



***"Quick & Easy Secrets to
Eating Better and Saving
Time, That You Can Do Too!"***

By Chef Renee Michelle Gordon &
Chef Jim Connolly

www.ceochef.com

Copyright © 2014 by Jim Connolly & Renee Gordon

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without the express written consent of the authors.

Warning - Disclaimer

The purpose of this book is to educate and entertain. The author and publisher does not guarantee that anyone following the ideas, tips, suggestions, techniques or strategies will become successful. The author and publisher shall have neither liability or responsibility to anyone with respect to any loss or damage caused, or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly by the information contained in this book

Table of Contents

Introduction:	4
About Our Authors:	6
Mindset of a Chef	7
Mind-Set of a Smart Shopper:	8
Mind-Set of a Nutritionist:	9
How to Set-up Your Kitchen, from Spices to Saute Pan	10
Menu “Mind Tickler” Planning Tool	17
<i>How to Use This Tool:</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Batch Cooking:</i>	<i>17</i>
Time Temperature Danger Zone	18
How to Maximize Your Usage of “Tickler” Ideas:	19
<i>Food Amounts:</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Procedure:</i>	<i>20</i>
Cooking Methods Glossary	26
<i>Dry Cooking Methods:</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Moist Cooking Methods:</i>	<i>26</i>
Explanation of the Last Weeks Menu:	30
<i>More Menu Ideas:</i>	<i>30</i>

Introduction:

We are just like you, when we come home from a long day, the last thing that we want to do is cook dinner, and we're both trained professional chefs!

So we can only imagine what the typical family goes through in their head when one spouse or significant other says to the other, "whadoyawannaeat?"

I'm sorry, didn't you understand that phrase? The question was, "***What do you want to Eat!***" (I don't know about you, but I always hear this as one muffled word, "whadoyawannaeat!")

Of course the answer that everyone replies is (everyone, you can answer in unison!), "I don't know, what do you want to eat?"

Of course this banter continues 3 or 4 times until someone finally gives in and says, "I don't know, how about Chinese take-out or pizza delivery?"

Then it's finally over and the great "give-in" begins. It starts with one night a week of take-out, then two, then frozen dinners in between until you find yourself at the Doctors office after your blood test to hear that your cholesterol has shot through the roof, you've gained another 10 pounds of fat and you may be on the way to type 2 diabetes! All because of one question, "What do you want to Eat!" was not answer properly!

Well, "***Quick & Easy Secrets to Eating Better and Saving Time, That You Can Do Too!***", is here to help you manage your time and resources so you can enjoy home prepared foods at a fraction of going out that is health friendly and tasty too!

Because we have the same challenge that you have, we needed a solution just like you. Our advantage was that we are professionally trained chefs who are trained to solve challenges just like this. So we came up with this simple solution that we put into this book to help you eat better and enjoy the process.

We divided the content in this book into three main empowering thoughts.

The first thought is to be in the mindset of a chef. If you learn the characteristics that drive a chef to create and cook, that would be very helpful to creating and cooking for you and your own family.

The second thought is set-up your home kitchen to suit your needs best. This would make daily food preparation easier because your kitchen is organized to work for your needs including having a basic inventory of essential ingredients on hand (no more running to the store for a cup of sugar!)

And the third thought is plan your meals in advance. Embrace the idea of planning your meals for the week and use the leverage of "batch cooking" to have foods ready to eat in under 15 minutes!

Now forgive yourself. Go ahead. Forgive yourself for not being able to sufficiently supply you and your family the right type of food and put that feeling in the past. Now schedule a day to read and apply these new strategies so you can enjoy the best tasting, wholesome meals with those that you love!

About Our Authors:

With nearly a combined 41 years of professional teaching, cooking, wine and food experience between this culinary duo of Chef Renee Michelle & Jim Connolly. They continually strive to empower people to enjoy food and dining through practical and entertaining ways that they call “edutainment!”



Chef Renee Michelle was professionally trained at the world renowned cooking school Le Cordon Bleu in Paris, France. She worked at many fine establishments in Europe, most notably at the Marbella Club in Marbella, Spain, where she stretched her culinary knowledge and experience.

Chef Renee returned to the U.S. and further honed her craft by joining up with Wolfgang Puck which led Chef Renee to founding Ambrosia Gourmet Catering of Beverly Hills where she dazed clients with her unique brand of gourmet foods.

She continues her culinary career as a celebrity chef making appearances, conducting cooking classes and writing.

Renee is also president of CEO Chef, a culinary team building company where she works with clients to help their employees maximize their work potential as a team.

Renee Michelle has also founded a relationship building company call “Luv At Last” that helps couples find each other and stay with each other passionately through Renee’s

helpful, practical lifestyle tips.

Currently she is completing her course and book of the same name, “90 Days to the Love of Your Life”, helping people, who had love and lost, find the love of their life through a step by step, insightful process.

For more information on Renee Michelle’s Love Coaching, visit her at www.luvatlast.com or send a message to info@luvatlast.com

Chef Jim, a Johnson & Wales University honors graduate in Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management, was former co-owner of Silicon Valley’s well known and Zagot honored *Emile’s Restaurant & Cooking School* for nearly 18 years, where his restaurant continually rated in the Top 5 in food for all of the San Francisco Bay area.

The past 19 years he has been founder of CEO Chef, a corporate team building and leadership development company. Some of his prized client list include Facebook, Google, Kaiser Permanente and Southern California Edison.

He is a published author and his latest book is called, “Teamwork: Recipe to Your Business Success”. Available on Amazon.

Jim & Renee proudly share the rank of 6A as independent distributors for Enagic USA and passionately share the message of optimum physical health, financial health and mental health through the consumption and sharing of Kangen water®.

For more information about our culinary corporate team buildings, visit us at www.ceochef.com or send a message to info@ceohchef.com.

