



MEAL PREP HACKS

DIANE ROMANO



TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHY GF-HP MEAL PREP IS A SUPERPOWER.....	3
THE ESSENTIAL KIT.....	4
Containers: Quick Guide	4
A GF-HP Pantry That's Always Ready	6
YOUR PREP GAME PLAN.....	7
What to Cook: How to Choose	8
How Much to Cook.....	9
HOW TO COOK IN BATCH.....	11
A Real-Life Batch Cooking Session.....	12
Decide Your Style of Assembly	13
How to Portion.....	14
STORE & STAY SAFE.....	15
Smart Storage Techniques.....	16
Food Safety Essentials.....	16
FLAVOR BOOSTERS: SAUCES, SPICE MIXES & VINAIGRETTES.....	18
Quick Sauces (ready in 5 minutes).....	18
Spice Mixes (make once, use many times).....	19
Everyday Vinaigrettes	19
HOW TO COMBINE THIS GUIDE WITH YOUR COOKBOOK.....	21
MEAL PREP PRINTABLES.....	22

WHY GF-HP MEAL PREP IS A SUPERPOWER

Picture this: it's 7 p.m., you're tired, hungry, and still wondering what to cook. The fridge looks half-empty, takeout feels tempting, and your goals—suddenly feel like extra stress.

Now imagine opening that same fridge to find colorful bowls of ready-to-eat meals, sauces portioned into little jars, and perfectly cooked proteins waiting to be mixed and matched. Dinner takes five minutes, not fifty. You feel in control, fueled, and free from “what’s for dinner?” panic.

That’s the power of meal prep.

With just one dedicated cooking session, you unlock three immediate benefits:

- **Time saved:** batch once, reclaim hours every week.
- **Consistency made simple:** protein-rich, gluten-free meals are prepped and ready—no willpower required.
- **Stress-free evenings:** no last-minute scramble, no compromise meals.

Meal prep is more than just a trick to save time—it’s a shift in how you relate to food and to your week.

When your meals are ready, the daily decision-making fades into the background. You stop negotiating with yourself at every lunch or dinner, and instead you simply enjoy what’s already waiting for you.

It’s a quiet kind of freedom: knowing that you’ve taken care of yourself in advance. The stress of cooking at the end of a long day disappears. The pressure of eating “enough protein” or staying gluten-free no longer weighs on you—it’s already handled.

And that’s why meal prep feels like a superpower. With a single burst of effort, you give yourself days of ease, consistency, and confidence.

One-line promise: Cook once, eat all week.

THE ESSENTIAL KIT

Before you even turn on the stove, meal prep begins with your tools. Having the right basics on hand is what makes the process smooth instead of stressful. You don't need a professional kitchen or fancy gadgets—just a small kit that works hard for you week after week.

The Essential Kit:

- **Airtight containers:** clear, stackable, and leak-proof. Glass is oven- and microwave-safe, Tritan plastic is light and durable, silicone bags are unbeatable for freezing flat.
- **Removable labels or masking tape:** so you always know what's inside and when you made it. A simple date and portion note saves you from guessing.
- **Kitchen scale:** not for obsessive tracking, but to quickly portion proteins so every meal hits the mark without effort.
- **Optional time-savers:** an Instant Pot, slow cooker, or air fryer. They're not required, but if you have one, it can cut your prep time in half and free up counter space for multitasking.

Think of these tools as your meal prep foundation. Once they're in place, everything else feels easier: cooking in bulk, portioning evenly, storing safely, and grabbing meals without hesitation. A small upfront setup, a big weekly payoff.

Containers: Quick Guide

Your containers do more than just hold food—they shape your whole meal prep experience. The right ones keep meals tasting fresh, make it effortless to grab and go, and save precious space in the fridge. What really counts isn't the brand or the price tag, but a few simple qualities.

First, they need to be truly airtight, so your chicken stays juicy and your sauces don't leak into your bag. They should stack neatly, too—because no one wants a fridge full of wobbly towers. Transparency is another quiet superpower: when you can see what's inside at a glance, you actually eat what you prepped instead of forgetting it at the back. And finally, look for lids with removable gaskets. They're easier to clean and won't trap odors over time.

Choose containers with these basics, and suddenly meal prep feels smoother, tidier, and a whole lot less stressful.

MATERIALS — CHOOSE BASED ON HOW YOU'LL USE THEM

Not all containers are created equal. The best choice depends less on the label and more on how you'll actually use them in your routine. Here's what each material does best:

BOROSILICATE GLASS

Sturdy, heat-resistant, and completely odor-proof. You can slide a glass container straight from the fridge into the oven or microwave without worry. It's ideal if you often reheat meals at home and want food to

taste exactly as it did when you cooked it. The trade-off? Glass is heavier and less convenient to carry around, but for everyday storage, it's the gold standard.

