



# Cooking Club Meal Prep Guide

## **WHAT'S INSIDE:**

One Hour of Easy Prep for Fast Weeknight Dinners  
The Meal Prep Strategy  
Meal Prep Day Plan  
How To Cook the Basics  
Tips for Storing  
Pantry Staples List  
Essential Meal Prep Tools

# One Hour of Easy Prep for Fast Weeknight Dinners

Meal prepping is KEY to being able to throw dinners together quickly during the week. If time is a barrier for you to get dinner on the table, meal prepping is the answer.

It doesn't have to be scary, stressful, or take up half the day either. Instead of cooking different meals at once, you're just prepping/cooking different components of your meals. My full-proof method will make meal prep feel a lot less scary.

By having different components of your meals already prepped or cooked and ready-to-go, you will be way more likely and excited to cook dinner instead of ordering take-out or eating popcorn for dinner (we've all been there!).

While you're doing the prep for all of your Cooking Club recipes, you can cook some extra grains, lentils, sauce, etc... to throw easy lunches together and stretch your ingredients even more.

**You'll feel so happy, nourished, and proud when you open your fridge and see cooked farro and lentils, a yummy sauce, and vegetables that are already cut up and ready to be eaten or roasted.**

Trust me, it's worth it!

Because of my personal chef business, I've learned how to be super efficient in the kitchen. I've come up with a really solid way to organize your meal prep day so that it goes as smoothly and quickly as possible.

More on that in the next few pages...

# The Meal Prep Strategy

On Sunday (or whichever day you dedicate your meal prep to), **make a list organized by cooking method** of all the food that needs to be cooked or prepped (see table on next page).

The goal is to have all of the make-ahead components of your meals prepped and ready to go so your Cooking Club dinners come together super fast.

It's helpful to always have extra of these components prepped for lunches or other meals:

- Cooked grains
- Cooked protein (beans, lentils, tofu, chicken, meatballs)
- A sauce or dressing
- Washed and prepped veggies
- Toasted nuts or seeds

# Meal Prep Day Plan

Organize all of the things you need to do by cooking method. Below is an example. I will walk you through this each week with our weekly menus :)

**Here is an example:**

Stovetop	Oven	Cold prep
Cook 1 cup brown rice	Toast ½ cup almonds	Slice kale
Cook 1 cup green lentils	Roast veggies	Slice cabbage
Poach chicken		Slice fennel
		Make tahini dressing

**Looks like a lot, but multitasking makes it go by super fast! Here's how you do it:**

1. Start by preheating your oven to toast some nuts.
2. Get anything going on the stove that you can walk away from (like grains, lentils, quinoa, etc..)
3. Once the oven is preheated, throw your nuts in.
4. Start poaching your chicken.
5. Once the nuts are done, pump the temperature up to 450F or 425F convection for roasting veggies.
6. While you're waiting for things to cook or ovens to preheat, chop up your vegetables! Cut up the veggies you want to roast.
7. Once the oven is preheated, roast your veggies.
8. Lastly, do the easy cold prep! Cut/slice any raw veggies you might want for salads or slaw (think kale, fennel, carrot, cabbage).
9. Make your dressings or sauce for the week.

**Woohoo, you're done!**

# How To Cook the Basics

## **How to poach chicken breast:**

Add chicken breasts to a medium to large pot with a lid. Add enough water just to cover (about 3 cups) and about 2 tablespoons of salt (to season the water and flavor the chicken). Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to very low, cover, and simmer gently until cooked through (160F internal temp), about 10-15 minutes depending on the size of the chicken. Transfer the chicken to a plate or quarter sheet pan to rest, then use two forks to shred it, keep it whole, or slice it.

## **How to cook short grain brown rice and farro:**

Add rice or farro to a pot and fill with enough water to cover by at least two inches. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to a rapid simmer and cook for about 20 minutes or until the rice or farro is tender. Drain and set aside to cool.

