

THE HEALTHY HOMESTEADER

Kitchen Club

September 2026 Recipe Booklet

Real Food, Real Simple, Real Good

31 dinners, nearly every one is one pot or one pan
Plus Stock Your Freezer and 5 Fall Staple treats

meganmoos.com · @healthyhomesteader

MONDAY AUGUST 31 DINNER

Crockpot Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

Prep 10 min · Cook 6 hrs · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 2 lbs
Wild rice blend — 1 cup
Carrots, diced — 2
Celery, diced — 2 stalks
White onion, diced — 1
Chicken broth — 6 cups
Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
Heavy cream — 1 cup
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place chicken, wild rice, carrots, celery, onion and garlic in the slow cooker.
2. Pour in chicken broth. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Cook on LOW 6 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours until chicken is tender and rice is cooked.
4. Remove chicken, shred with two forks, and return to the pot.
5. Stir in heavy cream at the end. Taste and adjust seasoning.
6. Serve warm with crusty bread.

Megan's Tip: Stir in the cream right at the end, off heat if possible. Adding it too early can cause it to separate instead of staying smooth and velvety.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 1 DINNER

One Pot Beef Taco Rice

Prep 5 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Taco seasoning — 3 tbsp
Instant white rice — 1.5 cups
Beef broth — 2 cups
Diced tomatoes with green chilies — 10 oz can
Shredded cheddar — 1.5 cups
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Drain excess fat.
2. Stir in taco seasoning, then add broth and diced tomatoes.
3. Bring to a boil, stir in instant rice.
4. Cover and remove from heat, let sit 5-7 minutes until rice is tender.
5. Fluff with a fork, sprinkle cheese over the top, cover 2 minutes until melted.
6. Serve with your favorite taco toppings.

Megan's Tip: Use instant rice for this one. It cooks fast enough to stay in sync with the beef so the whole thing comes together in one pan without extra steps.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2 DINNER

One Pot Chicken Fajita Rice

Prep 10 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken breasts, cubed — 2 lbs
Bell peppers, sliced — 3
White onion, sliced — 1
White rice, uncooked — 1.5 cups
Chicken broth — 3 cups
Chili powder — 2 tsp
Cumin — 1 tsp
Garlic powder — 1 tsp
Salt and pepper — generously
Shredded cheese and lime — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season chicken with chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, salt and pepper.
2. Heat a large skillet over medium-high. Cook chicken 5-6 minutes until browned. Remove and set aside.
3. In the same skillet, add peppers and onion, cook 3-4 minutes until softened.
4. Add rice and broth, scraping up any browned bits. Bring to a boil.
5. Return chicken to the skillet. Cover and reduce to a simmer 15-18 minutes until rice is tender.
6. Top with shredded cheese and a squeeze of lime before serving.

Megan's Tip: Cut the chicken into even, bite-sized pieces so it cooks at the same rate as the rice and peppers. Uneven pieces mean some parts finish before others.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 3 DINNER

One Pot Chili Mac

Prep 5 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
White onion, diced — 1
Elbow macaroni — 2 cups
Beef broth — 3 cups
Diced tomatoes — 14.5 oz can
Tomato paste — 2 tbsp
Chili powder — 2 tbsp
Cumin — 1 tsp
Shredded cheddar — 1.5 cups
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef with onion in a large pot. Drain excess fat.
2. Stir in chili powder and cumin, cook 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Add broth, diced tomatoes and tomato paste. Bring to a boil.
4. Stir in macaroni. Reduce to a simmer, cover and cook 12-14 minutes, stirring occasionally, until pasta is tender.
5. Remove from heat, stir in cheddar until melted.
6. Let sit 5 minutes before serving to thicken.

Megan's Tip: Let it sit off heat for 5 minutes before serving. The pasta keeps absorbing liquid and the whole dish thickens up to the perfect chili-mac consistency.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 4 DINNER

Skillet Deep Dish Pizza

Prep 15 min + rise · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Warm water — 1 cup
Active dry yeast — 2.25 tsp (1 packet)
Sugar — 1 tsp
Flour — 2.5 cups
Salt — 1 tsp
Olive oil — 2 tbsp
Pizza sauce — 1 cup
Shredded mozzarella — 2 cups
Toppings of choice — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine warm water, yeast and sugar. Let sit 5 minutes until foamy.
2. Stir in flour, salt and olive oil until a soft dough forms. Knead 4-5 minutes until smooth.
3. Cover and let rise 30-45 minutes while you go about your evening.
4. Oil a cast iron or nonstick skillet. Press the dough into the pan, working it slightly up the sides.
5. Cook covered over medium-low heat 5 minutes to set the bottom crust.
6. Layer on sauce, cheese and toppings. Cover again and cook 12-15 minutes until cheese is melted and crust is cooked through. Slice and serve straight from the skillet.

