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**15-MINUTE
FREELANCER**

QUICK MEALS FOR DEEP WORK



Speedy Salmon & Asparagus Sheet Pan Dinner



INGREDIENTS

2 fillets salmon (about 6 oz each)
1 bunch asparagus, trimmed
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp garlic powder
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp black pepper
1 lemon, sliced for serving

TOOLS NEEDED

Sheet pan

Parchment paper

Small bowl

PREPARATION

- Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and line a large sheet pan with parchment paper for easy cleanup.
- In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Place the trimmed asparagus on one side of the prepared sheet pan and toss with half of the olive oil mixture until evenly coated.
- Arrange the salmon fillets on the other side of the sheet pan. Drizzle the remaining olive oil mixture evenly over the salmon. Top each fillet with a lemon slice.
- Roast for 12-15 minutes, or until the salmon is cooked through and flakes easily with a fork, and the asparagus is tender-crisp.
- Carefully remove the sheet pan from the oven. Let the salmon rest for a minute before serving.
- Serve immediately, or let cool completely and store in airtight containers for grab-and-go lunches throughout the week. Enjoy your wholesome, quick meal!

Microwave Sweet Potato & Black Bean Bowl



INGREDIENTS

1 medium sweet potato
1/2 cup canned black beans,
rinsed and drained
1/4 cup frozen corn kernels
2 tbsp salsa
1 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
(optional)
1/4 tsp chili powder

TOOLS NEEDED

Microwave-safe bowl

Fork

Knife

PREPARATION

- Wash the sweet potato thoroughly. Pierce it several times with a fork to allow steam to escape, which prevents it from exploding in the microwave.
- Place the pierced sweet potato in the microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high for 5-8 minutes, or until fork-tender. The exact time will depend on your microwave and the size of the potato.
- Once tender, carefully remove the sweet potato from the microwave. Let it cool slightly, then slice it open lengthwise and fluff the inside with a fork. Mash the flesh gently within the skin.
- Add the rinsed black beans, frozen corn, and chili powder to the bowl with the sweet potato. Stir gently to combine and distribute the seasonings.
- Microwave for an additional 1-2 minutes, or until the beans and corn are heated through. This ensures all components are warm and ready to eat.
- Top the bowl with salsa and fresh cilantro, if using. Enjoy this incredibly fast and nutritious meal immediately, or portion it into containers for later.

Chilled Quinoa Salad Jars



INGREDIENTS

1 cup cooked quinoa, cooled
1/2 cup canned chickpeas,
rinsed and drained
1/2 cup diced cucumber
1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
3 tbsp lemon vinaigrette

TOOLS NEEDED

Mason jars (3)
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons

PREPARATION

- Prepare your vinaigrette by whisking together 3 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Set aside.
- Start layering the ingredients in the mason jars, beginning with the wettest ingredients at the bottom to prevent sogginess. Pour about 1 tbsp of vinaigrette into the bottom of each jar.
- Next, add the chopped parsley, followed by the diced red bell pepper and cucumber. These vegetables provide a crunchy layer that will stay crisp thanks to the dressing below.
- Add the rinsed chickpeas, distributing them evenly among the jars. They form a substantial protein layer.
- Finally, top each jar with the cooled cooked quinoa, dividing it equally. This quinoa layer acts as the base for the salad.
- Seal the jars tightly and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving, or store for up to 3-4 days. To serve, shake the jar well and pour into a bowl.

Sheet Pan Lemon Herb Chicken & Veggies



INGREDIENTS

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
cut into 1-inch cubes
1 cup broccoli florets
1 cup sliced carrots
1/2 medium red onion, cut into wedges
3 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp dried Italian herbs
1/2 tsp garlic powder
Salt and pepper to taste

TOOLS NEEDED

Sheet pan

Parchment paper

Large bowl

PREPARATION

- Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper for effortless cleanup.
- In a large bowl, combine the cubed chicken, broccoli florets, sliced carrots, and red onion wedges. Drizzle with olive oil, then sprinkle with Italian herbs, garlic powder, salt, and pepper.
- Toss all the ingredients gently until the chicken and vegetables are evenly coated with the oil and seasonings. Ensure every piece has a light coating for optimal flavor and roasting.
- Spread the seasoned chicken and vegetables in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet. Avoid overcrowding the pan, as this helps the ingredients roast rather than steam.
- Roast for 20-25 minutes, flipping halfway through, or until the chicken is cooked through (internal temperature of 165°F/74°C) and the vegetables are tender and lightly caramelized.
- Remove from the oven and let cool slightly. This dish is delicious served hot, or portioned into containers for healthy lunches throughout the week. Enjoy your flavorful, balanced meal!

