

ONE WEEK BUDGET MEAL PLAN 4

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- 100% real food recipes that are simple, straight-forward and family-friendly.
- A few store-bought items for things I typically make from scratch. Feel free to make these things from scratch if you prefer.
- A plan that comes in under \$50 for a family of four! *Note: This pricing may be different in your area or change due to inflation.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED:

- Precautions for food allergies. My family is blessed to not have food allergies, so I don't plan for them in my meal plans. However, ALDI has a fantastic gluten-free line of foods, and if you're dairy free you're used to subbing anyway. With a few tweaks, I think this ALDI meal plan would work in most food allergy families too.

NO BREAKFAST OR LUNCHES?

This meal plan doesn't include breakfast or lunches because in my experience, the majority of families have personal preferences on what they eat for breakfast and lunch.

- Have no fear though – I have NO DOUBT the ingredients you buy for this meal plan will provide extras you can use to cover breakfasts and/or lunches. Here's why:
- Every meal on this menu is something I make frequently with my family. Every single one of them covers dinner for the four of us AND enough for at least one leftover lunch (usually two).
- If you still don't think this is enough food to cover breakfast AND lunches, buy a bag of apples and a container of oatmeal. Make apple cinnamon oatmeal for breakfast and you'll keep your bill under \$53. 😊

THE PLAN

Day 1

Whole Chicken // Roasted Cabbage Wedges // Hidden Veggie Mac & Cheese // Roasted Butternut Squash

Day 2

Stuffed Baked Sweet Potatoes // Fried Eggs

Day 3

Loaded Kale Salad // Sweet Potato Biscuits

Day 4

Tikka Masala Chicken over Rice // Mixed Mashed Potatoes // Steamed Carrots

Day 5

African Sweet Potato & Peanut Soup // No-Knead Overnight Artisan Bread

Day 6

Sheet Pan Sausage, Onions, & Peppers // Hidden Veggie Mac & Cheese // Hoagie Rolls

Day 7

Egg Roll in a Bowl

THE SHOPPING LIST

Cold Case

butter	20 tbsp	milk	5.83 cups
crumbled feta	4 oz	milk (any)	1.25 cups
egg	9	shredded cheddar cheese	16 oz

Meat

chicken (3-5 lb)	2 whole	Italian sausages	6
ground pork	1 lb		

Pantry

active dry yeast	1 tsp	kalamata olives	0.50 cup
all-purpose flour	5 cups	lemon juice	3 tbsp
apple cider vinegar	1 tsp + 1 tbsp	mayo (optional)	0.25 cup
baking powder	1 tbsp	olive oil	15 tbsp
bread flour	4 cups	peanut butter	0.33 cup + 2 Tbsp
can cannellini beans or chickpeas	1 (15 oz)	peanuts	0.50 cup
can pumpkin puree	8 oz	sesame oil	2 tbsp
chicken stock or broth	4.50 cups	sriracha (!) (optional)	1 tsp
coconut aminos (or soy sauce or liquid aminos)	4 tbsp	sugar or honey	3 tbsp
coconut oil	1 tbsp	Tikka Masala	1 jar
cooking spray	1 tbsp	vital wheat gluten	1 tbsp + 1 tsp
elbow pasta	16 oz	white rice	2 cups
flour	8 tbsp	yeast	2.50 tsp
honey	1 tbsp		

Produce

avocado	1	head cabbage	1
baby carrots	1 lb	kale	10 cups
bag coleslaw	2 (10 oz)	minced garlic	1 tsp
bell peppers (any)	4	mushrooms	20 oz
butternut squash	2 lb	onion	6
carrot	5	russet potato	2 lb
celery	2 ribs	shredded carrots	1 (10 oz)
cherry tomatoes	0.75 cup	spinach	3 cups
cilantro	1 bunch	sweet potato	5 + 2.5 lbs
garlic	2 cloves	tomato	3

