

Pantry-Smart Weeknight Cooking

A 4-week plan with shopping lists for quick, budget-friendly dinners.



20

weeknight dinners

4

ready-made
shopping lists

10

no-shop rescue
dinners

36

dinners on the dice



SkillNugget

● SKILLNUGGET COOKING GUIDE

Pantry-Smart Weeknight Cooking

A 4-week plan with shopping lists for quick, budget-friendly dinners.

2026 edition · Large print · Printable

● THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

This book belongs to: _____

We started on: _____



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Food-safety temperatures and storage times follow USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service guidance. Recipes contain common allergens (including milk, eggs, wheat, soy, peanuts and fish); check labels and ask guests about allergies. Cooking times are guides: ovens and stoves vary. This book is not nutrition or medical advice.

FREE SAMPLE

Inside this free sample

The welcome, the smart pantry and two dinners from Week 1.

This sample includes the Welcome, Chapter 1 (stock a smart pantry), the Week 1 shopping list and two complete recipes. The full book has five chapters on the pantry-smart system, all four weeks with 20 dinners and shopping lists, ten pantry rescue dinners, food-safety guidance and a printable toolkit with shopping lists, a meal planner and a surprise.

GET THE FULL BOOK

skillnugget.com/course/pantry-smart-cooking

WELCOME

Dinner, sorted

How this book works, in five minutes.

It's 6 p.m. Everyone's hungry, nobody's planned anything, and the fridge contains half an onion and a mystery jar. This book makes that evening a thing of the past.

Here's the deal. You get **a 4-week dinner plan**: 20 weeknight dinners, Monday to Friday, almost all ready in 20 to 40 minutes. Each week comes with **a shopping list generated from the recipes**, so you buy exactly what you need, and a 20-minute **Sunday prep** that makes the week easy. The recipes share ingredients within each week, so half a cabbage on Tuesday becomes fried rice on Thursday, and Monday's chili becomes Tuesday's stuffed sweet potatoes.

Underneath it all is a simple idea: **a well-stocked pantry is the secret to cheap, fast dinners**. With the right staples in the cupboard, freezer and fridge, you're never more than 20 minutes from a real meal, even without a shopping trip. Chapter 1 shows you exactly what to stock, and Part 3 gives you ten "pantry rescue" dinners for the nights the plan falls apart.

How this book works

Part 1 • The pantry-smart system

Stock a smart pantry, the weekly plan-shop-prep rhythm, the kitchen basics, food safety in plain English and five dinner formulas that use up anything.

Part 2 • The 4-week plan

Four weeks of five dinners. Each week: a menu, a Sunday prep plan, a shopping list and five recipes with swaps and leftover tips.

Part 3 • Beyond the plan

Ten pantry rescue dinners, and how to build your own weekly plans once the four weeks are done.

Your toolkit

Printable shopping lists, a meal-planning pack, and a surprise that makes "What's for dinner?" a game.

A few promises

- **Every recipe serves 4.** Cooking for two? Halve it, or cook the full amount and enjoy the leftovers.
- **No fancy equipment.** A large pan, a large pot, a baking sheet, a knife and a cutting board.
- **No hard-to-find ingredients.** Everything is in an ordinary supermarket.
- **Budget-friendly by design:** beans, lentils, eggs, chicken thighs, frozen vegetables and pantry staples, with ideas for using every last bit.

CHAPTER 1

Stock a smart pantry

The short list of staples that makes fast dinners possible.

A smart pantry isn't a cupboard full of things you'll never use. It's a short list of cheap, long-lasting ingredients that turn into dinner in minutes.

The three zones

The cupboard

Long-lasting dry and canned goods: the backbone of fast dinners.

The freezer and fridge

Frozen vegetables, a few proteins, and the flavor-makers that keep for weeks.

The smart pantry checklist

Tick what you have. You don't need everything at once: add a few items each shop.

Grains and pasta

- ☐ Long-grain white rice
- ☐ Spaghetti
- ☐ A short pasta (penne, fusilli)
- ☐ Small pasta (ditalini, elbows)
- ☐ Egg noodles
- ☐ Tortillas (they freeze well)

Cans and jars

- ☐ Diced and crushed tomatoes
- ☐ Tomato paste
- ☐ Black, white, kidney beans and chickpeas
- ☐ Coconut milk
- ☐ Tuna or salmon
- ☐ Broth (cartons or cubes)
- ☐ Salsa
- ☐ Peanut butter

Dried

- ☐ Brown or green lentils
- ☐ Red lentils
- ☐ Flour and cornstarch
- ☐ Sugar and honey

Oils, sauces and vinegars

- ☐ Olive oil and a neutral vegetable oil
- ☐ Soy sauce
- ☐ Vinegar (cider or rice)
- ☐ Sesame oil
- ☐ Chili sauce

Spices

- ☐ Salt and black pepper
- ☐ Ground cumin, chili powder, smoked paprika
- ☐ Curry powder, Italian seasoning, dried oregano, dried thyme
- ☐ Garlic powder and red pepper flakes

Freezer

- ☐ Peas, corn and mixed vegetables
- ☐ Spinach
- ☐ Chicken thighs or breasts
- ☐ Ground meat
- ☐ Bread and tortillas
- ☐ Leftover portions (labeled!)

