

Budget Meal Plan 2

This menu was created to feed the average family of four. Considerations for children (light eaters), teenagers (heavy eaters), food allergies or any other eating patterns are not included.

This menu is 100% real food, but it was not written to include organic, grass-fed or any other qualities of real food. These things are great, but they're not required for a real food diet. If your budget is only \$50 for the week, these qualities need to be momentarily set aside until your financial situation can afford them.

Snacks and dessert are not included. When you are forced into a very lean grocery budget, these things become luxuries. If you **MUST** have snacks or desserts, I encourage you to use what you already have on hand.

There is a meal planned for every breakfast, lunch and dinner, but eating leftovers should be priority. Not eating food you've already paid for and cooked is a waste of money, and when you're going through financial crises, you can't afford to waste anything.

This menu is seasonal, so adjust produce as necessary to fit the season you're in. Aim for \$1 per pound of fresh produce, and don't rule out frozen if it's less expensive.

Shop your pantry first. Before heading to the store, make sure to shop your pantry. Many items like spices and baking ingredients are most likely already in your cabinets. Don't forget to check the fridge and freezer too! Substitutions are a great way to save on groceries too. The more items you use from home, the less you spend at the store.

Serve fruit with breakfast and lunch. I've included basic recipes for these, but adding fruit rounds them out as a whole meal. The following fruits are likely to be most affordable year round - remember to aim for \$1 per pound (but the less per pound the better!):

- apples
- pears
- grapes
- oranges
- melon

the menu

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Day 1	Pumpkin Pie Oatmeal	Peanut Butter Sandwiches + Fruit	Carnitas // Tortillas // White Rice // Refried Beans
Day 2	Potato & Egg Hash	Bean & Potato Burritos // Bell Peppers	Basic Chili with Vegetables // Buttered Bread
Day 3	Blender Pancakes	Cheese Quesadillas // Carrot Sticks	Chili Mac with Peas
Day 4	Pumpkin Pie Oatmeal	Peanut Butter Sandwiches + Fruit	Carnitas Burrito Bowls
Day 5	Potato & Egg Hash	Bean & Potato Burritos // Bell Peppers	Humble Tuna Pasta Salad
Day 6	Blender Pancakes	Cheese Quesadillas // Carrot Sticks	Tex-Mex Baked Potato Bar
Day 7	Pumpkin Pie Oatmeal	Peanut Butter Sandwiches + Fruit	Vegetable Fried Rice

shopping list

Cold Case

butter	14 tbsp	plain yogurt*	0.50 cup
egg	16	shredded cheddar cheese	22 oz

Frozen

frozen mixed vegetables (peas, carrots, corn, etc)	2 cups	frozen peas	1 (16 oz)
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Meat

pork shoulder butt/shoulder (bone-in or boneless)	3 lb
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Pantry

active dry yeast	2.25 tsp	jasmine rice	4 cups
all-purpose flour	9.50 cups	macaroni pasta	16 oz
baking powder	8 tsp	maple syrup (optional)	14 tbsp
can black beans*	2 (15 oz)	olive oil	14 tbsp
can diced tomatoes	2 (15 oz)	peanut butter	1.50 cups
can garbanzo beans*	1 (15 oz)	pinto beans (dry)	1 lb
can kidney beans*	2 (15 oz)	rolled oats	8 cups
can pumpkin puree*	1.50 cups	salsa*	6 cups
can tomato paste	2 (6 oz)	soy sauce or aminos	2 tbsp
can tuna	1 (5 oz)	sugar	3 tbsp
can white beans*	2 (15 oz)	tortillas*	40
chicken stock or broth*	0.50 cup	white rice	2 cups
coconut oil	2 tbsp		

Produce

bell peppers (any)	6	green onion	6
carrot	11	lime	1
celery	0.50 cup	onion	4
cilantro	1 cup	russet potato	16
garlic	10 cloves	seasonal fruit (fresh)	1.50 lb

