

THE FIELD GUIDE TO

Meal Prep Basics

The no-willpower system for the
shift you are too fried to cook for.

From one shift worker to another.

1 DONE-FOR-YOU WEEK · 20 BUILDING BLOCKS · 25 RECIPES

Built by Matt Wilson

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A NOTE FROM MATT

Why I made this

I've worked shifts for years. Days, nights, and everything in between. So I already know the version of your night that ends with you standing in front of the fridge at 4 a.m., too fried to cook, reaching for whatever takes zero effort. I lived there for a long time.

That's how I got to 270 pounds.

It wasn't one bad decision. It was a thousand tired ones. Off a night shift you don't want a recipe, you want the couch. So dinner was the drive-thru, breakfast was a gas-station stop, and the middle of the night was chips and an energy drink because, honestly, sometimes I just couldn't be damned. I know exactly how that feels, because that was me.

Here's the thing that actually turned it around, and it wasn't a diet. It was one habit: I started cooking my own food ahead of time and bringing it with me. Not fancy. Not seven hours on a Sunday. Just a bit of food ready to grab so the tired version of me didn't have to make a single decision. That one move, more than anything else, is what got the weight off and kept it off.

This little book is that habit, handed to you with the guesswork removed. It assumes you've never prepped a meal in your life, that you're not sure how long chicken lasts in the fridge, and that you're going to be reading it after a shift with nothing left in the tank. That's the whole point. I built it for the tired version of you, not the motivated one, because the tired one is who actually shows up.

I was you. From one shift worker to another, let's make the first step small enough that you can't talk yourself out of it.

Matt



Matt Wilson

© @mattwilsonlife • DOWN FROM 270 LB, ONE PREP AT A TIME

Cook once. Eat all week.

You don't need willpower for this. You need a system that still works when you have none. That's what this is.

The whole book runs on one idea: **build a plate from four simple parts, cook the parts once, and mix and match them all week.**

The four layers:

1. **A protein** (sheet-pan chicken, browned turkey, canned tuna, egg cups, a yogurt base).
2. **A carb** (rice, potatoes, protein pasta, oats, tortillas).
3. **A veg** (a tray of roast veg, a frozen steam bag, raw crunch, bagged salad, a can of corn or beans).
4. **A sauce** (this is the part that keeps you from getting bored, so day 4 doesn't taste like sad leftovers).

Pick one from each layer and you've got a plate. Swap the sauce the next day and the same food tastes brand new. That's the trick, and it's the whole reason people actually stick with prepping instead of quitting on Wednesday.

The weekly system, in plain terms:

- **Start with the Starter Week.** It's the very next thing in this book. One shopping list, one prep session, five days of dinners and breakfasts already mapped out. Zero decisions. Do that exact week first. Once it clicks, the rest of the book shows you how to build your own.
- **It is not a 7-hour Sunday.** The Starter Week is about 75 minutes, most of which is the oven doing the work while you sit down. You cook two proteins, not five. Simple is the feature, not a compromise.
- **The macros are already counted, right on every page.** Checked against real food data. No app, no calculator, no tracking. You just pick the plates that fit your goals.
- **Cook once, eat all week.** That's the move.

HOW LONG DOES IT LAST

Keep it. Freeze it. Do not fear it.

This is the question that quietly stops more people than anything else. So here it is up front, plain and simple. Keep this chart in your head and you've handled 90 percent of the food-safety worry that keeps beginners from starting.

What you cooked	In the fridge	In the freezer
Cooked chicken, turkey, beef	3 to 4 days	3 to 4 months
Cooked rice, pasta, potatoes	3 to 4 days	3 to 4 months
Roast or steamed veg	3 to 4 days	Freezes okay, best fresh
Overnight oats (made ahead)	4 to 5 days	Not worth freezing
No-cook sauces (yogurt-based)	3 to 4 days	Do not freeze

Two habits do the heavy lifting:

- **Let it cool, then fridge it.** After cooking, let food cool for about 10 to 15 minutes, then get it into the fridge. Do not leave it sitting on the counter for hours, and do not seal it screaming hot into a container either, because it sweats and turns soggy. Get it cold within about 2 hours of cooking.
- **Freeze half on day 1.** This is the single best trick in the book. The day you prep, portion out only what you'll eat in the next 3 to 4 days and freeze the rest right away, in single-serving containers. Then Thursday and Friday you're thawing food that's been frozen since prep day, not something that's been slowly dying in the fridge all week. That's why the back half of your week still tastes fresh.

When in doubt, throw it out. No meal is worth a shift spent in the bathroom.

You never have to track.

You do not have to weigh your food or log anything. The counting is already done.

Every plate and every recipe in this book has its macros printed right on the page, calculated from real food data. So instead of tracking, you just **pick the plate that fits the day:**

- **Trying to lose weight?** Lean toward the lighter plates. Load up the veg, keep the carb portion honest, and let the protein and the sauce carry the flavor.
- **Training hard, or facing a brutal block of shifts?** Grab the bigger plates, or add a scoop more carb. A tired body on a long shift needs fuel, not a lecture.
- **Somewhere in between?** Most of the plates land right in the middle on purpose. Pick one, eat it, get on with your night.

The goal isn't perfection. It's getting real food into you on a schedule that used to be a total gap. Do that for a few weeks and the results show up on their own, no spreadsheet required.

Sort it all at a glance.

Every recipe and component carries a few quick tags so you can sort at a glance:

- **Cost.** \$ means cheap: pantry, canned, eggs, frozen. \$\$ means fresh proteins and produce. \$\$\$ means a premium item here and there. Most of this book sits at \$ and \$\$ on purpose.
- **Temp.** *Eat cold* means no microwave needed, good for a shift with no kitchen. *Microwave* means it reheats at work. *Either* means it's fine both ways.
- **Packable.** It survives a cooler and a shift bag without turning into a mess.
- **Time.** Active prep plus total time, so you always know what you're actually signing up for before you start.

Two numbers. That is the whole game.

Real talk, because nobody wants a night shift derailed by their own lunch. You only need to remember two numbers.

Hot stays above 140°F. Cold stays below 40°F. Everything between those two, from 40 to 140°F, is the danger zone where bacteria grow fast.

- **The 2-hour rule.** Your food can sit in that danger zone for about 2 hours total across your whole shift, and the clock is cumulative, not a fresh start each time you open the bag. If it's hot out, above 90°F, cut that to 1 hour. Past that, toss it.
- **Your cooler is your best friend.** A soft cooler with a real, frozen ice pack keeps things below 40°F. A melting pack by hour six does not. Pack it cold and keep it cold. More on gear in the back of the book.
- **Reheating.** Get it to 165°F all the way through. Stir it halfway and check the middle, not just the edges. Reheating does not reset the danger-zone clock, so it doesn't buy back time food already spent warm.
- **Rice and cooked meat are the riskiest things to leave sitting warm.** Keep them cold until the moment you reheat.

When in doubt, throw it out. Same rule, worth repeating.

Six rules, on one card.

Know the danger zone

40 to 140F (4 to 60C). Bacteria multiply fast anywhere in that range. Keep hot food above 140F and cold food below 40F, and you have won most of the battle.

Cool it down fast

Get cooked food below 40F within 2 hours of cooking. Let it cool about 10 to 15 minutes first so it does not warm your fridge or sweat in the container, then refrigerate.

Fridge keep-time

Cooked proteins, grains, and prepped meals last 3 to 4 days in the fridge. When in doubt, throw it out.

The 2-hour rule

Food can sit in the danger zone for about 2 hours total across your whole shift, and the clock is cumulative, not a fresh start each time. If it is above 90F out, cut that to 1 hour. Past that, toss it.

Reheat all the way through

Hit 165F (74C) in the middle, not just the edges. Stir halfway and check the center. Reheating does not reset the danger-zone clock.

Freezer keep-time

The same cooked food keeps 3 to 4 months in the freezer. Freeze half on prep day so the back end of your week tastes fresh.

This book isn't medical or nutrition advice, and it isn't written by a registered dietitian or a doctor. It's one shift worker sharing the food and the simple system that worked for him. The macros are calculated from verified food data, but your real numbers move a little with brands, portions, and how you cook. **Allergen notes are a guide, not a guarantee. Always read your own labels**, especially if an allergy is serious. If you have a medical condition, take medication that interacts with food, or are pregnant, talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian before you make big changes. The food-safety windows here are deliberately conservative estimates drawn from public guidance. Use your own judgment, and when something seems off, throw it out.

