

MEAL PLANNING 101

WITH ALICE CHOI

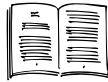
MEAL PLANNING: GETTING STARTED

Meal Planning isn't hard, it just takes time.

Set yourself up for success: If you are not cooking on a regular basis now, start with realistic goals.

Establish the number of days you will cook, when you will grocery shop, prep and cook and who will help you in the kitchen.

WHERE TO FIND RECIPES



- Cookbooks
- Cooking shows on TV
- Online: There are so many sources online: Food52, Cooking Light, Better Homes & Garden, The Kitchn, NY Times Food, Hip Foodie Mom, Pinch of Yum, Damn Delicious and so much more!
- Pinterest

HOW TO SAVE RECIPES

- Pin on Pinterest
- A recipe binder
- Recipe apps: Big Oven, Chef Tap, Paprika
- Tablet users: Basil, Pepper Plate, Evernote Food
- DropBox

HELPFUL TOOLS



Helpful Time Saving Appliances

- Instant Pot/Pressure Cooker
- Slow Cooker
- Air Fryer
- Blender
- Food Processor
- Mini Chopper

Containers

- Invest in a good set of glass storage containers with lids; stackable containers are key!
- Ziploc bags
- Insulated Thermos type containers for soups, stews, chili

PANTRY & FRIDGE ESSENTIALS



By keeping a well stocked pantry, refrigerator and freezer, you should always be able to cook a meal.

IN YOUR PANTRY



- Pasta, all types
- Rice
- Lentils
- Beans
- Quinoa
- Jarred tomato sauce
- Oils (olive oil, coconut, vegetable, etc)
- Nut butters
- Herbs & spices: Chili powder, Lemon pepper seasoning, Cumin, Paprika, Hot chili pepper flakes
- Kosher salt
- Pepper mill
- Onions
- Garlic
- Bread

IN YOUR REFRIGERATOR



- Fresh vegetables
- Fresh Fruit
- Eggs
- Milk
- Cheese
- Protein: chicken, beef, pork, tofu, fish, deli meat

IN YOUR FREEZER



- Frozen vegetables
- Toaster waffles
- Brown Rice
- Frozen pizza
- Cookie dough

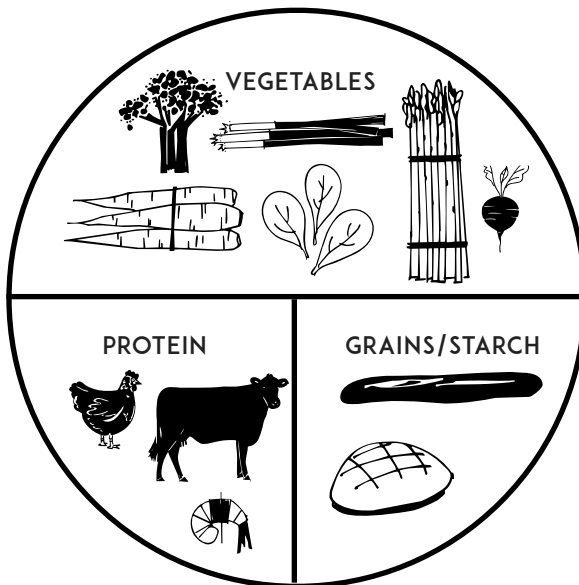
MEAL PLANNING NUTRITION

HOW TO PLAN HEALTHY & HEARTY MEALS

BY SAMANTHA GOLLUP, REGISTERED DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST

When planning meals, there are certain nutritional components that are recommended to include as often as possible to help you feel satisfied and consume a well-balanced diet. The Plate Method, which health educators have been using for several years, shows $\frac{1}{2}$ of the plate filled with non-starchy vegetables (about 1-2 cups), $\frac{1}{4}$ for lean protein (3-4 ounces of meat, beans, dairy or meat alternatives), and the last $\frac{1}{4}$ for starches or complex carbohydrates ($\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup). Not only will this method help you to feel satisfied, but it also helps to get in many important macronutrients (fat, carbohydrate and protein) and micronutrients (vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients) to fuel a healthy body.

THE PLATE METHOD



The Plate Method: Fill half of a 9-inch plate with one cup of non-starchy vegetables; a quarter of the plate with high-protein foods; and a quarter of the plate with carbohydrate foods. Add a small serving of fruit and a serving of dairy.

