

Starch Solution Meal Prep

Any great meal prep starts with a plan. Yes, you need to plan, plan what you're going to eat, how make it, what you need to buy to make your delicious creations. Benjamin Franklin once said "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail." That is way planning is your first step.

Taking a few minutes, to collect your thoughts and think about what you want to eat this week, what you have on hand and what you need you will save yourself money and a ton of time. Which is what all want!!

Step 1

Let's make a quick list of what we have on hand. That's right, go to your cupboards, fridge and freezer and make a list of what you have on hand. Start here first. Why is this important? You want to use what you have, why buy more ingredients if you have items that can be used. I have a master list including all my staples, can goods, freezer items, condiments and spices. It make take some time to put this list together but once this list is done it will be infallible to you.

Step 2

Whether you're following The Starch Solution or the Maximum Weight Loss, you'll need to pick you starch whether for your dish, plate, or week. If your doing the 50/50 plate, your going to pick your starch

Starches will include, whole grains, legumes, starchy vegetables, barely, rice, bulgur, corn, farro, millet, oats, rye, spelt- breads, tortillas, quinoa, flat breads, pasta, couscous and whole grains cereals.

If you are on the Maximum Weight Loss you will be avoiding the processed foods like bread, pastas.

Ok your first decision is done, what are your starches going to be this week? What do you have in the cupboard? Rice, potatoes, corn or a mixture.

Step 3

Let's pick on non starchy vegetables. What do we have in the fridge, lettuce, carrots, celery, cans of veggies, frozen veggies?? They all count. Do we have some can sauces? Canned tomatoes, tomato sauce.

Non-starchy veggies include Green, Yellow and Orange-
Boy chow, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, chives, collard greens, eggplant, garlic, green beans, herbs, kale, leeks, lettuce, mustard greens, okra, onions, peppers, radishes, nopales, spinach and squash, turnip, parsnip.

To keep it easy for the week you want to batch cook a large amount of your starch so when your hungry you have something to eat. I usually have a quinoa and potatoes cooked and ready to go. I can make some fries in the air fryer or have a grain bowl with the quinoa and some of the other vegetables I'm cooked. I suggest cooking a couple of starches and a couple of non starchy

vegetables unless you're using frozen vegetables during the week. This way you can mix and match and you're not eating the same thing over and over again. Unless you like that. I like to change the flavors up and I can use the same vegetables but change the flavor profile and it changes everything. Make wraps, tacos, grain bowls or just a plan 50/50 plate.

Fruit- Apples, apricots, bananas, berries, cherries, figs, grapefruit, mangos, melons, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, persimmons, pineapples, plums, tangerines, watermelon.

Let's start with breakfast

One the the easiest breakfast is Oatmeal, whether it's cooked or overnight oatmeal, or steel cut. Oatmeal will fill you up and stick with you all morning.

Basic Cooked Oatmeal

1 cup old fashion oats
1 cup plant based milk
1 cup water
Pinch salt
1 tsp cinnamon
1 tbsp ground flax seed (omit if doing Maximum Weight Loss)
1/3 cooked rice cauliflower

Add ons include chopped apples, pears or other fruit, even adding shredded zucchini or carrot is great for extra nutrients and flavor. Then add spices to go with those flavors. I know you're thinking, is she crazy to put cauliflower in her oatmeal. Hear me out. It's not much and I promise you don't taste it. But it does bulk it up and you're getting your veggies in.

In a sauce pan, add the plant base milk and water(feel free to just use water) bring to a boil, add the oats and flax if using. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the oats are soft and have absorbed most of the liquid, approximately 5 minutes. Remove from the heat, add the cinnamon and cover and let stand for 2-3 minutes.

You can also add 2 tsp of cocoa powder to make chocolate oats, add chopped apple /pear with the milk/water to soften. Top with your favorite fruit and toppings. Nut butter, cocoa nibs, tbsp of chop nuts.