Hungry at 3 a.m., handled.

Your body clock does not love a big meal in the small hours. The health folks are right that heavy eating between about midnight and 6 a.m. sits harder and can leave you groggy. But let's be honest with each other: you're going to be hungry at 3 a.m., and pretending otherwise just sends you to the vending machine anyway.

So the move isn't to white-knuckle it. It's to eat a little smarter when you do eat:

- **Go lighter and higher in protein.** A cottage-cheese bowl, some jerky, a yogurt-based snack, a small portion of your cold plate. Protein satisfies without the heavy, sleepy crash.
- **Ease off the big carb load in the middle of the night.** A giant bowl of rice or pasta at 3 a.m. is the thing most likely to make you want to lie down. Save the bigger carb plates for the start or the end of your shift.
- **Keep a snack floor in your bag.** A decent packable snack you actually planned beats whatever the gas station is selling, every single time. The Packable Snacks section later in this book is built to be exactly that floor.

No preaching here. You know your body and your shift better than any chart does. This is just how to eat at 3 a.m. without wrecking the rest of your night.

The Starter Week

One list. One prep. Five days handled.

One list. 15 things. Shop once.

Everything the week needs, grouped by aisle. Two proteins, not five, is the point.

Produce

☐	Broccoli, red bell peppers, yellow onion roast-tray veg (Monday, Wednesday)	1 head broccoli, 3 red peppers, 1 onion
☐	Fresh garlic, 1 lemon, 2 limes the sauces	1 head garlic, 1 lemon, 2 limes
☐	Bananas and frozen mixed berries overnight oats, rotated through the week	1 bunch bananas, 1 bag frozen berries

Meat

☐	Boneless skinless chicken thighs Monday, Wednesday, Friday dinners	about 2.6 lb (1200 g)
☐	Ground turkey, 93% lean Tuesday, Thursday dinners	about 2.6 lb (1200 g)

Dairy

☐	Plain nonfat Greek yogurt buffalo ranch, locker-room caesar, chipotle-lime crema, queso	1 large tub, about 5 cups total
☐	Cottage cheese, 2% buffalo ranch, queso, and a cottage-cheese-bowl snack	2 tubs, about 3 cups total
☐	Parmesan (grated) and sharp cheddar (shredded) locker-room caesar, queso	1 small container of each
☐	Milk, 2% overnight oats, queso	1 carton

Pantry

☐	White rice, long-grain Monday, Thursday, Friday carb	1 bag (about 2 1/4 cups dry needed)
☐	Chickpea protein pasta Tuesday, Wednesday carb	1 box (about 12 oz)
☐	Jarred marinara sauce Tuesday sauce	1 jar (24 oz)
☐	Sauce flavor kit: hot sauce, apple cider vinegar, garlic and onion powder, mustard, worcestershire, honey, anchovy paste, chipotle peppers in adobo, canned Rotel, pickled jalapenos, cornstarch, butter the 4 made-from-scratch sauces	one small jar, can, or bottle of each, you'll use a little
☐	Old-fashioned rolled oats and chia seeds overnight oats, every day	1 bag oats, 1 small bag chia

Freezer

☐	Frozen mixed vegetables (peas, corn, green beans blend) Tuesday, Thursday, Friday veg	1 to 2 large bags
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About 75 minutes, most of it hands-off.

The oven does most of the work while you sit down. Follow the order top to bottom and you will finish two proteins, two carbs, two veg, and four sauces in one session.

- 1** Preheat the oven to 425F (220C).
- 2** Season the chicken thighs with salt and pepper on one sheet tray. Toss the broccoli, red pepper, and onion with a little olive oil on a second tray.
- 3** Slide both trays into the oven. The veg comes out at 20 minutes, the chicken at 25 to 30 minutes.
- 4** While the oven's going, start the rice on the stove (or in a rice cooker) and bring a pot of water to a boil for the pasta.
- 5** Once the water's boiling, cook the chickpea pasta 7 to 9 minutes, then drain it right away so it doesn't turn to mush.
- 6** Heat a splash of oil in a pan and brown the ground turkey, breaking it up with a spatula, 8 to 10 minutes, seasoned with just salt and pepper.
- 7** Steam or microwave the frozen mixed vegetables, 4 to 5 minutes, whenever you've got a free burner or the microwave open.
- 8** Stir together the buffalo ranch, locker-room caesar, and chipotle-lime crema while everything else cooks. Make the queso last, it needs about 5 minutes on the stove to thicken.
- 9** Pull the chicken and veg from the oven when they're done and let everything cool about 10 minutes before you portion it. Hot food sealed straight into a container sweats and turns soggy.
- 10** Portion the protein, carb, and veg into 5 containers following the day map below. Keep the sauce separate and add it the day you actually eat, not now.
- 11** Freeze what you're not eating fresh this week, about half of each protein, in individual containers or bags labeled with the date.
- 12** Assemble the overnight oats jars last: oats, chia, and milk divided across 5 jars. Add fruit the morning you eat, or the night before if you don't mind it a little softer.

Five days, already mapped.

Dinner and breakfast for each day. The sauce is what changes, so the same proteins never taste the same twice.

Monday

Sheet-pan chicken thighs, white rice, roast veg, buffalo ranch

715 kcal **53g protein** **74g carb** **24g fat**

BREAKFAST

Overnight oats with banana

SNACK

cottage-cheese bowl

Oats topped with banana this morning. Want it leaner? Swap the thigh for chicken breast and pull it from the oven a few minutes early so it doesn't dry out.

Tuesday

Ground turkey, chickpea pasta, frozen veg, jarred marinara

707 kcal **60g protein** **71g carb** **26g fat**

BREAKFAST

Overnight oats with mixed berries

SNACK

yogurt bark

Oats topped with mixed berries. No chickpea pasta on hand? Regular pasta cooks the same way and this plate still hits about the same numbers.

Wednesday

Chicken thighs, chickpea pasta, roast veg, chipotle-lime crema

630 kcal **61g protein** **47g carb** **27g fat**

BREAKFAST

Overnight oats with banana

SNACK

beef jerky

Oats topped with banana again. Out of chipotle-lime crema? Any of the other 3 no-cook sauces work fine here too, this is the point of the system.

Thursday

Ground turkey, white rice, frozen veg, Greek-yogurt queso

893 kcal **64g protein** **94g carb** **30g fat**

BREAKFAST

Overnight oats with mixed berries and a drizzle of honey

SNACK

cottage-cheese bowl

Oats topped with mixed berries and a little honey. Swap the turkey for lean ground beef if that's what's already in the fridge, same cook time.

Friday

Chicken thighs, white rice, frozen veg, locker-room caesar

801 kcal **59g protein** **91g carb** **25g fat**

BREAKFAST

Overnight oats with banana

SNACK

yogurt bark

Oats topped with banana to close out the week. This plate also works cold, straight from the fridge, if you're eating it on a night-shift break.

Freeze half. Bank the difference.

Cook both proteins today and portion out only what you're eating fresh this week, then freeze the rest the same day once it's cooled, in individual containers so you can grab exactly one at a time. That's the whole trick behind Thursday and Friday tasting like Monday instead of week-old leftovers: you're thawing a portion that's been frozen since prep day, not one that's been sitting in the fridge all week.

\$55 *vs* **\$140**

PREP AT HOME / WEEK

EATING OUT / WEEK

About \$85 back in your pocket, every week.

The home figure assumes about \$55 in groceries for the week of proteins, carbs, veg, sauces, oats and snacks. Eating out assumes roughly \$20 a day across meals and coffee on shift. Your real numbers move with where you live and where you shop.

The Plate Formula

Four layers. Mix, match, never repeat.

THE PLATE FORMULA

Four layers. Endless plates.

Pick one part from each layer and you have a plate. Swap the sauce tomorrow and the same food tastes brand new. That is the whole system, and it is the reason people stick with prepping instead of quitting on Wednesday.

01	Protein	chicken · turkey · tuna · egg cups · yogurt base
02	Carb	rice · sweet potato · protein pasta · oats · tortillas
03	Veg	roast tray · frozen steam-bag · raw crunch · salad · corn & beans
04	Sauce	buffalo ranch · caesar · chipotle crema · queso · marinara

$3 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 = a \text{ week of non-repeating plates}$

THE MATRIX AT A GLANCE

Every part, every number.

