

Real Food for Less Money

Someone Else's Shoes

Working Full Time and Real Food

Menu Plan

Dinners

Sunday- Super Bowl! Appetizer Pimento Cheese on crackers
Frito Boats and Green Salad with Blue Cheese Dressing

Monday- Pinto Bean Plate

Tuesday- Taco Bowls

Wednesday- Crock Pot Chicken, Buttered Quinoa, Steamed broccoli and cauliflower

Thursday- Chicken Curry Casserole

Friday- Design a Crock Pot Dinner

Saturday- Smorgasbord! Last night's dinner, Roast Spread, Chicken Spread, Fermented Salmon, Pickled Eggs, Cheese Chunks and anything else pulled out of the fridge.

Breakfasts

Baked Oatmeal (early in week)

Sourdough Toast with Nut Butter

Yogurt Parfait

Fried Eggs

Breakfast cake (late in week)

I don't assign a day to breakfasts and lunches. You can if it helps you.

Lunches

Leftovers

Roast

Fermented Salmon

Pickled Eggs

Cheese

Carrot sticks, pickle spears, leftover salad, etc to round out meals

Snacks

Yogurt/Peanut Butter Dip with Apples and/or Carrots
Pickled Eggs
Fermented Salmon
Cheese Chunks
GORP (good ol' raisins and peanuts)

Preparation Plan/To Do List

Saturday PM

If making chips for your Frito boats, do that tonight to help you out for tomorrow. Store in an airtight container to maintain crispness.

Before bed, rinse and put pinto beans on to soak (I soak in the crock pot that I intend to cook in). Just plain water is fine for pintos. We'll be using these for three meals. For my family of 5 I start with 4 cups dry beans and have plenty (we are hearty eaters).

Feed your sourdough starter to get ready for bread making. Leave out if it is a starter that usually lives in the fridge

Take ground beef out of freezer for tomorrow's chili if needed, thaw in fridge.

Sunday AM

Rinse the soaking water off of the beans. Put the beans back in the crock pot and cover with broth or water. Turn on low and allow cooking all day until tender, usually 6-8 hours.

Make your yogurt. I do mine on the stove top. It takes very little hands on time but while it cools you can work on your bread and get your oats soaking. Put it in the cooler and leave it be until this evening or tomorrow AM.

Start your sourdough bread early so you can bake it in the evening. It will need plenty of time to rise.

Put oats on to soak for baked oatmeal

Sunday Midday – Pick a block of time that works for you allowing anywhere from 3-5 hours is usually reasonable

Prepare any items you need for the week. This week I need several basic items. I made mayonnaise and butter, pickled eggs, fermented salmon and fermented salsa. Usually, I do not need to make all of these items at the same time but it just worked out that way this week.

Mix up your Pimento Cheese. It only takes a minute and is good to let mix it then refrigerate so the flavors can blend.

Consider cutting up carrots or other veggies for lunches/snacks for at least the first few days of the week. Apples can also be cut up and if you sprinkle fresh lemon or orange juice on them they will not go brown. These little things can save a few minutes that you can use elsewhere.

Mix up yogurt/peanut butter dip (equal amounts of yogurt and peanut butter). Store in the fridge for quick snacks.

Dinner Prep

Your beans have been cooking all day and should be soft. Prepare your chili using only 1/3 of the beans. The remaining beans can be put in the refrigerator.

While the chili is cooking, mix up your salad dressing and prepare your greens. Then get your Frito Boat toppings ready.

Sunday PM

I use the time after dinner to finish things up. Mix up your baked oatmeal and get it in the pan. Your bread has had all day to rise and should be ready for the oven. Bake alongside the oatmeal.

Put your roast (lunches) in the crock pot and allow it to cook overnight.

Take a look at your menu plan and make sure there is nothing else that needs to be done for tomorrow.

Monday AM

Put rice on to soak. I make enough for two meals.

Take the roast out of the crock pot. Put hot roast in thermos for lunches. Cut rest of roast and put in container in the fridge. I let mine cool a little before putting it away- just don't forget and leave it on the counter.