Mindset of a Chef

1. Contrasts is the number one rule of great culinary dishes:
 - Contrasts in flavor
 - Contrasts in texture
 - Contrasts in color
2. K.I.S.S is the acronym for “Keep It Simple Silly” should be applied to producing great food. Many times, on the plate, less is more!
3. The three keys to successful kitchen results are planning, planning, planning! It not only pays off time wise, it also produces and encourages healthy eating.
4. Leave empty space on your presentation plates and platters to accent the actual food on the plate. Much like the saying, “The beautiful sound within a song is in the space between the notes”, is the same with presenting food, leave space to showcase.
5. Use your time well. Estimate your cooking process timing and reverse engineer your timing schedule. This helps to eliminate last minute stress and anxiety.
6. Never go it alone, use a coach to answer those tough questions, give advise or just to confirm a new idea.
7. A drop of lemon juice at the last moment will zip up the flavor of anything. Before you add more salt, add lemon juice instead.
8. Too much of a good thing is just usually too much. (refer to contrasts)
9. Stress kills creativity, productivity and innovation; when all else fails, have fun!
10. Save last minute finishing touches for the last minute. 5 minutes before a meal is served, is when the last minute flash in the pan, plating, drop of lemon juice, last taste, drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, should be done. Keep it fresh in looks and flavor.
11. You can always add flavorings, salt, pepper and spices; you can't take them away.
12. Season everything: though don't over-season.
13. People love crusts!

Mind-Set of a Smart Shopper:

1. Shop from the “outside” walls of the store. That’s where the fresh foods are located.
2. Base your meal around more fruits and vegetable rather than around proteins and starches.
3. Evaluate the produce area first, base your meal on what is in season first - it’s usually the best value and most plentiful.
4. Plan your menu details after evaluating the produce area.
5. “Manager specials” (mark-downs) are a good way to cut shopping costs. Just make sure you use the items by the “use-by date” or sooner.
6. Volume shopping (family packs) are a good way to save money. Either use “batch cooking” as a method to make use of the larger amount of food or make use of the freeze properly (if applies) or buy as a collective and share the money savings with other “families”.
7. Embrace convenience foods to save time on a daily schedule. By incorporating fresh with convenience, you’ll still benefit nutritionally but will consistently enjoy the cooking process much more.

Mind-Set of a Nutritionist:

1. The more color that you add to a plate of food usually indicates a higher nutritional value.
2. If your plate represented a clock, reserve 12 to 3 o'clock to represent calorie dense foods like protein and starches, fill the rest of the clock with vegetables and fruits.
3. Limit the amount of protein for each person to approximately 3-4 oz. per person. That amount looks like a pack of playing cards for an adult or visualize the amount of protein that fits into the palm of your hand (smaller palm for smaller people like children).
4. Increase the amount of fruits and vegetables at every opportunity.
5. Use whole grain starches whenever time permits. Manufacturers are producing more whole grain options that were previously difficult to find. Pastas and mixed grains are showing up on grocery shelves more frequently and in a wider variety.
6. Incorporate some kind of salad at every meal.
7. Redefine what a "salad" can be. Make use of all kinds of vegetables, fruits and nuts to create a unique composed type salad.
8. Make your own salad dressings so you control what type of ingredients are included.
9. Season consistently through out the cooking process, but don't over-season (especially by adding all of the seasoning at the end).
11. Portion sizes are the key to battling obesity, especially with dense foods like proteins and starches. Use green vegetables as a free pass to fill you up and use generous portions to your hearts content.
12. Soup at the beginning of any meal adds a certain "satiety" level to eating and enjoyment.
13. Make use of more herbs and spices to add flavor to a dish and cutting down on too much salt and fats.

How to Set-up Your Kitchen, from Spices to Saute Pan

The most important thing that you need in a kitchen is a proper set-up or as the French say, “Mise en Place”. A good set-up will save you time, effort and frustration every time!

In a professional restaurant, all decisions, right from the design to the daily equipment set-up is dictated by the menu, period. Now that makes perfect sense that if you are a steak house type restaurant, that you’d have a great set-up to process and cook meats on the grill as opposed to setting up the kitchen with pizza ovens.

But in a home, it’s a bit different, you don’t have a main menu that you base your design and set-up by, or do you?

In going back to the professional kitchen model of setting up around your menu, it’s not just the individual items on the menu that I’m talking about, but the cooking methods and techniques that are involved in preparing those individual menu items where you have what I call your strong cooking suits and your non-existent cooking suits, and various cooking strengths in-between. So setting up your kitchen to your stronger and strongest suits make perfect sense to setting up for your weaker cooking suits.

Now all of this is common sense once it’s been explained, but let me show you what happens when we are in the real world. Most of the cooking methods, techniques and functions are not set-up to save you time, effort and therefore frustrate you every time you cook.

So bottom line, the cooking methods you use most, must be the ones set-up closer to your work space in the kitchen. If you saute, pan grill or roast like I do, have your pans, utensils, cutting boards and knives surrounding the area that you work in the kitchen. I bake on occasion, but not often enough to have the free standing mixer on the counter or even in a cabinet close by my work station. I have it stored on the top shelf of my walk-in pantry. So when I am in the mood to bake, I know where it is, but keep it out of my way on a regular basis.

The next couple of pages will outline what I consider essentials to have in a home kitchen for the average home cook. The list of essentials may not mention your favorites, that is for you to determine, it is our expert opinion only what is needed in every home kitchen set-up (so don’t fret if you don’t see your favorite garlic press or egg separator tool, it’s your kitchen to do as you please!)

I look at kitchen equipment essentials as items that either supply a superior food end result or are multi-use type equipment. Super specialized equipment (like egg separators) take up kitchen storage space and defeats the purpose of a proper “mise en place”. So as much as I love a good waffle like the next guy, I’m not going to have my electric waffle iron stored on my kitchen counter, or even in my pantry, that’s a once in 3 month brunch tool that’s stored in the garage!

So take the following kitchen tool essentials as it is, two experts opinion based on what we think you'll be needing to create your meals in an easy, time saving, less frustrated way. So enjoy!

Knife Essentials:

- **Chef's knife (8-10" long)** Personally, I use a Chinese cleaver instead, I like the multi-task usage of this knife, vegetable chopper, meat cutter, meat mallet, but it's not for everyone.
- **Paring or utility knife** - I supply these 3" utility knives when we conduct our team building programs that are great. It's the most used knife in my home kitchen. Very versatile as a paring knife, boning knife, slicer, cheese slicer, vegetable slicer.
- **Serrated knife**- It's a knife that when needed, is indispensable. Obviously it's great for bread, but it's also great for anything that is baked dough or bread like or anything that is delicate to slice and needs a "sawing" action to cut through it.
- **Vegetable Peeler** - I like the serrated, stainless steel, swivel peeler.
- **Sharpening steel** - Get a real sharpening steel, made from steel, not ceramic. Most home kitchens either don't have a steel or don't use a steel. It's a must to keep your knife "edges" straight and honed. A sharp knife saves work time and effort!

