

PHOENIX
WELLNESS

HEALTH COACHING

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Week 4 Meal Prep Guide
30-Day No Excuses Challenge

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30-Day No Excuses Challenge

Meal Prep Guide – Week 4

This Meal Prep Guide highlights a healthy breakfast, two main meals, two side dishes and a snack/dessert recipe. The goal here is to start making healthier choices, little by little, without feeling overwhelmed. When you're overwhelmed, you may feel like the path to getting healthier is just too daunting, and you're more likely to fall back into old, bad habits. It's not always easy, but once you see and feel the benefits of consistently nourishing your body with healthy foods, it'll be easier to continue.

You already have the Meal Prep Guides for Weeks 1, 2, and 3. And now you have quite a few new recipes to choose from. If you liked something from Weeks 1, 2, or 3 and would like to prepare it again, do it. If you want to mix some of the recipes from this week and previous weeks, do it. The recipes have been tested and are ones that I find easy to prepare, delicious, and are easy enough to individually package and heat up.

One way to make sure you're ready for the hectic week that usually lies ahead is to prepare some meals ahead of time. It's easy enough to do, but it will require you to carve out an hour or two from your busy schedule. I can promise you that the benefits are worth it, though! Once you get into the habit of food prepping, you'll be lost if you skip a week. I know from personal experience that when I have healthy food ready to go, I eat better. When I haven't prepared for the week, I reach for the first thing that will only take a few minutes to heat up, and I typically overeat. Maybe you can relate...

Remember, this challenge is about ***not making any excuses***. When we make the time to exercise and eat well, we feel better. When we feel better, we're in a better mood, more positive, happier, and we're more patient with those around us. Plus, when we make goals and ***don't make excuses*** for letting them slip, we actually see results. And THAT is the ultimate motivator. So take this opportunity to create some new, healthy habits and to ***drop any excuses*** you once relied on as a reason why you're not getting the results you want. After all, **when you drop your excuses, you'll find results!**

How to use this guide:

- Choose one or two recipes (or all of them) that you'd like to try out – even having one thing prepped will save you time, and you'll have at least one healthy thing on hand for when you get hungry!
- Make sure you have all the ingredients.
- PLAN a time that you will prep the meals.
- Portion the foods in individual containers so that they're ready to grab and go. Even portioning snacks ahead of time helps you keep track of how much you're eating, as well as makes it easy to grab them when you're in a rush.
- If you don't like a particular ingredient, swap it out for something else. The recipes I use are very versatile so that you can make them to your liking. Ask if you need help with substitutions!
- Each week, decide which recipes you'll make before you go shopping. It saves on time and money when you know exactly what you need to get and have a plan of attack for the grocery store. You also won't waste money on perishable items that you probably won't use.
- If you have extra greens, freeze them! You won't waste them, and they'll be ready for the blender.

And now, what you've all been waiting for...a look at the new recipes!

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Breakfast

This is a super versatile breakfast, and boy, is it yummy! The first time I made it, I used guacamole, sliced tomato, and parsley. I also made another with fruit, cinnamon, and crushed nuts. (I would have put down a layer of nut butter, but I had finished it the night before. #thestruggleisreal) The “toast” can easily be made when doing your weekly food prepping and then put in the toaster oven for a couple of minutes to warm it up without it getting kinda soggy. And the sky is the limit when it comes to your creativity with toppings.

Note: This doesn't actually taste like toast. I know it seems weird that I'm saying that, but much like almond milk doesn't taste like cow's milk, I didn't want your brain to be thinking it was going to be exactly the same. It is a crispy, nutritious, and delicious way to deliver delicious condiments to your mouth, though.