Loaded Veggie Omelette Muffins



INGREDIENTS

6 large eggs
1/4 cup milk
1/2 cup chopped mixed vegetables (e.g., bell peppers, onions, spinach, mushrooms)
1/4 cup shredded cheese (optional)
Salt and pepper to taste

TOOLS NEEDED

Muffin tin (12-cup)
Whisk
Mixing bowl
Measuring cups

PREPARATION

- Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C) and lightly grease a 12-cup muffin tin, or line it with silicone muffin liners to prevent sticking.
- In a mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs, milk, salt, and pepper until well combined and slightly frothy. This ensures an even texture in the finished muffins.
- Distribute the chopped mixed vegetables evenly among the muffin cups. If using cheese, sprinkle it over the vegetables in each cup.
- Carefully pour the egg mixture over the vegetables and cheese in each muffin cup, filling them about two-thirds full. Avoid overfilling, as the muffins will puff up slightly while baking.
- Bake for 18-22 minutes, or until the muffins are set and lightly golden brown. A toothpick inserted into the center should come out clean.
- Allow the omelette muffins to cool in the tin for a few minutes before carefully removing them. Serve warm, or let cool completely and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.

Quick Chicken Stir-Fry with Mixed Veggies



INGREDIENTS

1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast or thighs, cut into strips
2 cups mixed stir-fry vegetables (e.g., broccoli, snap peas, carrots, bell peppers)
2 tbsp soy sauce (or tamari for gluten-free)
1 tbsp sesame oil
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp grated fresh ginger
1 tbsp cornstarch (optional, for thickening sauce)

TOOLS NEEDED

Wok or large skillet

Spatula

Small bowl

PREPARATION

- If using cornstarch, mix it with 2 tablespoons of water in a small bowl to create a slurry, then set aside. This will thicken your sauce.
- Heat the sesame oil in a wok or large skillet over high heat until shimmering. Add the minced garlic and grated ginger, stir-frying for about 30 seconds until fragrant, being careful not to burn them.
- Add the chicken strips to the hot wok and stir-fry until they are browned and cooked through, about 5-7 minutes. Remove the chicken from the wok and set aside.
- Add the mixed stir-fry vegetables to the same wok. Stir-fry for 3-5 minutes until they are tender-crisp. You want them to retain some bite.
- Return the cooked chicken to the wok with the vegetables. Pour in the soy sauce. If using, stir the cornstarch slurry again and add it to the wok, stirring constantly until the sauce thickens, about 1-2 minutes.
- Serve immediately over rice or noodles, or let cool and portion into meal prep containers. Enjoy your quick, flavorful, and healthy stir-fry!

Overnight Oats with Berries & Seeds



INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup rolled oats (old-fashioned)

1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)

1 tbsp chia seeds

1 tbsp maple syrup or honey (optional)

1/2 cup mixed berries (fresh or frozen)

TOOLS NEEDED

Mason jar or container with lid

Measuring cups

Measuring spoon

PREPARATION

- Combine the rolled oats, milk, chia seeds, and maple syrup (if using) in a mason jar or other airtight container. Stir well to ensure the chia seeds are evenly distributed and there are no clumps of oats.
- Stir in half of the mixed berries. If using frozen berries, they will thaw overnight and release some juice, adding flavor and color.
- Seal the jar tightly with a lid. Place it in the refrigerator overnight, or for at least 4-6 hours, allowing the oats and chia seeds to absorb the liquid and thicken.
- In the morning, give the oats a good stir. If they seem too thick, you can add a splash more milk to reach your desired consistency.
- Top with the remaining fresh berries just before serving. The combination of creamy oats, tangy berries, and nutritious seeds makes for a perfect, grab-and-go breakfast.
- Enjoy your refreshing and satisfying overnight oats! They are best consumed within 3-4 days of preparation.