Spices

cayenne (!) (optional)	0.13 tsp	dry minced onion	5 tbsp
chili powder (optional)	0.50 tsp	garlic powder	1 tbsp + 2.5 tsp
cinnamon	0.50 tsp	ground ginger	3 tsp
cinnamon (optional)	0.50 tsp	Italian seasoning	2.50 tsp
cloves	0.13 tsp	nutmeg	0.50 tsp
coriander	2 tsp	onion powder	0.50 tsp
cumin	1.50 tsp	paprika	0.50 tsp
dill	1 tsp	pepper	4.50 tsp
dried basil	1 tsp	salt	15 tsp
dried parsley	2 tbsp	thyme	1 tsp

DAY 1

WHOLE CHICKEN

INGREDIENTS

- 2 whole chicken (3-5 lb)
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- ½ tsp Italian seasoning
- ½ tsp coriander

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Remove the innards/giblets from the chicken and set aside for chicken stock. Rinse the chicken and pat dry.
2. Place chickens inside a large slow cooker and sprinkle all the seasonings on top.
3. Cover and cook on low for 6-8 hours.
4. Shred chicken with 2 forks, or with tongs and a fork. ***

*** *Serve half of 1 chicken for dinner. Reserve rest of shredded chicken into 2 cup portions for Loaded Kale Salad, Tikka Masala Chicken. Make chicken stock ([slow cooker instructions](#)) with bones for African Sweet Potato & Peanut Soup.*

ROASTED CABBAGE WEDGES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head cabbage
- 1 Tbsp cooking spray

DRY RANCH SEASONING

- 5 Tbsp dry minced onion
- 2 Tbsp dried parsley
- 1 Tbsp garlic powder
- 4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp dill
- 1 tsp thyme
- 1 tsp dried basil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400F.
2. Place sliced cabbage on a baking sheet. Brush both sides of each cabbage with olive oil and sprinkle with spices.
3. Bake for 15 minutes then flip. Bake for another 10-15 minutes or until browned.

HIDDEN VEGGIE MAC & CHEESE

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz elbow pasta
- 4 Tbsp butter
- 4 Tbsp flour
- 4 oz canned pumpkin, (just pumpkin, not pumpkin pie filling)
- 8 oz cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2-2½ cups milk, divided
- ¼ tsp each: garlic powder, ground nutmeg, onion powder, paprika
- ¼ tsp chili powder (optional)
- ½ tsp black pepper
- ½ tsp salt, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook pasta al dente according to package directions. Strain in a colander and set aside.
2. In the same pot, melt butter. Add flour and stir so that it makes a paste with the melted butter. Allow the flour to cook for about 5 minutes, stirring often.
3. Add 1½ cups of milk while stirring constantly. Stir until the sauce is smooth.
4. Add the pumpkin and cheddar cheese and stir often until the cheese is melted.
5. Season with the garlic powder, nutmeg, onion powder, paprika, pepper and chili powder, if using.
6. Rinse the pasta with water so that the noodles don't stick together. Add the pasta to the cheese sauce and stir well, but gently so that the noodles don't break. Taste and add additional seasoning as desired. If the sauce is too thick, thin with milk ¼ cup at a time.

**** You will eat this dish twice this week, but instead of doubling the whole thing, I suggest only doubling the pasta and shredding the cheese ahead of time. It really tastes the best fresh!*

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs butternut squash
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400F.
2. Wash and dry the butternut squash. Peel and remove seeds. Cut into 1 inch pieces.
3. Spread the squash into a single layer on a baking sheet.
4. Drizzle evenly with olive oil.
5. Season with salt and pepper and additional spices as desired.
6. Roast in the oven until the squash is tender, about 30 minutes.

