



cheat sheet

HOW TO BUILD A BALANCED MEAL

A guide with a straightforward approach to
balancing your plate!

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meet Stacy

Stacy is a Registered Dietitian & Certified Personal Trainer, and mom. My goal is to eliminate the stress of food and make it enjoyable, incredibly easy, and delicious!

Break It Down

Looking to create well-balanced meals but unsure where to start? My method involves incorporating four key components into each meal: protein, fiber-rich carbohydrates, colorful foods (fruits & veggies), and healthy fats.

Keep in mind: a balanced meal incorporates a diverse array of foods and nutrients. These guidelines aren't rigid, so feel free to customize your plate to suit your preferences. Use the cheat sheet as a reference, and adjust portion sizes as necessary, focusing on satisfaction rather than strict calorie counting.

1. PROTEIN

Protein isn't just vital for muscle growth; it also enhances feelings of fullness. Including a protein source with every meal can curb hunger, regulate appetite, and boost metabolism. Plus, protein has a high thermic effect, requiring more energy for digestion compared to fats

2. FILL UP WITH FIBER

Fiber-rich carbs do amazing things for your body, like keep you full between meals, encourage the growth of good gut bacteria, lower cholesterol and support digestive health.

3. ADD MORE COLORS

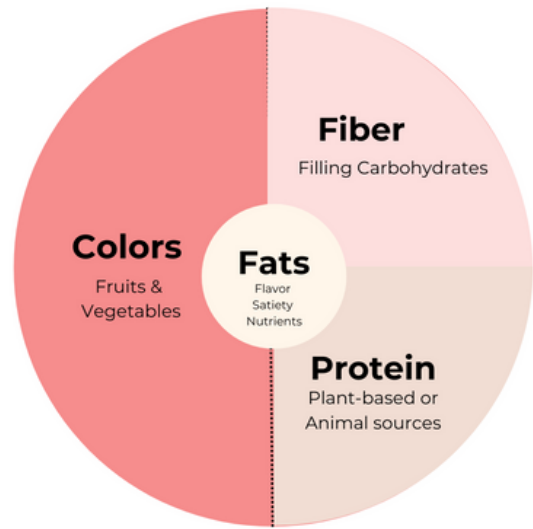
Not only are veggies low in calories and carbs, they're also dense in essential nutrients, fiber, and antioxidants. You can fill up on non-starchy veggies because they add volume to your meal and nourish your body.

4. FLAVORFUL FAT

By adding sources of healthy fat you're supporting things like heart health and your body's ability to absorb fat-soluble vitamins. Fat also contributes to feeling full after a meal.

balanced meal

CHEAT SHEET



<p>COLORS</p>	<p>Spinach, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots, bell peppers (red, yellow, green), tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, brussels sprouts, asparagus, green beans, celery, onions, mushrooms, eggplant, beets, radishes, cabbage, squash (butternut, acorn), peas, corn artichokes, arugula, leafy greens, romaine lettuce, turnips</p> <p><i>*Enjoy these vegetables can be enjoyed raw, steamed, roasted, or sautéed, providing a variety of textures and flavors to your meals.</i></p>	<p>Apples, bananas, oranges, strawberries, blueberries, grapes, pineapple, mango, watermelon, kiwi, papaya, peach, pear, cherries, raspberries, blackberries, plums, cantaloupe, grapefruit, apricots</p>
<p>FIBER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grains (quinoa, brown rice, oats, barley) • Legumes (lentils, chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans) • Potatoes (any kind) • Pasta (any kind) • Whole grain bread 	<p><i>Chia seeds and flaxseeds can be added to oatmeal, smoothies, salads, overnight oats and more meal ideas. One tablespoon of chia seeds contains 4 grams of fiber. One tablespoon of ground flaxseeds contains about 1.5 grams of fiber.</i></p> <p><i>*Legumes and certain grains like quinoa serve dual purposes as both plant-based protein sources and fiber-rich carbs. However, it's worth noting that they are lower in protein and higher in carbs compared to animal-based proteins.</i></p>
<p>PROTEIN</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken (breast, thigh) • Turkey (breast) • Beef (lean cuts like sirloin, tenderloin, ground) • Pork (tenderloin, loin chops) • Fish (salmon, tuna, cod) • Seafood (shrimp, crab, lobster) • Eggs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lentils • Chickpeas • Black beans • Edamame • Quinoa • Greek yogurt • Cottage cheese • Tofu • Tempeh
<p>HEALTHY FATS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avocado • Olive oil • Nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews) • Seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coconut oil • Nut butters (almond butter, peanut butter) • Flaxseed oil • Olives • Dark chocolate