Macros are per portion, for that one part alone. A finished plate is a protein plus a carb plus a veg plus a sauce, so add the four rows you picked.

Protein PER PORTION

Component	KCAL	PRO	CARB	FAT	KEEPS
Sheet-pan chicken thighs	318	39	0	19	4d fridge · 4mo freezer
Plain ground turkey (or lean beef)	322	38	0	19	4d fridge · 4mo freezer
Canned tuna & salmon (no-cook)	234	36	0	10	3d fridge · 3mo freezer
Baked egg cups (egg bake)	214	17	2	15	4d fridge · 3mo freezer
Greek yogurt + cottage cheese base (no-cook)	140	21	8	3	5d fridge · best fresh

Carb PER PORTION

Component	KCAL	PRO	CARB	FAT	KEEPS
White rice	274	5	60	0	5d fridge · 4mo freezer
Roasted (or microwaved) sweet potato	172	3	40	0	5d fridge · 4mo freezer
Chickpea (protein) pasta	186	14	31	3	4d fridge · 3mo freezer
Overnight oats base (no-cook)	300	14	41	10	5d fridge · best fresh
Tortillas or sourdough (no-cook)	150	5	26	2	7d fridge · 3mo freezer

Veg PER PORTION

Component	KCAL	PRO	CARB	FAT	KEEPS
Roast-tray vegetables	79	3	12	3	4d fridge · 3mo freezer
Frozen steam-bag vegetables	131	7	28	1	3d fridge · 8mo freezer
Raw crunch (peppers, cucumber, carrots)	44	1	10	0	5d fridge · best fresh
Bagged salad base	36	3	7	0	4d fridge · best fresh
Canned corn & black beans	129	6	26	1	5d fridge · 4mo freezer

Sauce PER PORTION

Component	KCAL	PRO	CARB	FAT	KEEPS
Buffalo Ranch	45	5	2	2	7d fridge · best fresh
Locker-Room Caesar (Greek-Yogurt Caesar)	79	8	4	4	7d fridge · best fresh
Chipotle-Lime Protein Crema	47	5	4	1	7d fridge · best fresh
Greek-Yogurt Queso	166	14	6	9	5d fridge · best fresh
Jarred red sauce (marinara)	68	2	12	2	7d fridge · 3mo freezer

Protein

Sheet-pan chicken thighs

\$ • COLD OR HOT

about 1 palm (200 g raw / about 150 g cooked)

Heat oven to 425F (220C). Lay the thighs on a foil-lined tray, rub with the oil, salt and pepper. Bake 25 to 30 minutes. Done when the biggest piece is no longer pink in the middle and juices run clear (165F / 74C if you have a thermometer). Leaner option: swap in boneless skinless chicken breast and pull it a few minutes earlier (breast dries out faster than thigh, so watch it closer).

Plain ground turkey (or lean beef)

\$ • COLD OR HOT

about 1 palm (200 g raw / about 150 g cooked)

Heat a splash of the oil in a large pan over medium-high. Add the turkey, break it up with a spoon or spatula, and season with just salt and pepper (keep it plain so it takes any sauce in this book). Cook 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Done when there is no pink left and it's no longer wet-looking (165F / 74C if you have a thermometer). Swap in lean ground beef (90/10) the same way if you prefer it.

Canned tuna & salmon (no-cook)

\$ • EAT COLD

1 can (about 140 to 150 g drained)

No cooking. Open the can, drain it, and portion it straight into your container. That's the whole recipe. Mix tuna and salmon cans through the week so it doesn't get boring, or stick to whichever one you like better.

Baked egg cups (egg bake)

\$ • COLD OR HOT

2 egg muffins (about 2 eggs worth)

Heat oven to 350F (175C) and grease a 12-cup muffin tin. Whisk the eggs in a big bowl, stir in the spinach and cheese. Pour evenly into the 12 muffin cups (about 3/4 full). Bake 18 to 22 minutes. Done when the centers are set (no longer jiggly / wet-looking) and a knife comes out clean. Let cool 5 minutes before popping out of the tin.

Greek yogurt + cottage cheese base (no-cook)

\$ • EAT COLD

1 cup (half yogurt, half cottage cheese, stirred together)

No cooking. Stir equal parts Greek yogurt and cottage cheese together in a big container so it's one grab-and-go tub, then portion it out through the week. Works as a savory base (add roast veg + sauce) or a sweet one (add fruit).

Carb

White rice

\$ • COLD OR HOT

about 3/4 cup cooked (75 g dry)

Rinse the rice if you like. Combine with water (check your bag, usually about 1 part rice to 1.5 parts water), bring to a boil, then cover, turn the heat down low, and simmer 15 to 18 minutes without lifting the lid. Turn off the heat and let it sit covered 5 more minutes. Done when all the water is gone and the rice is tender, not crunchy. A rice cooker does all of this for you if you have one.

Roasted (or microwaved) sweet potato

\$ • COLD OR HOT

1 medium potato (about 200 g)

Oven: heat to 425F (220C), poke each potato a few times with a fork, roast on a tray 40 to 45 minutes. Microwave (faster): poke with a fork, microwave 5 to 8 minutes, turning halfway. Either way, it's done when a fork slides into the middle with no resistance.

Chickpea (protein) pasta

\$\$ • COLD OR HOT

about 1 cup cooked (56 g dry)

Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil, salt it, add the pasta. Chickpea pasta cooks fast, usually 7 to 9 minutes (check the bag, it's easy to overcook into mush). Done when a piece is soft all the way through when you bite it. Drain right away, don't let it sit in the hot water. Regular wheat pasta works the same way if you'd rather use that.

Overnight oats base (no-cook)

\$ • EAT COLD

about 3/4 cup dry oats worth, in 1 jar

No cooking. Stir the oats, chia and milk together in a big container (or split into individual jars), cover, and put it in the fridge overnight. Done when it's thick and the oats have softened, usually 6-plus hours, ready by morning. Stir in fruit, honey or protein powder before eating.

Tortillas or sourdough (no-cook)

\$ • COLD OR HOT

1 tortilla or 1 thick slice (about 50 g)

No prep, just buy and portion. Use tortillas for wraps and burrito bowls, sourdough for anything you'd eat open-faced or on the side. Both keep at room temperature until you're ready to use them.

Veg

Roast-tray vegetables

\$ • COLD OR HOT

about 1 heaping cup (167 g raw)

Heat oven to 425F (220C). Toss the broccoli, pepper and onion on a tray with the oil, salt and pepper. Roast 20 minutes, stirring once halfway. Done when the edges are starting to brown and a piece of broccoli is easy to pierce with a fork.

Frozen steam-bag vegetables

\$ • COLD OR HOT

about 1 heaping cup (200 g)

The zero-effort option. Microwave a steam-in-bag portion 4 to 5 minutes (check the bag), or dump straight into a pan with a splash of water, cover, and steam 5 to 6 minutes over medium heat. Done when it's bright in color and tender when you bite it. No chopping, no thawing.

Raw crunch (peppers, cucumber, carrots)

\$ • EAT COLD

about 1 heaping cup (150 g)

No cooking. Slice everything into sticks or rounds once at prep time and split into containers. Good cold on the plate or as a stand-alone snack with a sauce for dipping.

Bagged salad base

\$ • EAT COLD

about 1.5 cups (150 g)

No cooking. A pre-washed bagged salad mix works exactly the same way if you'd rather not chop, just swap in the bag weight. Split into containers at prep time so it's grab-and-go, and add sauce right before eating so it doesn't go soggy.

Canned corn & black beans

\$ • COLD OR HOT

about 3/4 cup (150 g)

No cooking. Open the cans, drain and rinse in a colander, and portion straight into containers. Warms up in a pan or microwave in a couple minutes if you want it hot, or eat it cold on a burrito bowl.

Sauce

Buffalo Ranch

\$ • EAT COLD

about 2 tbsp

No cooking. Stir everything together in a jar or bowl until smooth. Keeps in the fridge like a dressing.

Locker-Room Caesar (Greek-Yogurt Caesar)

\$ \$ • EAT COLD

about 2 tbsp

No cooking. Blend or whisk everything together until smooth (a blender or food processor makes this easiest because of the anchovy and garlic). Keeps in the fridge like a dressing.