BPA-FREE TRITAN PLASTIC

Lightweight, shatter-proof, and easy to toss into a bag. Tritan containers are perfect for packed lunches, gym snacks, or office meals. They won't weigh you down, and they bounce instead of breaking if dropped. The only caveat: they don't belong in the oven, and you should check the label before microwaving. Use them when portability matters most.

PLATINUM SILICONE BAGS OR TUBS

Flexible, reusable, and practically indestructible. Silicone shines in the freezer, where you can use it for flat-freezing proteins, sauces, or pre-portioned grains—saving tons of space. They're also dishwasher-safe, making cleanup simple. Just take care with liquids: unless sealed carefully, they can leak when lying flat. Think of them as your eco-friendly, space-saving option.

STAINLESS STEEL

Robust, sleek, and long-lasting. Stainless steel is unbeatable if you want something light but durable, especially for outdoor meals, travel, or packed lunches that might get knocked around. The limitation is obvious: no microwave. Still, if you're looking for gear that survives years of use without scratches, steel is a great investment.

MASON JARS

The humble, budget-friendly glass jar is more versatile than it looks. Use it for layered salads (greens at the top, dressing at the bottom), overnight oats, or even storing soups and stews. They're cheap, easy to find, and surprisingly sturdy. The only downside is that they don't stack as neatly as flat containers, but for breakfasts and snacks, they're hard to beat.

Material	Pros	Cons	Best Use
Borosilicate Glass	Oven + microwave safe, odor-proof, durable	Heavy, less portable	Home storage, reheating, main meals
BPA-free Tritan Plastic	Lightweight, shatter-proof, portable	Not oven-safe, microwave only if labeled	Lunchboxes, office, gym
Platinum Silicone (bags/tubs)	Flexible, freezer-friendly, eco-friendly, dishwasher-safe	Can leak with liquids if not sealed well	Freezer storage, flat-freezing grains/proteins/sauces
Stainless Steel	Robust, long-lasting, light	Not microwave-safe, no transparency	Travel, outdoor meals, kids' lunches
Mason Jars	Budget-friendly, versatile, sturdy	Don't stack neatly, heavier	Layered salads, overnight oats, soups/snacks

A GF-HP Pantry That's Always Ready

Meal prep doesn't start in the kitchen—it starts in the pantry. When your shelves are stocked with the right staples, you can pull together balanced, high-protein, gluten-free meals without stress, even if life gets messy and grocery shopping falls off the list. Think of your pantry as your personal safety net.

Shelf-stable proteins: canned tuna, salmon, or chicken; lentils and beans (canned or dried); nut and seed butters; protein powder; long-life tofu packs. These are your “always there” backups when fresh options run low.

Smart carbs: quinoa, brown rice, millet, buckwheat, certified-GF oats, potatoes and sweet potatoes, polenta, legumes. They're filling, versatile, and batch-cook beautifully.

Flavor boosters: olive oil, vinegars, tamari (gluten-free soy sauce), tomato paste, coconut milk, salsa, hot sauce, mustard, tahini. A spoonful of the right flavor turns plain rice and chicken into a meal you actually look forward to.

Spice rack heroes: don't overcomplicate it. Choose a few blends you love and rotate them weekly. For example:

- Mexican: cumin, chili powder, smoked paprika.
- Mediterranean: oregano, garlic, lemon zest.
- Asian-inspired: ginger, curry powder, sesame seeds.

With these essentials always on hand, your kitchen is never “empty.” It only takes one protein + one carb + one spice combo to transform a handful of basics into a real meal. Stock once, stress less.

YOUR PREP GAME PLAN

Before you start chopping vegetables or heating the oven, pause for a moment. Meal prep works best when you know exactly what you're prepping for. Three quick questions will guide every choice you make:

HOW MANY MEALS DO I WANT TO COVER?

Maybe it's just three lunches to get through your busiest days. Or maybe it's a full week of five lunches plus a couple of dinners. Deciding the number first prevents both under-prepping (and running out midweek) and over-prepping (ending up with too much food you won't eat).

WHAT CHARACTERISTICS SHOULD THOSE MEALS HAVE?

Are they grab-and-go lunches for the office? Quick dinners that reheat in five minutes? Protein-heavy snacks between workouts? Knowing the "job" of each meal shapes the portions, the containers, and even the cooking method.

HOW MUCH TIME DO I ACTUALLY HAVE TO PREP?

Be realistic: if you can spare only an hour, keep the plan lean—one protein, one carb, two veggies, and a sauce. If you have closer to two hours, you can layer in more variety. Time is the frame that keeps the whole process stress-free.