Fridge

- ☐ Eggs
- ☐ Butter
- ☐ Cheddar and Parmesan
- ☐ Plain yogurt or sour cream
- ☐ Lemons and limes
- ☐ Onions, garlic, carrots (in a cool, dark place or the fridge)

Pantry habits that save money

- 1 Shop your pantry first.** Before you write a shopping list, look at what you already have.
- 2 First in, first out.** Put new cans and packets behind the old ones.
- 3 Keep a running list** on the fridge or your phone. When something runs low, write it down immediately.
- 4 Buy staples when they're on offer,** but only the ones you use often.
- 5 Frozen is fine.** Frozen vegetables are picked and frozen fresh, last for months and create no waste.

● WEEK 1 • SHOPPING LIST

Shopping list

PRODUCE

- ☐ **baby spinach** · 10 oz (one 10 oz bag, or two 5 oz bags) **Wed, Fri**
- ☐ **carrots** · 2 **Thu**
- ☐ **cilantro** · 1 bunch **Tue, Fri**
- ☐ **fresh ginger** · 1 inch (one small piece) **Fri**
- ☐ **garlic** · 13 cloves (about 2 heads) **Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri**
- ☐ **green beans** · 12 oz **Mon**
- ☐ **green onions** · 3 **Thu**
- ☐ **lemons** · 2 **Mon, Wed**
- ☐ **limes** · 2 **Tue, Fri**
- ☐ **small green cabbage** · 1 **Tue, Thu**
- ☐ **small potatoes** · 1½ lb **Mon**
- ☐ **yellow onion** · 1 **Fri**

MEAT AND FISH

- ☐ **boneless skinless chicken thighs** · 1½ lb **Mon**

DAIRY AND EGGS

- ☐ **eggs** · 4 **Thu**
- ☐ **grated Parmesan** · ½ cup **Wed**
- ☐ **shredded cheddar** · 1 cup (about 4 oz, or grate a block) **Tue**
- ☐ **sour cream or plain yogurt** · ½ cup **Tue**

BAKERY

- ☐ **small flour or corn tortillas** · 8 **Tue**

FROZEN

- ☐ **frozen peas** · 1 cup **Thu**

PANTRY AISLE (CHECK YOUR CUPBOARD FIRST)

- ☐ **black beans (15 oz)** · 2 cans **Tue**
- ☐ **chickpeas (15 oz)** · 2 cans **Fri**
- ☐ **coconut milk (13.5 oz)** · 1 can **Fri**
- ☐ **diced tomatoes (15 oz)** · 1 can **Fri**
- ☐ **long-grain white rice** · 3 cups (from a 2 lb bag) **Thu, Fri**
- ☐ **spaghetti** · 12 oz (1 × 1 lb box) **Wed**
- ☐ **white beans (15 oz)** · 1 can **Wed**

Staples to check you have: black pepper, chili powder, curry powder, dried oregano, garlic powder, ground cumin, olive oil, red pepper flakes, salt, sesame oil, soy sauce, vegetable oil.

Lemon-garlic sheet-pan chicken and potatoes

One pan, crispy potatoes, juicy chicken and almost no washing up.

40 min total

10 min hands-on

Serves 4

YOU NEED

1½ lb small potatoes (cut into 1-inch pieces)

1½ lb boneless skinless chicken thighs

12 oz green beans (trimmed)

1 lemon

4 cloves garlic (grated or finely chopped)

3 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp dried oregano

1 tsp salt

½ tsp black pepper

METHOD

- 1** Heat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Toss the potatoes with 1 tbsp of the oil and half the salt on a large rimmed baking sheet. Roast for 15 minutes.
- 2** Meanwhile, finely grate the lemon zest into a bowl. Add the juice of half the lemon, the remaining oil, garlic, oregano, remaining salt and the pepper. Add the chicken and turn to coat.
- 3** Push the potatoes to the sides of the pan. Lay the chicken in the middle and scatter the green beans around it.
- 4** Roast for 20–25 minutes, until the potatoes are golden and the chicken reaches 165°F (74°C) in the thickest part.
- 5** Cut the other lemon half into wedges and squeeze over everything at the table.

SWAP IT

Swap the green beans for broccoli florets or carrot sticks. Chicken breasts work too: cut them in half so they cook evenly.

GOOD TO KNOW

Leftovers keep 3–4 days in the fridge. Slice leftover chicken into Thursday's fried rice if you like.

FOOD SAFETY

Chicken: 165°F (74°C).

Black bean tacos with crunchy lime slaw

Smoky beans, a bright slaw and dinner in 20 minutes.

20 min total

20 min hands-on

Serves 4

YOU NEED

2 cans black beans (15 oz) (drained and rinsed)

1 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp chili powder

½ tsp garlic powder

½ small green cabbage (thinly sliced (about 4 cups))

1 lime

½ bunch cilantro (chopped (optional))

8 small flour or corn tortillas

1 cup shredded cheddar

½ cup sour cream or plain yogurt

½ tsp salt

METHOD

- 1** Warm the oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the beans, cumin, chili powder, garlic powder, half the salt and 1/4 cup water. Cook for 5 minutes, mashing about half the beans with a fork.
- 2** Toss the cabbage with the juice of the lime, the remaining salt and the cilantro. Leave it to soften while you finish.
- 3** Warm the tortillas one at a time in a dry pan, about 20 seconds a side, and stack them in a clean towel.
- 4** Fill each tortilla with beans, slaw, cheese and a spoonful of sour cream.

SWAP IT

Use pinto beans instead of black beans. Add a sliced avocado or a few pickled jalapeños if you have them.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep the other half of the cabbage for Thursday's fried rice.