Chipotle-Lime Protein Crema

\$ • EAT COLD

about 2 tbsp

No cooking. Blend everything together until smooth. Keeps in the fridge like a dressing.

Greek-Yogurt Queso

\$ • MICROWAVE

about 1/4 cup

Melt the butter in a small pot over low heat, whisk in the cornstarch, then add everything else. Warm gently over low heat, stirring, until it's smooth and slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Done when it coats the back of a spoon. Microwave to reheat in 20-second bursts, stirring between.

Jarred red sauce (marinara)

\$ • EAT COLD

about 1/2 cup

No cooking required, straight from the jar. If you want it warm, heat it in a small pot over medium-low or in the microwave for a minute, stirring halfway.

Simple recipes

Cook it once. Eat it all week.

Sheet-Pan Chicken, Sweet Potato & Broccoli Plate

The classic bodybuilder plate, sheet-pan simple

511

KCAL

41

PROTEIN

48

CARBS

19

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 10/40 MIN • COLD OR HOT • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Boneless skinless chicken thighs	700 g (about 1.5 lb)
Sweet potato	2 medium potatoes, cubed
Broccoli florets	1 large head, cut up
Olive oil	1.5 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 425F (220C). Cube the sweet potato and cut the broccoli into florets.
- 2 Spread the chicken thighs on one lined tray. Toss the sweet potato and broccoli with the oil, salt and pepper on a second tray.
- 3 Roast both trays 20 to 25 minutes, flipping the veg once halfway. The chicken is done when the biggest piece is no longer pink in the middle (165F / 74C if you have a thermometer); the veg is done when it browns at the edges.
- 4 Let everything cool about 10 minutes, then divide between 4 containers.
- 5 Add whatever sauce you like right before eating, not at pack time, so the plate doesn't go soggy in the fridge.

ON SHIFT This is the plate to build a week around.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner: swap the thigh for chicken breast and pull it a few minutes early so it doesn't dry out.

Ground Turkey & Pasta with Marinara and Green Beans

Weeknight spaghetti and meat sauce, batched for four

509

KCAL

39

PROTEIN

57

CARBS

15

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 12/25 MIN • MICROWAVE • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Ground turkey, 93% lean	600 g (about 1.3 lb)
Dry short pasta (rotini or penne)	4 servings, about 56 g dry each
Green beans, trimmed	about 3 cups
Marinara sauce, jarred	about 1.5 cups

METHOD

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil for the pasta.
- 2 While the water heats, brown the ground turkey in a pan over medium-high heat, breaking it up with a spatula, seasoned with just salt and pepper, 8 to 10 minutes, until no pink remains.
- 3 Cook the pasta according to the bag, usually 9 to 11 minutes, then drain.
- 4 Steam or microwave the green beans 4 to 5 minutes until bright green and tender-crisp. Stir the marinara into the browned turkey and warm through, 2 to 3 minutes.
- 5 Divide the pasta, turkey-marinara, and green beans between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT Reheats in a microwave in about 3 minutes, stir halfway.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Lower carb: swap the pasta for an extra cup of green beans per portion.

Big Mac Bowl

The drive-through burger, no bun, in a bowl

485

KCAL

37

PROTEIN

4

CARBS

35

FAT

PER SERVING · MAKES 4 · 12/15 MIN · COLD OR HOT · \$\$ · PACKABLE

THE BATCH · MAKES 4

Lean ground beef (90% lean)	600 g (about 1.3 lb)
Romaine lettuce	1 small head, chopped
Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded	1 cup shredded
Mayonnaise	1/4 cup
Dijon mustard	2 tbsp
Red wine vinegar	4 tsp

METHOD

- 1 Brown the ground beef in a pan over medium-high heat, breaking it into small crumbles, seasoned with just salt and pepper, 8 to 10 minutes, until no pink remains and it's no longer wet-looking (165F / 74C if you have a thermometer). Drain off any excess fat.
- 2 While the beef cooks, chop the romaine lettuce into small pieces.
- 3 Make the special sauce: whisk the mayonnaise, dijon mustard and red wine vinegar together in a small bowl until smooth.
- 4 Divide the chopped lettuce into 4 containers as the base layer, then top with the beef and shredded cheddar.
- 5 Keep the sauce in a small separate container and spoon it on right before eating, or the lettuce wilts and goes watery in the fridge.

ON SHIFT Pack the sauce separate, always.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner: use 93% lean beef instead of 90% and cut the mayo to 2 tablespoons.

BBQ Turkey Rice Bowl with Corn

Pulled-pork-and-cornbread plate, rebuilt with lean turkey

684

KCAL

37

PROTEIN

96

CARBS

18

FAT

PER SERVING · MAKES 4 · 10/30 MIN · MICROWAVE · \$ · PACKABLE

THE BATCH · MAKES 4

Ground turkey, 93% lean	600 g (about 1.3 lb)
White long-grain rice, dry	about 1.5 cups dry
Frozen corn kernels	about 3 cups
BBQ sauce	about 2/3 cup
Olive oil	1 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Cook the rice according to the bag, about 1 part rice to 1.5 parts water, simmered covered 15 to 18 minutes.
- 2 While the rice cooks, heat the oil in a pan over medium-high and brown the ground turkey, breaking it up, 8 to 10 minutes, until no pink remains.
- 3 Stir the BBQ sauce into the browned turkey and simmer 2 to 3 minutes until it coats everything.
- 4 Steam or microwave the frozen corn 4 to 5 minutes.
- 5 Divide the rice, BBQ turkey, and corn between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT Reheats in about 3 minutes in a microwave, stir halfway through.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Lower sugar: cut the BBQ sauce to 100g and add a splash of apple cider vinegar to keep the tang.

Honey-Mustard Chicken Rice Bowl with Peas

Honey-mustard chicken tenders, the sit-down-restaurant order, turned into a batch

671

KCAL

46

PROTEIN

82

CARBS

19

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 12/40 MIN • COLD OR HOT • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Boneless skinless chicken thighs	700 g (about 1.5 lb)
White long-grain rice, dry	about 1.5 cups dry
Frozen green peas	about 3 cups
Honey	2 tbsp
Dijon mustard	2 tbsp
Olive oil	1 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 425F (220C). Rub the chicken thighs with the oil, salt and pepper on a lined tray.
- 2 Bake 20 minutes. While it bakes, cook the rice according to the bag and stir the honey and dijon mustard together in a small bowl.
- 3 Pull the tray out, brush the honey-mustard glaze over the chicken, and bake 5 to 8 more minutes until the biggest piece is no longer pink in the middle (165F / 74C if you have a thermometer).
- 4 Steam or microwave the frozen peas 3 to 4 minutes.
- 5 Let the chicken rest 5 minutes, slice, then divide the chicken, rice, and peas between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT The glaze sets up a little as it cools, so this one is just as good cold out of a cooler as it is reheated.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner: swap the thigh for chicken breast, same glaze, same bake time, pull a few minutes earlier.

Beef, Sweet Potato & Green Beans Plate

Steak-house plate on a meal-prep budget

508

KCAL

35

PROTEIN

49

CARBS

19

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 10/40 MIN • COLD OR HOT • \$\$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Lean ground beef (90% lean)	600 g (about 1.3 lb)
Sweet potato	2 medium potatoes, cubed
Green beans, trimmed	about 4 cups
Olive oil	1 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 425F (220C). Cube the sweet potato, toss with half the oil, salt and pepper, and roast on a tray 25 to 30 minutes, flipping once.
- 2 While the potato roasts, heat the rest of the oil in a pan over medium-high and brown the ground beef, breaking it up, 8 to 10 minutes, until no pink remains. Drain off excess fat.
- 3 Steam or microwave the green beans 4 to 5 minutes until bright green and tender-crisp.
- 4 Let the sweet potato cool about 10 minutes.
- 5 Divide the beef, sweet potato and green beans between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT Hot sauce or a squeeze of lemon wakes this one up if plain gets boring by day three, both are zero-macro adds.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner: use 93% lean beef and drain thoroughly.