Sweet Potato Toast (Adapted from the Paleo Paparazzi blog)

Ingredients:

- 1 medium-large sweet potato
- Salt and Pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. cooking fat for roasting

Toppings:

- Guacamole
- Salsa
- Pepper slices
- Proscuitto
- Avocado slices
- Tomato slices
- Smoked salmon
- Cucumber slices
- Sausage
- Bacon
- Fruit
- Nutbutter
- Cinnamon
- Honey



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Scrub (or peel) your sweet potatoes and slice them into ¼ in. slices. (A mandolin slicer helps to keep them uniform.)
2. Coat both sides of sweet potato with cooking fat and sprinkle lightly with salt and pepper.
3. Cook for 30 minutes (flipping after 15).
4. Then set the oven to broil and broil both sides for 1 minute. (Make sure to watch the “toast”...It will brown quickly, and if it does, remove those pieces from the baking sheet while the others broil.
5. Add toppings of your choice and enjoy!

Main Meal #1

I love everything Buffalo Chicken. I love the spiciness of it, and Frank's Hot Sauce has been my favorite since I was little. So it's really no surprise that when I saw this recipe, I knew I had to make it. The sweet potatoes give the stuffing an extra creaminess (so you don't have to use a lot of mayo) with just a touch of sweet that is offset by the chipotle and hot sauce heat. It's very filling and can go with any veggie or even some homemade French fries. Oh, and it was also approved by the entire family...even the kids! It heats up really well, too.

Note: The recipe doesn't really take that much time to make, but there is a little bit of prep. I put the chicken in the crock pot (no liquid – just chicken) for about two hours to cook because crock chicken shreds in about 10 seconds, and it stays moist. During that time, I put the sweet potatoes in the oven for an hour. That's just mindless time that you can be doing anything else. Also, I bet you could do this with regular baking potatoes if you're not into sweet potatoes, but you'd miss out on that simple, sweet taste.

Buffalo Chicken Twice Baked Sweet Potatoes (From the Fed and Fit blog)

Ingredients:

- 4 medium sweet potatoes
- 2 heaping cups shredded chicken (crockpot or rotisserie)
- 1 small yellow onion
- 2/3 c. diced celery (2-3 stalks)
- 2/3 c. shredded carrots (or matchstick carrots for easiness)
- 2 tsp. cooking fat
- 1/3 c. mayo
- 1-2 tsp. chipotle seasoning (or chili powder)
- 1/3 c. buffalo sauce (like Frank's)
- 1 tbsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. dried dill
- 1 tsp. smoked paprika
- ½ tsp. cayenne pepper
- salt and pepper, to taste
- Optional toppings: cubed avocado, fresh parsley, hot sauce, shredded cheese



Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Rinse the sweet potatoes and poke with a fork. Place on a parchment lined baking sheet and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until soft.
3. While sweet potatoes bake, heat a medium skillet over medium heat. Add cooking fat and let it get hot, about 30 seconds. Add celery and onion and cook, stirring occasionally. Add carrots and cook for another 5 minutes. Pour into a large bowl and set aside.
4. When the sweet potatoes are cooked, cut them in half lengthwise and scoop out most of the flesh, leaving a thin layer so the sweet potatoes maintain their shape. Add the insides to the onion, celery and carrot mixture.

5. In the bowl, add the shredded chicken, chipotle mayo, hot sauce and spices. Mix, stir and mash until well-combined. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. Scoop filling into the shells, evenly distributing. Add shredded cheese, if desired.
7. Turn the oven down to 350 degrees F, and bake for 20 more minutes. Top with toppings of choice, or eat as is!

Main Meal #2

It's that time of year when the crockpot becomes a staple in our house. With sports, other activities, homework, and work, it's convenient to have a meal that cooks all day and is magically done when it's time to eat. Plus, crockpot meals usually leave enough for leftovers, which is perfect for lunches the next day or dinner again. (You know, if you're too busy to make dinner the next day...you might know what I'm talking about.)

Crockpot Chicken Sloppy Joes (Adapted from "the Real Food RDs")

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 14 oz. can tomato sauce
- ¼ c. tomato paste
- 3 tbsp. yellow mustard
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 4 dates, finely chopped
- 1 c. shredded carrots (or matchstick carrots for ease)
- 1 tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- ½ tsp. sea salt
- ½ tsp. black pepper



Directions:

1. Place all ingredients in a slow cooker and stir.
2. Cover and cook on low for 4-6 hours.
3. Remove chicken from crockpot and shred.
4. Add chicken back to the crockpot and mix.
5. Keep on low until ready to eat.