DAY 2

STUFFED BAKED SWEET POTATOES + FRIED EGGS

INGREDIENTS

- 5 sweet potatoes
- ¼ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 Tbsp olive oil, split
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 3 cups spinach
- 2 cups kale
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- ½ cup Kalamata olives
- 1 (15 oz) can of cannellini beans or chickpeas
- 4 ounces crumbled feta
- 8 eggs
- 2 Tbsp butter

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Use a fork to poke holes around the sweet potatoes to allow steam to escape as they cook. (Or [cook in the Instant Pot](#).) Bake for about 45 minutes to an hour until tender.***
2. Place halved cherry tomatoes on a baking sheet, drizzle with 1 Tbsp olive oil. Roast at 400F for 10-15 minutes until charred.
3. Meanwhile, warm the remaining olive oil in a large skillet. Add the garlic and cook for a 1-2 minutes on a medium-low until golden and fragrant, stirring the whole time to keep from burning.
4. Add the spinach, kale, and lemon juice to the pan. Cook uncovered, about 2-3 minutes until the greens are wilted.
5. Stir in the roasted cherry tomatoes, olives, beans, and feta and stir. Cook a few minutes to heat through then set aside away from the heat until the sweet potatoes finish cooking.
6. Right before sweet potatoes are finished, fry your eggs. Heat 1 Tbsp butter in a skillet on medium. Add eggs and cook until desired doneness.
7. After removing the potatoes from the oven slice an opening down the lengthwise. Spoon the filling into the potatoes, top with more feta if desired and serve with eggs on the side.

*** Reserve 1 baked sweet potato for Sweet Potato Biscuits.

DAY 3

LOADED KALE SALAD

INGREDIENTS

RICE

- 2 cups white rice
- 3 cups water

VEGETABLES

- 4 large carrots, halved + roughly chopped
- 1 lb russet potatoes, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 pinch sea salt

DRESSING

- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 2-3 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1-2 Tbsp honey
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 1/4 cup water (to thin)

SALAD

- 8 cups kale, torn or roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, chopped
- 1 ripe avocado, cubed
- 1/4 cup chopped peanuts
- 2 cups reserved shredded chicken

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In an Instant Pot, combine rice, water and salt. Cook on high pressure for 4 minutes. Release the pressure using Quick Pressure Release. Fluff the rice with a large fork. ***
2. Preheat oven to 375F degrees. Add carrots and russet potatoes to a baking sheet. Drizzle oil and seasonings and toss to coat. Roast for 25-30 minutes until tender and golden brown.
3. Meanwhile, prepare dressing by adding peanut butter, lemon juice, honey, and salt to a small bowl. Whisk to combine. Add water 1 Tbsp at a time until pourable consistency. Taste and adjust flavor as desired.

4. Arrange kale into serving bowls and top with cooked rice, cherry tomatoes, avocado, peanuts, shredded chicken, and roasted vegetables. Serve with dressing on the side or toss to combine.

****Reserve half of the cooked rice for Tikka Masala Chicken.*

SWEET POTATO BISCUITS

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup reserved sweet potato, mashed
- 1 tsp apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup milk (I used almond milk)
- 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting (I used einkorn flour-increase flour to 2 cups)
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 6 Tbsp cold butter, cut into small pieces

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 425F. Whisk together mashed sweet potato, apple cider vinegar and milk in a small bowl and place in the fridge.
2. Meanwhile, combine flour, baking powder, salt and butter in a the bowl of a stand mixer and using the paddle attachment, mix the fat into the flour until the largest pieces are no bigger than a pea. Alternatively, use your hands to mix the fat into the flour, taking care not to let the butter melt.
3. Place the flour in the fridge until the oven is preheated.
4. When the oven is ready, pull both the sweet potato and flour out of the fridge. Add the sweet potato to the flour and mix until the flour is just combined. The dough will be sticky.
5. Liberally dust flour on your counter or on a silpat mat and turn out the dough onto the surface. Sprinkle the top with flour and gently shape into a square.
6. Gently fold the dough over itself, pulling from the top and folding over to the bottom. Dust the top with flour and pat again into a square. Turn the dough ¼ turn counter clockwise.
7. Repeat this step until you've completed four folds.
8. After you've done four folds, dust the top with flour and carefully press the dough down and out until it's about ½" thick.
9. Using a biscuit cutter or a small jar (I used a pint-sized mason jar), cut out 11-13 biscuits. You may need to flour the rim of the jar in between each cut to prevent the dough from sticking to the jar.
10. Place each biscuit onto a baking sheet about 1" apart.
11. Bake for 13-16 minutes (mine took 15 minutes exactly), or until the tops are golden brown.
12. Let cool slightly on a cooling rack and then serve warm.