Cold Tuna & Rice Salad Bowl

Tuna salad sandwich, minus the bread, plus a scoop of rice

587

KCAL

34

PROTEIN

63

CARBS

20

FAT

PER SERVING · MAKES 4 · 10/15 MIN · EAT COLD · \$ · PACKABLE

THE BATCH · MAKES 4

White (albacore) tuna in olive oil, drained	3 cans, about 142 g drained each
White long-grain rice, dry	about 1.5 cups dry, cooked and cooled
Cucumber	1 large cucumber, diced
Mayonnaise	1/4 cup
Fresh lemon juice	2 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Cook the rice according to the bag, then spread it on a tray to cool completely, about 15 minutes, before mixing it with anything cold.
- 2 Drain the tuna cans well and dice the cucumber.
- 3 In a large bowl, whisk the mayonnaise and lemon juice together, then fold in the tuna, cooled rice and cucumber.
- 4 Divide between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT This one is fully cold, no reheating, no microwave line at work.

KEEP IT SAFE This is a cold, no-cook dish.

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner: swap half the mayo for plain Greek yogurt.

Salmon, Rice & Green Beans Bowl

Canned-salmon dinner, done in the time it takes to cook rice

492

KCAL

33

PROTEIN

67

CARBS

10

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 8/25 MIN • COLD OR HOT • \$\$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Canned wild pink salmon	3 cans, about 148 g drained each
White long-grain rice, dry	about 1.5 cups dry
Green beans, trimmed	about 3 cups
Olive oil	1 tbsp
Fresh lemon juice	4 tsp

METHOD

- 1 Cook the rice according to the bag, about 1 part rice to 1.5 parts water, simmered covered 15 to 18 minutes.
- 2 Steam or microwave the green beans 4 to 5 minutes until bright green and tender-crisp.
- 3 Drain the salmon cans and flake the salmon with a fork, checking for any stray bones or skin you'd rather not eat.
- 4 Toss the rice and green beans with the oil and lemon juice.
- 5 Divide the rice and beans between 4 containers and top each with a portion of flaked salmon.

ON SHIFT Eats hot or cold equally well since the salmon is already cooked, so don't stress about reheating it perfectly.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS No canned salmon: canned tuna works the same way, drained and flaked.

Turkey Taco Rice Bowl

Taco night, built ahead in one bowl

694

KCAL

44

PROTEIN

84

CARBS

20

FAT

PER SERVING · MAKES 4 · 12/30 MIN · MICROWAVE · \$ · PACKABLE

THE BATCH · MAKES 4

Ground turkey, 93% lean	600 g (about 1.3 lb)
White long-grain rice, dry	about 1.5 cups dry
Sweet corn, canned	1 1/3 cans, drained
Black beans, canned	1 1/3 cans, drained
Tomato salsa, chunky	about 3/4 cup
Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded	3/4 cup shredded

METHOD

- 1 Cook the rice according to the bag, about 1 part rice to 1.5 parts water, simmered covered 15 to 18 minutes.
- 2 While the rice cooks, brown the ground turkey in a pan over medium-high heat, breaking it up, seasoned with salt, pepper, and a teaspoon each of chili powder and cumin if you have them (negligible calories), 8 to 10 minutes, until no pink remains.
- 3 Drain and rinse the corn and black beans.
- 4 Stir the salsa into the browned turkey and warm through, 2 minutes.
- 5 Divide the rice, turkey, corn and black beans between 4 containers and top each with the shredded cheddar.

ON SHIFT Reheats in about 3 minutes, the cheese melts right into the top.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Spicier: use a hot salsa instead of mild.

Chicken, Pasta & Roast Veg Plate

Chicken and veggie pasta, the plate every gym-goer has made a version of

561

KCAL

45

PROTEIN

53

CARBS

20

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 12/35 MIN • MICROWAVE • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Boneless skinless chicken thighs	700 g (about 1.5 lb)
Dry short pasta (rotini or penne)	4 servings, about 56 g dry each
Broccoli florets	1 medium head, cut up
Red bell pepper	about 2 peppers, sliced
Olive oil	1.5 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 425F (220C). Season the chicken thighs with salt and pepper on one lined tray. Toss the broccoli and bell pepper with the oil, salt and pepper on a second tray.
- 2 Slide both trays in the oven. The veg comes out at 20 minutes, the chicken at 25 to 30 minutes (165F / 74C if you have a thermometer).
- 3 While the trays bake, cook the pasta according to the bag, about 9 to 11 minutes, then drain.
- 4 Let the chicken cool 10 minutes, then slice it.
- 5 Divide the pasta, chicken and roast veg between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT This plate is built to take a sauce.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Lower carb: swap the pasta for an extra tray of roasted veg.

Turkey & Black Bean Burrito Wraps

The gas-station burrito, built at home for a fraction of the price

536

KCAL

38

PROTEIN

44

CARBS

23

FAT

PER SERVING · MAKES 4 · 15/30 MIN · MICROWAVE · \$ · PACKABLE

THE BATCH · MAKES 4

Ground turkey, 93% lean	500 g
Flour tortillas, 10-inch	4 tortillas
Black beans, canned	1 1/3 cans, drained
Sweet corn, canned	about 1 cup, drained
Sharp cheddar cheese, shredded	1 cup shredded
Tomato salsa, chunky	about 2/3 cup

METHOD

- 1 Brown the ground turkey in a pan over medium-high heat, breaking it up, seasoned with salt and pepper, 8 to 10 minutes, until no pink remains.
- 2 Drain and rinse the black beans and corn, then stir them into the turkey along with the salsa. Warm through 2 to 3 minutes.
- 3 Warm the tortillas for about 15 seconds each in a dry pan or the microwave so they fold without cracking.
- 4 Divide the turkey mixture and shredded cheddar between the 4 tortillas, fold in the sides, and roll tight.
- 5 Wrap each burrito in foil or parchment. Refrigerate for the week, or freeze what you won't eat in the first 4 days.

ON SHIFT Reheats straight from the fridge in about 90 seconds, or from frozen in 3 to 4 minutes, flip halfway either way.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Lower carb: use a low-carb tortilla.

Chicken Fajita Rice Bowl

Sizzling-skillet fajitas, sheet-pan simple

615

KCAL

41

PROTEIN

70

CARBS

20

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 12/40 MIN • COLD OR HOT • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Boneless skinless chicken thighs	700 g (about 1.5 lb)
Red bell pepper	about 2 peppers, sliced
Yellow onion	1 large onion, sliced
White long-grain rice, dry	about 1.5 cups dry
Olive oil	1.5 tbsp
Fresh lime juice	2 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Heat the oven to 425F (220C). Slice the chicken thighs into strips and toss on a tray with the sliced pepper and onion, the oil, salt and pepper.
- 2 Roast 20 to 25 minutes, stirring once halfway, until the chicken is no longer pink in the middle (165F / 74C if you have a thermometer) and the veg has browned edges.
- 3 While the tray roasts, cook the rice according to the bag, about 1 part rice to 1.5 parts water, simmered covered 15 to 18 minutes.
- 4 Squeeze the lime juice over the chicken and veg straight off the tray.
- 5 Divide the rice and chicken fajita mix between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT A good one to eat straight out of a tortilla too if you've got the tortillas from the burrito recipe on hand.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Spicier: add a sliced jalapeno to the tray before roasting.

Turkey, Pasta & Broccoli with Parmesan

Buttered noodles and broccoli, all grown up with parmesan and lean protein

563

KCAL

42

PROTEIN

51

CARBS

22

FAT

PER SERVING · MAKES 4 · 10/30 MIN · MICROWAVE · \$ · PACKABLE

THE BATCH · MAKES 4

Ground turkey, 93% lean	600 g (about 1.3 lb)
Dry short pasta (rotini or penne)	4 servings, about 56 g dry each
Broccoli florets	1 medium head, cut up
Parmesan cheese, finely grated	3/4 cup
Olive oil	1 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil for the pasta.
- 2 While the water heats, heat the oil in a pan over medium-high and brown the ground turkey, breaking it up, seasoned with salt and pepper, 8 to 10 minutes, until no pink remains.
- 3 Cook the pasta according to the bag, about 9 to 11 minutes, then drain, saving a splash of the pasta water.
- 4 Steam or microwave the broccoli 4 to 5 minutes until bright green and tender-crisp.
- 5 Toss the pasta, turkey and broccoli together with a splash of the reserved pasta water and the parmesan, then divide between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT This one reheats a little dry since there's no sauce, so a splash of water or milk before the microwave keeps it from turning into a brick.

KEEP IT SAFE Cool within 2 hours of cooking, then store sealed at or below 40F (4C); good for 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 to 4 months in the freezer.