When you've answered these three questions, you'll have a clear map. And once the map is drawn, it's time to schedule the prep itself. One of the biggest secrets of meal prep isn't in the cooking—it's in the calendar. The moment you decide when you'll prep, half the work is already done. Treat it like any other non-negotiable appointment: if it's on the schedule, it happens.

A simple rhythm works best for most people:

- **Sunday — 90 minutes:** your main batch session. This is where you cook grains, proteins, and vegetables in bulk, set up your sauces, and portion meals for the first half of the week.
- **Wednesday — 20 minutes:** a quick mid-week top-up. Maybe it's roasting one extra tray of veggies, cooking a second protein, or blending a fresh sauce. It's light, fast, and keeps variety alive.

Prefer cooking just once? That works too. Choose a slightly longer session—about 2 hours on Sunday—and prepare enough to cover the whole week. The freezer becomes your best friend here: half of what you cook goes straight in, perfectly labeled, ready to reappear fresh a few days later.

Either way, the principle is the same: plan one dedicated slot, stick to it, and let that single effort remove stress from every other day of the week.

What to Cook: How to Choose

Before you start cooking, decide how wide your menu really needs to be. More variety isn't always better—sometimes it just means more time, more dishes, and more stress. The goal is to find the sweet spot between simplicity and flexibility.

- **If you're short on time:** choose one protein, one carb, and two vegetables. This keeps prep under control, and with sauces or spices you can still enjoy different flavors.
- **If you want more variety:** choose two proteins, one or two carbs, and three vegetables. It takes a bit longer to cook, but lets you rotate flavors all week.
- **If you're prepping for a full week (10+ meals):** lean on two proteins, two carbs, and 3–4 vegetables. Half goes in the fridge, half in the freezer. You get balance, freshness, and no food fatigue.

The key idea: you don't need five different meals. You need a handful of well-chosen components that can be mixed in different ways. With just a couple of proteins, a carb or two, and a few veggies, you can assemble plates that feel different even though they come from the same prep session.

HOW MANY MEALS CAN YOU BUILD?

Here's what those three options look like in practice:

OPTION 1 — MINIMAL (1 PROTEIN + 1 CARB + 2 VEGGIES)

Example: chicken + rice + broccoli + carrots

Possible meals:

1. Chicken + rice + broccoli
2. Chicken + rice + carrots
3. Chicken + rice + broccoli + carrots (mixed plate)

3 different meals from just four ingredients. Change the sauce or seasoning, and they taste even more distinct.

OPTION 2 — MODERATE (2 PROTEINS + 1–2 CARBS + 3 VEGGIES)

Example: chicken + tofu + quinoa + sweet potatoes + zucchini + peppers + spinach

Possible meals:

1. Chicken + quinoa + zucchini
2. Chicken + sweet potato + peppers
3. Tofu + quinoa + spinach
4. Tofu + sweet potato + peppers
5. Chicken + quinoa + spinach
6. Tofu + sweet potato + zucchini

Already 6+ different meals without repeating the same plate twice.

OPTION 3 — EXTENDED (2 PROTEINS + 2 CARBS + 4 VEGGIES)

Example: chicken + salmon + rice + potatoes + broccoli + carrots + zucchini + peppers

Possible meals:

1. Chicken + rice + broccoli
2. Chicken + potatoes + zucchini
3. Salmon + rice + peppers
4. Salmon + potatoes + carrots
5. Chicken + rice + carrots
6. Salmon + potatoes + broccoli
7. Chicken + potatoes + peppers
8. Salmon + rice + zucchini

That's 8+ variations, all from a single prep session.

And remember: sauces and seasonings multiply variety even further. The same chicken + rice + broccoli can feel Mexican with salsa, Mediterranean with lemon and oregano, or Asian-inspired with soy sauce and sesame.

How Much to Cook

The easiest way to plan quantities is to measure food before cooking. Raw weights are consistent, while cooked foods shrink or expand in different ways.

1. START WITH PROTEIN (THE ANCHOR)

For one high-protein meal you'll need about:

- 4–5 oz raw chicken, turkey, or fish (yields ~3–4 oz cooked)
- 5–6 oz raw tofu or tempeh
- 2 large eggs (4 oz) + ½ cup cottage cheese or Greek yogurt

Example: 5 lunches with chicken → $5 \times 5 \text{ oz} = 25 \text{ oz}$ raw chicken (about 1.5 lb).

2. ADD SMART CARBS

- Rice or quinoa: ~½ cup raw (about 2.5–3 oz) per meal → doubles/triples when cooked.
- Potatoes or sweet potatoes: ~7 oz raw (about 1 medium) per meal.

Example: 5 lunches with rice → $5 \times \frac{1}{2} \text{ cup} = 2 \frac{1}{2} \text{ cups}$ raw rice (about 12–15 oz dry).

