



Summer Dinners Made Easy

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Summer temps are here and that's fine by me! (I **REALLY** don't like winter!!) And, now that it's warm outside it's time to catch up on fresh air, sunshine and balmy breezes. No more winter-imposed, nature deprivation!

Playing hard in warm weather requires good fuel, powerful nutrition and, of course, time. But, finding extra minutes to cook healthy meals during busy summer months (or any time) challenges even the most organized human. You don't want to spend hours in the kitchen because you have better things to do, but you also don't want to settle for pizza or fast food burgers every night, right?

No worries! What you need are some great "How To's" for planning summer meals and a few new menus to refresh your dinner repertoire.

So here you go! These quick and easy summer menus will create happiness at your dinner table and free up loads of time to do the things you love – like hiking, biking, golfing, paddleboarding, walking, running, playing with your grandkids, attending ball games and swim meets.....Now, gotta run, summertime's calling me!!

[Click here for the summer theme song of the Carolinas. Thank you, Catalinas!](#)

5 Summer Menu Planning Tips

- **When planning your meals, include a protein, a healthy starch** (sweet potatoes, beans, winter squash, intact grains – quinoa, wild rice, wheat berries, millet) **and two vegetables or a vegetable plus a fruit.**
- **Balance the work load of meal prep** by including 1 – 2 cooked dishes with 1 - 2 fresh, raw foods requiring minimum prep time.
- **Think ROY G BIV:** Add the bright colors of the rainbow to your meals. Each color group has its own set of powerful health benefits. (Super easy dinner hint: - its berry season so include a different berry at each dinner meal.)

And wow, is this the season for color! The farmers market looks like an artist's palette.

- **When cooking meats, cook double the amount you need** and use the 2nd batch for another night's meal. Ex. Grill 2 whole chickens – eat 1 the first night and make chicken salad or chicken fajitas with the 2nd one the next night.
- **On weekends and Wednesday nights, cook healthy starches in large quantities** (i.e. baked sweet potatoes, winter squash, beans, wild rice, brown rice, quinoa, millet) and reheat on subsequent nights. These starches freeze well for later use.