Tuna Salad Lettuce Wraps



INGREDIENTS

2 cans tuna (in water or oil), drained
1/4 cup mayonnaise (or Greek yogurt for a lighter option)
2 tbsp finely chopped celery
1 tbsp finely chopped red onion
1 tsp lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
4-6 large lettuce leaves (e.g., butter, romaine)

TOOLS NEEDED

Medium bowl

Fork

Knife

Cutting board

PREPARATION

- Drain the tuna thoroughly. If using canned tuna in water, press out as much liquid as possible to prevent a watery salad.
- In a medium bowl, flake the drained tuna with a fork. Add the mayonnaise (or Greek yogurt), chopped celery, chopped red onion, and lemon juice.
- Mix all the ingredients together until well combined. Season with salt and pepper to your liking. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed for optimal flavor.
- Wash and dry the lettuce leaves thoroughly. Choose large, sturdy leaves that can hold the filling without tearing easily.
- Spoon the tuna salad mixture evenly into the prepared lettuce cups. Ensure each cup has a generous portion of the creamy tuna salad.
- Serve immediately for a light and satisfying meal, or pack the lettuce cups and tuna salad separately in airtight containers to assemble just before eating, keeping the lettuce crisp. Enjoy your refreshing, protein-packed lunch!

Savory Lentil Shepherd's Pie Cups



INGREDIENTS

1 cup brown or green lentils, rinsed
3 cups vegetable broth
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 carrots, finely chopped
1 stalk celery, finely chopped
1 tsp dried thyme
2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 tbsp milk (dairy or non-dairy)

TOOLS NEEDED

Muffin tin (12-cup)

Saucepan

Pot

Potato masher

PREPARATION

- In a saucepan, combine the rinsed lentils and vegetable broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes, or until lentils are tender. Drain any excess liquid.
- While lentils simmer, boil the cubed sweet potatoes in a separate pot of water until very tender, about 15-20 minutes. Drain well.
- In another skillet, sauté the chopped onion, carrots, and celery over medium heat until softened, about 5-7 minutes. Stir in the cooked lentils and dried thyme. Season with salt and pepper.
- Mash the drained sweet potatoes with the milk, salt, and pepper until smooth and creamy. Add a little more milk if needed to reach desired consistency.
- Spoon the lentil mixture evenly into the bottom of a 12-cup muffin tin, filling each cup about halfway. Top each with a generous spoonful of the mashed sweet potato, spreading it to cover the lentil mixture.
- Bake in a preheated oven at 375°F (190°C) for 20-25 minutes, or until the topping is lightly golden and the filling is heated through. Let cool slightly before serving or storing.

Chicken Caesar Salad Power Bowls



INGREDIENTS

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts grilled and sliced
4 cups chopped romaine lettuce
1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup croutons (optional)
1/4 cup lighter Caesar dressing

TOOLS NEEDED

Large bowls (2)
Grill or skillet
Knife
Cutting board

PREPARATION

- Season chicken breasts with salt, pepper, and any desired herbs. Grill or pan-sear until cooked through (internal temperature of 165°F/74°C). Let cool slightly, then slice.
- Wash and chop the romaine lettuce. Place it in a large bowl. Add the halved cherry tomatoes and shredded Parmesan cheese. Toss gently to combine.
- Divide the chopped lettuce mixture evenly between two meal prep bowls or containers.
- Top each bowl with a portion of the sliced grilled chicken. Add croutons, if using, just before serving to keep them crisp.
- Drizzle with the lighter Caesar dressing. It's best to store the dressing separately and add it right before eating to prevent the lettuce from wilting.
- Enjoy your delicious and convenient Chicken Caesar Salad Power Bowl! This meal is perfect for a quick, healthy lunch.

Peanut Butter Banana Energy Bites



INGREDIENTS

1 cup rolled oats
1/2 cup creamy peanut butter
1/3 cup mashed ripe banana
2 tbsp honey or maple syrup
1 tbsp chia seeds or ground flaxseed
1/2 tsp vanilla extract

TOOLS NEEDED

Medium bowl
Spatula
Measuring cups
Measuring spoons

PREPARATION

- Ensure your banana is very ripe and mashed thoroughly. This provides natural sweetness and binding.
- In a medium bowl, combine the rolled oats, peanut butter, mashed banana, honey (or maple syrup), chia seeds (or flaxseed), and vanilla extract. Stir everything together thoroughly with a spatula until a sticky dough forms.
- The mixture should be thick enough to hold its shape. If it seems too wet, add a tablespoon more oats; if too dry, add a teaspoon more peanut butter or banana.
- Roll the mixture into small, bite-sized balls, about 1 inch in diameter. You should get around 15-20 energy bites, depending on size.
- Place the rolled energy bites on a plate or baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes to allow them to firm up and hold their shape.
- Store the energy bites in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to a week. They make a perfect grab-and-go snack for busy freelancers. Enjoy your healthy, homemade treats!