Spices

bay leaf	4	garlic powder	3.50 tsp
cayenne (!)	0.50 tsp	ginger	1 tbsp
chili powder	2 tsp + 2 tbsp	onion powder	1 tsp
cinnamon	3.25 tsp	oregano	1.50 tsp
coriander	1.5	pepper	1 tsp
cumin	7 tsp	red pepper flakes (!)	0.25 tsp
dill	1 tsp	salt	9.75 tsp

**Note: These items can be homemade for extra savings. Go to the main recipe in 30 Minute Dinners and click the link to find the homemade version.*

Potato & Egg Hash

INGREDIENTS

2 russet potatoes, sliced ¼" thick 4 eggs ¼ tsp pepper to taste
2 Tbsp butter ½ tsp salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Melt the butter in a large pan. Add the potatoes and turn every few minutes until most of them are brown and cooked through, about 15 minutes.
2. Add eggs. You can either leave the eggs alone, or stir to scramble the eggs with the potatoes. Cook until eggs are cooked as desired. Season with salt and pepper.

Pumpkin Pie Oatmeal

INGREDIENTS

2 cups rolled oats 4 cups water ¾ tsp cinnamon
½ cup can pumpkin puree ¼ tsp salt 2 Tbsp maple syrup (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large saucepan, combine pumpkin, water, salt and cinnamon. Bring to a boil.
2. Add oatmeal and turn the heat down, cooking oatmeal until most of the liquid is absorbed, about 15 minutes.
3. Serve with optional maple syrup if desired.

Blender Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

1 cup all-purpose flour ½ tsp salt 4 Tbsp melted butter
1 cup oats ½ tsp cinnamon 2 cups water, more or less
4 tsp baking powder 2 eggs 4 Tbsp maple syrup (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat a griddle to medium low or cast iron skillet to 350F. Put oats in a blender and pulse until they form a powder. Add eggs and melted butter and pulse to combine.
2. Add 1 cup of water, baking powder, salt and cinnamon and blend well. Add additional water as needed to thin the batter, but you want the batter to be on the thicker side.
3. Pour about ¼ cup batter onto the griddle or cast iron skillet and cook until bubbles form on the top. Flip and cook for 1-2 minutes, until both sides are golden brown.

Cheese Quesadilla

INGREDIENTS

8 tortillas
4 oz cheddar cheese, shredded

1 cup salsa
4 carrots, cut into sticks

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat griddle to medium or cast iron skillet to 350F. Place tortillas on the griddle/skillet and add 2 oz cheese and cover with a second tortilla.
2. When cheese is mostly melted, flip and cook until both sides are brown. Serve with salsa and carrot sticks on the side.

Bean & Potato Burritos

INGREDIENTS

8 tortillas
2 cups refried beans
4 russet potatoes, diced

1-2 Tbsp olive oil
1 cup salsa
4 oz cheddar cheese, shredded

2 bell peppers (any), sliced

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat olive oil in a skillet. Pan-fry potatoes until brown and cooked through.
2. Warm tortillas in a skillet or microwave. Fill each tortilla with potatoes and beans. Top with salsa and cheese as desired.
3. Serve with sliced bell peppers.

Peanut Butter Sandwiches + Fruit

INGREDIENTS

½ loaf homemade bread (staple recipe)
½ cup peanut butter

½ lb seasonal fruit (fresh),
apples, bananas, berries, melons,
etc.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Smear about 2 Tbsp of peanut butter on one side of one piece of bread. Top with a second piece of bread.
2. Repeat with the remaining peanut butter and bread to make 4 sandwiches.
3. Serve with sliced fruit.

dinner: Day 1

Slow Cooker Carnitas

INGREDIENTS

1 onion, diced	1 ½ tsp coriander	8 tortillas
3 lb pork loin shoulder or butt	½ tsp salt	
1 ½ tsp oregano	4 bay leaves	
3 tsp cumin	¼ tsp red pepper flakes	

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Dice and place the onion evenly on the bottom of the slow cooker.
2. Place the pork roast on top of the onion.
3. Add ½ cup chicken stock (or water) to the slow cooker.
4. In a small bowl or a mug, combine all the spices. Sprinkle liberally over the pork shoulder.
5. Cook the pork on low for 10 hours.
6. When the meat is done, shred the meat with two forks. Add the remaining ½ cup liquid if the pork has not released many juices. Stir to combine.