PROTEINS

- Keep you satisfied longer
- Fuel your muscles and makes up nearly every cell of your body
- Choose lean proteins more often than high fat proteins:
 - Choose flank, loin cuts, chops, or anything labeled as 90% for beef and pork, poultry, fish, meat alternatives (tofu, seitan, tempeh), beans and lentils, and dairy products (low fat)
- 3-4 oz of lean meat is about the size of a deck of cards

COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES

- Provide rapid energy and fuel for your brain and muscles
- Have more fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients than simple carbs (which include refined flours, juices, and sugars)
- Fiber helps to slow digestion (leaving you feel fuller for longer and creating less of a peak and crash in blood sugar) and keeps your intestines healthy and moving more regularly.
- Choose whole grain flours or grains (whole wheat, quinoa, brown rice, etc.), whole fruits, and starchy veggies (peas, corn, potatoes, squash)
- Growing littles and very active children may need $\frac{1}{3}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ of their plate to be complex carbs

VEGETABLES

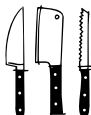
- Include multiple colors of veggies in a meal, or over the course of a week
 - Look for reds, oranges, yellows, greens, purples, and whites - different colors have different properties that help your body to function at full force.
- Fiber in veggies helps just like the fiber in complex carbs and fills you up without dragging you down
- Picky eaters?
 - Hide veggies in sauces (spinach, peppers, tomatoes, onions, herbs), smoothies (cauliflower, kale, carrots), meats (meatloaf or meatballs with zucchini, spinach, carrots, etc.)
 - The more you can expose your kids (or spouses!) to veggies, the more they will start to accept them
 - Cut them into fun shapes and let them dip away!

OTHER COMPONENTS

- Healthy Fats - fats from plant foods, such as avocado, butts, seeds, olives, and plant oils are important to include in meals and snacks in small amounts throughout the day because they help keep you satisfied and keep your organs healthy

- Treats - it's important to enjoy foods that are more indulgent once in a while. Stay mindful when and how often you are eating these foods - moderation is key!
- Choose whole foods more often than processed foods for a better quality diet
- Respect your body's signals - eat when you're hungry and stop eating when satisfied
- Don't feel bad if every plat doesn't look perfect - as long as you vary what you eat throughout the week and month, you will get in lots of good nutrition and fuel a healthy body!

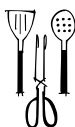
BUILDING YOUR MENU



TIPS

1. Cook foods that you and your family will enjoy
2. Themed Nights: Meatless Monday, Taco Tuesday, Vegetarian, Instant Pot night
3. Use what's in season; share a CSA with friends
4. Be smart about how you use ingredients
5. Plan on leftovers
6. Plan meals as a family
7. Plan faster, easier meals on busy nights
8. Take inventory of what you already have at home and use those ingredients first!
9. On days where you have extra time, stock your freezer with meals! Casseroles, meatballs, lasagna, slow-braised meats, chili, and soups work well for freezer meals.

GROCERY SHOPPING



TIME SAVING TIPS

1. Look at specials and /or cut coupons
2. Try to minimize number of stops in one day
3. Divide the grocery list with your partner or roommate if you need ingredients from more than one place; i.e: a specialty store
4. If you are a parent: Try to grocery shop solo
5. If you have kids with you, pack healthy snacks for the kids ahead of time
6. Write your grocery list according to sections in the store

SETTING YOUR MEAL PREP SCHEDULE

1. Determined what day of the week you will plan the menu and write your grocery list
2. It's a good idea to prep and get started the same day you go grocery shopping
3. Chop/prep vegetables
4. Cooking "components" of meals
5. Big batch cooking and freezing
6. Roasting a chicken or throwing a pork roast in the slow cooker
7. Marinate meats ahead of time
8. Be flexible! Things happen and plans change. If you don't end up cooking one night, save it for the following night.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO PREPARE/SERVE VEGGIES

1. Side salad
2. Blend up in pesto
3. Smoothie
4. In baked goods
5. Roasted veggies with dipping sauce
6. Raw veggies with dressing
7. Steamed
8. Sautéed
9. Veggie stir Fry with stir fry sauce from TJ's



DIFFERENT/FUN WAYS TO SERVE FOOD FOR KIDS

1. Use sectioned plates
2. Bento Boxes
3. Cut food into different, fun shapes; Spiralizer
4. Chili, soup, pasta in a big coffee mugs
5. Condiments/dressings

Have your kids help and take ownership in some part of the meal prep!