Spicy Shrimp & Avocado Wraps



INGREDIENTS

8 oz raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 tsp chili powder
1/2 tsp cumin
1 tbsp olive oil
1 whole wheat tortilla large
1/2 avocado sliced
1/4 cup thinly sliced red bell pepper
2 tbsp chopped cilantro

TOOLS NEEDED

Skillet

Spatula

Knife

Cutting board

PREPARATION

- Pat the shrimp dry with paper towels. In a small bowl, toss the shrimp with chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper until evenly coated.
- Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the seasoned shrimp and cook for 2-3 minutes per side, until pink and cooked through. Be careful not to overcook.
- Warm the whole wheat tortilla slightly in a dry skillet or microwave to make it more pliable. This prevents it from cracking when rolled.
- Lay the warm tortilla flat. Arrange the sliced avocado, sliced red bell pepper, and chopped cilantro down the center of the tortilla.
- Top the vegetables with the cooked spicy shrimp. Spoon any remaining juices from the skillet over the filling.
- Fold in the sides of the tortilla, then tightly roll it up from the bottom to create a wrap. Cut in half if desired, and enjoy immediately, or wrap tightly for a portable lunch.

Greek Yogurt Parfait with Granola & Fruit



INGREDIENTS

1 cup plain Greek yogurt
1/2 cup granola
1/2 cup mixed berries
(fresh or frozen)
1 tbsp honey or maple
syrup (optional)

TOOLS NEEDED

Glass or jar
Spoon
Measuring cups

PREPARATION

- Choose a clear glass or jar to showcase the beautiful layers of your parfait. Ensure it's clean and dry.
- Start by spooning about half of the Greek yogurt into the bottom of the glass. Spread it evenly to create a smooth base layer.
- Add half of the granola over the yogurt layer. This provides a satisfying crunch contrast to the creamy yogurt.
- Spoon the remaining Greek yogurt on top of the granola, creating the second yogurt layer. Smooth the top slightly.
- Top the second yogurt layer with the remaining granola and then the mixed berries. If using honey or maple syrup, drizzle it over the berries just before serving.
- Serve immediately or prepare up to 2 days in advance by storing the components separately in the refrigerator and assembling just before eating to keep the granola crunchy. Enjoy this delightful and healthy parfait!

Mini Meatloaf Muffins with Sweet Potato Topping



INGREDIENTS

1 lb ground turkey or lean ground beef
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1/4 cup rolled oats or breadcrumbs
1 large egg
2 tbsp ketchup
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
1 large sweet potato, peeled and mashed
1 tbsp milk (optional, for mashing)

TOOLS NEEDED

Muffin tin (12-cup)

Large bowl

Fork

Potato masher

PREPARATION

- Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) and lightly grease a 12-cup muffin tin. This ensures easy removal of the mini meatloaves.
- In a large bowl, combine the ground turkey (or beef), chopped onion, oats (or breadcrumbs), egg, ketchup, and Worcestershire sauce. Mix gently with your hands until just combined; avoid overmixing, which can make the meatloaf tough.
- Divide the meat mixture evenly among the muffin cups, pressing it gently into the bottoms and sides to form a cup shape, or simply filling the cups.
- Prepare the sweet potato topping by mashing the cooked sweet potato until smooth. Add milk if needed for a creamier consistency. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper.
- Spoon a dollop of mashed sweet potato onto each meatloaf cup, spreading it to cover the top. You can create swirls or patterns with a fork.
- Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the meatloaf is cooked through (internal temperature of 165°F/74°C) and the sweet potato topping is lightly golden. Let cool slightly before removing from the tin. Enjoy these perfectly portioned, flavorful mini meatloaves!