3. PLAN YOUR VEGETABLES

Aim for 7–8 oz raw veggies per meal (about 2 cups chopped). For 5 meals, that's 2–2.5 lb of vegetables total. A full sheet pan of roasted veggies usually covers ~4–5 portions.

4. THINK IN MEALS, NOT IN PEOPLE

Multiply by the number of meals you want to cover.

- 5 meals = ~1.5 lb protein, 2 ½ cups raw rice, 2–2.5 lb veggies
- 10 meals = ~3 lb protein, 5 cups raw rice, 4–5 lb veggies

5. USE THE FREEZER AS YOUR BUFFER

Cook a little extra protein or carbs. Anything beyond 3–4 days can be frozen in portions. Veggies are better prepped in the amount you'll eat fresh.

Rule of thumb per meal:

- Protein: 4–5 oz raw
- Carbs: ½ cup raw rice/quinoa or 1 medium potato
- Veggies: 2 cups chopped (7–8 oz raw)

Multiply by the number of meals and you'll have exactly what you need—no more, no less.

HOW TO COOK IN BATCH

Batch cooking doesn't mean juggling five complicated recipes at once. It means cooking a few simple foods in larger amounts, using your kitchen efficiently so everything happens together. Instead of cooking meal by meal, you create building blocks—proteins, carbs, and vegetables—that can be mixed and matched later.

Think of your kitchen like a small assembly line. The oven can roast vegetables while also baking chicken or tofu on another tray. At the same time, a pot of rice or quinoa simmers quietly on the stove. If you have an Instant Pot or an air fryer, you can put them to work on a second protein or another batch of veggies. In less than an hour, you can have multiple components cooked without ever feeling like you're chained to the stove.

Here's how it usually flows:

- Start the carb first. Grains and potatoes take time, but don't need attention once they're cooking.
- Fill the oven. Roast a tray of vegetables and a tray of protein side by side—same temperature, different trays.
- Use downtime wisely. While the oven and stovetop are working, chop raw salad vegetables, boil a few eggs, or blend a sauce.
- Keep seasoning simple. Salt, pepper, olive oil, maybe one spice. Variety comes later when you add different sauces or toppings.
- Balance cooked and fresh. Roast sturdy vegetables, but keep some items (like cucumbers, spinach, or cherry tomatoes) raw to add freshness during the week.

The beauty of this approach is that the same set of components can become very different meals. Chicken and rice with roasted broccoli is one lunch; swap the broccoli for peppers and add a vinaigrette, and it feels completely new. Add a peanut sauce to the same base, and it's transformed again.

Batch cooking is not about repeating the same plate—it's about creating a flexible pantry of cooked foods. With one session, you've set yourself up for a week of meals that are quick to assemble, varied in flavor, and always high in protein and gluten-free.

A Real-Life Batch Cooking Session

It's Sunday afternoon. You've set aside about an hour, maybe a little more, to get ahead for the week. You already know how many meals you want to cover—let's say five lunches—and you've chosen your building blocks: chicken, rice, zucchini, and peppers, plus a simple vinaigrette and a peanut sauce for variety.

1. The first thing you do is preheat the oven to 400°F. While it warms up, you rinse a cup of rice and set it on the stovetop with water to simmer. Two appliances, two jobs, already in motion.
2. Next, you grab two sheet pans. On the first, you scatter sliced zucchini and peppers, drizzle them with olive oil, season with salt and pepper. On the second, you lay out chicken breasts, brushed lightly with oil and a touch of garlic powder. By the time the oven beeps, both trays are ready to slide in—side by side—so the oven cooks your protein and vegetables together.
3. While the oven and stovetop take care of themselves, you move to the counter. You chop a cucumber and a handful of spinach to keep raw for salads later in the week. Then you pull out the blender: in a few minutes, you've got a jar of vinaigrette and a creamy peanut sauce. The kitchen smells fresh and busy, but you're not rushing—everything is happening in parallel.
4. After about twenty minutes, the rice is done. You fluff it with a fork and leave it to cool. A little later, the oven timer dings: golden chicken and perfectly roasted vegetables are ready. You pull the trays out and realize you've just created the core of five lunches without ever cooking a “full dish.”

Here's what you have on the counter from this single session:

- A pot of fluffy rice (enough for 5 servings)
- A tray of roasted chicken (5 portions)
- A tray of roasted zucchini and peppers (about 5 cups cooked)
- Fresh chopped cucumber and spinach
- Two sauces in jars, ready to grab

From here, assembling meals during the week will take only minutes. One day: chicken + rice + roasted zucchini with vinaigrette. The next: chicken + rice + peppers with peanut sauce. Another day: chicken + rice + fresh cucumber and spinach. Same base, new experience.