That's it! You can buy more specialty knives if you want. But if I were to set up a friends kitchen, I'd focus on those five tools only.

Small Tools and Utensils:

- **10-12" Wooden Spoons** - These are cheap, so stock up on them.
- **10" Wire Whisk** - I prefer the wooden handled whisks with medium to thin wire.
- **10" Kitchen spoons**, slotted and solid - get plenty of these to stock your kitchen.
- **10" Rubber Spatular** - 2 should be enough
- **1 Potato masher** - Yes, great for mashed potatoes, but also for making other mashed vegetable items quickly.
- **4 Sided Box Grater** - I'm a big micro-plane grater fan, but if I had one grater in the kitchen, it would be this. It's great for grating cheese (two sizes), ginger, citrus & more.
- **Instant Read Thermometer** - Don't waste your money on the electric version, the simple, instant read thermometers are great for checking the internal temperature of roasted

Pots & Pans Essentials:

- **12" Pre-seasoned Cast-iron Skillet** * * with cover. This is the best gift that my Mom ever gave to me and I told her so! (besides the gift of life, of course!) If I only had one pan to take with me, it would be this or my next item. Great for pan grilling, searing, stewing, braising and baking. I make a mean cornbread in cast iron skillets. The main attribute to these pans is that they retain their heat longer and uniformly.
- **14" Steel Wok pan with cover** - Along with the Chinese cleaver, it's the best multitasked kitchen tool you could own. Of course you can stir fry in a wok, but it also perfect for deep frying (while using less oil than a traditional pan), stove top braising, steaming & pan grilling.
- **Non-stick, saute pans**, 6" for frying eggs and omelets, 12" for other saute items.
- **Sauce pans**, 3 qt. & 6 qt size with covers
- **Roasting pan** with deep sides - can be used for roasting as well as braising. I like the rectangular shape of the pan to fit more pieces of meat or poultry. Also great for roasting long roasted (that give off much fat) items.
- **Sheet pans** - great for roasting, toasting & baking. I use these more than a roasting pan for roasting leaner cuts of meat for better caramelization of the exterior of the roast.
- **Stainless Steel Bowl Assortment** - I like having three sizes, small 2-4 quart, medium 6-7 quart, and large 9 quart. Have 2-3 of each size or more of the size you use the most.
- **Salad Spinner** - I know, it seems like it's a *non-essential*, but from the consistent amount of salads that my family eats, it's an every day essential tool for us.
- **Cutting Boards** - I am partial to wood cutting boards but the plastic ones are more abundant to find. I like having at least one very large cutting board and a few smaller cutting boards. I also am a big proponent of using the "Cut & Toss" disposable cutting boards to prevent

continued next page

Small Tools and Utensils cont.

- meats as well as checking the inner temperature of cooling items that are “batch cooked”
- **Kitchen Tongs**, 6”,10” and 12” (for BBQ) - the spring loaded are best so you don’t have to struggle with keeping them open.
- **Ice Cream Scoop** - Not just a single use item, great for ice cream but even better for exact portioning of food items like doughs, mixtures (crab cakes), etc...Get at least a #8 scoop and one more smaller size scoop like a #12 scoop.
- **Meat Mallet** - Besides making chicken, pork and veal into thin cutlets and scallopini, it can be used for making a quick batch of cracker or dry bread crumbs or crushed ice.
- **Soup Ladles** - Begin with one larger sized (12 oz) to a more standard size (8 oz.)
- **Fine Strainer** - one small and one large. The larger for straining stocks, sauces but also great for sifting flour. The smaller size can do the same with the addition of sifting cocoa and powdered sugar for desserts.
- **Baking Brush** - Used for brushing egg wash or glaze on pastry, or marinade on meats.
- **Hand Can Open** - I’ve never owned an electric can opener, the hand operated are more versatile and fit in a small drawer.
- **12-14” Rolling Pin** - The wooden versions as good for me, sure the marble ones are cool but, once again, it’s uses are limited. I am okay with the ball bearing type rolling pins or the rolling sticks. In a pinch, you can use a rolling pin as a meat mallet too!
- **Kitchen timers** - I usually like the low tech type and I usually have two, one for each oven. It’s definitely an essential tool when you keep going through toasted almonds or coconut from burning them!
- **Waiter’s Cork Screw** - I should have put this at the top of the list of essentials ☺. I prefer the waiter’s cork screw type because of it’s versatility in opening wines and the less space it takes up.
- **Funnel** - It’s a sometimes the simple tools that stop us dead in our tracks when we don’t have them.
- **Set of measuring spoons and cups**

Pot & Pan Essentials, cont.

- cross contamination between cooked and raw meats, or raw meats and raw vegetables. It’s worth the additional expense to have them in the kitchen.

Power Equipment:

- **Enagic SD-501** - This powerhouse of a water ionizer not only supplies us with the best water in the world to consume, it offers versatility in cooking and cleaning, 9.5 pH for soups, stews, sauces, 5.5 pH for pasta and egg cookery, 2.5 pH for disinfecting equipment and first aid and 11.5 pH for degreasing stoves and cleaning vegetables.
- **High Powered Blender** - my favorite is the Vita-mix Blender which is fairly expensive but it does short work of soups, sauces, frappe, mixes, blended drinks, etc... A very good stand-in for the Vita-mix is the Bullet brand of mixers and food processor in one.
- **Size Adjustable Toaster** - For years, I fought the need to have a power tool that had only one function, to toast. But after years of dealing with toaster ovens or heating up the kitchen for one piece of toast, I now am a believer and totally enjoy my toaster.
- **Electric Hand Mixer** - I never owned a set until I meet my wife who uses it all the time. I would use my heavy duty stand mixer to do all the jobs that she would use with a hand mixer, but her method is easier to use, clean up and store and for those reasons, it rates much higher as an essential kitchen tool.
- **Immersion Hand Blender** - Great to puree small amounts of soup, sauce, shakes, etc... Easy to clean, takes up a small amount of room to store rates this high on my list. In fact, if room was too tight, I’d opt for this over my Vita-mix Blender.