Side Dish #1

Ok. So I'm not sure I've ever made potato salad, but it seems to go with so many meals. You can adjust how much you make, you don't have to be super particular about measuring the amount of ingredients you put in, and you'll most likely have leftovers (or not...I guess either way, it's a win). Anyway, this potato salad was delicious, and different enough from the usual potato salad I had growing up. (I actually ate it as a meal one day. Why not?)

Bacon Ranch Potato Salad (From the "Paleo Running Momma" blog)

Ingredients:

For the Ranch

- ½ c. mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. paprika (or smoked paprika)
- 2 tsp. dried chives
- ½ tsp. dried dill
- ¾ tsp. lemon juice
- ¼ c. salt

For the Potato Salad:

- 1 ½ pounds small, red potatoes, scrubbed
- 8 slices bacon
- 1 bunch scallions
- Ranch dressing, to taste



Directions:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Carefully add the potatoes, return to a boil and cook 15 minutes longer, until the potatoes can be pierced with a fork, but are not too mushy.
2. Drain the potatoes and chill them in the fridge.
3. While the potatoes cool, prepare the ranch by whisking all the ranch ingredients together and then put them in the fridge until ready to use.
4. If you haven't already, cook your bacon until crispy, drain and crumble.
5. Once potatoes are cooled, cut them into bite-sized pieces and toss with the crumbled bacon, scallions, and ranch.

Side Dish #2

This veggie packed salad is light and refreshing. It has a great caprese taste, and I was able to use squash, tomatoes, and basil from my garden. You can use zucchini in place of the squash, or you can mix it up and use both! If you don't have a spiralizer (I recommend one because they're so fun!), you can just slice up the squash. Easy Peasy.

Caprese Zucchini Salad (Taken from "Inspiralized" by Ali Mafucci)

Ingredients:

- 2 medium zucchini (or yellow squash), spiralized or sliced
- 1 c. cherry tomatoes, halved
- 12 small mozzarella balls, halved
- ½ c. thinly sliced basil leaves

For the Marinade:

- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 3 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 medium garlic clove, minced



Directions:

1. Place the zucchini and tomatoes in a large bowl.
2. Make the marinade. Pulse ingredients in a food processor until the garlic is smooth.
3. Pour the marinade over the zucchini noodles and tomatoes, and toss to combine. Place in the fridge to marinate for 10 minutes.
4. Add the mozzarella and basil to the zucchini mixture. Toss to combine and serve.

Snack

I found this recipe when looking for something to do with dates. Why? Because my son begged me to get him some of “nature’s candy” and I did. After the first bite, he didn’t like them. And so there I was, searching Google for something using dates that struck my fancy. And then these suckers popped up. People raved about them in the comments, and I thought it would be a good recipe to try. Heck yeah, it was.

Note: These are addicting. You may have to have a family member hide them from you...But then you may just get angry about it.

Oh, and you can use any other nut if you’re not digging walnuts or if you just don’t have them in the house.

Raw Brownie Bites (Taken from the Paleo Grubs blog)

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ c. walnuts
- Pinch of salt
- 1 c. dried, pitted dates
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/3 c. unsweetened cocoa powder

Optional finishing touches:

- Crushed walnuts (or any other nut)
- Shredded coconut
- A little sprinkle of sea salt



Directions:

1. Soak the dates in a bowl of warm water (This will make it easier to combine them with the other ingredients in the blender/food processor.)
2. Add walnuts and salt to a high-speed blender or food processor.
3. Add the dates, vanilla, and cocoa powder to the food processor. Mix well until everything is combined. Add water, a few drops. at a time, until the mixture sticks together.
4. Using a spatula, transfer the mixture to a bowl. Using your hands, form small, round balls, rolling in your palm. Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week.