Basic Overnight Oats

1/2 cup rolled oats(not steel cut or quick oats)
3/4 cup unsweetened plant based milk
1 tbsp chia seeds
1 tsp cinnamon or favorite spice
1 tbsp maple syrup or agave,

Take a mason jar or other air tight container and mix all ingredients well and let sit in the fridge over night.

Add ins- 2 tps cocoa powder, dried fruit, zest of lemon or lime, fresh fruit, nuts, nut butter, cocoa nibs. Hint, think of you favorite dessert and you can make it into an over night oatmeal. Lemon Blueberry, Strawberry Shortcake, Pina Colada, Key Lime, Black Forest- Your imagination is your only limitation!!!

Batch Cooking

So a staple in any Starch Solution kitchen is potatoes unless you are allergic to them. There are so many ways to cook your potatoes and just as many potatoes to cook. I like to start off simple and then expand your horizons with new and different ones. Let's start with the basics, there are three types of potatoes, starchy, waxy and all purpose. Starchy potatoes would be russet, sweet potato, which are great for baking, fries, chips or hash browns.

Waxy potatoes include new potatoes, fingerlings, baby potatoes, creamers and red bliss. They keep their shape so they are best for casseroles, roasting, soups or potato salad.

Then we have the All Purpose potatoes, here are the Yukon Gold, Peruvian Blue or Superior Potatoes. They fall between waxy and starchy, they have more moisture then a starchy potato but still keeps it shape. These potatoes are great for roasting, panfrying, stewing and gratins.

I usually like to precook my potatoes in my instant pot only because it's easier. I just wash a bunch of russets and Yukon gold and cook for 20 mins. Let is naturally release for 10 minutes and then allow to cool and keep refrigerated until you want them. Then you are ready to go, whether you want fries, wedges, mashed, potato salad etc. Your potatoes are cook so you are half way there.

Quick and Easy Potato Salad

Yukon Gold potatoes, cooked
Dill pickle juice
Chopped dill pickles
Celery, diced

Onion, diced
Mustard, yellow, dijon, sweet and spicy
1 tsp dry dill or fresh dill
Salt and pepper

Cook potatoes and while they are still warm, chop into bite size pieces. In a separate bowl mix the dill pickle juice with the mustard, dry dill and salt and pepper to taste, toss with the warm potatoes.

Quick and Easy Mash Potatoes

Cooked potatoes
Plant based milk
1 tsp granulated garlic
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tbsp nutritional yeast(optional)

Cook your potatoes until fork tender, either in a pressure cooker, or stove top. Drain, using hand mixer, blend the potatoes or use potato masher and mash potatoes and add splash of milk at a time until light and fluffy to your preferred consistency.

Easy Quinoa

1 cup white quinoa, rinsed
2 cups water

If you have regular quinoa, rinse it before cooking. I get mine at Costco and it doesn't need to be pre rinsed.

In a pot bring water to a boil, add your quinoa and bring back to boil, reduce heat, cover and lower heat to simmer and cook for 15 minutes or until the water has cooked off and absorbed. Remove from heat, let stand for 5 minutes then fluffy with fork. You can use your quinoa for sweet or savory, breakfast, lunch or supper.

The next step in Meal prepping with the Starch Solution is to pick your Non Starchy vegetables. What do you feel like this week? Here are a few go to?

Big Salad

Prepping your salad takes all the excuses and it makes it so easy to get all your greens in and have your 50/50 plate anytime. There are several ways to keep your salad fresh for several days.

1. Put a cloth or paper towel in the bottom of your container.
2. Clean your greens and dry them very well, wet greens will wilt and go bad quickly.
3. Use harder vegetables like kale, cabbage and Swiss chard.
4. Leave the dressing on the side, the dressing will make the salad wilt and spoil quickly, unless it's a Kale like salad that will last for several days in the fridge.
5. Prep different component like greens, proteins, grains, beans, vegetables both cooked and raw and then you can mix and match and change up the dressing.
6. Make your own dressings. It's easy, economical and you'll know what your eating and you can make it to your liking

Base-

Greens- Lettuce, Iceberg, Romaine, Butter, Leaf, Endive, Frisee, Radicchio

Grains- Rice, Quinoa, Farro, Barley, Bulgur or Millet

Next Layer- Add your veggies- this could be anything from tomatoes, cucumber, carrots, radishes, onions, bell peppers, celery, mushrooms, broccoli and cauliflower. Whatever you are in the mood for.