DAY 4

TIKKA MASALA CHICKEN OVER RICE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 jar Tikka Masala
- 2 cups reserved shredded chicken
- reserved white rice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In an Instant Pot, combine rice, water and salt. Cook on high pressure for 4 minutes. Release the pressure using Quick Pressure Release. Fluff the rice with a large fork.
2. In a large skillet, combine Tikka Masala and shredded chicken. Heat until warmed through.
3. Serve over warmed rice.

MIXED MASHED POTATOES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1½-inch chunks (use whatever is left from Loaded Kale Salad)
- 1 lb sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1½-inch chunks
- ½ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ tsp cinnamon (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add chopped potatoes into a large pot. Cover with water and boil until tender (about 7-10 minutes).
2. Drain water and mash potatoes with masher or back of spoon.
3. Add milk, butter, salt, and pepper. Add optional cinnamon if desired.

STEAMED CARROTS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup water
- 1 lb baby carrots
- 2 Tbsp butter
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add 1 cup water to the bottom of a saucepan. Place 1lb carrots in a steamer basket, or place carrots directly in the water.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cover. Allow carrots to steam 8-11 minutes or until tender-crisp. If you're not using a steaming basket, crack the lid and stir every few minutes.
3. Toss carrots with butter, salt, and pepper. Serve warm.

DAY 5

AFRICAN SWEET POTATO & PEANUT SOUP

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 ½ tsp ground cumin
- 1 ½ tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 pinch ground cloves
- 3 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 ½ lbs sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and chopped
- 4 ½ cups chicken stock
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ cup chopped, unsalted dry-roasted peanuts
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper
- 2 Tbsp creamy peanut butter
- 1 bunch chopped fresh cilantro

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Saute the onion 10 minutes, until lightly browned.
2. Mix in the garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, and cloves. Stir in the tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and carrot, and continue to cook and stir about 5 minutes.
3. Pour chicken stock into the saucepan, and season the mixture with salt. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes.
4. Remove the soup mixture from heat. In a food processor or blender, blend the soup and peanuts until almost smooth. Season with cayenne pepper. Return to the saucepan.
5. Whisk in the peanut butter, and cook until heated through. Serve warm topped with fresh cilantro.

NO KNEAD ARTISAN BREAD

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp active dry yeast
- 1½ cups room temperature water

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine flour, salt and yeast in a large bowl and stir to combine.
2. Add water and mix well. The dough will be hard to stir and shaggy, not smooth like traditional bread dough.
3. Cover with a towel and let rise overnight, 8-18 hours. The dough will bubble and rise.
4. When you're ready to make bread, flour your hands and your working surface and turn the dough out. Without kneading the dough, gently form it into a ball. Cover with a towel and allow to rest for one hour.
5. After the dough has risen for 30 minutes, preheat the oven to 450F and put your Dutch oven or oven-safe pot (that has a lid) inside to preheat. Do not put the lid in the oven. Preheat for 30 minutes.
6. When the dough has rested for an hour, and the pot has preheated, remove the pot from the oven. Carefully lift the dough from the surface and place into the pot. If your pot is stainless steel and not lined, you can line it with parchment paper first.
7. Replace the lid and place the pot back in the oven. Bake for 30 minutes with the lid on.
8. Remove the lid and bake for another 15 minutes, or until the top is golden-medium brown.
9. Allow to cool completely (at least 30 minutes in a spot where air can flow freely above and below).

DAY 6

SHEET PAN SAUSAGE, ONIONS, & PEPPERS

INGREDIENTS

- 4 bell peppers (any) sliced
- 3 onions large, sliced
- 16 oz mushrooms halved
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 6 Italian sausages

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 375F.
2. Add all the vegetables to a large sheet pan. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with salt, pepper and Italian seasoning. Add the sausages in and around the vegetables.
3. Bake until the sausages are cooked through and the vegetables are tender and slightly charred for about 40-45 minutes.