• • • *Divide into three portions; serve one portion for dinner and reserve the other two portions for meals later in the week.*

White Rice

INGREDIENTS

4 cups jasmine rice	4 Tbsp butter
8 cups water	1 tsp salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill a medium pot with 8 cups water and bring to a boil. Add 1 tsp salt, 4 Tbsp butter, and allow the butter to melt.
2. When the water has returned to a boil, stir in the rice. Let the water return to a light simmer. Stir again, cover the pot and turn the heat down to low.
3. Keep the rice simmering slightly, and keep the pot covered (you may have to peek after a few minutes to make sure the heat is at the correct temperature, but then let it cook, covered). Set a kitchen timer for 17 minutes and see if the rice is tender and all of the liquid is absorbed. It may take up to 25.
4. When the rice is cooked, turn off the heat and let it sit for another couple of minutes to finish absorbing any liquid. Take off the lid, fluff the rice with a fork and let it sit for another 2 minutes or so, so that some of the excess moisture in the rice dries off.

• • • *Serve 4 cups of rice with dinner; reserve the remaining 4 cups for Carnitas Burrito Bowls.*

Recipes continue on the next page →

Refried Beans

INGREDIENTS

1 lb dry pinto beans	4 Tbsp olive oil	2 tsp chili powder
9 cups water	2 tsp cumin	1 tsp salt, to taste
4 garlic cloves, peeled		½ lime, juiced

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place beans and water in the Instant Pot.
2. Seal the Instant Pot and make sure the pressure value is set to "sealing."
3. Press the "manual" or "pressure cook" button so that it is set to high pressure and use the "-" and "+" buttons to adjust the timer to 12 minutes.
4. When the timer goes off and the beans are done cooking, use the natural pressure release (i.e. do nothing).
Note: DO NOT use quick release when making more than one pound of beans.
5. Once the valve indicator has gone down, it is safe to open the Instant Pot.
6. Drain the beans and set aside.
7. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Cook garlic cloves until brown on both sides, 4-5 minutes. Smash garlic with a fork.
8. Add beans and spices and cook until the beans are heated through, about 5 minutes. Smash beans with a potato masher or immersion blender until desired texture is reached.

- • • *Serve about 2 cups of beans with dinner; reserve leftover beans for other meals during the week.*

dinner: Day 2

Basic Chili with Vegetables // Buttered Bread

INGREDIENTS

4 Tbsp olive oil	2-15 oz can kidney beans	2 Tbsp chili powder
2 onions, diced	2-15 oz can black beans	2 tsp ground cumin
4 garlic cloves, minced	2-15 oz can diced tomatoes	½ tsp cayenne
2 carrots, diced	2-15 oz cans white beans (any)	½ tsp garlic powder
1 Tbsp sugar	2-6oz can tomato paste	1 tsp onion powder
	2 cups water	2 tsp salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add onion and garlic to a large pot with olive oil and cook over medium heat until soft and transparent.
2. Drain the beans and add them to the pot with the tomatoes, tomato paste, water and all of ingredients for seasoning. Cover and simmer for at least 15 minutes, but the longer the better. Stir occasionally.

• • • *Serve with ½ loaf of sliced bread. Add butter if desired. Reserve 2 cups of chili for Tex-Mex Potato Bar and 2 cups for Chili Mac.*

dinner: Day 3

Chili Mac with Peas

INGREDIENTS

2 cups reserved chili
8 oz macaroni pasta
2 oz cheddar cheese, shredded
1-16oz package frozen peas

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook pasta in a pot of boiling water until al dente, about 7-8 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, warm reserved chili in a medium pot. Add frozen peas and cook until warmed through.
3. When pasta is done, drain and mix with warmed chili. Serve with cheddar cheese on top.