Megan's Tip: Short on time or it's just one of those nights? Store-bought pizza dough works great here too, same method, just skip straight to pressing it into the skillet. No shame in that game, either way dinner's on the table and everyone's happy.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 5 DINNER

Baked Ziti

Prep 15 min · Cook 30 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Ziti or penne pasta — 1 lb
80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Marinara sauce — 24 oz jar
Ricotta cheese — 1.5 cups
Shredded mozzarella — 2.5 cups
Parmesan, grated — 1/2 cup
Italian seasoning — 1 tsp
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Cook pasta 2 minutes less than package directions, drain.
2. Brown ground beef in a large skillet, drain excess fat. Stir in marinara and Italian seasoning.
3. Combine cooked pasta, meat sauce and ricotta together in a large bowl.
4. Spread into a 9x13 baking dish. Top with mozzarella and parmesan.
5. Bake 25-30 minutes until bubbly and golden.
6. Let rest 5 minutes before serving.

Megan's Tip: Undercook the pasta by 2 minutes before baking. It finishes cooking in the oven and soaks up the sauce instead of turning mushy.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 6 DINNER

Sheet Pan Pumpkin Pancakes with Sausage

Prep 10 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Flour — 3 cups
Baking powder — 3 tsp
Cinnamon and pumpkin spice — 1 tsp each
Sugar — 3 tbsp
Buttermilk — 2.5 cups
Pumpkin puree — 1 cup
Eggs — 3
Butter, melted — 6 tbsp
Sausage links — 1 package
Maple syrup, for serving — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425F. Line a large sheet pan with parchment paper.
2. Whisk flour, baking powder, cinnamon, pumpkin spice and sugar together.
3. In a separate bowl whisk buttermilk, pumpkin puree, eggs and melted butter.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients, stirring just until mixed.
5. Pour batter onto the prepared sheet pan and spread evenly. Bake 15-18 minutes until set.
6. While pancakes bake, cook sausage links in a skillet. Cut pancakes into squares and serve with sausage and maple syrup.

Megan's Tip: Baking the batter on a sheet pan means every pancake is ready at the exact same time. No more standing at the griddle while everyone else already eats.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 7 DINNER

Crockpot White Chicken Chili

Prep 10 min · Cook 6 hrs · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 2 lbs
White beans, drained and rinsed — 2 cans
Chicken broth — 4 cups
White onion, diced — 1
Green chilies, diced — 4 oz can
Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
Cumin — 1 tsp
Cream cheese — 8 oz
Shredded cheese and cilantro — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place chicken, white beans, broth, onion, green chilies, garlic and cumin in the slow cooker.
2. Cook on LOW 6 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours until chicken is tender.
3. Remove chicken, shred with two forks, return to the pot.
4. Stir in cream cheese until melted and creamy.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning.
6. Serve topped with shredded cheese and fresh cilantro.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — double this batch and freeze half flat in a bag. See the Stock Your Freezer section for storage and reheating tips.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8 DINNER

Beef Tacos

Prep 5 min · Cook 10 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Taco seasoning — 3 tbsp
Hard or soft taco shells — 12
Shredded lettuce — 2 cups
Shredded cheddar — 1.5 cups
Diced tomatoes — 1 cup
Sour cream and salsa — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef in a skillet over medium-high heat.
2. Add taco seasoning and a splash of water, simmer 3-4 minutes until thickened.
3. Warm taco shells in a dry skillet or low oven.
4. Fill shells with seasoned beef.
5. Top with lettuce, cheese and tomatoes.
6. Serve with sour cream and salsa on the side.

Megan's Tip: Warm the taco shells in a dry skillet for 30 seconds per side, or in a low oven for a few minutes. Cold shells crack and crumble, warm ones fold and hold together perfectly.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9 DINNER

One Pot Cheesy Beef and Potato Skillet

Prep 10 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Baby potatoes, diced small — 1.5 lbs
White onion, diced — 1
Beef broth — 1.5 cups
Garlic powder and onion powder — 1 tsp each
Shredded cheddar — 1.5 cups
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef with onion in a large skillet. Drain excess fat.
2. Add diced potatoes and broth. Season with garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper.
3. Bring to a boil, then cover and reduce to a simmer 15-18 minutes until potatoes are tender.
4. Uncover and let any excess liquid cook off, 2-3 minutes.
5. Sprinkle cheese over the top, cover 2 minutes until melted.
6. Serve hot straight from the skillet.