SAMPLE SCHEDULE #1

DAY OF THE WEEK	TO DO/DINNER
Saturday*	Grocery shop and begin prep work
Sunday	Prep make ahead meals
Monday	Cook
Tuesday	Cook
Wednesday	Easy Dinner Night: Sandwich or wrap night
Thursday	Cook
Friday	Purchase ready-made meals or frozen meals
Saturday*	Pantry Dinner
Sunday	Crock Pot Dinner

SAMPLE SCHEDULE # 2

DAY OF THE WEEK	TO DO/DINNER
Saturday*	Grocery shop and begin prep work
Sunday	Prep make ahead meals
Monday	Cook
Tuesday	Easy Dinner Night: Order Pizza, Takeout
Wednesday	Cook
Thursday	Cook
Friday	Go out to eat
Saturday*	Purchase ready-made meals or frozen meals
Sunday	Crock Pot or Instant Pot Dinner

*meal prep day

EXAMPLE A: MEAL PLAN SCHEDULE WITH MENU

DAY OF THE WEEK	TO DO/DINNER
Saturday*	Grocery shop and begin prep work: chopping vegetables, store in fridge
Sunday	Prep make ahead meals, prep meatballs and chicken, roast vegetables and make rice
Monday	Whole Roast Chicken with vegetables, or side salad and mashed potatoes or brown rice
Tuesday	Fish or Seafood: Salmon Rice Bowl with side salad or cucumber tomato salad
Wednesday	Beef and Ginger Fried Rice or Chicken and Shrimp Stir Fry
Thursday	Pantry Pasta Night: easy pasta, Lo Mein
Friday	Go out to eat
Saturday*	Homemade Pizza Night or Purchase ready-made meals or reheat frozen meals
Sunday	Spaghetti and Meatballs Crock Pot Dinner or Instant Pot Dinner

*meal prep day

EXAMPLE B: MEAL PLAN SCHEDULE WITH MENU. INCORPORATING LEFTOVERS

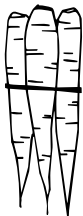
DAY OF THE WEEK	TO DO/DINNER
Saturday*	Grocery shop and begin prep work: chopping vegetables, store in fridge
Sunday	Prep make ahead meals, prep meatballs and chicken, roast vegetables and make rice
Monday	Whole Roast Chicken with vegetables, or side salad and mashed potatoes or brown rice
Tuesday	Salmon Rice Bowl with side salad or cucumber tomato salad
Wednesday	Chicken and Shrimp Stir Fry (using leftover roast chicken)
Thursday	Pantry Pasta Night: easy white bean pasta
Friday	Go out to eat
Saturday*	Leftover salmon with a side salad or Purchase ready-made meals or reheat frozen meals
Sunday	Re-heat Any leftovers

*meal prep day

ONE PAN ROAST CHICKEN WITH ROOT VEGETABLES

NOTE: Follow instructions on how to arrange vegetables & chicken on your baking sheet. PREP TIME: 25 minutes + overnight storing time. COOK TIME: 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS



- 12 ounces red potatoes unpeeled, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 12 ounces Brussels sprouts trimmed and halved
- 8 shallots peeled and halved
- 4 carrots peeled and cut into 2-inch pieces, thick ends halved lengthwise
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil or vegetable oil
- 6 garlic cloves peeled and minced
- 4 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves or a handful sprigs of fresh thyme
- 3 tablespoons fresh rosemary leaves only; split
- 3 1/2 lbs. bone-in, skin on chicken pieces (breasts, drumsticks and thighs)
- salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

To Prep:

1. Place potatoes, Brussels sprouts, shallots, carrots, 2 tablespoons oil, garlic, 2 teaspoons thyme leaves and 1 teaspoon rosemary in 1-gallon zip top bag. Press out the air and seal; toss to coat.
2. Place the chicken, remaining 2 tablespoons oil, remaining 2 teaspoons thyme, remaining 1 teaspoon rosemary, salt and pepper in a separate 1-gallon zip top bag. Press out the air and seal; toss to coat.

To Store:

1. Refrigerate chicken and vegetable mixture zipper-lock bags for at least one hour or overnight, up to 24 hours, flipping the bag at least once or twice to ensure the chicken marinates evenly if you can.