MAKE IT YOURS Saucier: stir in a few tablespoons of jarred marinara or a pat of butter per portion.

No-cook staples

Built the night before. Eaten cold.

PB-Banana "Banana Bread" Protein Oats

Peanut butter banana bread (the PB-and-banana craving, in a jar)

660

KCAL

55

PROTEIN

73

CARBS

19

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 5 • 12/480 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 5

Rolled oats	2.75 cups
Plain nonfat Greek yogurt	3 cups
2% reduced-fat milk	2.5 cups
Vanilla whey protein powder	5 scoops
Chia seeds	5 tbsp
Banana, ripe	2 medium
Natural peanut butter, smooth	5 tbsp
Pure maple syrup	2 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Whisk together the rolled oats, vanilla whey, and chia seeds in a large bowl.
- 2 Mash the bananas with a fork until mostly smooth, then scrape into the bowl.
- 3 Add the Greek yogurt, peanut butter, and maple syrup, then pour in the milk.
- 4 Stir hard for a full minute until it forms a thick, even batter with no dry streaks.
- 5 Divide between 5 jars, roughly 430 g each, seal, and refrigerate at least 8 hours, ideally overnight. Eat cold; if a jar firms up by day 3 or 4, stir in a splash of milk.

ON SHIFT Grab a jar straight from the fridge on your way out.

KEEP IT SAFE Store sealed at or below 4°C (40°F).

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner (cut about 120 kcal/jar): drop the peanut butter to 40g and the maple to 20g.

Apple Pie Overnight Oats

Apple pie à la mode: the diner slice and the scoop of vanilla, turned into a cold spoonable breakfast you build once and grab for five mornings.

578

KCAL

37

PROTEIN

86

CARBS

11

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 5 • 12/480 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 5

Old-fashioned rolled oats	400 g (about 4 1/2 cups)
Plain nonfat Greek yogurt	500 g (about 2 cups)
Vanilla whey protein isolate	90 g (about 3 scoops)
2% reduced-fat milk	600 g (about 2 1/2 cups)
Chia seeds	40 g (about 1/4 cup)
Apple, coarsely grated	300 g (about 2 apples)
Pure maple syrup	40 g (about 2 Tbsp)

METHOD

- 1 Grate the apples, skin on, on the large holes of a box grater, stopping at the core, about 300 g, roughly two apples.
- 2 Whisk the dry ingredients first in a large bowl: oats, vanilla whey, chia, 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon, and 1/4 teaspoon salt.
- 3 Add the Greek yogurt, milk, maple syrup, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract. Stir hard for a full minute until it looks like a loose, even batter. Fold in the grated apple.
- 4 Divide between 5 jars, about 400 g each, seal, and refrigerate at least 8 hours, ideally overnight.
- 5 Stir each jar; splash in a tablespoon of milk if you want it looser. Eat cold from the jar. Optional: top with chopped walnuts or toasted pecans and a pinch of cinnamon right before eating.

ON SHIFT This is a 4 a.m.

KEEP IT SAFE Dairy-based, so keep it cold: store sealed in the fridge at or below 4°C (40°F) for up to 5 days.

MAKE IT YOURS Lower carb / leaner: drop the maple syrup (the apple carries plenty of sweetness) to cut about 5 g carb per jar, and swap the 2% milk for unsweetened almond milk to trim fat and carbs.

Tiramisu Overnight Oats

Tiramisu: the espresso-and-mascarpone Italian dessert, rebuilt as a grab-and-go breakfast jar

706

KCAL

73

PROTEIN

70

CARBS

15

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 15/375 MIN • EAT COLD • \$\$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Old-fashioned rolled oats	240 g
Vanilla whey protein powder	160 g (4 scoops)
Cottage cheese, 2% milkfat	600 g
Plain nonfat Greek yogurt	480 g
Chia seeds	48 g (4 Tbsp)
Pure maple syrup	60 g (4 tsp)
Unsweetened almond milk	800 g

METHOD

- 1 Brew about 1 cup (240 ml) of strong coffee or use cold brew concentrate, and chill it. Stovetop espresso or 2 tsp instant stirred into hot water both work.
- 2 In a big bowl, combine the rolled oats, vanilla protein powder, chia seeds, maple syrup, the unsweetened almond milk, and the cooled coffee. Whisk hard for 30 seconds until there are no dry protein clumps.
- 3 In a blender or with an immersion blender, blend the cottage cheese and Greek yogurt together until completely smooth, no curds left, about 30 seconds. This is what makes it taste like sweetened mascarpone.
- 4 Divide the oat base between four pint jars or sealable containers (a heaping 3/4 cup each). Spoon the blended cottage-cheese-yogurt cap over the top of each, smooth it flat, lid, and refrigerate at least 6 hours, ideally overnight.
- 5 Right before eating, dust the top with cocoa powder through a small sieve or a pinch between your fingers. Do not dust ahead of time, the cocoa sucks up moisture overnight and turns to paste. Eat cold, straight from the jar.

ON SHIFT Grab one on the way out and it's a full 73 g of protein before your shift even gets going, no cooking, no microwave needed.

KEEP IT SAFE Dairy-heavy, so keep it cold.

MAKE IT YOURS To cut calories/carbs, drop the maple to 1/2 tsp per jar (the protein powder and coffee carry plenty of flavor) and use 50 g oats instead of 60 g.

Carrot Cake Overnight Oats

Carrot cake (cream-cheese-frosting slice) reworked into a make-ahead jar

527

KCAL

27

PROTEIN

72

CARBS

16

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 12/375 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Old-fashioned rolled oats	2 1/2 cups
Plain nonfat Greek yogurt	1 2/3 cups
2% reduced-fat milk	1 1/2 cups
Carrots	2 medium
Walnuts, chopped	1/2 cup
Raisins	1/3 cup
Pure maple syrup	2 tbsp
Chia seeds	2 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Toast the chopped walnuts in a dry pan over medium heat, stirring 3 to 4 minutes until nutty and lightly darkened, then tip onto a plate to cool. Finely grate the carrots on the small holes of a box grater, about 150 g, 2 medium.
- 2 In a large bowl, whisk the Greek yogurt, milk, maple syrup, 2 tsp ground cinnamon, 1/2 tsp ground ginger, 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg, 1 tsp vanilla, and a pinch of salt until smooth.
- 3 Stir in the oats, chia seeds, grated carrot, and raisins until evenly coated.
- 4 Divide between 4 jars (about 320 g each), pressing the mix so liquid covers the oats. Lid and refrigerate at least 6 hours, ideally overnight.
- 5 To serve, top each jar with a quarter of the toasted walnuts (about 12 g). Optional: add a spoon of yogurt for a cream-cheese-frosting finish.

ON SHIFT Grab-and-go cold breakfast.

KEEP IT SAFE Keep refrigerated at or below 40F (4C).

MAKE IT YOURS Want it bigger/leaner?

Berry & Honey Protein Yogurt Bowl

Fruit-on-the-bottom yogurt cup, made from scratch and doubled up on protein

312

KCAL

24

PROTEIN

29

CARBS

12

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 8/8 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Plain nonfat Greek yogurt	2 cups
Cottage cheese, 2%	1 1/4 cups
Blueberries	1 1/3 cups
Strawberries	1 1/3 cups, sliced
Honey	2 tbsp
Walnuts, chopped	1/2 cup

METHOD

- 1 Stir the Greek yogurt and cottage cheese together in a big bowl until it's one smooth base.
- 2 Slice the strawberries; leave the blueberries whole.
- 3 Divide the yogurt-cottage cheese base between 4 containers.
- 4 Top each with the berries and a drizzle of honey.
- 5 Scatter the walnuts on top right before eating so they stay crunchy instead of going soft in the fridge.

ON SHIFT Keep the walnuts in a small separate bag and add them at the moment you eat, they turn soft and lose their crunch if they sit in the yogurt for a day.

KEEP IT SAFE This is a cold, no-cook dish.

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner: skip the walnuts and save about 100 kcal a bowl.