## **How to cook lentils:**

In a medium pot, add 1 cup french green (Puy), black or regular green lentils and enough water to cover by at least 2-inches. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer gently for 10-15 minutes, or until the lentils are tender, but not mushy. Depending on how fresh/old your lentils are, they will cook a lot faster or slower, so keep an eye on them and taste as you go. I'd rather my lentils be slightly al dente than mush!

Drain the lentils and transfer them to a quarter sheet pan or large bowl to cool.

## **To make marinated lentils ([full recipe post here](#)):**

Once the lentils have cooled, add 2 tablespoons red wine or apple cider vinegar, 1 tablespoon olive oil, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, and optional 1/4-1/2 cup of fresh herbs. Toss to coat. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 7 days. The vinegar and salt helps keep them fresher longer. Now you've got tasty lentils you can add to anything or eat straight up.

## **How to pickle onions ([full recipe post here](#)):**

Peel, cut in half, and thinly slice 1 medium red onion (a mandolin is really helpful here). Place in a large mason jar or bowl with a lid. Add 1 cup of apple cider or red wine vinegar, 1 cup of water, and 1 tablespoon of salt. Seal with a lid and shake to combine. Remove the lid and press the onions down so they are submerged.

**PRO-TIP:** to get your onions bright pink, save the onion skin and add it to the jar. The pigment in the skin helps color the onions.

**How to roast veggies:**

*For whole roasted beets or sweet potatoes*, just wrap them up in some tinfoil, place on a baking sheet and bake for 30-60 minutes (size dependent), or until easily pierced with a knife. Unwrap and let cool. Once cooled, trim and peel the skin off of the beets. Sweet potatoes can be left with their skin on - they're packed with nutrients.

*For the roasted chopped veggies*: cut the veggies into similar sizes, place them on a parchment lined rimmed baking sheet. Make sure not to overcrowd the sheet (use 2 baking sheets if you can!). Drizzle with a generous amount of oil (about 2 tablespoons per sheet) and sprinkle with salt (about ½ tsp per sheet). Bake at 450F or 425F convection until browned, about 30 minutes, tossing halfway. Allow to cool before storing in the fridge.

**How to toast nuts + seeds:**

Add nuts or seeds to a sheet pan. Bake at nuts at 350F for 7-12 minutes and seeds for 5-7 minutes, or until fragrant. Transfer them to a plate or bowl so they don't burn. Allow to cool before chopping and storing.

**P.S. - A note on convection vs. regular baking:**

I ALWAYS use convection when I roast veggies or when I want something to brown nicely. Convection circulates air/heat using a fan, which transfers the heat better and results in a crispier, browner result much quicker.

Note that convection baking is hotter than regular, so always reduce the heat by 25F when using convection vs. regular.

# Tips for Storing

## Things that freeze well if you have leftovers or want to freeze extra:

- Cooked grains
- Cooked lentils or beans
- Meatballs, patties, or shredded chicken
- Soup
- Tahini Dill Dressing or other creamy or cooked (non vinaigrette) sauces

## How long things last in the fridge and how to store:

### Cooked grains

- **Store:** in an airtight container in the fridge or freezer.
- **Shelf life:** up to 4 days in the fridge, 3 months in the freezer

### Cooked meat

- **Store:** in an airtight container in the fridge or freezer
- **Shelf life:** up to 4 days in the fridge, 3 months in the freezer

### Lentils and beans

- **Store:** in an airtight container in the fridge or freezer
- **Shelf life:** up to 4 days in the fridge, 3 months in the freezer (my marinated lentils last me for a week, I think marinating them in vinegar and salt helps them last longer)

### Dressing

- **Store:** in an airtight container in the fridge. Vinaigrettes do not freeze well, but thicker, creamier dressings do.
- **Shelf life:** vinaigrettes can last up to 2 weeks (just don't add garlic!) in the fridge, dairy-based dressings or dressings with fresh herbs last up to 1 week in the fridge.