To Finish and Serve:

1. Adjust the oven rack to upper-middle position and preheat oven to 475 degrees. Spread vegetables in a single layer in rimmed baking sheet, discarding any excess liquid and arranging Brussels sprouts in center and potatoes and carrots along the outside. Season vegetables with more salt and pepper if desired.
2. Place chicken skin side up on top of vegetables, arranging breast pieces in the center and leg and thigh pieces around the perimeter of the sheet. Bake chicken until breasts register 160 degrees and drumsticks and thighs register 175 degrees, for about 35 to 40 minutes, rotating the sheet halfway through baking.
3. Transfer the chicken to serving platter, tent loosely with aluminum foil, and let rest for 5 to 10 minutes. If desired, return vegetables to oven and continue to bake until lightly browned, 5 to 10 minutes. Toss vegetables with any accumulated chicken juices and transfer to platter with chicken. Serve and enjoy.

WHOLE ROAST CHICKEN

*Option for COOK: *With chicken breast facing up and legs pointing toward you, use a sharp knife to slice through loose area of skin draped between leg and breast, making about a 3"-long incision. Continue cutting downward until you hit the joint that connects the thigh to the body, then stop (once you get through the skin, there's not much there; if you are cutting through flesh, you're too close to the breast). This exposes the leg joint, making it easy to tell if chicken is cooked. Repeat on second side. ** Feel free to add fresh herbs like finely diced parsley, rosemary, oregano and mix with the melted butter; you can also add some minced garlic into the melted butter as well. **Sometimes I use a full stick of butter.

Prep time: 5 to 10 minutes, Cook time: About an hour



INGREDIENTS

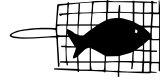
- 1 3 to 4 lb. whole chicken
- 1 to 2 lemons cut in half crosswise
- 1 head of garlic unsealed, cut in half crosswise
- 1 shallot unpeeled, cut in half crosswise
- ¼ cup ½ stick unsalted butter, melted + more if needed**
- 2 to 3 tablespoons mixture of fresh herbs: diced parsley, rosemary, oregano
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Arrange a rack in the center of oven; preheat oven to 425 degrees. Place whole chicken on cutting board and pat dry with paper towels.* (If you need a more fool proof way to ensure your chicken is done and cooked through, do the following*, see above)
2. Transfer chicken breast side up to a large cast iron skillet. Arrange lemons, garlic and shallot cut sides down in the skillet around the chicken.
3. Drizzle the melted butter all over the chicken (**if you want more flavor, use a full stick of butter), sprinkle the fresh herbs (finely diced parsley, rosemary, oregano) over the chicken and season generously with salt and pepper. Make sure you get every surface of the chicken with a generous amount of salt and pepper.
4. Transfer to oven and roast until chicken is nicely b round and cooked through, checking for doneness after about 55 minutes. To check, carefully remove skillet from oven, poke a knife into leg joints, and pierce the meat. If juices run clear, chicken is done. If you see a rosy pink color, it needs more time. Continue to roast, checking every 5 minutes, until juices run clear.
5. Let chicken rest in skillet for at least 15 minutes before carving. Transfer chicken to platter. Top with pan juices and serve with roasted lemon and garlic. Enjoy!

ASIAN SALMON RICE BOWL

Prep time: 5 to 10 minutes, Cook time for salmon: 10 minutes



INGREDIENTS

For the salmon:

- 1 to 2 salmon filets
- olive oil
- lemon pepper seasoning
- smoked paprika
- salt & pepper if desired

For the rice bowl:

- cooked white or brown rice
- sesame oil
- low sodium soy sauce optional
- sesame seeds or Furikake (Japanese seasoning)
- seasoned nori

INSTRUCTIONS

For the salmon:

1. Preheat your oven to 425 degrees. Prep and line a baking sheet. If desired, pat your salmon filet gently with a paper towel. Lightly drizzle with some extra virgin olive oil, season with lemon pepper seasoning from Penzeys Spices and sprinkle on some paprika. Season with just a little more salt and pepper if desired (usually not needed).
2. Bake in oven for about 8 to 10 minutes, depending on the thickness of your salmon filet. Remove from oven and break into pieces with fork.

For the rice bowl:

1. To assemble and serve: place some rice into a bowl. Lightly drizzle on just a little touch of sesame oil and low sodium soy sauce, if desired. Top with salmon. and sprinkle on some sesame seeds, or Furikake (if using) and a few pieces of seasoned nori on top. Serve and enjoy!