Peanut Butter Banana Protein Bowl

Peanut butter banana sandwich, no bread, extra protein

362

KCAL

28

PROTEIN

32

CARBS

15

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 5/5 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Plain nonfat Greek yogurt	2 cups
Cottage cheese, 2%	1 1/4 cups
Banana, ripe	2 medium
Natural peanut butter, smooth	1/3 cup
Honey	1.5 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Mash the bananas with a fork until mostly smooth.
- 2 Stir the Greek yogurt and cottage cheese together in a big bowl until smooth.
- 3 Add the mashed banana, peanut butter, and honey, and stir until fully combined.
- 4 Divide between 4 containers.

ON SHIFT Eats straight from the cooler, no reheating needed.

KEEP IT SAFE This is a cold, no-cook dish.

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner: cut the peanut butter to 60 g.

Packable snacks

Your 3 a.m. floor, and it beats the vending machine.

Shift-Pocket Teriyaki Beef Jerky

Gas-station Teriyaki Beef Jerky: the \$9 bag, made at home for a third of the price with triple the protein and no mystery preservatives.

194

KCAL

35

PROTEIN

9

CARBS

2

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 6 • 25/300 MIN • EAT COLD • \$\$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 6

Eye of round roast	2 lb
Soy sauce	4 tbsp
Brown sugar	2 tbsp
Worcestershire sauce	2 tbsp
Honey	1 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Put the eye of round in the freezer 45 to 60 minutes until the surface is stiff but a knife still goes through, partially-frozen beef is the trick to thin, even jerky. Slice WITH the grain into 1/8 to 1/4 inch strips, trimming off any visible fat or silverskin as you go (fat doesn't dry, it goes rancid).
- 2 Whisk the soy sauce, brown sugar, Worcestershire, and honey in a bowl until the sugar dissolves. Add a heavy crack of black pepper, a teaspoon of garlic powder, a teaspoon of onion powder, and a pinch of red pepper flakes if you like heat.
- 3 Combine the beef and marinade in a zip-top bag, press out the air, and refrigerate at least 12 hours, ideally overnight.
- 4 Blot the strips dry on paper towel. Heat the oven to its lowest setting, ideally 175F (80C), and lay the strips directly on the racks with a foil-lined tray below to catch drips. Crack the oven door an inch with a wooden spoon so moisture escapes.
- 5 Dry 3 to 4 hours, rotating racks top-to-bottom halfway, until a strip bends and cracks but does not snap in half. Cool completely on a rack before storing. Read the food safety note below before eating, an extra heat step after drying is required to make this safe.

ON SHIFT This is the rare meal-prep item built for the worst conditions: dried jerky is shelf-stable, so it lives in a shift bag, jacket pocket, or your vehicle through a full 12-hour shift without a cooler.

KEEP IT SAFE Home-dried beef jerky carries a real pathogen risk: drying meat at a low oven temp (175F/80C, door cracked) or in a dehydrator (160F) does NOT reliably kill Salmonella or E.

MAKE IT YOURS Want it leaner-tasting and even lower carb?

Smoked Salmon & Cottage Cheese Bowl

Everything bagel with lox and cream cheese

453

KCAL

42

PROTEIN

29

CARBS

19

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 15/15 MIN • EAT COLD • \$\$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Cottage cheese, 2% milkfat	3 3/4 cups (one 2-lb / 907 g tub)
Cold-smoked salmon	two 4-5 oz packs
Chickpeas, canned	1 1/2 cups
Cucumber	1 large field cucumber or 2 mini cukes
Cherry/grape tomatoes	1 1/4 cups
Olive oil, extra-virgin	2 tbsp
Capers	2 tbsp
Everything bagel seasoning	2 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Drain and rinse the chickpeas well, then pat them dry on a clean towel. Dice the cucumber and quarter the cherry tomatoes.
- 2 Tear the smoked salmon into ribbons with your hands rather than chopping it, so it drapes through the bowl.
- 3 Make the dressing: stir the olive oil, drained capers, and everything bagel seasoning together in a small jar.
- 4 In a big bowl, gently fold the cottage cheese with the chickpeas, cucumber, and tomato. Fold, don't whip, you want it loose and creamy.
- 5 Divide the cottage cheese mix between 4 containers, lay the salmon ribbons on top, and spoon the dressing over the salmon. Seal, refrigerate, and eat cold straight from the container.

ON SHIFT Built for a quiet, no-cook break.

KEEP IT SAFE Cold meal - keep it cold.

MAKE IT YOURS Want it leaner: swap to 1% or fat-free cottage cheese to drop about 5 g fat per box.

Midnight Chocolate Chia Pudding Cups

Snack Pack chocolate pudding cups

277

KCAL

18

PROTEIN

33

CARBS

10

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 5 • 10/250 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 5

Nonfat plain Greek yogurt	600 g
Whole milk	1 cup
Chia seeds	1/2 cup plus 1 tbsp
Unsweetened cocoa powder	1/2 cup
Pure maple syrup	3.5 tbsp
Semisweet chocolate chips	3.5 tbsp

METHOD

- 1 Whisk the Greek yogurt and whole milk in a large bowl until completely smooth and pourable.
- 2 Sift in the cocoa powder a little at a time, whisking until uniformly dark with no dry pockets, then whisk in the maple syrup and a pinch of salt.
- 3 Stir in the chia seeds hard for 60 seconds. Wait 5 minutes, then stir hard again to break up clumps.
- 4 Divide between 5 jars (about 216 g each). Seal and refrigerate at least 4 hours, ideally overnight.
- 5 Just before eating, chop the chocolate chips and scatter about 8 g over each jar. Stir if any liquid pooled on top.

ON SHIFT This is the snack that survives a nightshift.

KEEP IT SAFE Keep refrigerated at or below 4C / 40F.

MAKE IT YOURS Macros are computed on the raw batch (1079 g total) divided by 5 jars, so they hold exactly as long as you fill evenly.

Wild Berry Greek Yogurt Bark

Frozen yogurt / fruit-on-the-bottom yogurt cup

199

KCAL

19

PROTEIN

18

CARBS

6

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 8 • 12/192 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 8

Plain whole-milk Greek yogurt	3 1/2 cups (one 32 oz tub)
Vanilla whey protein powder	3 scoops
Honey	1/4 cup
Strawberries	1 cup
Blueberries	1 cup

METHOD

- 1 Line a rimmed half-sheet pan (about 13×18 in) with parchment, leaving overhang on two sides. Dice the strawberries and pat both berries dry with a paper towel.
- 2 Whisk the yogurt, whey, and honey until completely smooth with no powder streaks.
- 3 Spread the yogurt onto the parchment into an even slab about 1/4 inch (6 mm) thick.
- 4 Scatter the berries over the surface and press them lightly into the yogurt. Freeze flat and uncovered at least 3 hours, or overnight.
- 5 Lift out by the overhang and break into roughly 8 pieces. Eat frozen, or let a piece sit 2 to 3 minutes for a softer bite. Store in an airtight container in the freezer, parchment between layers.

ON SHIFT This is the one to pack when work has no fridge and the day is long.

KEEP IT SAFE Greek yogurt and fresh berries are perishable.

MAKE IT YOURS To bump protein toward 25 g a piece, swap to a 0% fat Greek yogurt and add a fourth scoop of whey, but expect a slightly icier, harder bite, so let it temper 3-4 minutes before eating.

Brown-Butter Cookie Dough Bites

No-bake edible chocolate chip cookie dough

335

KCAL

17

PROTEIN

28

CARBS

20

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 8 • 15/45 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 8

Canned chickpeas	1.5 cups
Natural peanut butter	3/4 cup
Unsalted butter	3 tbsp
Pure maple syrup	3.5 tbsp
Vanilla whey protein powder	3 scoops
Rolled oats	1/2 cup
Semisweet chocolate chips	1/3 cup

METHOD

- 1 Brown the butter in a small pan over medium heat, swirling, until golden and nutty, 3 to 5 minutes; scrape into a bowl and cool a few minutes. Blitz the dry oats in a food processor to a coarse flour.
- 2 Add the drained chickpeas, peanut butter, browned butter, maple syrup, 1 tsp vanilla extract, 1/2 tsp baking soda, and a pinch of salt to the processor. Run 1 to 2 minutes, scraping, until completely smooth with no whole chickpeas.
- 3 Add the oat flour and vanilla whey; pulse to a thick, scoopable dough.
- 4 Scrape into a bowl and stir in the chocolate chips by hand. Chill 15 minutes.
- 5 Scoop and roll into 16 even balls, about 46 g each. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes before eating. Pack 2 per portion.