Optional Power Equipment: (not quite essential)

- **Food Processors** - My favorite is Cuisinart, the lids may crack, but the motor is sound.
- **Rice Cooker** - Not just for rice, it’s great for other types of grains too.
- **Standing Mixer** - Unless you bake a lot, it takes up space allotted for more essentials.

Essentials List of Pantry Items to Have On Hand:

Obviously, we can have more than the items listed below, but to give you the most versatility and variety without over ordering and having too much food on hand, this list will cover the bases well. Remember this is our list of essentials, it's used only as a guideline as if a friend ask me to set up their pantry for them. A good example is the dry herb list of only six herbs, obviously, you can purchase more herbs for yourself, but I find that it's best to start with these herbs and buy as you need them to keep them freshest.

Six Essential Dry Herbs:

- Bay leaves
- Whole Thyme
- Whole Tarragon
- Whole Oregano
- Rosemary
- Dill

Six Essential Spices:

- Paprika (smoked)
- Chili Powder
- Madras Curry Powder
- Black Pepper
- Cinnamon
- Allspice

Other Essential Flavorings:

- Kosher Salt
- Tabasco
- Mexican Cholula or Tapatio Hot Sauce
- Worcestershire
- Braggs Amino Sauce
- Soy Sauce
- Hoisin Sauce
- Vietnamese Sriracha Hot Chile Sauce
- Sherry wine
- Brandy
- Wine & Red wine
- Ketchup
- Mustard, Dijon
- Maple Syrup

Miscellaneous Pantry Essentials:

- Canned Chopped Tomatoes
- Canned Tomato Paste
- Kalamata Olives
- Powdered Milk - Great for baking when out!

Pasta, Rice & Beans:

- Penne or Elbow Macaroni
- Lasagna
- Spaghetti
- Thai Jasmine Rice - long grain
- Cal-Rose or Arborio Rice - short grain
- Brown Rice - long or short grain
- Dried Beans (two types)
- Lentils
- Whole Grains (Barley, Bulgar, etc...)
- Couscous

Oils & Vinegars:

- Olive Oil (for cooking) & Extra Virgin Olive Oil (for flavoring and salads)
- Vegetable oil (canola, soy, etc...)
- Sesame Oil
- Apple Cider Vinegar
- Balsamic Vinegar, Rice Wine Vinegar and
- Red Wine Vinegar

Miscellaneous Pantry Essentials:

- Panko Bread Crumbs
- Canned Tuna and/or Salmon
- Capers
- Dry Mushrooms (shiitake, porcini)
- Clam Juice
- Sudried Tomatoes
- Corn Starch
- All Purpose Flour (whole wheat too)
- Vanilla Extract
- Granulated Sugar
- Brown Sugar
- Cocoa
- Baking Powder & Baking Soda
- Cream of Tar Tar
- Honey
- Apple Sauce

Essentials List of Refrigerated or Freezer Items to Have On Hand:

These items round out what I recommend to have on hand before you do your fresh vegetable and fresh meat shopping. The point is that if you have these items stocked up, you have much more variety in your food preparation. And more variety means more flexibility, which is the de-stress way of operation in your home kitchen.

Dairy Essentials:

- **Unsalted Butter** - I keep a couple of pounds in the freezer and one stick in the refrigerator.
- **Eggs or Egg Substitute** - Nothing can quite take the place of eggs for food and baking preparations. So keep it stocked.
- **Parmesan Cheese** - It keeps very well ungrated, in a chunk. Grate as you need it and it will stay available for quite awhile.
- **Cream or sour cream** - Depending on your diet, a small container of cream is great to have on hand for a quick dessert. And sour cream lasts long enough and has enough uses that it's always good to have on hand.
- **Low Fat Yogurt** - Especially good if you want the lusciousness of cream or sour cream without the added saturated fat. It's great as it is, with berries, in health shakes, in baking or mashed potatoes.
- **Various Cheeses** - A semi-firm cheese like Gruyere Cheese or Havarti Cheese is good to have on hand for a quick cheese & fruit plate or a dynamite toasted cheese sandwich. And it'll last much longer than other types of soft cheeses.
- **Milk or Soy Milk**

Miscellaneous Fresh Essentials:

- **Lemon and/or Limes** - Fresh lemons especially, perk up any dish and add a nice fresh flavor to all of your preparations.
- **Garlic bulbs** - Yes, I'll buy the pre-peeled garlic in the jar to save time. But I especially like the flavor of garlic in the bulb and it lasts a while in a mesh fabric hanging in air.
- **Yellow and Red Onions** - I store them in an open air wire container so they stay fresh longer.
- **Baking or Russet Potatoes** - Store in a cool, dark place and they will last a while. They last longer than the thin skinned potato varieties, so for having on hand, they are an essential.
- **Various Fresh Nuts** - Almonds, walnuts, etc... and they store well in the freezer too.
- **Puff Pastry Sheets** - Makes anything more elegant with a puff pastry crust.
- **Pre-Cut Puff Pastry Squares** - Some ethnic stores carry the 5"X5" squares. These are great because they are quick to defrost, make great individual free style fruit tarts or add elegance to pastry crowned soups!
- **Filo Dough** - Stays very well frozen and defrosts fairly quickly. Adds a nice touch of elegance to any food preparation.
- **Bacon** - I keep this in the freezer, ready to use. I divide the bacon into four parts, cut in half down the middle and then separate the slices. Then store in ziplock bags in the freezer. Great as that added flavor enhancer.
- **Variety of Frozen Vegetable** - I especially like fresh vegetables, but let's be realistic, you need to have emergency vegetables ready incase. So here are my favorites when used right, peas, spinach, broccoli, lima beans and green beans. The secret is to defrost them in cold water first. Drain them, then treat them like freshly blanched vegetables.

