

Quick Start Guide

Meal Prep & Batch Cooking

for vegans



What's your prep style?

- Do you need to eat a different meal every day, or are you content with less variety?
- Do you need a complete dinner ready to reheat on weeknights, or can you spend 15-30 minutes to pull things together?
- Is it important to you that all staples (plant milk, beans, seitan, snacks...) be made at home from scratch, or are you ok with commercial substitutes?
- Can you enjoy dinner leftovers for lunch, or do you prefer preparing a separate meal?
- Can you commit to a 3-hour prep session on the weekend, or would you rather spend more time in kitchen one or two evenings a week?
- How much space is there in your refrigerator and freezer?

A few common types

- The Harried Single* Cooks two big pots of soup or stew, along with cooked grains, for the week . Eats three nights this, two nights that. Brings Mason Jar salads or wraps to work for lunch.
- The Busy Foodie Couple* Prepares everything ahead for four complete meals per week, and enjoys leftovers for lunch.
- The Unprocessed Family* Cooks most staples from scratch on the weekend along with some key components, spends 20-30 minutes on weeknights to add a fresh element. Sometimes double-batches on weeknights and freezes the extra.

Ingredients for a successful prep session

- Time: Block 1-4 hours in your calendar every week or two, depending on your prep style, and skill level. It gets easier and faster, promise.
- If you have children who are too small to really help, try to get them out of the house.
- Meal plan: Make a detailed list of your upcoming meals, broken down by component (for example: pasta, sauce, topping, salad). Identify what components can be prepared ahead. Need inspiration? Download a template: <http://veganfamilykitchen.com/templates>.
- Groceries: Make sure you have all the necessary ingredients at hand... unless you are a pro at substitutions. Many prefer going to the store the day before to break down the work.
- Containers: It's not necessary, but matching containers can make it easier to fit everything in your fridge. Rectangular snap-top glass containers are great. If using Mason jars, fill well below the top to avoid breakage in the freezer. If using plastic, make sure the food is completely cold before storing.
- Kitchen buddy: If your kitchen size allows it, make it a prep party with one or two like-minded friends. Each one brings a recipe and the ingredients! Just make sure the knives are put away before you open that bottle of wine...
- Playlist or podcast: Pump up the tunes and the afternoon will breeze by!

Where to start

Don't bite more than you can chew!
Take the ONE next step that makes sense to YOU,
based on YOUR priorities.

Vowed to cut back on processed food?

- Cook your beans from scratch, they freeze great in 1 1/2 cup portions.
- Learn to make seitan.
- Make your own vegan cheesy spread.
- Blend your own almond, cashew, hemp or oat milk.
- Cook whole grains and freeze in dinner-size portions.
- Cook your own cheesy sauce.
- Bake muffins, energy balls, granola, and other snacks.

No time to cook dinner on weeknights?

- Roast veggies and eat on pasta, rice, salad, risotto, polenta...
- Prepare "dump dinner" bags that you can empty in the slow cooker in the morning, so you can come home to a tasty meal.
- Cook two big batches of hearty stew, chili, bolo sauce, and eat throughout the week.

Focus on nutrition?

- Prepare whole grains, protein-rich foods (beans, tofu, tempeh...), veggies (steaming is great!) and dark leafy greens. and mix healthy sauces, to
- pull out your own "dinner bowl bar" every night.

Make the most of your time

Start with a clean kitchen (really).

First, deal with the recipes that go in the oven...

followed by whatever needs to simmer the longest...

use the food processor to chop your veggies all at once...

and only rinse it between batches (only if necessary).

Finish by mixing those dressings, spice mixes or overnight oats.

Wash dishes as you go (or enroll a helper).



YOU'LL ROCK THIS!

Start small.

Set goals that suit you.

Celebrate early, celebrate often.

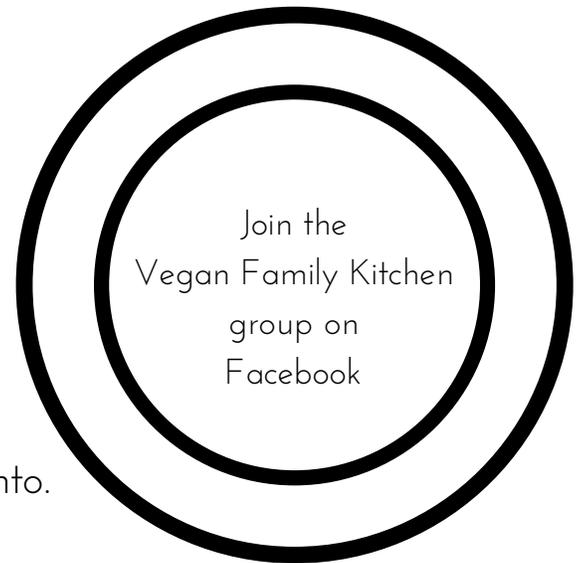
Share your joys and pains with others.

Keep moving forward.

It's true for every new skill we need to learn.

And for every old habit we need to get back into.

You too can fill your fridge with **really good** food.



Inspire others:

**Share your results on Facebook and Instagram
using #veganbatchcookingchallenge**



Brigitte Gemme is Chief Meal Planner and Kitchen Boss at the Vegan Family Kitchen. Her greatest joy is to help home cooks feed their families more yummy, nutritious vegan meals made at home, (mostly) from scratch.

Download your free 2-week meal plan:
veganfamilykitchen.com/meal-plans

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