### Roasted veggies

- **Store:** in an airtight container in the fridge
- **Shelf life:** up to 5 days in the fridge

### Sliced veggies

- **Store:** in an airtight container in the fridge. For crispy raw vegetables with high water content (radish, carrot, cabbage, fennel), I like to store in an airtight container filled with cold water. It keeps them nice and crisp!
- **Shelf life:** depends on the vegetable, but 5 days as a rule of thumb!

#### Chopped kale

- **Store:** chop, wash and dry then store in an airtight container or resealable bag lined with paper towel in the fridge.
- **Shelf life:** up to 7 days

#### Pickled onions

- **Store:** in an airtight container in the fridge
- **Shelf life:** 1 week in the fridge

#### Fresh herbs

- **Store:** wash and spin dry, then store like kale - in an airtight container lined with paper towel in the fridge.
- **Shelf life:** up to 2 weeks (or until they get slimy and start to smell weird!)



# PANTRY STAPLES LIST

These are non-perishables that are good for buying in bulk to save money and time grocery shopping.

Always check this list when making your grocery list. If you are out of or low on anything, add to your list.

Oils and Vinegars	Condiments	Spices
Extra virgin olive oil Toasted sesame oil Coconut oil Apple cider vinegar Rice vinegar Red wine vinegar Balsamic vinegar	Dijon mustard Soy sauce/Tamari Fish sauce Tomato paste Mellow white miso paste	Fine sea salt or Kosher salt Black pepper (fresh grind) Ground cumin Ground coriander Smoked paprika Paprika Ground turmeric Ground cinnamon Ground nutmeg Chili powder Curry powder Garlic powder Dried oregano Fennel seeds Red pepper flakes
Grains + Nuts/Nut Butters	Flours	Sweeteners
Lentils (French green lentils, green lentils, and red lentils) Short Grain Brown rice Farro Quinoa Steel cut or rolled oats  Almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, peanuts, cashews, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds  Peanut butter Tahini	Almond flour Oat flour Whole wheat flour All purpose flour	Honey Maple syrup Coconut sugar Blackstrap Molasses

# Essential Meal Prep Tools

You're more likely to create a meal prep and cooking habit with a well equipped kitchen. These are the tools I use most often that make meal prep and cooking a breeze! [Click here](#) for a full list of my favorite tools, cookbooks, ingredients, and supplements.

[Mandolin](#): this makes thinly slicing your raw veggies SO fast and easy. I always use it when I'm pickling onions or cucumbers.

[Quarter sheet pans](#): toast your nuts on one pan and roast your beets on the other. I use these smaller baking sheets to bake multiple things at once in the oven AND to cool my cooked grains fast.

[Half sheet pans](#): these rimmed baking sheets are a must for veggie roasting!

[8" Chefs Knife](#): a good knife makes chopping safer and more efficient.

[Large cutting board](#): this beautiful big maple wood cutting board gives you more space for chopping without veggies falling onto your counter and making a mess!

[Large plastic cutting board](#): A less expensive, large plastic OXO board. I use this for dealing with raw meats because you can throw them in the dishwasher.

[Fine mesh strainer](#): a must-have for draining grains

[Microplane](#): perfect for grating ginger or garlic

[Instant read thermometer](#): I always use this when I'm poaching chicken to know when it's done without overcooking. Dry chicken breast is the worst!

[Vitamix](#): I use this all the time to make dressings or sauces for the week. It's also great for finely chopping veggies.

[Food storage containers](#): you need good glass containers to store all your prepped food!

[Stasher bags](#): these are perfect for storing chopped veggies, kale or nuts without washing plastic bags.

[Wide mouth mason jars \(24 oz\)](#) - I use these taller mason jars to freeze soups in bigger quantities

[Wide mouth mason jars \(16 oz\)](#) - this is the perfect size for freezing individual portions.

[Y Peeler](#) - the best peelers, I use for peeling carrots, potatoes, ginger, and shaving parmesan.