This is batch cooking: start with one oven, one pot, and one counter, and by the end of a single session you've built days of meals—fresh, balanced, and flexible.

Decide Your Style of Assembly

You've just finished cooking. The chicken is roasted, the rice is fluffy, the vegetables are steaming on the counter. Now comes the real question: how do you put this food away so that it works for you all week? There are three main paths:

OPTION A: PRE-ASSEMBLED MEALS

This means you portion everything right now—protein, carb, and veggies—into individual containers.

What it looks like: You line up five lunch boxes, scoop rice into each, add chicken and vegetables, close the lids. Done.

Why choose this:

- Maximum convenience. Tomorrow morning you just grab a box and go.
- Great for office lunches or nights when you know you'll be too tired to think.
- Helps you stay on track with portions—each box is already balanced.

Trade-offs:

- Less flexibility—if you don't feel like chicken + rice on Thursday, too bad, that's what's in the box.
- Leafy greens or raw vegetables don't do well inside a pre-assembled box; they wilt. Add them fresh.
- Works best for meals you'll eat within 3–4 days, or else you'll need to freeze a few boxes.

OPTION B: MIX-AND-MATCH “BUFFET STYLE”

Here you keep each component in its own large container—one for chicken, one for rice, one for vegetables. At mealtime, you scoop and build a plate or box fresh.

What it looks like: You slide a big container of rice into the fridge, another of chicken, another of roasted veggies. When it's time to eat, you spoon some of each onto a plate, add a sauce, maybe toss in some fresh spinach or cucumbers.

Why choose this:

- Flexibility—swap vegetables, change sauces, adjust portions depending on your appetite.
- Perfect if you eat most meals at home and don't mind spending 5 minutes assembling.
- Keeps delicate foods (like salads or sauces) separate until the last minute, so meals taste fresher.

Trade-offs:

- Not grab-and-go—you'll need to plate food when it's time to eat.
- Easier to lose track of portions unless you use hand-size or measuring cues.

OPTION C: THE HYBRID APPROACH

This is a mix of the two methods: a few ready-to-go boxes plus some components kept separate.

What it looks like: You portion 2 or 3 complete meals into containers for the fridge—enough to cover the next couple of days. The rest of the food (extra chicken, rice, veggies) stays in larger containers. From there, you decide: freeze some portions for later in the week, or keep them refrigerated if you'll eat them within safe storage times.

Why choose this:

- Best balance of convenience and freshness.
- Ensures you always have something ready to grab, while also giving you flexibility for later in the week.
- Reduces waste: you don't portion food into boxes that might sit too long.

Trade-offs:

- Requires a little extra planning—deciding what to eat in the first days and what to freeze.
- Not as “set it and forget it” as full pre-assembly.

Many people end up here: pre-assembling the meals they know they'll eat soon, and leaving the rest as flexible components. It's often the most practical balance.

How to Portion

You've cooked your proteins, carbs, and vegetables—now it's time to turn them into meals. Whether you're dividing food into ready-to-go containers or keeping everything in larger “buffet style” boxes, the logic of portioning is exactly the same.

1. START WITH PROTEIN (THE ANCHOR).

Every meal should revolve around protein. Without enough, you'll feel hungry and miss your high-protein target. A single portion is about 4–5 oz raw meat or fish (\approx 3–4 oz cooked), or 5–6 oz tofu/tempeh. That's one palm of your hand. If you're cooking in bulk, think in totals: 1.5 lb raw chicken will yield about 5 balanced portions.

2. ADD YOUR CARB SMART (THE FUEL).

Carbs give energy and variety, but they don't need to dominate the plate. A serving is about one fist—roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked grains or one medium potato.

3. FILL THE REST WITH VEGETABLES (THE VOLUME AND FRESHNESS).

Vegetables should take up the most space. They bring color, fiber, and keep meals satisfying. A good target is two open handfuls (\approx 2 cups raw, or 1 cup cooked). Think roasted peppers and zucchini, steamed broccoli, or a handful of fresh spinach added on top.

4. FINISH WITH FLAVOR.

Sauces and dressings turn the same base into different meals. Keep them in small jars or containers, and add just before eating. That way the food stays fresh and textures don't suffer.

STORE & STAY SAFE

Cooking your meals is only half the job—the other half is making sure they actually last. Nothing kills motivation faster than opening the fridge to find wilted veggies, dry chicken, or rice you’re not sure is still safe to eat. Food safety isn’t just about avoiding waste (though that’s a big win), it’s also about protecting your health and keeping meals fresh and enjoyable all week long.

Think of your fridge and freezer as part of your meal prep team. If you know how long each food can stay fresh, you’ll never second-guess whether to keep it, toss it, or freeze it for later. With the right storage habits, every container you open will taste just as good—and fuel you just as well—as the day you made it.