dinner: Day 4

Carnitas Burrito Bowls

INGREDIENTS

1 portion reserved carnitas
4 cups reserved rice
2 oz cheddar cheese, shredded
1 cup salsa
½ cup cilantro, chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Warm reserved carnitas and reserved rice.
2. Divide rice evenly between bowls. Top with carnitas, salsa, cheese and cilantro as desired.

dinner: Day 5

Humble Pasta Salad with Tuna

INGREDIENTS:

8 oz macaroni pasta	1 carrot, diced small	1 tsp salt
1-5 oz can tuna	1 tsp dill (dried)	½ tsp pepper, to taste
6 green onions, thinly sliced	2 eggs, hard boiled and cut in wedges	1 Tbsp lime juice
1 bell pepper, diced		½ cup plain yogurt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook pasta in a medium saucepan of boiling water until al dente, about 7-8 minutes.
2. Mix tuna, onions, carrot, and bell pepper with yogurt so that it's moist, but not super wet.
3. Add the dill, salt and pepper to taste. Add the dash of lemon juice and then refrigerate the salad for at least a 30 minutes.
4. When ready to serve, give the salad another toss, taste to see if you need more seasoning, or more yogurt, (it will probably need something) and garnish with the sliced eggs.

dinner: Day 6

Slow Cooker Tex-Mex Baked Potato Bar

INGREDIENTS

4 russet potatoes	1 cup salsa	2 cups reserved chili
2 oz cheddar cheese, shredded	½ cup cilantro, chopped	1 portion reserved carnitas

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash potatoes, cut out any bad spots and wrap in aluminum foil.
2. Add 1" of water to the bottom of a slow cooker and place wrapped potatoes inside. Cook on low for 6-8 hours. Fork should insert easily.
3. Warm reserved chili and carnitas. Allow individuals to top potatoes with chili, carnitas, cheese, cilantro and salsa as desired.

dinner: Day 7

Vegetable Fried Rice

INGREDIENTS

2 cups white rice	2 cloves garlic	½ cup bell pepper, chopped
2 cups water	1 Tbsp ginger	½ cup onion, chopped
2 Tbsp coconut oil	½ cup celery, chopped	1-15 oz can garbanzo beans
2 eggs	2 cups frozen mixed vegetables	2-4 Tbsp soy sauce or aminos

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add 2 cups rice in the Instant Pot. Add 2 cups water. Cook on high pressure for 4 minutes. Quick release pressure when timer goes off.
2. In a wok or very large skillet, add fat and heat over medium high heat until it melts.
3. Add eggs, then scramble the eggs in the pan with a spatula or wooden spoon. Add onion, garlic and ginger and cook, stirring often.
4. When the eggs are translucent, add the remaining vegetables and stir-fry for 2-5 mins.
5. Add rice and fold to fully incorporate with the vegetables. (Pre-cooked meat could also be added at this point.)
6. Gently fold in beans before adding soy sauce. Stir vegetable fried rice well and serve.

Homemade Bread

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ cups warm water	2 Tbsp sugar	2 Tbsp olive oil
2 ¼ tsp yeast (one packet)	2 tsp salt	3 ½ - 4 cups all-purpose flour

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine yeast and warm water in a bowl or in the bowl of a stand mixer and allow yeast to bloom.
2. Add remaining ingredients and knead until the dough is smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes.
3. Cover with a towel and allow to rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 – 1 ½ hours.
4. Pour onto a lightly floured surface and flatten to about 2" tall. Separate into two equal parts. Working with one section at a time, gently punch the dough down and out, then folding the dough over itself. Turn ¼ turn. Repeat this punching and turning process 3-4 times. Shape the dough into a log and place it smooth side up into a loaf pan. Repeat with the remaining dough. Cover both loaves with a towel and allow to rise in a warm place until doubled in size, about 45-60 minutes. Preheat the oven to 400F.
5. When the dough is ready, slash the top lightly with a serrated knife. Bake the loaves for 25-30 minutes, or until the top is browned and the loaf sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom.
6. Allow to cool completely before slicing.

• • • *Makes two loaves. Use 1 ½ loaves for lunch sandwiches, ½ loaf for dinner.*