Monday PM

Take ground beef and whole chicken out of the freezer to thaw. I put them on a cookie sheet and stick in the fridge.

Tuesday

You should be in good shape! Take a look at your standard supplies and see if you need anything. Would it help you if you cut up more veggie sticks or fruit? Maybe go ahead and cut the broccoli and cauliflower for tomorrow night's dinner if you have a little extra time.

Wednesday AM

Put chicken in crock pot. I season simply with salt and pepper and add about ½ cup of water. Plug in and turn on low (I hate to tell you how many time I have forgotten one of those two steps!).

Put quinoa on to soak. Use 1 Tablespoon of acid (whey, acv, lemon juice, etc) per cup of soaking water. I wanted extra quinoa so I started with 2 cups quinoa, 4 cups water, and 4 T whey.

Wednesday PM

Pick any remaining chicken off of the carcass. Depending on the size of your chicken there may be quite a bit of meat still. Use the leftover chicken, rice and vegetables for tomorrow night's dinner. If you have a larger chicken, you might have enough to add in to lunches also (I did!). You could make a super easy chicken salad just by adding a bit of your homemade mayo, salt, and pepper and maybe a little minced onion.

Put the chicken bones back in the crock pot and start a batch of broth.

How is your bread supply? If necessary, mix up a simple No-Knead Sourdough aka Bucket Bread or Minimal Knead Bread.

Thursday AM

Mix up the grains and liquid for Breakfast cake.

Thursday PM

If you mixed up bread last night, put it in to bake. If you do this when you first walk in the door, you could possibly even have fresh, hot bread with your dinner.

Thaw meat for Friday's Crock Pot Dinner; chop veggies and store in the fridge ready to add to crock pot in the AM. Decide on your liquid and spices. Decide what your base will be. Does it need to be soaked? Have everything ready to go for the AM.

Finish mixing up and bake breakfast cake (or muffins).

Friday AM

Assemble your crock pot meal. Just dump it all together. Plug in and turn on low. Do you need to soak the base for you crock pot dinner?

Saturday

I take Saturday off from most cooking duties! We usually have leftovers or quick to prepare meals that require zero prep on Saturdays.

Recipes

Find it on my blog realfoodforlessmoney.com

Frito Boats- <http://realfoodforlessmoney.com/frito-boats/>

Pimento Cheese- <http://realfoodforlessmoney.com/pimento-cheese/>

Blue Cheese Dressing- <http://realfoodforlessmoney.com/recipe-and-video-blue-cheese-salad-dressing/>

Minimal Knead Sourdough Bread- <http://realfoodforlessmoney.com/sourdough-sandwich-bread-variation/>

Breakfast Cake- <http://realfoodforlessmoney.com/design-a-muffin/>

On other blogs:

Fermented Fish- <http://www.sustainableeats.com/2010/04/01/lacto-fermented-fish/> or learn about this method in the GNOWFGLINS eCourse on Ferments

Mayonnaise- <http://gnowfglins.com/2010/04/02/lacto-fermented-mayonnaise/>

Basic Sourdough Bread- <http://gnowfglins.com/2009/09/10/spelt-sourdough-bread/>

Yogurt- <http://www.nourishingdays.com/2011/11/how-i-am-making-yogurt-right-now-the-cooler-method/>

No Knead Sourdough Bread- Learn about this in the GNOWFGLINS Sourdough eCourse (link on my blog in the side bar)

Crock Pot Roast

I like to make a roast to use for lunches. It makes a great sandwich item instead of buying lunch meat. We usually just eat ours in chunks (with sea salt sprinkled on) along with cheese chunks, carrot sticks and lacto-fermented pickles (I use Bubbies brand pickles). If you cook the roast overnight, you can take hot roast for lunch by putting it in a thermos.

Put roast in crock pot, season with salt and pepper. Add ¼ to ½ cup of water. Plug in and turn on low.

Pinto Bean Plate

Such an easy meal, it doesn't really need a recipe.

Heat up leftover pinto beans and season with salt, pepper, garlic, hot sauce whatever sounds good to you. I like to heat season simply and then add a little red wine vinegar to my plate at serving. Serve on a plate with buttered rice and green salad topped with your favorite dressing.