ON SHIFT Cold, sweet, and zero prep at work.

KEEP IT SAFE Store in an airtight container in the fridge (at or below 40F / 4C) for up to 1 week, or freeze for up to 2 months.

MAKE IT YOURS Leaner version: swap the 42 g browned butter for an extra 40 g peanut butter and skip the brown-butter step (you lose the toffee note but drop the saturated fat).

Chili-Crisp Edamame & Jammy Egg Box

The gas-station "protein box" (hard egg + sad cheese cube): rebuilt as a savory, spicy, eat-cold snack that actually slaps

417

KCAL

34

PROTEIN

22

CARBS

24

FAT

PER SERVING • MAKES 4 • 20/25 MIN • EAT COLD • \$ • PACKABLE

THE BATCH • MAKES 4

Shelled edamame, frozen (mukimame)	4 cups
Large eggs	8 large
Soy sauce	2.5 tbsps
Toasted sesame oil	2 tsp
Toasted sesame seeds	2 tbsps
Chili crisp	1.5 tbsps
Green onion / scallion	3 stalks
Honey	2.5 tsp

METHOD

- 1 Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil; set up an ice bath (a bowl two-thirds full of cold water plus ice). Lower the eggs in gently and set a timer for 8 minutes for a soft, jammy set, then move them straight to the ice bath for 5 minutes.
- 2 Keep the same boiling water. Drop in the frozen edamame and boil 3 to 4 minutes until hot and bright green. Drain well and let it sit a minute so the steam carries off the surface water.
- 3 Make the glaze while everything cooks: whisk the soy sauce, honey, sesame oil, and chili crisp together in a bowl.
- 4 Toss the hot drained edamame in the glaze until coated and glossy, then fold in the sesame seeds and most of the green onion, saving a pinch to scatter on top.
- 5 Peel the eggs under a thin stream of cold water and halve lengthwise. Divide the glazed edamame between 4 containers, nestle in 2 egg halves per box, spoon any remaining glaze over the eggs, and finish with the reserved green onion.

ON SHIFT Pure cold grab-and-go.

KEEP IT SAFE Keep refrigerated at or below 4 C / 40 F.

MAKE IT YOURS Bigger appetite or a heavier shift: add a third egg per box (about +70 kcal, +6 g protein) or a scoop of cold rice on the side.

The Kit

What to buy once, then never think about again.

The whole kit. About \$90 to \$150.

You do not need a fancy kitchen or a wall of gadgets. You need a small kit that gets food from your fridge to your shift without it spoiling or going cold. Buy this once and you are set for years. The whole minimum kit lands at about \$90 to \$150 CAD. Brand names below are examples the community keeps recommending, not endorsements.

Item	Why it earns its spot	Price	Priority
8 to 10 single-compartment containers	The workhorse. About ten per person means one is always clean while the rest are in the wash or the fridge. Match the size to a portion so you are not guessing. A leakproof plastic set (Rubbermaid Brilliance style) or a basic glass set both work.	\$25 to \$40	ESSENTIAL
1 insulated food jar (16 to 24 oz)	The hero of this whole book if your shift has no microwave. Preheated properly, it keeps food safely hot for most of a shift. A vacuum-insulated jar (Thermos style) is the one gadget worth the money.	\$20 to \$30	ESSENTIAL
1 soft cooler (lunch-bag size)	Your shift-length fridge. It keeps cold food below 40F for a shift as long as it has real ice packs in it. A soft-sided cooler bag that fits your containers is all you need.	\$20 to \$35	ESSENTIAL
2 to 4 slim ice packs	The difference between a cooler that works and a warm bag. Slim packs sit flat against your containers. Two per cooler, so one is always frozen and ready while the other is in transit.	\$10 to \$20	ESSENTIAL
1 instant-read thermometer	Takes the guesswork out of food safety. Check reheated food hits 165F in the middle and check your cooler is holding cold. Cheap insurance against a shift spent in the bathroom.	\$12 to \$20	ESSENTIAL
2 to 3 wide-mouth mason jars (16 oz)	For overnight oats, yogurt bowls, and salads you shake up. Wide-mouth is easier to fill, eat from, and clean. Not strictly required, but they make the no-cook breakfasts effortless.	\$6 to \$15	NICE TO HAVE

NO FRIDGE, NO MICROWAVE, NO PROBLEM

The 3 a.m. playbook.

No fridge and no microwave is not an edge case on shift work, it is Tuesday. Two pieces of gear cover it.

The preheated insulated jar (for hot food). An insulated jar keeps food hot, but only if you warm the jar first, and this step is the whole trick. Fill the empty jar with boiling water, cap it, and let it sit about 5 minutes. Dump the water. Now add your food piping hot, heated all the way through to at least 165F, and fill the jar close to the top with as little air space as you can. Cap it tight. A preheated 16 to 24 oz jar holds food safely hot for about 7 to 9 hours, which is most of a shift. Skip the preheat and you get maybe 3 hours, so do not skip it.

The cooler is a shift-length fridge, not a 4-day one (for cold food). A soft cooler with real ice packs holds your cold plates, oats, and snacks below 40F for a shift. Treat it right: use two frozen ice packs, not one melting one. Restock fresh packs every shift. Keep the lid closed and the bag out of the sun and off a hot dashboard. It is a fridge for the length of your shift, so eat what is in it that day. Do not use it to store food for days.

GLASS OR PLASTIC

Do not pick a side. Split the job.

Do not pick a side, split the job. Glass (borosilicate is the premium kind) is for reheating and for meals you eat at home or somewhere with a microwave. It goes straight from fridge to microwave, does not stain or hold odors, and lasts for years. Light plastic is for cold transport only, the food you are carrying in a cooler to eat cold or reheat elsewhere. It is lighter in your bag and it will not shatter. The one hard rule that covers both: never microwave food in plastic. Move it to a plate or a glass container first. Heat plus plastic is the combination you always avoid.

WHEN THE BASICS ARE DIALED IN

2-compartment bento container

Keeps a wet sauce or a crunchy veg separate from the rest until you eat, so nothing goes soggy in transit. Nice once the basics are dialed in.

Silicone freezer trays

Portion sauces, cooked grains, or single servings, freeze them, then pop them out like ice cubes. Makes the freeze-half-on-day-1 habit even easier.

Borosilicate glass container set

The premium reheat container. Goes fridge to microwave to dishwasher, does not stain or hold smells, and lasts for years. Heavier, so pair it with light plastic for days you are carrying food cold.

Plug-in personal oven (HotLogic style)

For a rig, truck, or station with an outlet. Slowly heats a meal over your shift with no open flame and no fighting for a microwave. A real fix if you have power where you work.

Rice cooker or Instant Pot

Set-and-forget the carb layer while you cook everything else. Not required, but it turns your 75-minute prep into more sitting and less watching a pot.

BUILD YOUR OWN WEEK

Your turn. Same system, blank page.

Once the Starter Week clicks, you build your own the exact same way. Pick your layers from the matrix, keep the whole list under about 15 items, and shop once. Here's the blank template. Fill in the lines, cross them off at the store.

Pick your two proteins:

Protein 1 _____

Protein 2 _____

Pick your two carbs:

Carb 1 _____

Carb 2 _____

Pick your two or three veg:

Veg 1 _____

Veg 2 _____

Veg 3 (optional) _____

Pick your three sauces (your anti-boredom engine):

Sauce 1 _____

Sauce 2 _____

Sauce 3 _____

Breakfast and snacks:

Oats and fruit _____

Snack floor _____

The rule: two proteins, not five. Keep it under about 15 items on the list. Freeze half on prep day. Swap the sauce so nothing repeats. That's the entire system, and it fits on this one page.

THE ONE ASK • TOTALLY YOUR CALL

The app that builds your training.

Made it this far? Then here's the honest pitch, once. If the **free** stuff is this dialed in, the app is the real thing.

IronShift builds your actual training, strength and conditioning, programmed around your shifts so they don't wreck each other. Same idea as this book: built for the tired version of you, no willpower required. It's not out yet. But if you want first crack at it, and a founder's deal when it drops, get on the waitlist. No spam, no nonsense, just a heads-up the day it's live.

Join the IronShift waitlist

ironshift.app/waitlist

And come say hi at [@ironshift.app](https://twitter.com/ironshift.app).

Either way, thanks for prepping with me. You just did the hard part, which is starting. *Matt*