In the next section, you’ll find a clear cheat sheet: how long your proteins, grains, veggies, and sauces safely last in the fridge or freezer. Consider it your roadmap to keeping every GF-HP meal not only convenient, but also safe, flavorful, and stress-free.

Food Item	Fridge (≤ 40 °F / ≤ 4 °C)	Freezer (0 °F / -18 °C)
Cooked meats & poultry	3–4 days	2–6 months
Cooked fish	3–4 days	4–6 months
Cooked rice, grains, legumes	3–4 days	Up to 6 months
Cooked tofu / tempeh	3–4 days	2–3 months
Cooked vegetables (roasted/steamed)	3–4 days	Up to 3 months (quality-based, texture may decline)
Sauces / dressings (oil-based, nut-based, vinaigrette)	5–7 days (nut butters); 3–7 days for others—varies by type	2–3 months (freezer-safe, though texture may change)

CONTEXT & TIPS

- Refrigeration slows bacterial growth—it doesn’t stop it. That’s why cooked food is only considered safe for 3–5 days.
- Freezer time frames reflect quality—not safety. Food kept continuously at 0 °F remains safe indefinitely, but taste and texture degrade.
- Rice requires careful cooling. It must be cooled rapidly to avoid *Bacillus cereus* contamination (“fried rice syndrome”)

Smart Storage Techniques

Once you know how long each food lasts, the next step is learning the little tricks that keep everything safe, fresh, and gluten-free. These aren't complicated systems—just small habits that make a big difference in how your meals taste by the end of the week.

1. FLAT-FREEZE

Instead of freezing soups, stews, or cooked grains in bulky containers, portion them into freezer bags, lay them flat, and freeze them like thin “tiles.”

Why it works: flat portions freeze and thaw faster, stack neatly, and save a ton of space.

How to use it: label each bag with the food and date, lay flat until frozen, then stand them upright like files in a drawer. You'll always see what you have and pull out exactly what you need.

2. MASON-JAR SALADS

These are a game-changer for keeping salads fresh for days. The secret is in the layering:

Dressing at the bottom, then sturdy veggies (carrots, cucumbers, peppers), grains or proteins in the middle, leafy greens at the very top.

Stored this way, the greens stay crisp, the dressing stays put, and when you're ready to eat, just shake and enjoy. Perfect for lunches on the go that actually taste fresh on day three.

3. GLUTEN-SAFE STORAGE (AVOIDING CROSS-CONTAMINATION)

If your kitchen isn't 100% gluten-free, storage becomes just as important as cooking.

Top shelf rule: keep GF-HP meals on the upper shelves of the fridge so nothing with gluten can drip down onto them.

Dedicated containers & utensils: use containers, spatulas, and cutting boards reserved for gluten-free foods only.

Label clearly: mark meals “GF” if your household mixes diets—this avoids confusion and keeps everyone safe.

Food Safety Essentials

Meal prep only works if your food stays safe from the moment it's cooked until the moment you eat it. These simple rules keep your meals fresh, tasty, and worry-free all week long.

COOL IT QUICKLY

Don't leave cooked food sitting out for hours. As soon as you finish cooking, transfer it into shallow containers so it cools faster. The goal is to get it into the fridge within two hours—one hour if your kitchen is hot.

FRIDGE & FREEZER BASICS

- Keep your fridge at 40 °F (4 °C) or colder.
- Your freezer should be at 0 °F (–18 °C).
- Store meals in airtight containers to prevent drying out and protect flavor.

REHEAT THE RIGHT WAY

When it's time to eat, bring leftovers back up to a safe internal temperature of 165 °F (74 °C). Stir or rotate food halfway through reheating to make sure the heat reaches the center.

SEPARATE RAW AND COOKED

During prep and storage, never mix raw ingredients with cooked ones. Use different cutting boards, knives, and containers. This is especially critical if your household isn't fully gluten-free—dedicated utensils and containers keep cross-contamination from ruining your hard work.

LABEL AND DATE EVERYTHING

Even the freshest-looking box has limits. Write the date on every container so you always know what to eat first and when it's time to freeze or toss.

Think of these steps as the “insurance policy” for your meal prep. You've invested the time to cook—these habits make sure your meals stay safe, delicious, and ready whenever you need them.

FLAVOR BOOSTERS: SAUCES, SPICE MIXES & VINAIGRETTES

Meal prep only works if your food stays exciting. A couple of sauces, vinaigrettes, or spice blends can transform the same chicken + rice into three completely different meals. Here are quick recipes with clear yields and storage times, so you know exactly how far each batch will take you.