Breakfast MEAL IDEAS:

Be flexible and incorporate your favorite foods into each idea.

	PROTEIN	FIBER	COLORS	FAT
Super Smoothie	Protein powder or Greek yogurt	Chia seeds or Flaxseeds	Frozen berries, banana, handful spinach	Serving of your favorite nuts on the side
Eggs & Toast	2 eggs, may add egg whites for extra protein	Sprouted toast	Orange (or any fruit)	Butter
Mini Breakfast Pizzas	Scrambled eggs + cheese	Whole wheat pita	Spinach on pizza + side of fruit	Olive oil (drizzle over pita bread)
Yogurt Parfait	Greek yogurt	Granola + Chia seeds	Berries	Slivered almonds
Avocado Toast	Hard-boiled eggs (sliced on top of avocado toast)	Whole grain toast	Pear (or any fruit)	Smashed avocado on toast
Waffles & Sausage	Chicken sausage links Kodiak protein waffles + syrup	(waffles contain a good amount of protein & fiber)	Berries	Butter
Overnight oats	1/2 cup Greek yogurt + 1/2 cup milk	1/2 cup oats + 1tbsp. chia seeds or flaxseeds	Berries, apples, pineapple, or mango	Chopped walnuts
Omelete Wrap	2 eggs + 1/4 cup egg whites + cheese	Whole grain wrap	Mushrooms, spinach, peppers, and onions	Olive oil
Breakfast Box	2-3 egg cups (premade, can be found in the frozen section)	Mini whole wheat pitas or whole grain cereal	Apple slices	Peanut butter

Lunch MEAL IDEAS:

Be flexible and incorporate your favorite foods into each idea.

	PROTEIN	FIBER	COLORS	FAT
Super Salad	Grilled chicken strips + cheese	Roasted chickpeas	Leafy greens, mini sweet peppers, mushrooms, etc. + side of fruit	Avocado + Dressing
Avocado Tuna Salad	Tuna	Whole grain bread or pita or wasa crackers	Side of fresh veggies & fruit	Ranch to dip veggies Avocado & mayo for tuna salad
Air Fryer Pizza <small>Top pita with pizza sauce, top with toppings and place in the air fryer for 3-4 minutes</small>	Chicken sausage or hamburger crumbles + shredded cheese	Whole wheat pita	Side of fruit + side salad	Dressing
Buffalo Chicken Wrap	Cooked shredded chicken	Whole grain wrap + side Bada Beans	Leafy greens, celery, onions (<i>in wrap</i>) + side of fruit	Buffalo chicken dressing
Lazy Lunch Plate	Deli meat, cheese stick/wedges	Whole grain crackers + roasted chickpeas	Apple slices, blueberries, cucumbers, carrots, etc.	Hummus, cashews, dark chocolate
Mediterranean Power Bowl	Grilled chicken strips + feta cheese or Quinoa	Canned chickpeas + pita chips	Dark leafy greens, peppers, tomatoes	Olive oil-based dressing
Taco Salad	Ground taco meat + cheese	Black beans + tortilla chips	Lettuce, onions, tomatoes, etc. Salsa or taco sauce	Guacamole
Burrito Bowl	Quinoa & black beans (<i>or cooked lentils</i>) <small>Seasoned with taco seasoning, lime juice, cilantro Add fresh salsa or seasoning</small>		Tomatoes, mushrooms, peppers, and onions	Avocado
Fast Chicken BLT Salad & Parfait	Chicken nuggets, hard-boiled egg, bacon slice	Add a small yogurt parfait with yogurt, chia seeds, berries	Leafy greens, tomatoes, onions	Italian dressing Avocado slices

Dinner MEAL IDEAS:

Be flexible and incorporate your favorite foods into each idea.