Now you can add extra protein layer - You can add beans, lentils, tofu or tempeh. Don't forget the nuts and seeds they add extra crunch and protein to your salad. You can also add nutritional yeast or a vegan cheese if you like.

Always remember Color!! Add the rainbow of colors to your salad.

Now to finish your salad add your dressing.

Here are a few of my favorite dressing that are oil free and delicious

LEMON GARLIC DRESSING

1/2 Lemon(juiced)
1-2 clove garlic minced
2-3 tbsp of nutritional yeast
1 tbsp ground flax seed
2 tsp white miso
2-3 tbsp water
Fresh ground pepper

Mix all ingredients together in a bowl until smooth.

Test and adjust seasoning to your liking

Peanut Lime Miso Dressing

1/2 Lime (juiced)
1-2 tbsp water
2 tbsp powdered peanut butter
2 tsp white miso
1 tsp sriracha less if you don't like it hot
1 tsp maple syrup
Red pepper flakes

Mix all ingredients together in a mason jar and shake until combined.
Adjust seasoning as you like

Vegan Ranch Dressing with Nuts

1/2 cup raw cashews, soaked
1 cup plain unsweetened soy milk
2 tbsp white vinegar
3/4 tsp salt or to taste
1/2 tsp garlic powder
1/4 tsp onion powder
1 tsp dried parsley
1/4 tsp dried dill

Blend all ingredients except for the parsley and dill in a blender until smooth and creamy. Gently add the parsley and dill.

Fresh herbs are also wonderful in this! If you have them use them

Smoky Sweet Mustard Dressing

2 Tbsp mustard
2 tbsp water
1 tsp smoked paprika
1 tsp maple syrup
Fresh ground pepper to taste

Mix all ingredients together, adjust to your preference.

Vegan Mayo- Oil Free

12 oz container silken tofu
1-2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp cane sugar
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp white pepper

Make sure you are using shelf stable tofu in the tetra box. This does make a difference. It won't have the same taste if you use tofu that you find in the refrigerator case. Drain the tofu in the strainer or nut milk bag.

Add the tofu and remaining ingredients to the food processor and process for a minute or two until smooth. Chill. This can be used to make Ranch dressing, or any place you would use mayo.

Main Dishes

Here are some of my favorite recipes. They are great for families or couples. They will give you leftovers for lunches or another meal so you're cooking once and eating twice, sometime three times.

Vegan Sheppard's Pie

Ingredients

8 large white/yellow potatoes or sweet potatoes
1/2 cup plant base milk
Salt and pepper to taste
1 large white onion
2 cloves garlic
4 cups cooked lentils (1 cup dried lentils)
8 oz cremini mushrooms or button mushrooms, sliced
2 tbsp reduced sodium soy sauce or tamari, or liquid aminos
1 tbsp thyme
1 tbsp summer savory or regular savory
1 cup vegetable broth
3 tbsp cornstarch or arrowroot
3 tbsp water or enough to make slurry
1 1/2 cup of baby spinach
1 10 oz package of frozen corn or 1 can of creamed corn if you preferred

1. Peel and dice the potatoes. Place in a large pot and cover with enough water to cover the potatoes. If using sweet potatoes. I prefer to bake them as it makes them sweeter. But you can cook them either way. Bring to a boil, then put cover on and simmer for 20 minutes until tender. Drain and mash with plant based milk, salt and pepper to taste.

