

4-3-2-1 MEALS PREPARTION GUIDE

Learn how to make 4 dinners
and 3 lunches for 2 people
and only 1 base recipe.
Meal prepping has
never been easier.



Common Threads
COOKING FOR LIFE

OUR MISSION

Common Threads is a national nonprofit that provides children and families cooking and nutrition education to encourage healthy habits that contribute to wellness. We equip under-resourced communities with information to make affordable, nutritious and appealing food choices wherever they live, work, learn, and play. We know that food is rooted in culture and tradition so we promote diversity in our lessons and recipes, encouraging our participants to celebrate the world around them.

Here at Common Threads ...

we believe cooking is a life skill. Through our hands-on cooking programs and nutrition education, Common Threads provides a preventative health program solution in schools to children, families, and teachers.

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THE MENU

Batch cooking and meal planning are important tools to help you plan healthy meals while saving time and money. Our 4-3-2-1 Guide provides batch cooking recommendations, healthy recipes, grocery lists, and meal planning tips to make it as easy as 1-2-3-4!

1

Preparation Day

Batch cooking roasted chicken, brown rice and add a salad to serve as our base for each meal

2

Meal 1: Thai Cuisine

Quick Thai Curry -brown rice topped with curried chicken, carrot, bell pepper, and zucchini; topped with lime juice, cucumber slices, and fresh basil.

3

Meal 2: Mexican Cuisine

Burrito Bowls - a bowl of brown rice and sauteed spinach topped with chicken sauteed in taco seasoning, jalapeno, salsa, black beans, red onion, and bell pepper.

4

Meal 3: Chinese Cuisine

Fried Rice - sauteed brown rice & chicken, with carrot, bell pepper, and greens flavored with soy sauce and curry paste.

5

Leftover Day

Enjoy a new recipe using remaining ingredients!



GROCERY LIST

Produce

1 bunch celery
6 C spinach
3 bell peppers
1 red onion
1 jalapeno
6 cloves garlic
1 lime
1 zucchini
1 bag carrots
1 cucumber
1 bunch fresh basil

Meat & Dairy

8 boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 dozen egg

Dry Goods

3 C brown rice
1 can spray oil
Salt and pepper
1 small container olive oil
1- 15 oz. can black beans
1 small jar salsa
1 package taco seasoning
1 jar red curry paste
1- 13.5 oz can coconut milk
1 small bottle soy sauce



PREPARATION DAY

Cooking in batches is a efficient way to make a large quantity of food at once for use in different meals. This menu uses chicken and rice as base ingredients scaled to used in multiple recipes. We have outlined three recipes to have handy to explore different cuisines and add new flavors to your batch cooked base recipe. This is key to not becoming bored of your food!

Brown Rice Base

8 cups rice base

Ingredients

- 3 C brown rice
- 3 stalks celery, diced
- 6 C water
- 2 T salt

Directions

1. Combine ingredients in large pot.
2. Bring to a simmer, cover, and simmer for 40 minutes.
3. Remove from heat and let stand covered for 10-20 minutes.



Roasted Chicken Breasts

8 pieces roasted chicken

Ingredients

- 8 boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut lengthwise in half
- 1 can spray oil
- Salt and pepper

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F
2. Place halved chicken on lined and greased baking tray. Lightly spray chicken with cooking oil. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Bake for 25 minutes or until cooked through..



Once you've prepared the rice and chicken in bulk. Enjoy this simple meal!

- 1. Serve a roasted chicken breast with the brown rice base.**
- 2. Lightly toss the greens in a vinaigrette as a side salad.**

MEAL 1: QUICK THAI CURRY

Ingredients

- 3 cups brown rice base
- 2 C greens (eg. Spinach, kale)
- 1 zucchini, diced
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 bell pepper, sliced
- 2 pieces roasted chicken, diced
- 1/4 C carrot, sliced
- 1 1/2 T red curry paste
- 12 oz. coconut milk
- 1/2 lime, juiced
- 1/2 cucumber, sliced
- 1 bunch fresh basil, sliced (optional)



Directions

1. Add 1/2 T olive oil, heat for 10-20 seconds. Add brown rice base and heat thoroughly and lightly toss in the greens at the end to wilt. Remove from heat and transfer to four serving bowls.
2. Clean out the pan and add 1/2 T olive oil. Add the diced zucchini and lightly sauté. Add the minced garlic, sliced bell pepper, diced chicken, and sliced carrot. Sauté for 1-2 minutes more. Mix in the curry paste.
3. Add the coconut milk and bring to a simmer. Simmer for 5-10 minutes.
4. Top each rice bowl with curry, squeeze of lime, sliced cucumber, and fresh basil (if using).