	PROTEIN	FIBER	COLORS	FAT
Stir-Fry Chicken & Veggies	Grilled chicken	Whole grain rice or quinoa	Saute frozen stir-fry veggie mix	Olive oil
Sheet Pan Dinner <small>Bake at 425 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes</small>	Chicken sausages	Baby potatoes or cubed potatoes	Chopped brussels sprouts, peppers	Dress sausage, potatoes and veggies with olive oil & seasoning
Salmon Burger & Fries	Salmon patty	Whole wheat bun or sandwich thin + fries (made 10-min in the air fryer)	Side of fresh veggies & fruit	Dressing
Pork Chops & Sides	Grilled pork chops	Sliced sweet potatoes (made 10-min in the air fryer)	Fresh or canned green beans + side of fruit	Drizzle olive oil over the sweet potatoes
Crock-Pot Roast & Potatoes	Roast <small>(Place roast, cut potatoes, carrots, celery and onion in crock-pot. Pour 6 cups of tomato juice or broth over ingredients and cook on high for 6 to 8 hrs)</small>	Potatoes +whole grain rolls (on the side)	Carrots, celery, onions and tomato juice (or beef broth)	Butter (with rolls)
Crock-Pot Salsa Chicken	Chicken breast <small>(Place 1 pound chicken in crock-pot with 8-oz jar salsa, 15-oz can black beans, 1 cup frozen corn. Cook on high for 4 hours)</small>	Canned black beans +whole wheat tortillas or shells	Lettuce, tomatoes, onions	Guacamole or avocado slices (for toppings)
Chicken Broccoli Alredo	Grilled chicken strips	Noodles (any kind) + can white beans	Roasted broccoli (made in the air fryer for 8 minutes) + side fruit	Drizzle olive oil over broccoli +jar alfredo sauce
Burrito Bowl	Veggie burger	Whole grain bun	Salad kit + Berries & Whipped cream	Dressing



BUILD BALANCED *Snacks*

PICK ONE FROM AT LEAST TWO CATEGORIES

COLORS

Apple
Banana
Berries
(strawberries,
blueberries,
raspberries)
Kiwi
Carrots
Broccoli
Spinach
Bell peppers
Tomatoes

FIBER

Whole grain
crackers
Wasa crackers
High-fiber
tortilla
Mini wheat
cereal
Flaxseeds
Chia seeds
Sprouted grain
bread
Popcorn
Granola

PROTEIN

Greek yogurt
Hard-boiled
eggs
Cottage cheese
Milk
Protein bar
Turkey or
chicken slices
Edamame
Cheese sticks
or cheese slices
Jerky
Edamame

FAT

Avocado
Nuts (almonds,
walnuts,
cashews)
Seeds
Nut butters
(almond butter,
peanut butter)
Olives
Dark chocolate
Hummus

Satisfying SNACK IDEAS

1. Apple slices + peanut or almond butter
2. Carrot sticks + hummus + pear
3. Berries + Greek yogurt + flaxseed
4. Whole grain crackers + guacamole + clementine
5. Popcorn + orange + cheese stick
6. Edamame + wasa crackers + cream cheese
7. Almonds + dark chocolate + milk
8. Roasted chickpeas + turkey slices + cucumber slices + dip
9. Whole grain toast + mashed avocado
10. Veggie sticks (bell peppers, cucumbers, celery) with tzatziki or yogurt dip



Thank You!

Thank you for your interest in this balanced meal guide!

We hope it's made creating healthy and satisfying meals a little less daunting for you. Happy eating!

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