Quick Sauces (ready in 5 minutes)

SPICY PEANUT (OR TAHINI) SAUCE

Creamy, nutty, and with a gentle kick of heat. Works beautifully with chicken, tofu, or roasted veggies. It's especially good on rice bowls and stir-fries.

Ingredients: 2 tbsp peanut butter (or tahini), 1 tbsp gluten-free tamari, juice of ½ lime, pinch of chili flakes, 2–3 tbsp warm water to thin.

Yield: ~½ cup (≈ 4 servings)

Storage: 5–6 days in the fridge; 2–3 months in the freezer (freeze in ice cube trays).

AVOCADO PESTO

Fresh, velvety, and bright green with a citrus kick. Perfect with salmon, chicken, or as a spread in GF wraps. Also great on quinoa bowls or zucchini noodles.

Ingredients: 1 avocado, 1 cup basil, 1 garlic clove, 2 tbsp olive oil, juice of ½ lemon, 2 tbsp nuts/seeds.

Yield: ~1 cup (≈ 6 servings)

Storage: Best within 2–3 days (oxidizes quickly). Press plastic wrap against surface to slow browning. Not freezer-friendly.

YOGURT-HERB DRESSING

Light, tangy, and cooling. Matches perfectly with grilled chicken, turkey burgers, or falafel-style bowls. Also a great dip for raw veggies.

Ingredients: ½ cup Greek yogurt, 1 tbsp olive oil, 2 tbsp chopped fresh herbs (parsley/dill/cilantro), salt, pepper.

Yield: ~¾ cup (≈ 5 servings)

Storage: 3–4 days in the fridge. Not freezer-friendly.

Spice Mixes (make once, use many times)

MEXICAN BLEND

Smoky and bold with a hint of heat. Great for chicken, ground turkey, beans, or roasted peppers. Sprinkle on before cooking or add to sautéed dishes.

Ingredients: 1 tbsp chili powder, 1 tsp cumin, 1 tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp oregano.

Yield: ~3 tbsp (seasons 6–8 meals)

Storage: 3 months in a sealed jar.

MEDITERRANEAN BLEND

Bright and herbal with a citrus lift. Ideal for chicken, fish, or roasted zucchini and eggplant. Adds instant “Greek bowl” vibes.

Ingredients: 1 tbsp dried oregano, 1 tsp garlic powder, 1 tsp dried lemon zest (or add fresh zest when cooking), ½ tsp thyme.

Yield: ~2 tbsp (seasons 4–6 meals)

Storage: 3 months in a sealed jar.

CURRY BLEND

Warm, aromatic, and slightly sweet. Delicious with lentils, chickpeas, chicken, or roasted cauliflower. Turns basic rice into a comfort food.

Ingredients: 1 tbsp curry powder, ½ tsp turmeric, ½ tsp ginger powder, pinch of cinnamon.

Yield: ~2 tbsp (seasons 4–5 meals)

Storage: 3 months in a sealed jar.

Everyday Vinaigrettes

HERBY LEMON VINAIGRETTE

Zesty, light, and refreshing. Perfect with chicken + quinoa bowls, or drizzled over mason-jar salads.

Ingredients: 6 tbsp olive oil, 2 tbsp lemon juice, 1 tsp Dijon mustard, 2 tbsp chopped parsley.

Yield: ~½ cup (≈ 4–5 servings)

Storage: Up to 1 week in the fridge. Shake before using.

BALSAMIC GARLIC VINAIGRETTE

Deep, tangy, and slightly sweet. Great for roasted veggie bowls, steak salads, or drizzling over mozzarella + tomato + chicken.

Ingredients: 6 tbsp olive oil, 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar, 1 garlic clove minced, ½ tsp dried oregano.

Yield: ~½ cup (≈ 4–5 servings)

Storage: 1 week in the fridge.

SESAME GINGER VINAIGRETTE

Savory and slightly nutty with a sharp ginger kick. Fantastic on rice bowls with chicken or tofu, or tossed with shredded cabbage for a quick slaw.

Ingredients: 4 tbsp sesame oil, 2 tbsp rice vinegar, 1 tbsp gluten-free tamari, 1 tsp grated ginger.

Yield: ~½ cup (≈ 4 servings)

Storage: 5–7 days in the fridge. Shake before using.

With just one sauce, one vinaigrette, and one spice mix, you can turn the same set of batch-cooked ingredients into 6–8 different meals—all gluten-free, all high in protein, all full of flavor.

HOW TO COMBINE THIS GUIDE WITH YOUR COOKBOOK

This guide was designed to work hand-in-hand with your Gluten-Free High-Protein cookbook. The recipes in your book already do the heavy lifting: they're balanced, flavorful, and written in 2-portion batches. At the end of each recipe you'll even find storage notes—how long the dish lasts in the fridge, whether it can be frozen, and the best way to reheat it.

