



# THE BUSY BATCHELOR: A WEEK OF 15 MINUTE MEALS

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Juggling a career, exercise regime, social life and whatever else life deals you can understandably leave you drained and more inclined to grab a pizza and beer, rather than prepare a gourmet meal at the end of the day. What if you could have it all? A healthy supper and all your extra time back. I'm here to offer you some quick and easy, balanced meal options that can be prepared within 15 minutes with limited ingredients. I have also compiled some tips to make shopping and preparation as simple as possible.

## TIPS FOR SPEEDY AND EFFICIENT SHOPPING

I personally find weekly shopping to be the most efficient interval. It allows you to plan accordingly for the week ahead and is probably the longest period you are going to be able to go without needing to re-stock your fresh produce. Follow these steps to make sure that you spend as little time as possible in the supermarket:

1. Plan your meals for the week, consider what ingredients will be required to prepare these meals and calculate the exact amount of each ingredient needed. From there check your cupboards and fridge to see what you already have. Finally determine what your non-food requirements may be in the next week (toilet paper, deodorant, aftershave?). You are now ready to compile your list.
2. Now use your familiarity of the local supermarket to your advantage: organise your list by aisle in the store. If you stick to this plan, you will avoid backtracking and be less likely to pick up other un-listed snacks that you would have to repeatedly avoid.
3. Remember to always double-check your list before heading to the tills, you don't want to head back to the shop to collect any forgotten goods.
4. If you really can't get your head around a busy supermarket and queues, there is always the home delivery option offered by some retailers.

## TIPS TO MAKE PREPARATION AS SIMPLE AS POSSIBLE

- Does the thought of peeling and chopping vegetables put you off eating them altogether? Let someone else do it for you! Most supermarkets sell pre-chopped veggies, which makes the process as simple as transferring the veg from the packaging to the cooking device. Better yet, some supermarkets even sell veg that are microwave-ready in their packaging.



- Remember to thaw frozen meat in the fridge a day or two before you plan to use it. This could make or break your success when you have limited time.
- Stock up on foods that save time and have many uses. Grated cheese, salsa, tortillas, tomato and onion, tinned fruit and veg and eggs all pop to mind. These are great for days when you haven't planned your meals properly and are tempted to pop into the take-away joint down the road.

## 15 MINUTE MEALS FOR A WORKING WEEK

Some of these are my own go-to "quick" meals, others I have sourced and modified, but they all have one thing in common, they can be prepared in less than 15 minutes and are TASTY.

### Monday "breakfast wrap"

I know Monday is the toughest days for most, so I gave it one of the quickest meal options.

#### Ingredients:

1 large whole-wheat tortilla

10ml olive/canola oil

1 or 2 eggs

1 tomato

½ cup chopped bell pepper (preferable mixed colours)

Grated cheese

Optional: bacon, chilli sauce, avocado

#### Method:

- Heat oil in a non-stick pan
- While heating chop tomato and peppers and avocado (if necessary).
- Fry egg and bacon as desired, at the same time heat tortilla in the microwave
- Place egg and bacon in wrap and place tomato and peppers in heated pan, cook for 2-3 minutes, add to wrap.
- Sprinkle grated cheese over and top with avocado and chilli sauce
- Wrap and eat



## Tuesday: beef stir fry with brown rice

### Ingredients:

Lean beef strips

Crushed garlic

Finely chopped onion

Stir Fry vegetable mix

Olive/canola oil

Ready-to-eat brown rice

Low-sodium soya sauce

Optional: added sliced mushroom, leftover peppers, chickpeas, tinned kidney beans

### Method:

- In a wok/ large frying pan: heat a small amount of oil and brown garlic, onion and beef.
- Add the vegetables and any optional extras, stir fry until heated, but still crispy. Drizzle with soya sauce according to taste.
- Heat rice in microwave and serve all-together

## Wednesday: Chick 'n bean bowl

### Ingredients:

Pre-cooked chicken breast, sliced thinly (this can be bought cooked or prepared ahead of time, either way make sure there's another breast for Thursdays meal).

Ready-to-eat brown rice

Olive/canola oil

¼ cup tinned kidney beans

Broccoli

Leftover stir fry vegetable mix



Optional: avocado, sauce of your choice (I enjoy a chilli garlic sauce)

#### Method

- In serving bowl: heat beans and sauce (where applicable) in microwave, add rice and heat until desired temperature
- Sauté broccoli and stir fry mix in pan
- Combine ingredients and top with avocado if desired

#### **Thursday: use your leftovers wrap**

1 large whole-wheat tortilla

The remaining cooked chicken breast from Wednesday- shredded

¼ cup kidney beans

Ready-to-eat brown rice (If you have leftover- not a necessity)

Tomato, chopped

Avocado

Grated cheese

Greek yoghurt

Recommended: a hot sauce of your choice

#### Method:

- Heat chicken, beans and rice in microwave (if you desire).
- Heat tortilla in the microwave for about 10 seconds then fill with chicken, beans and rice
- Layer with with tomato, grated cheese and avocado
- Top with Greek yoghurt and hot sauce, fold and enjoy.

#### **Friday is ostrich burger day**

#### Ingredients:

Hamburger bun of your choice



Olive/canola oil

Ostrich or other lean patty

Onion, finely chopped

Tomato

Mushroom, chopped

Peppers, chopped

Greek yoghurt

Other sauce of your choice

#### Method

- Heat a small amount of oil and fry onion, peppers and mushrooms, put aside.
- Cook patty in the same pan.
- Open bun and fill with various ingredients, top with Greek yoghurt and chosen sauce.

## CONCLUSION

There is no longer any excuse to pop by the take-away store. If you plan properly, you can have a delicious and nutritious meal in the time it would take to get to the store and wait for your food.

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