Caprese Pasta Salad Jars



INGREDIENTS

8 oz rotini or fusilli pasta, cooked and cooled
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup fresh mozzarella balls (bocconcini), halved if large
1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, roughly chopped
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp balsamic glaze
Salt and pepper to taste

TOOLS NEEDED

Mason jars (3)

Large bowl

Measuring cups

Measuring spoons

PREPARATION

- Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. Drain and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking process. Let it cool completely.
- In a large bowl, combine the cooled pasta, halved cherry tomatoes, mozzarella balls, chopped basil, and olive oil. Toss gently to mix all the ingredients.
- Season the pasta salad with salt and pepper to taste. Ensure the flavors are well-balanced.
- Begin layering the ingredients into the mason jars. Start with a base of pasta salad in each jar.
- Top the pasta salad with a drizzle of balsamic glaze. This keeps the glaze concentrated and prevents it from making other ingredients soggy.
- Seal the jars tightly and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving, or store for up to 3 days. Shake well before opening to redistribute the flavors. Enjoy your fresh, portable Caprese Pasta Salad!

Black Bean Burgers



INGREDIENTS

1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 cup rolled oats or breadcrumbs
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp chili powder
1 tbsp olive oil (for cooking)
Salt and pepper to taste
Burger buns and toppings as desired

TOOLS NEEDED

Large bowl
Fork or potato masher
Skillet
Measuring cups

PREPARATION

- Rinse and drain the black beans thoroughly. Pat them dry with paper towels to remove excess moisture, which helps the burgers hold their shape.
- In a large bowl, mash about three-quarters of the black beans with a fork or potato masher until mostly smooth but still with some texture. Leave the remaining beans whole for added texture.
- Add the finely chopped onion, oats (or breadcrumbs), minced garlic, chili powder, salt, and pepper to the mashed beans. Mix everything together until well combined. The mixture should hold together when pressed.
- Form the mixture into 2-4 patties, depending on desired size. If the mixture is too sticky, add a bit more oats or breadcrumbs.
- Heat the olive oil in a skillet over medium heat. Carefully place the patties in the skillet and cook for 5-7 minutes per side, until golden brown and heated through.
- Serve the black bean burgers on buns with your favorite toppings like lettuce, tomato, avocado, or a special sauce. Enjoy your delicious, homemade vegetarian burgers!

Baked Oatmeal Cups with Apple & Cinnamon



INGREDIENTS

2 cups rolled oats
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp salt
1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
1 large egg
1/4 cup maple syrup or honey
1 apple, peeled, cored, and diced small

TOOLS NEEDED

Muffin tin (12-cup)

Large bowl

Whisk

Measuring cups

PREPARATION

- Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C) and grease a 12-cup muffin tin well, or line it with parchment liners to prevent sticking.
- In a large bowl, combine the rolled oats, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. Whisk together to ensure the leavening agent and spices are evenly distributed.
- In a separate smaller bowl, whisk together the milk, egg, and maple syrup (or honey) until well combined. This wet mixture will bind the dry ingredients.
- Pour the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Gently fold in the diced apple pieces, distributing them throughout the mixture.
- Spoon the oatmeal mixture evenly into the prepared muffin cups, filling each about two-thirds full. The mixture will be thick.
- Bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the edges are golden brown and the centers are set. A toothpick inserted into the center should come out clean. Let cool in the tin for a few minutes before removing. Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

Cottage Cheese & Fruit Snack Cups



INGREDIENTS

- 1.5 cups cottage cheese (low-fat or full-fat)
- 1 cup mixed fresh fruit (e.g., berries, diced peaches, pineapple chunks)
- 2 tbsp granola or chopped nuts (optional)
- 1 tbsp honey or agave nectar (optional)

TOOLS NEEDED

- Small cups or jars (3)
- Spoon
- Measuring cups

PREPARATION

- Ensure your cottage cheese is fresh and has a smooth, creamy texture. If preferred, you can stir it to break up any large curds.
- Wash and prepare your chosen fruits. Dice larger fruits like peaches or pineapple into bite-sized pieces. Berries can be used whole or halved.
- Spoon about half a cup of cottage cheese into the bottom of each small cup or jar. Smooth the top slightly with the back of the spoon.
- Arrange a layer of your prepared fruit mixture over the cottage cheese in each cup. Distribute the fruit evenly among the cups.
- If using, drizzle a small amount of honey or agave nectar over the fruit layer, or sprinkle with granola or chopped nuts for added texture.
- Serve immediately for a quick snack, or cover and refrigerate for up to 2-3 days. These are perfect for a healthy, protein-rich boost between freelance projects.

