

PHOENIX
WELLNESS

HEALTH COACHING

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Week 4 Meal Prep Guide
6-Week Holiday Health Warrior Challenge

Phoenix Wellness

30-Day No Excuses Challenge

Meal Prep Guide – Week 4

Hi! And welcome to week 4 of the 6-Week Holiday Health Warrior Challenge. I'm so excited that you've decided to drop your excuses and take on this fitness and nutrition challenge. There are only 3 weeks left, and when it's over, hopefully you'll find that you'll continue along with the healthy habits you've created during this time. So, let's get to it! First, I'll explain how the Meal Prep Guides are set up, and then we'll get to the delicious recipes.

For each Meal Prep Guide, I'll highlight a healthy breakfast, two main meals, two side dishes, and a snack. 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.

Making healthier choices doesn't require throwing out all of the junk in your cupboards immediately (although you're certainly welcome to!). All it requires is making small changes. And before you know it, those small changes compounded on each other will add up to huge gains and health benefits. You'll have more energy, clearer skin, sleep better, and you'll most likely lose some weight.

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 (usually a processed something that is high in fat and calories because I'm so hungry and just want to eat NOW), and I typically overeat. Maybe you can relate...

Remember, this challenge is about ***sticking to your healthy routines during the holiday season***. 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 ***stay on track during the busiest time of year***.

How to use this Meal Prep 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. Write it in your calendar if you need to!
- 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 any substitutions!** (Really, I'm not just saying that. I'd love to help.)
- 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...the recipes!

- **Sweet Potato Kale Hash**
- **Quinoa Chicken Salad**
- **Slow Cooker Chipotle Chicken Soup**
- **Roasted Tomatoes and Garlic**
- **Sweet Potato Pomegranate Salad**
- **Healthy Caramelized Onion Dip**

Breakfast

This was a super easy and quick recipe to make, and it was totally approved by my husband (super bonus). As a matter of fact, he liked it so much that he ate it for dinner (and lunch) throughout the week. If you like a little extra protein, you can always cook an egg to go with it or put it on top.

**As for the balsamic, at first I was a little disappointed that I put it in. But after the flavors in the hash had time to marinate, it really added an extra depth of flavor. I wouldn't go crazy on it...maybe use 1 tbsp? You can always add more.

**Oh, and if you don't have or like chicken sausage, sub in other sausage or some ground meat (already cooked). Why not? Make it your own based on your and your family's likes.

Sweet Potato Kale Hash (Adapted from the "Fit Foodie Finds" blog)

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled
- 1 red pepper, finely diced
- ½ yellow onion, finely diced
- 4 chicken sausages, pre-cooked
- 4 cups kale, deboned
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar



Directions:

1. Place 1 tbsp. olive oil in a nonstick skillet and place over medium-high heat.
2. Prepare your sweet potato hash by grating your sweet potato with a cheese grater. (Or with the grating blade of your food processor.)
3. Add in sweet potato, onion, red pepper, and sliced chicken sausages to the skillet. Sauté for about 5-7 minutes or until onions become translucent.
4. Add in kale and sauté until kale has wilted and reached desired texture. Season with salt, pepper, and 2 tbsp. of balsamic vinegar.

Main Meal #1

This is a great protein-packed recipe with quinoa and chicken that you can use for lunch or dinner (or even breakfast if you're into that kind of thing like I am!). This makes quite a bit, so if you're the only one eating it, you may want to half the recipe. Except for the dressing. You can put it on anything as it's super tasty! Oh, and I usually use more veggies than is called for in any recipe...they're tasty and healthy, so why not?

Quinoa Chicken Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 cup quinoa, rinsed well
 - 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 - 2 garlic cloves, minced
 - 1/3 c. extra virgin olive oil
 - ¼ c. balsamic vinegar
 - Pinch of salt
 - Freshly ground black pepper
 - 1 large English cucumber, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
 - 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
 - 2/3 c. chopped flat-leaf parsley (I used a lot more than this.)
 - 1/2 c. chopped fresh mint (I used a lot more than this.)
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced (I used more than this.)
 - 1 cup or more of shredded chicken (I baked the chicken and then shredded it with a fork. In a pinch, you can use canned chicken.)



Directions:

1. Bring quinoa, 1 2/3 cups water to a boil in a medium saucepan over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until quinoa is tender, about 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
2. Meanwhile, whisk lemon juice, balsamic vinegar and garlic in a small bowl. Gradually whisk in olive oil. Season dressing to taste with salt and pepper.
3. Add cucumber (If you are not going to serve this salad immediately, I wouldn't put the cucumbers in as they tend to get slimy. I add them right before eating it.), tomatoes, herbs, and scallions to bowl with quinoa; toss to coat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add dressing right before serving. (I always leave the dressing on the side and add just a little with each bowlful and mix it up. The dressing goes a long way.).

