



# Create a Nourishing Plate



## Resources to help you get started...

There is so much information about “good nutrition” and foods you should and should not eat available that figuring out what to eat can be overwhelming. Use this step-by-step guide to meal planning to maximize healthy nutrients while minimizing unnecessary worry.

### Menu planning resources:

**Orgjunkie.com** – Weekly menus with links to recipes under the “menu planning” tab. Also has a free, printable menu and shopping list form.

**Sparkrecipes.com** – Allows you to set parameters for preparation time, calories, fat, protein, fiber, and allergies/intolerances like gluten and dairy.

**Recipeland.com** – Allows you to set parameters for desired dietary restrictions like diabetes, gluten free, and more. It also has recipes from a variety of world cuisines, and even an “out of this world” Star Trek recipes category.

**Bigoven.com, allrecipes.com, cooks.com, supercook.com** – A few of the free sites that allow you to browse recipes. There are many others that a search will identify. They normally allow choices to be personalized by ingredients, allergies, and other preferences.

### If you prefer to have someone else plan your menus:

**SOSCuisine.com** – Creates meal plans based on the Mediterranean diet, which can be customized based on preferences, medical conditions, and/or allergies. The basic option is free, and it offers various subscription options which allow for more benefits.

**Plantoeat.com** – Allows you to collect recipes from different websites and use them to make a weekly menu. From that the site generates a shopping list. It is free for 30 days, then charges \$4.95/month or \$39.00/year

**TheScramble.com** – Another menu planning site which offers free access for 14 days, then different subscription options. The mission is to simplify meal planning and preparation so families find it easier to sit down and share a meal together.

### Some Apps to consider:

**Innit (free)** – Plan meals for a week or a day with this app, which allows you to customize the recipes you choose based on preferences and health considerations, creates a shopping list, and also will take you to videos for step by step preparation.

**Love Food Hate Waste (free)** – Gives suggestions and recipes that let you use leftovers from previous dinners so there is less chance of ending up with a science experiment in the back of the refrigerator.

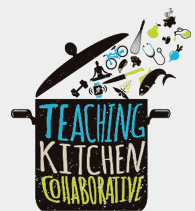
**Food on the Table (free)** – This app simplifies planning by sending recipes for weekly meals based on your set preferences/restrictions. It makes a shopping list and also lets you take advantage of sales based on your location.

- 1. Start with produce.** Half of your meals should be composed of plants, the more vegetables the better.
- 2. Eat lots of colors.** Dark green is great, but so are red (radicchio, tomatoes, strawberries); orange (sweet potatoes, pumpkin, cantaloupe) yellow (peppers, squash, pineapple); purple (beets, cabbage, blueberries); and white (mushrooms, onions, apples). Steamed, raw, roasted, fresh, frozen — there are many options available.
- 3. Make the remaining half of the plate one quarter grains.** Choosing whole grains (brown rice, whole wheat pasta, whole grain breads) means you get the nutrients that are removed during the processing to white rice and white flour.
- 4. The other quarter of your plate is for a good protein source.** Consider high protein plant based proteins like beans, tofu, and tempeh. These are a great way to stretch your food budget as they are less expensive than animal protein. Small amounts of animal protein like grass fed meat, pasture raised poultry, wild caught fish (recommended at least twice a week) contribute important nutrients also. Three to four ounces (the size of a deck of cards) is the recommended serving size.
- 5. Add a tablespoon of a healthy fat** like butter from grass fed cows, olive oil, or avocado. These give important nutrients and also add flavor and satiety. Stay away from hydrogenated fats which is code for trans-fats.
- 6. Water is the beverage of choice.** This includes sparkling waters, like seltzers and mineral water, as long as they are free of added sugars. A slice of citrus, or some fresh herbs like mint can really add to the flavor. Aim to drink at least one-half of your body weight in ounces daily.
- 7. Nourish yourself and your family by creating a peaceful atmosphere.** How you consume your meals matters. Put phones and other devices away, sit down while you eat, chew your food thoroughly and eat foods you enjoy.

A little bit of planning goes a long way towards making mealtimes more relaxing. Depending on your lifestyle and interest, it can take as little as 30 minutes, or you can take your time and browse through the resources available to you like cookbooks or recipe sites. Plus, having a menu leads to a shopping list, making time at the grocery store more efficient. If using preplanned menus from internet sources, a good rule is to double the amount of vegetables called for or add a big salad as a first course.

Investing some time in weekly preparation of foods to use during the busy work week can pay off. Rice, quinoa, ground beef, or ground turkey are just some of the items that can be cooked, portioned out into recipe sized containers, and stored in the refrigerator or freezer for use during busy weeknights. Canned beans can be rinsed and placed in a container for adding to soups, stews, or salads. Roasting vegetables, preparing salads, raw vegetables, and fruit ensures healthy options are readily available for snacks and meals.

Don't forget about slow cookers. Prepped ingredients can be taken from the fridge and layered in the cooker. When you walk through the door, dinner is ready and the house smells wonderful. In warmer weather, bypassing the stove or oven keeps the house cooler. In addition, pressure cookers are another tool that can really cut down on meal preparation time.



Member of the Teaching Kitchen Collaborative, whose mission is to advance person and public health through culinary literacy and integrative lifestyle transformation.