Essentials Check List of Pantry Items to Have On Hand:



Six Essential Dry Herbs:

- Bay leaves
- Whole Thyme
- Whole Tarragon
- Whole Oregano
- Rosemary
- Dill
- _____

Six Essential Spices:

- Paprika (smoked)
- Chili Powder
- Madras Curry Powder
- Black Pepper
- Cinnamon
- Allspice
- _____

Other Essential Flavorings:

- Kosher Salt
- Tabasco
- Mexican Cholula or Tapatio Hot Sauce
- Worcestershire
- Braggs Amino Sauce
- Soy Sauce
- Hoisin Sauce
- Vietnamese Sriracha Hot Chile Sauce
- Sherry wine
- Brandy
- Wine & Red wine
- Ketchup
- Mustard, Dijon
- Maple Syrup
- _____

Miscellaneous Pantry Essentials:

- Canned Chopped Tomatoes
- Canned Tomato Paste
- Kalamata Olives
- Powdered Milk - Great for baking when out!
- _____
- _____
- _____

Pasta, Rice & Beans:

- Penne or Elbow Macaroni
- Lasagna
- Spaghetti
- Thai Jasmine Rice - long grain
- Cal-Rose or Arborio Rice - short grain
- Brown Rice - long or short grain
- Dried Beans (two types)
- Lentils
- Whole Grains (Barley, Bulgar, etc...)
- Couscous
- _____

Oils & Vinegars:

- Olive Oil (for cooking) & Extra Virgin Olive Oil (for flavoring and salads)
- Vegetable oil (canola, soy, etc...)
- Sesame Oil
- Apple Cider Vinegar
- Balsamic Vinegar, Rice Wine Vinegar and Red Wine Vinegar
- _____

Miscellaneous Pantry Essentials:

- Panko Bread Crumbs
- Canned Tuna and/or Salmon
- Capers
- Dry Mushrooms (shiitake, porcini)
- Clam Juice
- Sudried Tomatoes
- Corn Starch
- All Purpose Flour (whole wheat too)
- Vanilla Extract
- Granulated Sugar
- Brown Sugar
- Cocoa
- Baking Powder & Baking Soda
- Cream of Tar Tar
- Honey
- Apple Sauce
- _____
- _____
- _____

Menu “Mind Tickler” Planning Tool

How to Use This Tool:

The *Menu “Mind Tickler” Planning Tool* was created to help you make use of the “Batch Cooking” technique.

“Batch Cooking” is a time saving cooking technique that makes use of food special savings & time saving (and we all could use a bit more money and time! ☺) By incorporating a small amount of planning, you can save time by cooking larger batches of food to use as other dishes during the week.

This *Menu “Mind Tickler” Planning Tool* is there to help you get your own mind’s creative juices flowing by giving you an insight in how we would plan our own home meals. Don’t get to hung up about recipes. Remember, recipes are the process, the meal or food outcome should be your focus. By applying the principles of being in the mindset of the chef, you’ll slowly free yourself of recipes and have more fun in the kitchen.

Stick with us during our blog postings and we’ll continue giving you juicy ideas, meaty techniques and mighty methods of completing your weekly meals. Our whole goal is to make home cooking fun for you and your family and to use it as an opportunity to bond with those around you, now that the stress from planning and performing has been reduced through these tools

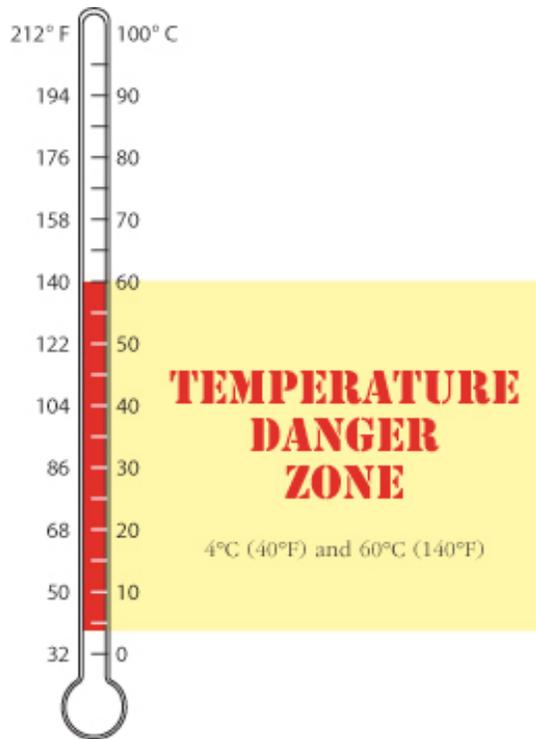
Batch Cooking:

Plan one to two nights a week to set up you batch cooking. I usually plan Sunday as my one or main batch cooking day. It’s the day I shop for most of my foods so it makes it convenient to process them at the same time.

Here is the general concept:

- Plan the batch food item as your first nights meal. So that means for me, Sunday night if I batch cook chicken breast, then it’s chicken breast as my first meal.
- Be creative with how you use the batch cooked food item for the rest of the week. You don’t want your meals to look or taste too similar or it defeats the plan.
- Incorporate “mini” batch items into you planning. For instance, if you like brown rice like I do, than make a double batch for your Sunday dinner and refrigerate the rest to be used during the week.
- Make use of storage advantages. Once you cool your batch items down, pack them up into smaller meal size portions to cool and store properly. Remember, food held too long in the “danger zone” of 40°F to 140°F can develop a medium to promote rapid bacteria growth (more on that on the following page). So cooling quickly is the key to maximum storage time in the refrigerator.
- Plan in using all of your batch cooked food completely by the following week, usually when it’s time to shop and batch cook again.

Time Temperature Danger Zone



How scary does that sound? The Time Temperature Danger Zone (TTDZ, for short) includes temperatures between 40° Fahrenheit and 140° Fahrenheit. Keeping foods in this temperature range can lead to rapid bacteria growth, which can cause scary food borne illnesses. Temperatures in this range can create a breeding ground for harmful bacteria, which thrive in warmer environments.

Keeping this in mind, there's no need to panic. The TTDZ is not something conscientious home cooks need to worry too much about. Cooked foods can remain safe in the zone for short periods of time. (Think 45 minutes to an hour.) It's important to avoid long periods at these temperatures.

Some simple advice for avoiding the TTDZ, invest in an instant-read thermometer so you can quickly check your food's temperature. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

Let's be careful out there!

How to Maximize Your Usage of “Tickler” Ideas:

“Our goal is to wean you off of recipes and to use them as inspiration rather than law.”

Some of you will get how to use this “*Mind Tickler*” *menu planning tool* right away and others will be challenged to this different way of thinking. If you’ll be patient in making this adjustment, we’ll continue to assist you in making the change through repetition and more tools.