Main Meal #2

Seeing as though the weather is getting cooler, I have been dying for some soup. Who doesn't like a hot bowl of delicious goodness on a cold winter's day? (Okay, it's still technically fall, but it feels like winter some days, so it counts.) Anyway, this is suuuuuuper easy to make, dairy- and gluten-free, and is absolutely delish. You can add in some of your favorite toppings to make it your own, as well. I really liked mine topped with some of my guacamole, some scallions and fresh parsley. I'm sure you could crush up some taco chips or cut up some tortillas and put them on top for a little something extra, too. Do it up your way.

**I used some extra broth and a little more coconut milk as I had some extra in the fridge.

**I also subbed the cumin for garlic powder. (My husband *hates* cumin with a passion and can taste it a mile away.)

****Coconut milk**...When you open a can of full-fat coconut milk, most likely there will be a hunk of the coconut cream at the top with coconut water at the bottom. You'll have to stir it to make it blend into a thick liquid. I usually break it up in the can with a knife and stir it. If there are still some chunks when you add it to the soup, that's ok. They'll dissolve in the heater liquid when you stir it.

Slow Cooker Chipotle Chicken Soup Recipe (Adapted from the "Paleo Hacks" blog)

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. boneless chicken breasts
- 6 cups chicken stock
- 1 medium onion
- 2 c. freshly diced tomatoes (or 1 can diced tomatoes)
- 1 can full-fat coconut milk
- 3 tbsp. chipole peppers in adobo sauce (SAUCE ONLY)
- 2 tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. smoked paprika
- 2 tsp. salt

Optional Toppings:

- Chopped parsley or cilantro
- Diced avocado
- Guacamole
- Lime wedges
- Crushed tortillas chips or Sliced corn tortillas
- Sliced scallions



Directions:

1. Turn slow-cooker to low heat setting and add chicken breasts, tomatoes, onion, chicken stock, chipotle sauce, cumin, smoked paprika, and salt. Cover and cook for 5-6 hours.
2. Remove chicken and shred with two forks. Add chicken back to slow cooker.
3. Stir in coconut milk. Cook an additional 20 minutes.
4. Ladle some soup into a bowl, top with your favorite toppings and serve!

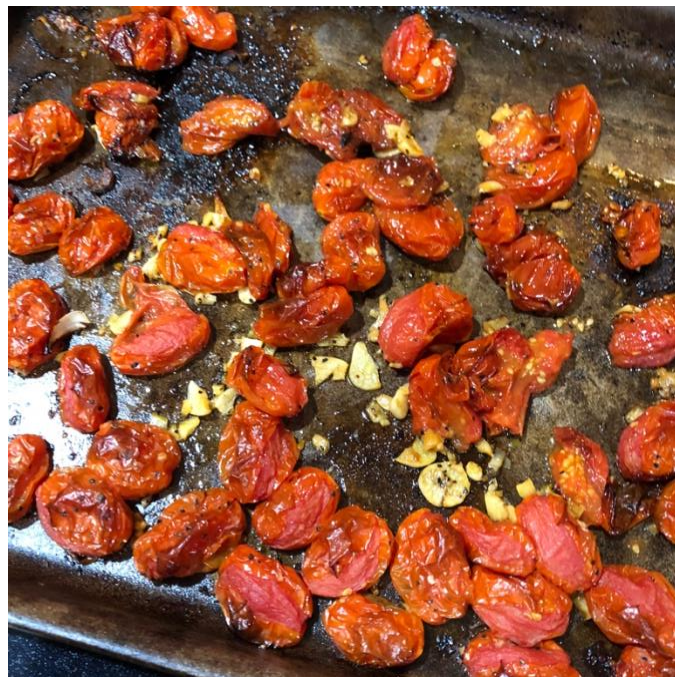
Side Dish #1

This is honestly the easiest dish using tomatoes I have ever made. If you like tomatoes, you'll love this. And it was so good that I would have eaten the entire thing myself in one sitting, but seeing as though garlic kind of stays with me for a few days, I figured I'd save the people around me from smelling a walking garlic clove. (Garlic is one of my favorites, so I don't really understand who wouldn't want to smell garlic all the time, but everyone has their own likes and dislikes, I guess.) Use this recipe with tomatoes from the store, or when summertime comes and you have grape tomatoes out your wazoo, you can quickly make this dish to use them up!