What this guide adds is the bigger picture: how to use those recipes as part of a weekly meal prep routine. Here's how the two fit together:

SCALING UP FOR MEAL PREP

Every recipe in your cookbook is designed for 2 portions, which makes it easy to test flavors and keep variety. But when you meal prep, those same recipes can be doubled or tripled. Cook once, and you suddenly have 4–6 portions: some ready for the fridge, others cooled and frozen to enjoy later in the week. The beauty is that you don't need to reinvent the recipe—just multiply the quantities and follow the same steps.

USING STORAGE NOTES AS A STRATEGY

Your cookbook tells you how each dish should be stored: which recipes stay fresh in the fridge for 3–4 days, and which are freezer-friendly for weeks. This guide helps you turn those individual notes into a weekly strategy. You'll learn to plan which meals to keep in the fridge for quick access, and which ones to freeze immediately so they taste just as good when you're ready for them.

ROTATING RECIPES WITHOUT REPETITION

One of the best parts of combining the two resources is variety without overwhelm. Instead of cooking five totally different dishes in one session, you cook two or three recipes from the cookbook, each in a larger batch. Because the storage notes guide you on what can stay in the fridge and what should be frozen, you can rotate them through the week. The result: you get consistency, variety, and safety—without ever wondering if your food is still good.

UNLOCKING FLEXIBILITY

Maybe you love the chicken but don't want to eat it four days in a row. That's where the freezer strategy comes in: portion half into containers for the fridge and half into the freezer. Pair those meals later with a different side dish or sauce, and they'll feel brand-new. The recipes stay the same, but the way you use them becomes more flexible, thanks to the systems in this guide.

Think of it this way: the cookbook is your flavor library, full of high-protein, gluten-free recipes you'll actually enjoy eating. This guide is the system that makes those recipes work for your real life—by showing you how to scale, store, and rotate them so that one cooking session fuels you for days.

MEAL PREP PRINTABLES

These two planners are designed to work together: the Weekly Meal Map helps you decide what meals you need to cover, while the Prep Session Sheet helps you plan what and how to cook to make it happen.

1. START WITH THE WEEKLY MEAL MAP

Look at your upcoming week and fill in the meals you want covered with meal prep. Maybe it's just lunches, or maybe it's lunches + a few dinners + snacks.

Be realistic: leave blank the meals you know you'll cook fresh, eat out, or keep flexible.

By the end, you'll see at a glance how many meals you need your prep to cover.

2. MOVE TO THE PREP SESSION SHEET

Write the date of your prep session (Sunday batch, Wednesday top-up, etc.).

In Which meals am I covering?, check off the boxes (lunches, dinners, snacks, breakfasts) and note the number. This should line up with what you wrote on your Meal Map.

Under What to Cook, list the proteins, carbs, vegetables, and sauces/boosters you'll prepare. If you're using recipes from the cookbook, note the page number so you can find them quickly.

In Storage plan, decide how many portions go to the fridge (to be eaten in the next 3–4 days) and how many go straight into the freezer (for later in the week).

Use Need to Buy as a mini shopping list to fill in any gaps before prep day.

Finally, jot down observations in Notes—what worked, what to change next time. This helps you refine your system week after week.

3. PUT THEM TOGETHER

Your Meal Map tells you what needs to be covered.

Your Prep Sheet tells you exactly how you'll cover it.

Together, they keep you organized, save you time, and make sure your meals stay high-protein, gluten-free, and stress-free.

WEEKLY MEAL MAP

FROM: / / TO: / /

MONDAY

BREAKFAST	SNACKS	LUNCH	SNACKS	DINNER

TUESDAY

BREAKFAST	SNACKS	LUNCH	SNACKS	DINNER

WEDNESDAY

BREAKFAST	SNACKS	LUNCH	SNACKS	DINNER

THURSDAY

BREAKFAST	SNACKS	LUNCH	SNACKS	DINNER

FRIDAY

BREAKFAST	SNACKS	LUNCH	SNACKS	DINNER

SATURDAY

BREAKFAST	SNACKS	LUNCH	DINNER	DESSERT

SUNDAY

BREAKFAST	SNACKS	LUNCH	DINNER	DESSERT

PREP SESSION SHEET

SESSION _____ (DATE: _____)

Which meals am I covering?

- Lunches (how many? _____)
- Dinners (how many? _____)
- Snacks (how many? _____)
- Breakfasts (how many? _____)

Storage plan

To fridge: _____ portions

To freezer: _____ portions

WHAT TO COOK

Proteins

Qty

Carbs

Qty

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Veg

Qty

Recipes

P.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Sauces/Boosters

Qty

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

NEED TO BUY

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

NOTES

.....

.....

.....