2. If using dried lentils, sort and rinse, add 1 cup of dried lentils into the pot with 3 cups of water and cook until tender, about 30 minutes. You can also cook in your pressure cooker. Follow your directions for your pressure cooker.
3. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F.
4. While the potatoes are cooking, heat water in a medium skillet or pan. Add the onions and cook until nearly translucent. Add the garlic and mushrooms and continue to sauté until the onions are golden.
5. Add the cooked lentils, vegetable broth, bring to boil. Add soy sauce, spices and salt and pepper. Cook 5 minutes. Combine the cornstarch with the water to make a slurry to dissolve the cornstarch. Stir into the lentil mixture. Stir until it thickens the lentil mixture.
6. Add the spinach, a little at a time, cooking until it is wilted down. Remove from heat and taste and adjust seasoning to your liking.
7. Pour lentil mixture into a casserole dish. Then cover with the cooked corn or creamed corn. Spread the mashed potatoes over the top and bake in the oven for 20 minutes until the potato topping is lightly brown. Remove from the oven and let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Cauliflower and Pea Curry

Ingredients

Water for sautéing

1/2 white onion, chopped

4 clove garlic, minced

2 tbsp ginger, minced or grated

1 small jalapeño or Serrano pepper finely chopped

3-4 tbsp red or yellow curry paste (I use Maesri, but use your favorite)

1 can coconut milk, lite or full fat

1 tsp turmeric

1 tbsp agave or maple syrup

2 tbsp coconut aminos, tamari or soy sauce

Cauliflower chopped into bite size pieces

1 cup frozen peas or any other vegetables, carrots, zucchini

1 can chickpeas

Cilantro

In a large pot or rimmed skillet heat over medium heat. Once hot, add water, onion, garlic, ginger, and jalapeño pepper. Sauté for 2-3 minutes, stirring frequently and adding more water if needed. Add 2 tbsp of curry paste to start and stir. Cook for two minutes. Add coconut milk, turmeric, agave, coconut aminos, the remaining curry paste and stir. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Once simmering, add cauliflower and reduce heat. You just want it to simmer not boil. Allow to cook for 10-15 minutes until cauliflower is tender.

Add the chickpeas and frozen peas and lower the heat to minimum and cover to allow the peas and chickpeas to heat through. Stir in cilantro and serve over rice, quinoa or even potatoes!

Instant Pot Quinoa Chili

Ingredients

- 1 package of Trader Joe's Meatless Beef or Beef Crumbles or Omit
- 1 cup of quinoa
- 1 large onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 28 oz can Fire Roasted Dice Tomatoes or regular Dice Tomato
- 1 8 oz can of tomato sauce
- 1 can red kidney beans
- 1 can black beans
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- 1 1/2 tbsp chili powder
- 1 1/2 tbsp cumin
- 2 tbsp smoked paprika
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1-2 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes

1. Turn pressure cooker to sauté function, once hot add several tablespoons of water for sautéing. Add onions and green peppers and allow to soften. Add garlic and continue to cook another minute or two.
 2. Add the remaining ingredients to the pressure cooker. Seal and set on manual to cook for 10 minutes. Once the 10 minutes is done, allow to naturally release for 10 minutes.
 3. Stir and taste at this point and adjust your seasoning to your taste. I like to add more black pepper. Remove the bay leaves.
 4. Serve with cilantro, avocados, fresh jalapeños, vegan sour cream, squeeze of lime.
- Tip- If you don't have Trader's Joe beetles crumbles, use any other frozen or fresh replacement including TVP (texture Vegetable Protein)

Always remember to have a plan A, B or even C. Always have something in your bag, just in case you get hungry. Only one person is going to take care of you that way you need to be taken care of and that's You! If you have a plan you will success. If you don't have a plan you can still success you're just making it harder on yourself. Trust me. Set aside 1-2 hours on Sunday. Figure out what you want to eat. Shop and prep. It takes some getting use to but once you do, you will wonder how you ever lived without it. Your weeks will run smoother, why? Because you are not asking 3 times a day, hey what I'm I eating at lunch? Supper? Breakfast? It's done.