Megan's Tip: Cut the potatoes small, about half-inch cubes. Smaller pieces cook through in the same time as the beef without needing to par-boil them first.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10 DINNER

One Pot Butternut Squash and Sausage Soup

Prep 10 min · Cook 25 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Smoked sausage, sliced — 1 lb
Butternut squash, cubed — 4 cups (fresh or pre-cut)
White onion, diced — 1
Chicken broth — 4 cups
Heavy cream — 1/2 cup
Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
Cinnamon — 1/4 tsp
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown sausage slices in a large pot over medium-high heat. Remove and set aside.
2. In the same pot, cook onion and garlic 2-3 minutes until softened.
3. Add butternut squash and broth. Bring to a boil, then simmer 15-18 minutes until squash is fork-tender.
4. Blend directly in the pot with an immersion blender, or carefully transfer to a blender, until smooth.
5. Stir in cream and cinnamon. Return sausage to the pot.
6. Season with salt and pepper and serve warm.

Megan's Tip: Use pre-cubed butternut squash from the produce section to save real time. Fresh whole squash is cheaper but cubing it yourself adds 15 minutes you may not have on a Thursday.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11 DINNER

Sheet Pan Nachos

Prep 5 min · Cook 10 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Taco seasoning — 3 tbsp
Tortilla chips — 1 large bag
Shredded cheddar — 2.5 cups
Black beans, drained — 1 can
Diced tomatoes, jalapenos, green onion — to top
Sour cream, salsa, guacamole — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef with taco seasoning and a splash of water.
2. Preheat oven to 400F. Spread a layer of chips on a large sheet pan.
3. Top with half the beef, beans and cheese. Add another layer of chips, remaining beef, beans and cheese.
4. Bake 8-10 minutes until cheese is fully melted.
5. Top with diced tomatoes, jalapenos and green onion.
6. Serve with sour cream, salsa and guacamole on the side.

Megan's Tip: Layer the chips and toppings twice instead of once, chips, meat, cheese, repeat. It guarantees every single chip gets toppings instead of just the top layer.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12 DINNER

Slow Cooker Pot Roast

Prep 10 min · Cook 8 hrs · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Chuck roast — 3-4 lbs
Baby potatoes, halved — 1.5 lbs
Carrots, cut into chunks — 4
White onion, quartered — 1
Beef broth — 2 cups
Worcestershire sauce — 2 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Italian seasoning — 1 tsp
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season chuck roast generously with salt and pepper. Place in the slow cooker.
2. Add potatoes, carrots and onion around the roast.
3. Whisk broth, Worcestershire, garlic and Italian seasoning together. Pour over everything.
4. Cook on LOW 8 hours until the beef is fork-tender.
5. Shred the beef directly in the slow cooker.
6. Serve with the vegetables and gravy spooned over the top.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — double this batch and freeze the shredded beef and gravy separately from the vegetables for the best texture later. See the Stock Your Freezer section for details.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13 DINNER

Baked Apple Cinnamon French Toast

Prep 15 min · Cook 40 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Thick cut bread, cubed — 1 loaf
Apples, peeled and diced — 3
Farm eggs — 8
Whole milk — 2 cups
Cinnamon — 1.5 tsp
Brown sugar — 1/2 cup
Vanilla extract — 1 tsp
Butter, melted — 3 tbsp
Maple syrup and pecans, for serving — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Grease a 9x13 baking dish. Layer cubed bread and diced apples evenly in the dish.
2. Whisk eggs, milk, cinnamon, brown sugar, vanilla and melted butter together.
3. Pour the egg mixture evenly over the bread and apples, pressing down gently so the bread soaks it up.
4. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours or overnight.
5. Preheat oven to 350F. Bake covered 25 minutes, then uncover and bake 15 more minutes until golden and set.
6. Serve with maple syrup and pecans.

Megan's Tip: Assemble this the night before and refrigerate. Sunday afternoon, just pop it in the oven. The bread soaks up even more flavor overnight.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 14 DINNER

Crockpot Beef and Barley Soup

Prep 10 min · Cook 7 hrs · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Beef stew meat, cubed — 2 lbs
Pearl barley — 3/4 cup
Carrots, diced — 3
Celery, diced — 2 stalks
White onion, diced — 1
Beef broth — 6 cups
Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
Tomato paste — 2 tbsp
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season beef generously with salt and pepper. Place in the slow cooker.
2. Add barley, carrots, celery, onion and garlic.
3. Whisk broth and tomato paste together. Pour over everything.
4. Cook on LOW 7 hours or HIGH 4 hours until beef is tender and barley is cooked.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning.
6. Serve warm with crusty bread.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — double this batch and freeze flat in a bag. See the Stock Your Freezer section for storage and reheating tips.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15 DINNER

One Pot Beef Enchilada Rice

Prep 5 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
White onion, diced — 1
Red enchilada sauce — 1 can (10 oz)
Instant white rice — 1.5 cups
Beef broth — 1.5 cups
Black beans, drained — 1 can
Shredded cheddar — 1.5 cups
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef with onion in a large skillet. Drain excess fat.
2. Stir in enchilada sauce, broth and black beans. Bring to a boil.
3. Add instant rice. Cover and remove from heat, let sit 5-7 minutes.
4. Fluff with a fork.
5. Sprinkle cheese over the top, cover 2 minutes until melted.
6. Serve with sour cream and fresh cilantro if desired.