Lentil & Vegetable Soup



INGREDIENTS

1 cup brown or green lentils, rinsed
6 cups vegetable broth
1 medium onion, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 tsp dried thyme
1 cup chopped spinach
Salt and pepper to taste

TOOLS NEEDED

Large pot or Dutch oven
Knife
Cutting board
Ladle

PREPARATION

- Rinse the lentils thoroughly under cold water to remove any debris. This step is crucial for clean flavor.
- In a large pot or Dutch oven, combine the rinsed lentils, vegetable broth, chopped onion, carrots, and celery. Add the dried thyme for aromatic depth.
- Bring the mixture to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 25-30 minutes, or until the lentils and vegetables are tender. Stir occasionally.
- Stir in the chopped spinach during the last 5 minutes of cooking. Allow it to wilt into the hot soup.
- Season the soup generously with salt and pepper to taste. Adjust seasonings as needed until the flavors are well-balanced.
- Ladle the hot soup into bowls and serve immediately. This soup is excellent for meal prep; let it cool completely before storing in airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.

Chicken & Veggie Skewers with Peanut Sauce



INGREDIENTS

1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 zucchini, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 red onion, cut into 1-inch pieces

1/4 cup soy sauce

2 tbsp sesame oil

1 tbsp honey

For peanut sauce: 1/4 cup peanut butter, 2 tbsp soy sauce, 1 tbsp lime juice, water to thin.

TOOLS NEEDED

Skewers (metal or soaked wood)

Large bowl

Grill or oven

Small bowl

PREPARATION

- If using wooden skewers, soak them in water for at least 30 minutes to prevent burning. Thread the chicken cubes, bell pepper pieces, zucchini slices, and red onion wedges alternately onto the skewers.
- In a large bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, sesame oil, and honey to create a marinade. Add the assembled skewers to the marinade, ensuring they are well coated.
- Let the skewers marinate for at least 15-30 minutes at room temperature, or longer in the refrigerator for deeper flavor. Turn them occasionally to ensure even marination.
- Prepare the peanut sauce by whisking together peanut butter, soy sauce, lime juice, and enough water (start with 2 tbsp) to reach a smooth, dipable consistency.
- Grill the marinated skewers over medium-high heat for about 10-15 minutes, turning occasionally, until the chicken is cooked through and the vegetables are tender-crisp with slight char marks. Alternatively, bake at 400°F (200°C) for 15-20 minutes.
- Serve the chicken and veggie skewers hot with the peanut dipping sauce on the side. They are great on their own or served over rice. Enjoy your flavorful, grilled meal!

Egg Fried Quinoa Bowls



INGREDIENTS

2 cups cooked quinoa, chilled
2 large eggs
1 tbsp sesame oil
1 cup frozen mixed vegetables
(peas, carrots, corn)
2 tbsp soy sauce (or tamari)
1 scallion, sliced (green parts
only)

TOOLS NEEDED

Large skillet or wok
Spatula
Small bowl

PREPARATION

- Whisk the eggs in a small bowl with a pinch of salt and pepper. Heat 1/2 tbsp of sesame oil in a large skillet or wok over medium-high heat. Pour in the eggs and scramble until cooked, then remove from the skillet and set aside.
- Add the remaining 1/2 tbsp of sesame oil to the skillet. Add the frozen mixed vegetables and stir-fry for 3-4 minutes until tender-crisp. This quick cooking ensures they retain their vibrant color and crunch.
- Add the chilled cooked quinoa to the skillet with the vegetables. Break up any clumps of quinoa with your spatula and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes until heated through. Using chilled quinoa helps prevent it from becoming mushy.
- Return the scrambled eggs to the skillet. Pour the soy sauce over the mixture and toss everything together well to combine and ensure the quinoa and vegetables are evenly coated.
- Cook for another minute or two, stirring constantly, until everything is heated through and the soy sauce has slightly caramelized.
- Serve the egg fried quinoa immediately, garnished with sliced scallions. This dish is also great for meal prep; let it cool completely before portioning into containers for up to 4 days.

