

# 10 BEST

## Tips and Tricks for Stress-Free Dinners



# HELPFUL IDEAS

## to make dinner time stress-free

1

### **Make use of slow cooker dump-and-run recipes.**

I'm always so happy at the end of the day when all I have to do is lift the lid of the slow cooker to get dinner on the table! I love it even more when the prep involves simply tossing some ingredients in the crock pot and turning it on.

*Some ideas: [Pineapple Chicken](#), [Creamy Chicken with Cayenne](#), [Cauliflower Mac & Cheese](#)*

2

### **Look for one-pot recipes.**

Similar to #1 above, these types of recipes are typically easy to make and involve a minimal number of ingredients. I am all about that at the end of a busy day!

*Some ideas: [Curry Pasta and Veggies](#), [Creamy Lemon Chicken](#), [Chicken Cordon Bleu](#)*

3

### **Maintain a list of super-easy options your family enjoys.**

Put together a list and keep it handy to refer to whenever you are stuck. I keep adding to my list as I go and it has been a life-saver more than once!

*Some ideas: [oven baked grilled cheese](#), baked potatoes, eggs with waffles (keep frozen waffles on hand), French toast, make-your-own sandwiches, [oven baked quesadillas](#), spaghetti with jarred sauce.*

4

### **Map out a rotation of easy dinners.**

Taking the above tip one step further, keep track of all your meals for several weeks. Then start back at the beginning and go through it again for another few weeks, swapping out what didn't work well the first time and making adjustments for schedule changes. Before you know it, you'll have created your own custom meal planning resource!

5

### **Keep the ingredients on hand for a backup meal or two.**

These need to be easy meals with ingredients that can be kept in the pantry or the freezer, or made with ingredients that you generally always happen to have available in your house (like eggs, bread, etc).

*Some ideas: [Lemon Artichoke Pasta](#), [Teriyaki Glazed Salmon](#), [Black Bean Ranch Tuna Salad](#)*

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6

### Make extra on the weekends to use later.

On the weekend, I like to double the quantity that I make and then set aside the extra in the fridge for later in the week, or in the freezer for a few weeks later.

Some ideas: [Slow Cooker Chicken and Rice](#), [Jalapeno Artichoke Mac and Cheese](#), [Crock Pot Salsa Chili](#)

7

### Stock handy shortcut freezer items (DIY or store bought).

- Pre-cooked frozen chicken/beef/shrimp
- Pre-cooked frozen rice
- Pre-cut frozen veggies
- Pre-made pizza dough

8

### Stock handy refrigerator shortcut items.

- Minced garlic, garlic paste, ginger paste, other herb pastes
- Store-cooked rotisserie chicken (for [pot pie](#), quesadillas, [chicken salad](#))
- Pre-cut fruit (mango, pineapple, cantaloupe, honeydew)
- Pre-washed and cut fresh veggies

9

### Stock handy pantry shortcut items.

- Canned tuna and chicken
- Dried spaghetti/other pasta
- Jarred pasta sauces
- Bisquick (perfect for a quick pancake breakfast-for-dinner)
- Canned veggies and fruit

10

### Utilize cleanup shortcuts.

- Use parchment paper on baking sheets.
- Use liners in your slow cooker.
- Take advantage of one-pot or one sheet-pan recipes to minimize dishes.
- Cleanup while you go - put away spices, wipe counters, place dishes in the dishwasher or start them soaking in the sink.



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*Cooking with love  
provides food for  
the soul.*

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Do you feel like you don't have the time or energy to cook dinner on a fairly regular basis?

I totally understand that! I used to think that there was no way I could actually cook meals for my family more than the couple of nights a week I was able to manage. The rest of the week, I resorted to fast food, frozen prepared dinners, and take out.

But after a while I had to admit that not only was that approach expensive, it also wasn't the healthiest option for my family.

So I decided I had to figure out a way to make cooking real food more often work for me, even with my crazy schedule.

I started to create my own recipes that I knew my family would love, incorporating little shortcuts that I discovered and eliminating ingredients and steps that I didn't feel added enough to the final result to be worth it.

So while my recipes are not fancy restaurant caliber, they're perfect for the home cook who needs to be able to rely on some fuss-free yet delicious, hearty, and healthy dishes.

You can do this! With a little bit of thought and preparation, you too can save time and money by cooking more often without adding any further stress to your already busy schedule. 😊

Happy cooking!

*Kristin*