Taco Bowl

Here is another simple but delicious dish. I had this ready in less than 25 minutes.

Brown ½ to 1 pound of ground beef (or antelope, venison, elk, bison, etc), when brown season with salt, pepper, chili powder and cumin. Add ¼ cup of water and allow to cook for a minute or two. Then add 1-2 cups of leftover pinto beans. Let heat through. Grab your potato masher and mash up the beans a bit. This part is optional but makes a nice consistency.

While your meat is browning, you also want to heat up brown rice and prepare your toppers.

Toppers we like;

Sour Cream

Avocado

Shredded Cheese

Cilantro

Lacto-Fermented Salsa

Lettuce

When your rice is hot and your beef/bean mixture is done. Assemble. Put the rice in a bowl (or on a plate) top with meat mixture and then your desired toppings.

Crock Pot Chicken

Put chicken in crock pot, season with salt and pepper. Add ½ cup of water. Plug in and turn on low. Easy Peasy.

Buttered Quinoa

In the morning, put your quinoa on to soak. Use a ratio of 1 cup quinoa to 2 cups water. Add 1 Tablespoon acidic medium per cup of water (Apple Cider Vinegar, Whey, Kombucha, Kefir, etc). Cover and allow to soak at room temperature at least 7 hours. I usually just soak in the pan I plan to cook in.

Put your water and quinoa on the stove top. Bring to a boil and then cover and reduce to low. After soaking all day, it cooks fast. Mine is usually done in about 10 minutes. The water will be absorbed and the quinoa will be fluffy. Turn off the heat. Add 2 Tablespoons of butter per 1 cup of quinoa that you started with (1 cup dry = 2 T butter). Put the lid back on for 5 minutes to allow the butter to melt. Fluff with a fork and season with salt, pepper and powdered garlic (optional).

Chicken Curry Casserole

This turned out to be a super quick and easy dinner. I used chicken and broccoli cooked on Wednesday and rice cooked on Monday.

In the morning, I combined ½ cup flour with ½ cup water and 1 Tablespoon whey. This was covered and allowed to set at room temperature during the day.

Heat oven to 350 degrees. First step; make simple gravy. I took 2 cups of broth out of the crock pot (I started the broth on Wednesday night) and put in a pot. It came to a boil rather quickly since it was hot. While that was coming to temperature I mixed ½ cup of milk into the flour mixture that had been soaking all day and started shredding some cheese. The gravy came together just by whisking the flour/milk mixture into the boiling broth. I let it cook for a minute to thicken and seasoned with salt, pepper and powdered garlic. I turned off the heat and added about ½ a cup of sour cream and a good amount of curry powder (I'm guessing ¼ cup).

In a bowl, I mixed the reserved (chopped) chicken from last night, chopped broccoli and cauliflower and the rice until blended. Then poured the gravy mixture in and gave a good stir. More salt, pepper and about 1 cup of shredded cheese then it was ready for a buttered 9x13 pan.

Bake about 25 minutes and then top with more cheese. After 5 minutes the new cheese was hot and bubbly and it looked perfect. It was delicious!

Design a Crock Pot Dinner

I usually refer to this as “Dump Dinner” but my husband let me know that does not sound very appetizing. 😊 I call it this because I just dump everything together in the crock pot, turn it on and let it do its thing. We then serve it on a base of potatoes or grains and top it with all sorts of yummy things. The toppings really make this a special meal.

This dinner featured stew meat, tomatoes, onions, shredded cabbage, and Italian seasonings. We served it over Quinoa leftover from Wednesday night and topped with choices of clabber cheese, shredded cheese, sour cream, fresh basil or salsa.

I share the details of this method plus several others in my soon to be released eBook. You will love this eBook! It will offer you several wonderful ideas to help you save time in the kitchen while cutting your food costs plus reducing waste, increasing variety and even adding probiotic foods to you meals while designing simple and tasty dishes. And it will be a **FREE** gift when you sign up for my monthly newsletter.