MEAL 2: BURRITO BOWL

Ingredients

- 2 T olive oil, divided
- 2 C cooked brown rice base
- 2 C greens (eg. spinach, kale), chopped
- 1 bell pepper, sliced
- 1/4 red onion, sliced
- 14 oz. can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1/2 C jarred salsa, divided
- 1/4 jalapeno, minced
- 2 pieces roasted chicken, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 t taco seasoning (optional)
- 1/4 lime, juiced
- Salt and pepper, to taste)



Directions

1. Heat a large sauté pan over medium heat.
2. Add 1/2 T olive oil, heat for 10-20 seconds. Add brown rice base and heat thoroughly and lightly toss in the greens at the end to wilt. Remove from heat and transfer to four serving bowls.
3. Clean out the sauté pan. Heat again over medium heat and add 1/2 T olive oil. Add the sliced onions and bell pepper and cook until lightly caramelized. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and top the serving bowls.
4. Using the same pan, add 1/2 T olive oil. Add the drained and rinsed beans, minced jalapeno, and 1/4 C salsa. Cook until heated through, adding 1 T of water as need to reduce sticking. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and top serving bowls.
5. Using the same pan, add 1/2 T olive oil. Add the diced chicken, minced garlic, and 1 t taco seasoning (optional). Cook until heated through, adding 1 T of water as need to reduce sticking. Remove from heat and top serving bowls.
6. Top each serving bowl with remaining salsa and a squeeze of lime.

MEAL 3: FRIED RICE

Ingredients

- 1 T olive oil
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 carrot, julienned
- 2 C brown rice base
- 2 pieces chicken breasts, diced
- 1 egg (optional)
- 1 1/2 T soy sauce
- 1 t red curry paste
- 2 C greens (eg. Spinach, kale)
- Salt and pepper, to taste



Directions

1. Heat olive oil over medium heat in a large sauté pan. Add diced bell pepper, minced garlic, and julienned carrot. Sauté until fragrant.
2. Add the brown rice and diced chicken. Cook until heated through.
3. Clear space in the center of the sauté pan by moving ingredients to the perimeter of the pan. Add 1/2 t olive oil into the cleared space and quickly crack the egg and scramble. Mix scrambled egg into the mixture.
4. Add the soy sauce, curry paste, and greens. Mix until the greens are wilted. Season to taste.

LEFTOVER DAY

Now that you have made a series of different recipes using a base recipes- its time to use up all the rest of your leftovers! Check out our recoipe suggestions that utilize leftover ingredients below. Note: These recipes may require additional ingredients not included in the 4-3-2-1 Guide grocery list.

RECIPE SUGGESTIONS:



MEAL PLANNER

When planning meals, remember to fill your half of your plate with colorful fruits and vegetables, a quarter lean protein, and a quarter whole grains. Consider versatile and shelf stable pantry staples that can be purchased in bulk, stored safely such as grains, pastas, oats, rice, nuts, seeds, canned beans, vegetables, and fruits. Focus on a base recipe that can be used as the foundation of many meals. Try our meal planner template below and visit www.commonbytes.org for recipe inspiration,

MONDAY	TUESDAY	GROCERY LIST
<i>Dinner: Baked Chicken with Brown Rice: Side Salad</i>	<i>Dinner: Quick Thai Curry</i>	
WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	
<i>Dinner: Burrito Bowl</i>	<i>Dinner: Fried Rice</i>	
FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
<i>Dinner: Chicken & Rice with Salsa</i>		
SUNDAY	NOTES	