The meal ideas that we share with you (example on the bottom-left side of this page) is not a new technique of sharing food ideas. Professional cooks and chefs have been doing this for years, it’s like short hand for the culinary language. And after all, our goal for you is to enjoy food preparation in the easiest, fastest way that matches your lifestyle. And the best way for you to do that is to be in the mindset of a chef and since chef’s communicate in this short hand culinary language, you shall too!

Now let’s get started:

Notice the image to the right, it’s a typical idea generated from the “*Mind Tickler*” *menu planner*. It’s making use of the grilled chicken breast that we “batched cooked” from a previous day. What’s missing from it to make it a traditional recipe are amounts for the food items and procedure.

Food Amounts:

Now this is where you have to trust me with this next point: “You’ll know the right amount intuitively, we trust you’ll add the right amount of everything that you want.”

How can we say this?

We’ve been conducting team building programs using food, longer than anyone that I know and we never use recipes! It all comes down to how much you’d like to add to customize your dish’s flavors. Is there a bit of trial and error involved in this process. You bet! But the learning curve is reduced considerably with these tools.

Important note:

With flavors, spices, salt and seasonings, you can always add, but you can’t take away.

Procedure:

Cajun Pasta with Chicken

- Grilled Chicken
- Chopped tomato
- Chopped garlic, celery, green peppers
- Cajun spices, tabasco
- Linguini cooked

“Mind Tickler” Idea from the “Grilled Chicken” page as an example

Traditional recipe procedures are long winded and unnecessary. Once you understand terms, techniques and methods, you can apply that to your culinary short hand.

Some preparations are self explanatory like the meal idea above. Since the grilled chicken has been “batch cooked” from a previous day, all it needs is a quick reheat. And if the cooked linguini was also “batch cooked”, it only needs a reheat as well. So all that’s left are the vegetables and flavorings that make up the characteristic of the preparation. So those items are first sauteed, then simmered together to form the flavoring sauce. Add the grilled chicken to reheat shortly followed by the cooked linguini and voila, dinner is prepared!

So all that you really need to communicate is a cooking technique or method in one or two words!

First Night's Meal
Grilled Chicken "Brazilian"

- Grilled Bananas
 - Shallot, Rum & Heavy Cream Side Sauce
 - Toasted Almond Garnish
 - Brown Rice side
 - Salad
- 1

Notes:

- Chicken Breast meat is a very lean meat, so when you prepare it in advance, be aware not to overcook.
- When you reheat, do so in a moist medium like a sauce.
- Store the cooked chicken breast as whole as possible to retain meat moisture. Cutting the meat will expose more surface area that can dry out.

"Mini-Batch"-

Mini-batch this week extra brown rice to use the first night and the stir fry.

Main Ingredient
Grilled Chicken Breast

- Cajun Pasta with Chicken
- Grilled Chicken
 - Chopped tomato
 - Chopped garlic, celery, green peppers
 - Cajun spices, tabasco
 - Linguini cooked
- 2

- Curry Chicken Salad
- Grilled Chicken
 - Chopped pears, walnuts, shallots
 - Madras curry
 - Mayonnaise
 - Lettuce "cup"
 - Tear drop tomatoes
- 3

- Stir Fry of Chicken and Vegetables
- Grilled Chicken
 - Assortment of fresh vegetables
 - Hoisin Sauce
 - Brown rice
- 4

- Chicken Saute "Greek Style"
- Grilled Chicken
 - Roma tomatoes, chopped
 - Garlic, Kalamata olives, oregano
 - Feta cheese
 - Cooked Orzo
- 5

First Night's Meal
Braised Pork Shoulder with Garlic Mashed Potatoes

- Sliced Pork Shoulder with pan juices
 - Garlic Mashed Potatoes
 - Seasonal Steamed Vegetables
- 1

Notes:

- Pork shoulder is one the tastiest parts of the pig and braising, a moist method of cooking, is perfect in retaining the best characteristics of this meat.
- If you have leftover wines, use them to braise your pork shoulder.
- If your going to use the pork shoulder as shredded, spread it out on a sheet pan to cool quickly to room temperature, then bag them into meal portion sizes into ziplock bags for storage.

“Mini-Batch”-
 Mini-batch this week extra mash potatoes to use once the first night and again as potato cakes for “Greek Style”.