BEEF AND GINGER FRIED RICE

This is a truly comforting meal: rice crisps up golden and crunchy with ground beef, leeks and ginger, each grain absorbing all those rich flavors. Make sure to use the back of a wooden spoon to press down on the rice for an extra crispy crust. We pickled radishes with plum vinegar—a sour and salty vinegar made with Japanese plums—which we love for the pink hue it lends to veggies. If wanting to make the bok choy salad: Pick cilantro leaves and tender stems. Halve bok choy and rinse under cold water to remove grit; dry well. Slice on a diagonal into ½-inch pieces. Toss bok choy with radishes and vinegar. Top fried rice with some of the bok choy and radish salad (drizzle with any dressing in the bowl) and garnish with cilantro. Serve remaining salad on the side. Enjoy!

Prep time: 10 mins, Cook time: 30 mins



INGREDIENTS

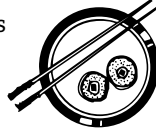
- 1 1/2 cups medium grain rice
- 1 1/4 cups water
- salt; optional
- 1 1/2 cups radishes thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 oz plum vinegar
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 large leek tender white part only, chopped
- 12 ounces baby bok choy chopped
- 1 oz fresh ginger peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 lb. lean ground beef
- 3 tablespoons tamari or low sodium soy sauce
- handful fresh cilantro

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook rice: Rinse rice in a fine-mesh sieve until water runs clear. Combine rice, $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups water, and a pinch of salt in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until rice is tender and water is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Let rest 5 minutes before uncovering. You can also use a rice cooker if you have one.
2. Prep pickled veggies: Combine the sliced radishes with plum vinegar and toss; set aside.
3. Cook aromatics: Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large (preferably nonstick) skillet or wok over medium high. Add the leeks and cook, stirring, until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the ginger and continue to cook until softened and fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the bok choy and cook/sauté for another 2 minutes. Season with salt and transfer veggies to a plate.
4. Add the ground beef directly into the empty skillet and cook over medium high heat, stirring occasionally, until beef is cooked and browned completely, for about 5 minutes. Season with salt. Return the ginger, leeks and bok choy back into skillet.
5. Add in the cooked rice to skillet (adding 1 tablespoon of oil if the rice looks dry) and stir to combine. Cook, pressing down with a wooden spoon to allow rice to crisp, tossing occasionally and repeating, until most of the rice is crispy, for about 6 to 8 minutes; stir in the tamari or soy sauce. Taste and add a little more soy sauce if needed.
6. Serve fried rice with the pickled radishes on top (optional) and garnish with fresh cilantro. Enjoy!

CHICKEN SHRIMP STIR FRY

Prep time: 10 minutes, cook time: 25 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1/2-inch pieces (or chicken breast)
- 1 to 2 cups broccoli cut into florets
- 18 oz package mushrooms, sliced
- 2 to 3 carrots thinly sliced
- 1 red bell pepper chopped
- 1 yellow or orange bell pepper chopped
- 1 to 2 cups sugar snap peas cut in half or left whole
- 1 cup onion diced
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1/4 cup + 1 tablespoon hoisin sauce + more if needed
- 2 tablespoons low sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon powdered ginger
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 pound fresh shrimp fresh or frozen, but if frozen, make sure it's completely thawed
- finely diced scallions
- sesame seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

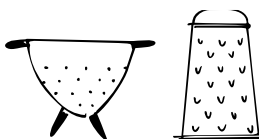
1. In a large skillet or wok, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and cook for 5 to 6 minutes or until lightly browned. Add the broccoli, mushrooms, carrots, bell peppers, snap peas and diced onion and cook an additional 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Drizzle on the sesame oil and mix together.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the chicken broth, hoisin sauce, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, ginger, and cornstarch until there are no lumps. Slowly pour over the chicken and veggies and bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
3. Reduce the heat to medium or medium-low, and let simmer for about 5 to 6 minutes, or until the sauce thickens. Arrange the shrimp on top in a single layer and cover the skillet or wok with a lid.
4. Let cook until the shrimp has turned pink. Flip over and cook on the other side. The shrimp should only need a few minutes to cook. Mix together and garnish with finely diced scallions and sesame seeds. Serve over steamed rice. Enjoy!