Mediterranean Chickpea Salad Sandwiches



INGREDIENTS

1 can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1/4 cup finely diced cucumber
1/4 cup finely diced red bell pepper
2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
2 tbsp tahini
1 tbsp lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
Whole wheat bread or pita for serving

TOOLS NEEDED

Medium bowl
Fork or potato masher
Knife
Cutting board

PREPARATION

- Rinse and drain the chickpeas thoroughly. Pat them slightly dry with paper towels to ensure the salad isn't too watery.
- In a medium bowl, mash about two-thirds of the chickpeas with a fork or potato masher until mostly broken down but still chunky. Add the remaining whole chickpeas for texture.
- Add the finely diced cucumber, red bell pepper, and chopped parsley to the bowl. These add crunch and freshness to the salad.
- Stir in the tahini and lemon juice. Tahini provides a creamy base, while lemon juice adds brightness. Mix well until everything is evenly combined.
- Season the chickpea salad generously with salt and pepper to your taste. Mix again to ensure the seasonings are evenly distributed.
- Serve the Mediterranean Chickpea Salad mixture on whole wheat bread, in pita pockets, or with crackers. For meal prep, store the filling in an airtight container and assemble sandwiches just before eating.

Sheet Pan Sausage & Peppers



INGREDIENTS

1 lb Italian sausage (sweet or hot), cut into 1-inch pieces

1 red bell pepper, sliced

1 yellow bell pepper, sliced

1 green bell pepper, sliced

1 medium onion, sliced

2 tbsp olive oil

1 tsp dried Italian seasoning

Salt and pepper to taste

TOOLS NEEDED

Sheet pan

Parchment paper

Large bowl

PREPARATION

- Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C) and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper for easy cleanup. This prevents sticking and makes serving straightforward.
- In a large bowl, combine the sausage pieces, sliced bell peppers, and sliced onion. Drizzle with olive oil and sprinkle with Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper.
- Toss all the ingredients together until the sausage and vegetables are evenly coated with oil and seasonings. Ensure every piece is well-seasoned for optimal flavor.
- Spread the mixture in a single layer on the prepared baking sheet. Avoid overcrowding the pan, as this promotes roasting rather than steaming.
- Roast for 25-30 minutes, stirring halfway through, until the sausage is cooked through and browned, and the peppers and onions are tender and slightly caramelized.
- Serve hot as is, or over pasta, rice, or in hoagie rolls. Let cool completely before portioning into meal prep containers for a delicious lunch or dinner throughout the week.

Smoothie Packs for Busy Mornings



INGREDIENTS

1 cup frozen mixed berries
1/2 banana, sliced and frozen
1 cup fresh spinach or kale
1 tbsp chia seeds or flax seeds (optional)
Liquid base (milk, water, juice) for blending

TOOLS NEEDED

Zip-top freezer bags
Measuring cups
Blender

PREPARATION

- Wash and prepare your fresh ingredients, such as spinach or kale. Ensure all fruits are washed and chopped into manageable pieces if necessary.
- Portion out the frozen mixed berries, frozen banana slices, and fresh spinach (or kale) into individual zip-top freezer bags. Add chia seeds or flax seeds if desired for extra nutrients.
- Press out as much air as possible from each bag before sealing it tightly. This helps prevent freezer burn and keeps the ingredients fresh.
- Label each bag with the contents and date, if desired. Store the prepared smoothie packs in the freezer until ready to use. They can be stored for up to 3 months.
- When ready to make a smoothie, simply empty the contents of one bag into a blender. Add your preferred liquid base (e.g., almond milk, water, orange juice).
- Blend until smooth and creamy. Pour into a glass and enjoy your incredibly quick and healthy breakfast! Adjust liquid for desired consistency.

Chicken & Black Bean Burrito Bowls



INGREDIENTS

1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breasts
1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
1 cup corn kernels (fresh or frozen)
2 cups cooked brown rice
1/4 cup salsa
1 tbsp taco seasoning
1 tbsp olive oil
Optional toppings: guacamole,
shredded lettuce, cilantro

TOOLS NEEDED

Meal prep containers

Skillet

Fork

Measuring cups

PREPARATION

- Season the chicken breasts with taco seasoning. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat and cook chicken until thoroughly cooked through (165°F/74°C). Let cool slightly, then shred with two forks.
- While chicken cooks, prepare the other components. Rinse and drain the black beans. If using frozen corn, thaw it. Ensure your brown rice is cooked and cooled.
- Assemble the bowls by placing a portion of brown rice at the bottom of each meal prep container. This creates a base for the other ingredients.
- Top the rice with a generous portion of the shredded seasoned chicken. Distribute the chicken evenly among the containers.
- Add the black beans and corn kernels to each bowl, creating distinct sections for visual appeal and ease of eating.
- Add a spoonful of salsa to each bowl. Include any optional toppings like guacamole, shredded lettuce, or cilantro, either directly in the bowl or packed separately to maintain freshness. Seal and refrigerate for up to 4 days.