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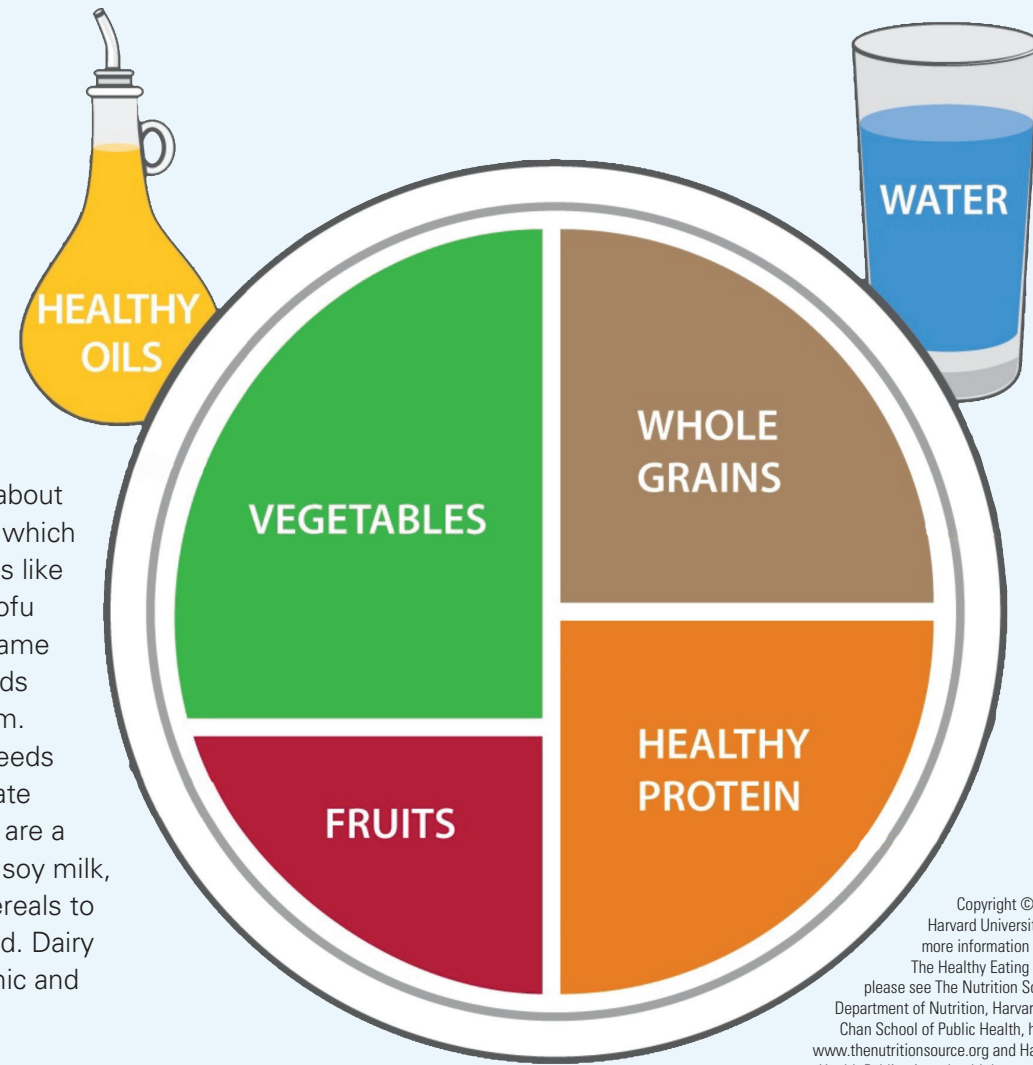
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## MENU PLANNING TOOL

Use this visual aid as a tool when planning your meals. Also see the chart below for some specific examples of food choices. Getting the whole family involved will develop kitchen skills in the younger members, while also giving them a voice at mealtime decisions.

Remember to include good sources of calcium in your daily intake. We often forget about plant based dairy alternatives which contribute calcium. Vegetables like arugula, kale, turnip greens, tofu (processed in calcium), edamame (soybeans), figs, and chia seeds are all good sources of calcium. Almonds, oranges, sesame seeds and broccoli provide a moderate amount of calcium, and there are a number of fortified foods like soy milk, nut milks, orange juice and cereals to which calcium has been added. Dairy products are best when organic and from grass fed animals.



	PRODUCE (3)	PROTEIN (3-4 oz)	GRAIN (1-2)
<b>Monday</b>	Green beans Sweet potatoes Berries	Roasted chicken	Farro
<b>Tuesday</b>	Broccoli Red and yellow peppers Grapes	Wild caught fish (i.e., salmon, flounder, mackerel, sardines)	Whole grain pasta
<b>Wednesday</b>	Mixed vegetables (i.e., bok choy, mushrooms, snow peas, water chestnuts) Pineapple	Diced tofu, tempeh, or organic edamame	Brown rice
<b>Thursday</b>	Asparagus Carrots Apple slices	Turkey burger	Whole grain bun
<b>Friday</b>	Kale and spinach mix Peach or apricot	Tuna fish	Quinoa

## My Meal Planning:

	PRODUCE (3)	PROTEIN (3-4 oz)	GRAIN (1-2)
<b>Monday</b>			
<b>Tuesday</b>			
<b>Wednesday</b>			
<b>Thursday</b>			
<b>Friday</b>			
<b>Saturday</b>			
<b>Sunday</b>			

### NOTES

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