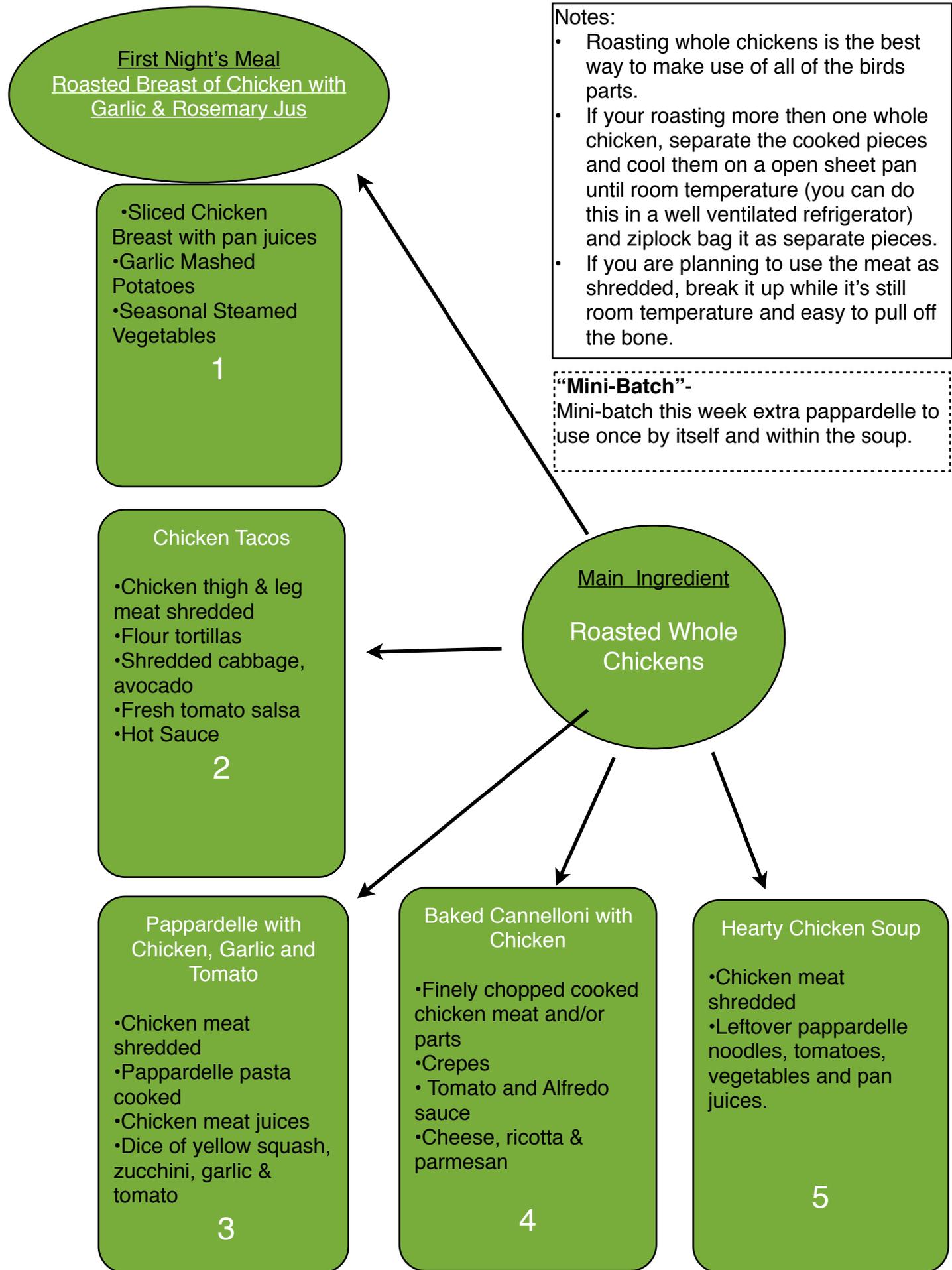
Main Ingredient
 Braised Pork Shoulder

- Pork Tacos
- Pork meat shredded
 - Flour tortillas
 - shredded cabbage, tomato diced
 - Fresh salsa
- 2

- Pappardelle with Pork
- Pork meat shredded
 - Pappardelle pasta cooked
 - Pork meat juices
 - Julianne of yellow squash and zucchini
- 3

- Baked Lasagna with Pork Ragu
- Pork meat shredded
 - Lasagna noodles
 - Pork meat juices and tomato sauce
 - Cheese, ricotta & parmesan

- Pork Saute “Greek Style”
- Pork meat shredded
 - Roma tomatoes, chopped
 - Garlic, Kalamata olives, oregano
 - Feta cheese
 - Grilled Potato Cake



Notes:

- Pork tenderloin meat is a very lean meat, so when you prepare it in advance, be aware not to overcook.
- The first night, we opted to use it as sliced pieces of pork tenderloin slightly pounded with a meat mallet into scaloppini's.
- When you reheat, do so in a moist medium like a sauce.
- Store the cooked pork tenderloin as whole as possible to retain meat moisture. Cutting the meat will expose more surface area that can dry out.
- Usually there is a thin layer of "silver skin on the head of the pork tenderloin that should be gently sliced away.

"Mini-Batch"-

Mini-batch this week extra quinoa to use the first night and the stir fry, also couscous for the curry salad and for Greek style.

First Night's Meal
Sauteed Pork Scallopini
"Brazilian"

- Grilled Bananas
 - Shallot, Rum & Heavy Cream Side Sauce
 - Toasted Almond Garnish
 - Quinoa side
 - Salad
- 1

- Cajun Pasta with Pork
- Roasted Pork
 - Chopped tomato
 - Chopped garlic, celery, green peppers
 - Cajun spices, tabasco
 - Linguini cooked
- 2

- Curry Pork Salad
- Roasted Pork
 - Couscous cooked
 - Leftover grilled bananas, sun-dried cranberries & ginger
 - Arugula or watercress leaves
 - Mayo with curry
 - Toasted almonds
- 3

- Stir Fry of Pork and Vegetables
- Grilled Pork
 - Assortment of fresh vegetables
 - Hoisin Sauce
 - Quinoa
- 4

- Pork Saute "Greek Style"
- Grilled Chicken
 - Roma tomatoes, chopped
 - Garlic, Kalamata olives, oregano
 - Feta cheese
 - Cooked Orzo
- 5

Main Ingredient
Roasted Pork Tenderloins

Notes:

- Chicken Breast meat is a very lean meat, so when you prepare it in advance, be aware not to overcook.
- When you reheat, do so in a moist medium like a sauce.
- Store the cooked chicken breast as whole as possible to retain meat moisture. Cutting the meat will expose more surface area that can dry out.

Healthier Choice

“Mini-Batch”-

Mini-batch this week extra brown rice to use the first night and the stir fry.

First Night's Meal
Grilled Chicken with a Strawberry BBQ Sauce

- Ripe Strawberries
 - Tomato Puree
 - Cider Vinegar
 - Spices (allspice, chipotle pepper powder, onion powder)
 - Toasted Almond Garnish
 - Brown Rice side
 - Salad
- 1

- Cajun Pasta with Chicken
- Grilled Chicken
 - Chopped tomato
 - Chopped garlic, celery, green peppers
 - Cajun spices, tabasco
 - Linguini, whole grain, cooked
- 2

- Curry Chicken Salad
- Grilled Chicken
 - Chopped pears, walnuts, shallots
 - Madras curry
 - Mayonnaise, lite or olive oil and lemon
 - Lettuce “cup”
 - Tear drop tomatoes
- 3

Main Ingredient
Grilled Chicken Breast

- Stir Fry of Chicken and Vegetables
- Grilled Chicken
 - Assortment of fresh vegetables
 - Hoisin Sauce
 - Brown rice
- 4

- Chicken Saute “Greek Style”
- Grilled Chicken
 - Roma tomatoes, chopped
 - Garlic, Kalamata olives, oregano
 - Feta cheese
 - Cooked whole grain Orzo
- 5

Cooking Methods Glossary

Dry Cooking Methods:

Best for More Tender Cuts of Meat or Vegetables

Grilling - A method of cooking food over hot coals or other heat source. The term barbecue is often used synonymously with grilling.