Roasted Tomatoes and Garlic

Ingredients:

- 4 pints grape tomatoes
- 5 cloves garlic, sliced ([tutorial on how to slice garlic here](#))
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste



Directions:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 450°F. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil.
2. Place the tomatoes and garlic in a bowl. Add in olive oil and mix until well-coated.
3. Sprinkle in the salt and pepper, to taste. Mix again until well-incorporated.
4. Place tomatoes and garlic on the prepared baking sheet. Roast for about 20 minutes, until tomato skins begin popping and browning.

Side Dish #2

This is a perfect salad for this time of year. It uses sweet potatoes and pomegranate, which is in season right now. I love the mix of the sweet flavors of the sweet potato and pomegranate with the savory flavor of the feta cheese. This salad can either be eaten hot or cold and reheats really well.

**Unless you're eating the salad right away, I'd keep the dressing on the side and add it as you eat the salad. That way, things won't get soggy.

Sweet Potato Pomegranate Salad (Adapted from the blog "Two Peas and Their Pod")

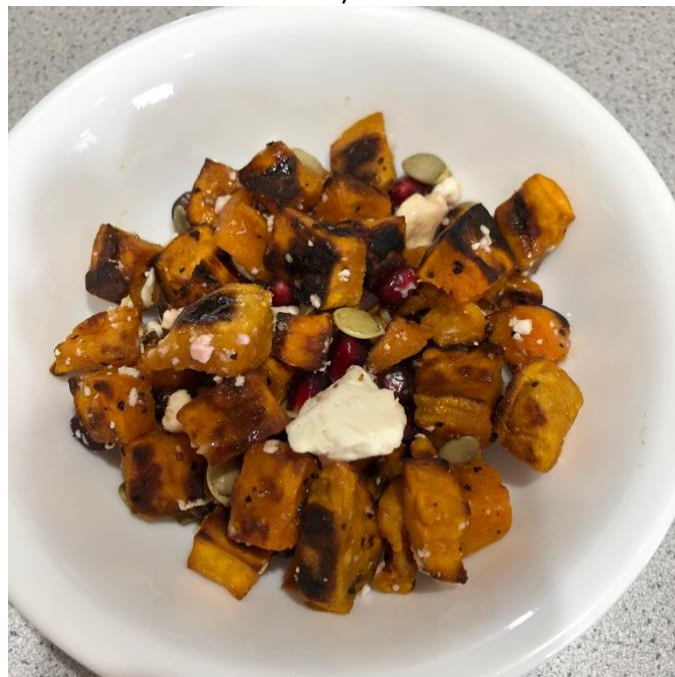
Ingredients

For the salad:

- 4 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 c. pomegranate arils (Video: [How to Cut Up Pomegranate](#))
- ½ c. pepitas (raw pumpkin seeds)
- ½ c. feta cheese

For dressing:

- 2 tbsp. pomegranate juice
- 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 tbsp. honey
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Place sweet potatoes in a large bowl and drizzle with olive oil. Toss until the sweet potatoes are coated. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Place sweet potatoes on 2 baking sheets and roast 20-30 minutes, stirring or flipping occasionally until browned and tender. Remove from oven.
3. Place sweet potatoes in a large bowl. Add in pomegranate arils, pepitas, and feta cheese.
4. In a small bowl, whisk pomegranate juice, red wine vinegar, honey, olive oil and salt and pepper.
5. Drizzle the dressing over the salad and toss to combine. Serve immediately.

Snack/Dessert

One day, I had a hankering for some French Onion Dip. So I did some research on how I could make a healthier version. This is it. And it is delish. It's not hard to make and would go well with crackers of your choice or some crudités. It's a great thing to bring to a holiday party. It's healthy, but doesn't look healthy so everyone will love it. ;)

**This recipe calls for thinly sliced onions. You can spiralizer them if you have a spiralizer, or you can thinly slice them with a knife. If you have a mandolin, that works great too for thin slices of the same thickness.

Caramelized Onion Dip (Taken from the "Fit Foodie Finds" blog)

Ingredients:

- 1 large red onion, spiralized with an "A" blade (Or slice the onion very thin)
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- Pepper, to taste
- 1 c. nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- ½ tsp. apple cider vinegar



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Place spiralized (or thinly sliced) onions in a large bowl.
2. Sprinkle in minced garlic, olive oil, and salt and pepper. Toss to evenly combine. Spread out evenly on a baking sheet.
3. Roast for 20-25 minutes, tossing with a spatula every 10 minutes to make sure the onions don't burn. Remove from the oven when the onions are translucent. (The onions will reduce in size quite a bit, and make sure to not overcook them. You don't want the onions crispy for this treat.)
4. Remove from oven and use a pair of kitchen shears to chop onions into strings.
5. In a separate bowl, mix Greek yogurt, lemon juice, and apple cider vinegar together. Stir in onions until well combined.
6. Serve with crackers of choice or crudités.