HIDDEN VEGGIE MAC & CHEESE

INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz elbow pasta
- 4 Tbsp butter
- 4 Tbsp flour
- 4 oz canned pumpkin, (just pumpkin, not pumpkin pie filling)
- 8 oz cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2-2½ cups milk, divided
- ¼ tsp each: garlic powder, ground nutmeg, onion powder, paprika
- ¼ tsp chili powder (optional)
- ½ tsp black pepper
- salt, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook pasta al dente according to package directions. Strain in a colander and set aside.
2. In the same pot, melt butter. Add flour and stir so that it makes a paste with the melted butter. Allow the flour to cook for about 5 minutes, stirring often.
3. Add 1½ cups of milk while stirring constantly. Stir until the sauce is smooth.
4. Add the pumpkin and cheddar cheese and stir often until the cheese is melted.
5. Season with the garlic powder, nutmeg, onion powder, paprika, pepper and chili powder, if using.
6. Rinse the pasta with water so that the noodles don't stick together. Add the pasta to the cheese sauce and stir well, but gently so that the noodles don't break. Taste and add additional seasoning as desired. If the sauce is too thick, thin with milk ¼ cup at a time.

HOMEMADE HOAGIE ROLLS

INGREDIENTS

- 1¼ cup milk (cow, almond, soy, etc.)
- 1 large egg
- 6 Tbsp olive oil
- 3 Tbsp honey
- 4 cups bread flour
- 1 Tbsp + 1 tsp vital wheat gluten
- 2 tsp salt
- 2½ tsp active dry yeast

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Measure yeast in a mixing bowl.
2. Warm milk to 105-110 degrees (I used the microwave and a candy thermometer) and pour into yeast. Let stand for 5-10 minutes while yeast activates.
3. When the yeast is slightly beer-foamy (milk won't make it as foamy as water does), add all of the other ingredients and mix on medium until dough is smooth and elastic (5-10 minutes).
4. Pour into a large oiled bowl and let rise in a warm place until dough is doubled in size, 1-1½ hours.
5. After the dough has risen, pour onto a flour surface and knead to form a long log-shape.
6. Cut dough (I use a pizza cutter) into 12 equal pieces.
7. Shape pieces into hoagie rolls and place on a cookie sheet.
8. Cover loosely with plastic wrap sprayed with cooking spray (sprayed side down).
9. Preheat oven to 375 degrees and let buns rise for 30 minutes.
10. Bake for 15-22 minutes until lightly browned.

DAY 7

EGG ROLL IN A BOWL

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Tbsp coconut oil
- 1 lb ground pork
- 2 (10 oz) bag coleslaw
- 1 (10 oz) shredded carrots
- 2 onions diced
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp pepper
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 4 Tbsp coconut aminos (or soy sauce or liquid aminos)
- 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 2 Tbsp sesame oil
- 2 ribs celery diced
- 4 oz mushrooms sliced
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- ¼ cup mayo (optional)
- 1-4 tsp sriracha (!) (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large 5-6 quart pot OR the Instant Pot, melt 1 Tbsp coconut oil over medium heat. Add 1 lb ground meat and cook until cooked about halfway through.
2. Add 2 (10 oz) packages of shredded cabbage, 2 diced onions, 2 tsp ground ginger, 1 tsp pepper and 2 tsp garlic powder. Cook until the onions begin to turn translucent.
3. Add the 10 oz shredded carrots, 1 cup diced celery, 1 cup sliced mushrooms, 4 Tbsp coconut aminos, 1 Tbsp vinegar and 2 Tbsp sesame seed oil and cook until vegetables soften. Season with ½ tsp salt and ¼ tsp pepper, to taste.
4. (Optional) In a small bowl, combine mayo and hot sauce. Mix well and serve as desired with the egg roll in a bowl.