Pan Grilling - A method of cooking food in a grilling type pan with raised metal grates usually used indoors to simulate the flavor and grill markings you'd get from outdoor grilling. Both grilling and pan grilling usually are referred in menus as grilled.

Roasting - A method of cooking meat or vegetables in an uncovered pan to produce a well-browned exterior while retaining a moist interior.

Baking - A method of cooking in an oven that surrounds the food item with dry heat. Baking usually refers to non meat or vegetable items and usually with dough or confectioner food items.

Pan Fry - To brown and cook foods in fat in a shallow pan, where the fat does not completely cover the food.

Sauté - Literally means "to jump". To quickly fry foods in a little fat, usually oil or butter, in an open skillet over medium-high to high heat, turning or tossing often, until tender and lightly browned, as dictated by the recipe

Stir-fry - To quickly cook foods over high or medium-high heat in a lightly oiled skillet or wok, stirring or tossing constantly, until desired or specified doneness.

Moist Cooking Methods:

Steam - A method of cooking foods over, not in, hot liquid, usually water. The heat cooks the food while the vapors keep it moist. Steaming is a good alternative to boiling because none of the nutrients or flavor is lost in the liquid.

Braise - To cook slowly in a small amount of liquid in a covered pot. Foods are usually browned prior to braising to add flavor. Braising can be done on top of the stove or in an oven, depending on the recipe. This method is ideal for tougher cuts of meat.

Blanche - To partially cook food, usually vegetables or fruit, in boiling water or steam. Immediately after blanching, vegetables are usually placed in ice water to stop the cooking and set the color.

Boil - To heat liquids until bubbles form on the surface, and then to keep it at that temperature during the cooking process.

Simmer - To cook gently just below the boiling point. If the food starts boiling, the heat is too high and should be reduced.

Sweat - To cook foods, usually chopped vegetables, over medium heat until they exude some of their moisture which, in turn, steams and softens the food without browning.

Menu Organizer

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Menu Planning & Preparation <hr style="width: 10%; margin-left: 0;"/> Batch Cooking & Storage						
Shopping List →	Ingredients	Ingredients	Ingredients	Ingredients	Ingredients	Add Ingredients

How to Use This Organizer:

- First let's presume that you've followed the essentials guide to keeping your pantry, freezer and refrigerator stocked up, now...
- Focus on seasonal vegetables, fruits and fill-in the blanks with protein sources (chicken, pork, beef, lamb, etc...)
- Use your "Menu Mind Tickler" to help plan for the week. Use bulk, seasonal and sale prices to determine what food items will be your "batch" cooking focus. The next page will use the "Menu Mind Tickler" ideas as a sample week and extend it out to include each days menu and a shopping list.

Menu Organizer

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Batch Cooking & Storage Grilled Chicken Breast Grilled Chicken "Brazilian" Mini "Batch" Brown Rice	Cajun Pasta with Grilled Chicken Breast	Stir Fry of (Grilled) Chicken and Vegetables	Out with Clients	Curry Chicken Salad	Chicken Saute "Greek Style"	Dinner at Your Favorite Restaurant - You've Earned it!
<u>Shopping List</u> 5-6 lbs Chicken Breast, boneless 2 Bananas	<u>Ingredients</u> 3 each Roma tomato 3 stalks Celery 1 each Green Pepper 1 lb Spaghetti	<u>Ingredients</u> <i>Seasonal Vegetables:</i> 2 carrots 1 red pepper 1/2 lb bean sprouts 1 head bok choy 1/2 head Napa cabbage	<u>Ingredients</u> Pizza for the kids! Yay	<u>Ingredients</u> 1 Head Lettuce 1 basket tear drop tomatoes 2 bartlett pears	<u>Ingredients</u> 3 Roma Tomatoes 4 oz. Feta Cheese 1 lb. Orzo	<u>Total Ingredients</u> 5-6 lbs chicken Breast, boneless 2 bananas 6 roma tomato 1 bunch celery 1 bag carrots 1 red & 1 green bell pepper 1 hd. bok choy 1 hd. Napa cabbage 1 bag bean sprouts 1 basket tear drop tomato 2 bartlett pears 1 lb. Orzo

Explanation of Using This Menu Planning:

Breakfast:

- One of the most consistent meals of the day. If you are a hot oatmeal person, that's what you tend to have every day or most every day. If you are an eggs and toast person, that's what suits you in the morning. Just add your breakfast items to your "Essentials List" and stock up.

Lunch:

- Lunches tend to be out of the home for most. If you work from the home, double-up on dinner items and eat them as left-overs for lunch or prepare extra "batch proteins" as sandwich ingredients.

Dinner:

- This week's menu was taken exactly as it was written within the "Menu Mind Tickler" first menu.
- This "Menu Organizer" was based on a family of four, two adults and two kids as an example. Adjust the menu according to the number in your "brood".
- We base our week on shopping on Saturday or Sunday, to take advantage of the local Farmers Markets. But you can do your "Batch Cooking" planning day on any day. Once you get the hang of it, you'll find you'll switch days depending on holiday schedule, work & travel schedules and family functions.
- I used Wednesday as a "free" day of no cooking since I was going to a dinner meeting with a client and the kids and significant others enjoy a good pizza every other week. This adds flexibility to your planning and flexibility means less stress!
- I usually plan a salad of some kind along with my entree. It is the single easiest way to increase your vegetable intake, decrease your intake of more dense starches and proteins. I usually have a bag of romaine hearts available and left-over vegetables to add variety to our salad making.

More Menu Ideas:

- If you tire of the same type of protein for the week. Try what we do, maybe one batch protein and two vegetarian type dinner meals. So use two days, like Wednesday and Friday to have meatless meals.
- Another suggestion is once you get the batch cooking concept down, try doing two "mini-batch" proteins in one week's worth of meals. So use two days as your "fresh" cooked protein days. One day could be the beginning of the menu week, Sunday and then on Wednesday, introduce the next "mini-batch" ingredient.
- Also, as a nice emergency type meal, the incredible, edible egg is the world's "healthy fast food". Sometimes I take advantage of a few leftover meals ingredients

and use an omelette to make use of all of these items in one dish. Add some yummy Gruyere cheese to the omelette's center and you've got a winner! If you have cholesterol challenges, use these no-cholesterol type egg substitute products and beef up the vegetables (sorry, you'll need to skip the Gruyere cheese for this person!)