WHOLE GRAIN PASTA WITH WHITE BEANS

Prep time: 5 minutes, cook time: 25 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 lb. whole-grain angel hair or thin spaghetti
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil plus more for drizzling
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes whole
- 2 cloves garlic grated
- 2 cups cooked cannellini beans rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup roughly chopped kalamata olives
- 1 tablespoon capers rinsed
- 1/2 cup roughly chopped parsley
- freshly ground pepper
- parmesan cheese
- finely diced scallions
- sesame seeds



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil and cook the pasta according to package instructions. Drain and set aside. Drizzle with olive oil to prevent sticking.
2. In a large 12-inch skillet, warm the olive oil over medium heat. Add the whole cherry tomatoes and cook until they begin to burst, about 5 to 6 minutes. Add the garlic and stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
3. To the pan, add the beans, kalamata olives, capers and chopped parsley. Add the pasta directly into the pan, and toss well with tongs to coat the pasta.
4. To serve, top the pasta with extra olive oil, a few turns of freshly cracked pepper and a generous grating of parmesan cheese.

SUPER SIMPLE VEGGIE LO MEIN

Prep time: 5 minutes, cook time: 20 minutes



INGREDIENTS

- 1 to 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 large sized onion peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 garlic clove minced
- Pinch of salt
- 1 pound spaghetti pasta cooked
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- ¼ cup mushroom broth + more if needed
- 3 to 4 tablespoons soy sauce + more if needed
- 3 tablespoons hoisin sauce + more if needed
- 2 to 3 tablespoons vegetarian Chinese oyster sauce
- 1 to 2 teaspoons brown rice vinegar
- Green onions or scallions finely diced for garnish
- roasted sesame seeds

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Using a large sauté pan or skillet, heat your oil over medium-high heat. After a minute or two, add the onions and sauté for about 4 minutes. Add in the garlic and season with salt and continue sautéing for a few minutes longer.
2. Add the cooked pasta into the pan along and drizzle with the sesame oil. Add in the mushroom broth, soy sauce, hoisin sauce, oyster sauce, vinegar and a handful of scallions. Using tongs, toss together for a few minutes, or until the noodles are well coated and heated through. Taste and adjust any ingredients as needed.
3. Garnish with more diced green onions and roasted sesame seeds and serve immediately. Enjoy!

SLOW COOKER SPAGHETTI & MEATBALLS

Note to the cook: I did not cook my pasta in the slow cooker. Cook your pasta separately on the stove. *Recipe makes about 31-32 meatballs so freeze any leftovers or bake the remaining at 400 degrees for about 25 minutes (or until cooked through) and make meatball subs for another night!

Prep time: 30 minutes, cook time: 4 hours on high, 8 hours on low

INGREDIENTS

For the marinara sauce:

- 1 medium yellow onion finely chopped
- 128-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 128-ounce can fire roasted diced tomatoes
- 128-ounce can chunky tomato sauce
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1/2 to 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 fresh garlic cloves finely chopped or minced
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt



For the meatballs:

- 2 pounds lean ground beef
- 1 small onion finely chopped
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic minced
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup plain panko bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese plus more when serving
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

For the spaghetti & meatballs:

- 1 lb. cooked spaghetti noodles
- fresh parsley finely diced for garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

For the marinara sauce:

1. Into the bowl of a large sized slow cooker, add the chopped onion, crushed tomatoes, diced tomatoes, chunky tomato sauce, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, minced garlic and salt. Stir well to combine.

For the meatballs:

1. In a separate large mixing bowl, mix together all of the meatball ingredients. Using either your hands or a rubber spatula, mix the raw meatball mixture until thoroughly combined.
2. Form into meatballs; I recommend using a tablespoon sized cookie scoop to scoop out the meatball mixture. This also helps to ensure that all of your meatballs are roughly the same size. The mixture will make roughly about 30+ meatballs. I placed 20 into the slow cooker and saved the rest.*
3. Position the meatballs into the marinara sauce and make sure each meatball is covered and submerged into the sauce.
4. Cover the slow cooker with a lid and cook until the meatballs are cooked through: about 4 hours on a HIGH setting or 8 hours on a LOW setting.

When ready to serve::

1. Place cooked spaghetti pasta into dish or bowl, top with some marinara sauce and meatballs and sprinkle with diced parsley and freshly grated parmesan cheese. Serve and enjoy immediately!



NOTES: