple slices. Kids love to mix and match.

Any day • uses Sunday head start

4 Quesadilla Wedges & Salsa

Cold chicken quesadilla wedges, a little cup of salsa for dipping, cucumber sticks and a yogurt cup.

Friday • uses Thursday's extras

5 Sunflower Butter & Banana Roll-Ups

Spread sunflower seed butter on a tortilla, add a whole banana, roll up and slice into "sushi" rounds. Serve with carrot sticks and yogurt with a pinch of cinnamon for dipping apple slices.

Any day • school-safe and nut-free

Your grocery list

Everything for all 5 dinners, the optional head start and the lunchbox ideas, sorted by store section. Check off as you go.

Produce

- ☐ Baby potatoes Mon 1½ lb (680 g)
- ☐ Green beans Mon (frozen works too) 1 lb (450 g)
- ☐ Sweet potatoes Thu 2 medium
- ☐ Yellow onions Tue, Wed, Fri 3
- ☐ Red bell peppers Tue, Thu, lunches 2
- ☐ Garlic Mon, Fri 1 head
- ☐ Green onions Tue, Fri 1 bunch
- ☐ Carrots Wed, Fri, sides, lunches 2 lb (900 g) bag
- ☐ Cucumbers Thu, lunches 2
- ☐ Apples Lunches 6
- ☐ Bananas Lunches 1 bunch

Meat & Seafood

- ☐ Boneless, skinless chicken thighs (family pack) Mon, Thu, lunch wraps 3 lb (1.35 kg)
- ☐ Lean ground turkey Tue 1 lb (450 g)
- ☐ Lean ground pork Fri 1 lb (450 g)
- ☐ Lean ground beef Wed 1 lb (450 g)

Dairy & Eggs

- ☐ Large eggs Fri, Sunday hard-boiled 1 dozen
- ☐ Block cheddar cheese Tue, Wed, Thu, lunches 2 blocks (about 400 g each)
- ☐ Plain yogurt (2% or whole) Tue, Thu, lunches 1 tub (650–750 g)
- ☐ Milk Wed ½ cup

Pantry & Canned

- ☐ Long-grain white or brown rice Tue, Fri 2½ cups dry
- ☐ Microwave rice pouches only if skipping the head start 4–5 (250 g)
- ☐ Macaroni or short pasta Wed 1 box (1 lb / 450 g)
- ☐ Black beans Tue, Thu 2 cans (19 oz / 540 mL)
- ☐ Low-sodium beef or chicken broth Wed 1 carton (32 oz / 900 mL)
- ☐ Tomato paste Wed 1 small can
- ☐ Mild salsa Tue, Thu, lunches 1 jar (about 24 oz / 650 mL)
- ☐ Whole-grain crackers Lunches 1 box
- ☐ Sunflower seed butter Lunches (school-safe) 1 jar

Frozen

- ☐ Frozen peas Wed, Fri 1 bag (750 g / 1.5 lb)
- ☐ Frozen corn Tue, Fri 1 small bag

Bakery

- ☐ Medium (8") flour tortillas, whole wheat if you like Thu, lunch wraps & roll-ups 2 packs (16–20)

You probably already have

Give the cupboard a quick peek before you go.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| ☐ Olive or canola oil | ☐ Dijon mustard | ☐ Paprika | ☐ Ketchup |
| ☐ Salt & black pepper | ☐ Sesame oil (optional) | ☐ Garlic powder | ☐ Ground cinnamon |
| ☐ Honey | ☐ Chili powder | ☐ Onion powder | ☐ Parchment paper |
| ☐ Low-sodium soy sauce | ☐ Ground cumin | ☐ Dried oregano | ☐ Freezer bags |

Optional Sunday head start

Totally optional: every dinner works without it. This just makes weeknights faster.

0:00–0:05

Start the rice & oven

Heat oven to 425°F (220°C). Rinse 2½ cups rice and cook with water per package directions (stovetop or rice cooker) for about 7 cups.

0:05–0:12

Roast the sweet potatoes

Peel and cut 2 sweet potatoes into ¾" cubes. Toss with 1 tbsp oil and a pinch of salt, spread on a parchment-lined pan and roast about 25 minutes, flipping once.

0:12–0:15

Hard-boil 6 eggs

Cover eggs with cold water, bring to a boil, then cover, turn off the heat and set a 12-minute timer.

0:15–0:25

Chop once for the week

Dice 3 onions and 2 red peppers, and grate 1 carrot. Tue: 1 onion + 1 pepper. Wed: 1 onion + grated carrot. Thu: ½ pepper. Fri: ½ onion + 1 finely diced carrot. Trim the green beans.

0:25–0:30

Seasoning, Monday's sauce & cheese

Taco seasoning: 2 tbsp chili powder, 1 tbsp cumin, 1 tsp each paprika, garlic and onion powder, oregano, salt.
Monday sauce: 3 tbsp honey, 2 tbsp soy, 3 cloves garlic, 1 tbsp oil. Shred 1 cheddar block for Tue–Thu.

0:30–0:38

Eggs out, veggie sticks in

When the egg timer goes, move eggs to ice water (shells on for lunches). Then peel and cut about 6 carrots and 1 cucumber into sticks. Store carrots in a container of water.

0:38–0:42

Cool the rice & sweet potatoes

Spread rice on a sheet pan to cool quickly. Take out the sweet potatoes to cool.

0:42–0:45

Pack, label, done

3 cups rice → fridge (Tue). 4 cups rice → freezer bag (Fri). Everything else → fridge. You're all set.

The time math, honestly: this week's dinners take 125 minutes with no prep, or 102 minutes after the head start. That's about **23 weeknight minutes saved** for 45 minutes on Sunday. The rest preps lunches (eggs, veggie sticks, cheese), and dry rice costs less than pouches. It doesn't cut total work. It moves some of it to a calmer moment.

Good to know: use cooked rice within 3–4 days (Friday's is frozen; thaw it Thursday night). Freeze meat if its best-before date comes sooner.

AROUND THE TABLE

A little something for supper

A simple prayer to say together before you eat. Little ones can repeat it after you, a few words at a time.

Thank you, God, for this food, for the hands that made it, and for the people around this table. Help us to be kind, to listen well, and to share the good we've been given. Amen.

THIS WEEK'S CONVERSATION QUESTION

"What's one thing someone did this week that made you feel cared for?"

Try going first, and keep your answer small and real. Then ask who they could do something kind for next week.

Share this with a mom friend

Know someone who's tired of figuring out what's for supper? Forward her this email. A calmer week is a lovely gift.

Friday Plate · Made with care, one table at a time.