

Busy Weeknight Meal Ideas

From my kitchen to yours....with a little effort, you can make a quick and easy dinner. Save leftovers for lunch or dinner the next day. These recipes are versatile. Use ingredients you like and have on hand in your refrigerator, freezer, or pantry. Planning meals ahead or cooking on the weekends gives you the opportunity to cook once and eat all week.

Baked Salmon with Roasted Vegetables



Ingredients:

Baked Salmon

1. Frozen portioned Salmon (or fish of your choice).
2. Add salt and pepper to the fish.
3. Put a little oil in a baking dish so the fish doesn't stick.
4. Place in 400-degree oven. Cook until opaque.
5. Optional topping - if you like a sauce
 - a. Combine a little olive oil, herbs, fresh squeezed lemon or a few squeezes from a bottle of lemon juice and mix. Brush on top of the salmon before baking.

Roasted vegetables:

1. Dice any vegetables of your choice: sweet potato or small potatoes, mushrooms, zucchini, yellow squash, onion, carrots, cauliflower etc.
2. Place in a bowl and toss with a little olive oil and spices such as salt, pepper, salt-free seasoning, tsp of ranch dressing mix. Toss to coat.
3. Place on baking sheet and roast at 400 degrees until tender.
4. Note: you can do both the salmon and the vegetables on one sheet pan just watch the cooking time so that one doesn't cook before the other.

Variation on roasted vegetables:

- Slice vegetables in thin rounds and stack like a deck of cards or layer like lasagna.
- Add little bit of olive oil to your baking dish.
- Then add the thinly sliced vegetables. I like to use zucchini, mushrooms, tomatoes, Chinese eggplant, sweet potato, and onion. I will sometimes top it with asparagus or basil leaves. If layering the vegetables, put a little olive oil, salt and pepper about every 3 layers.
- Add your favorite seasonings (salt, pepper, dill, basil, thyme, garlic powder, etc.)
- Cover and cook in 400-degree oven until tender.
- Top with low-fat or part-skim mozzarella. (optional)

Salsa Chicken Bowl

This recipe is made in a crock pot.

Ingredients:

Frozen skinless chicken breasts
Jar of salsa (your choice, I like salsa Verde)

1. Pour some of the salsa in the bottom of the crock pot. Add frozen chicken breasts. Pour salsa over the frozen chicken. Cook on high until the chicken is cooked and tender. Shred with a fork. You can always add more salsa, if desired.
2. Toppings: low-fat cheese, salsa or Pico de Gallo, crushed tortilla chips, low or non-fat sour cream or Greek yogurt, olives, tomato, fresh chopped cilantro, shredded lettuce...anything you like. Serve with a side of beans (pinto, black beans etc.) and a salad.

Note: This is high in protein and will fill you up.

Quick Wonton Soup

Use a stock pot for this recipe.

Ingredients:

- Low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth (1-2 large cans depending on how many servings you desire.)
- 1 package of frozen mini wontons (beef, pork/chicken and vegetable, or vegetable) Your choice.
- Jar ginger
- Low sodium soy sauce
- Bok choy
- 1 can of bamboo shoots
- 1 can of water chestnuts
- Sliced carrots (optional)
- Sliced mushrooms (optional)
- Raw or cooked shrimp (optional)

Directions:

This recipe is versatile. Use ingredients you like and have on hand.

1. In a stock pot, add chicken broth, ginger and soy sauce (as desired)
2. Rinse any canned vegetables then add to the pot.
3. Wash and chop Bok choy or any other fresh vegetables if using mushrooms, carrots etc.
4. Bring the soup to a boil making sure the vegetables are tender.
5. Add the mini wontons for the number of servings you desire. They cook fast.
6. Add shrimp last if it is pre-cooked. (Optional)



Note: Wontons will be a bit soggy the next day if you are planning for leftovers.

Tortilla Soup

Use a stock pot for this recipe.

Ingredients:

- Low-sodium chicken broth (1-2 large cans depending on how many servings)
- 1-15 oz can of tomato sauce
- Chili powder (be generous)
- Diced thawed boneless skinless chicken breasts (2-3 large)
- Chopped onion (optional)



Toppings: Your choice

- Chopped cilantro
- Cubed pepper jack cheese or Monterey Jack cheese
- Salsa or Pico de Gallo
- Low or no-fat sour cream or Greek yogurt
- Crushed tortilla chips
- Diced avocado (heart-healthy fat)

Directions:

1. Add chicken broth, tomato sauce, diced onion (optional) and chili powder to stock pot.
2. Bring to a boil.
3. Add raw diced chicken to the pot. Simmer until chicken is cooked.
4. Spoon into bowls and add your favorite toppings.

Note:

- If using cubed cheese, add to the bowl first than add the soup to melt the cheese.
- This recipe is low in protein so you will need to pair it with a salad with protein such as a hard-boiled egg or enjoy the soup with a cheese quesadilla.
- Don't forget to have a small serving of chips and salsa.
- Salad dressing suggestion: combine a little Ranch dressing with salsa to make a Salsa-Ranch salad dressing.

These recipes are from the kitchen of Lora Maloof-Miller who is a Wellness Program Manager at Health Net. She's always looking for quick, easy meals for her family.