Megan's Tip: Use red enchilada sauce, not green, for that classic deep flavor. Both work, but red gives you the richer, more traditional taste this dish is going for.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16 DINNER

One Pot Creamy Tuscan Chicken

Prep 10 min · Cook 18 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken breasts, sliced — 2 lbs
Sun-dried tomatoes, chopped — 1/2 cup
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Chicken broth — 1 cup
Heavy cream — 1 cup
Parmesan, grated — 1/2 cup
Fresh spinach — 3 cups
Italian seasoning — 1 tsp
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season chicken with salt, pepper and Italian seasoning. Sear in a large skillet over medium-high 5-6 minutes until golden and cooked through. Remove and set aside.
2. In the same skillet, add garlic and sun-dried tomatoes, cook 1 minute.
3. Pour in broth and cream, bring to a simmer.
4. Stir in parmesan until melted and smooth.
5. Add spinach in handfuls, stirring until wilted.
6. Return chicken to the skillet, coat in the sauce, and serve warm.

Megan's Tip: Add the spinach in handfuls, stirring between each. It looks like way too much at first but wilts down to almost nothing within a minute.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17 DINNER

One Pot French Onion Pasta

Prep 10 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

White onions, sliced thin — 4 large
Butter — 3 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
Beef broth — 4 cups
Rotini or penne pasta — 12 oz
Worcestershire sauce — 1 tbsp
Gruyere or Swiss cheese, shredded — 1.5 cups
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Melt butter in a large pot over medium-low heat. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, 15 minutes until deeply caramelized.
2. Add garlic and cook 1 minute more.
3. Pour in broth and Worcestershire sauce, bring to a boil.
4. Add pasta, cover and simmer 12-14 minutes until tender.
5. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Top with shredded cheese, cover 2 minutes until melted, and serve.

Megan's Tip: Take your time caramelizing the onions, they're the whole flavor of this dish. Low and slow for a full 15 minutes gets you that deep, sweet richness instead of just softened onions.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18 DINNER

Sheet Pan Quesadillas

Prep 10 min · Cook 10 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Large flour tortillas — 8
Cooked shredded chicken or seasoned ground beef — 3 cups
Shredded Mexican cheese blend — 2.5 cups
Butter, melted — 3 tbsp
Sour cream, salsa, guacamole — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425F. Line a large sheet pan with parchment paper.
2. Lay tortillas flat on the pan. Fill half of each with meat and cheese, fold over.
3. Brush tops lightly with melted butter.
4. Bake 8-10 minutes, flipping halfway, until golden and crispy on both sides.
5. Cut into wedges.
6. Serve with sour cream, salsa and guacamole.

Megan's Tip: Brush the tops lightly with butter before baking. It helps them turn golden and crispy in the oven the same way they would on a stovetop.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 19 DINNER

Slow Cooker Beef Stew

Prep 10 min · Cook 8 hrs · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Beef stew meat, cubed — 2.5 lbs
Baby potatoes, halved — 1.5 lbs
Carrots, cut into chunks — 4
White onion, diced — 1
Beef broth — 4 cups
Tomato paste — 2 tbsp
Worcestershire sauce — 2 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
Cornstarch — 3 tbsp
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season beef generously with salt and pepper. Place in the slow cooker with potatoes, carrots and onion.
2. Whisk broth, tomato paste, Worcestershire and garlic together. Pour over everything.
3. Cook on LOW 8 hours until beef is fork-tender.
4. Mix cornstarch with cold water, stir into the slow cooker to thicken. Cook 15 more minutes.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning.
6. Serve warm with crusty bread.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — double this batch and freeze flat in a bag. See the Stock Your Freezer section for storage and reheating tips.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 20 DINNER

Cinnamon Roll Pancakes with Maple Glaze

Prep 15 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Flour — 2.5 cups
Sugar — 3 tbsp
Baking powder — 3 tsp
Salt — 1/2 tsp
Milk — 2.5 cups
Eggs — 2
Butter, melted — 4 tbsp
Brown sugar — 1/2 cup
Cinnamon — 2 tbsp
Cream cheese — 4 oz
Powdered sugar — 1 cup
Maple syrup — 3 tbsp
Sausage links — 1 package

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Whisk flour, sugar, baking powder and salt together. Whisk in milk, eggs and melted butter until just combined.
2. Mix melted butter, brown sugar and cinnamon together for the swirl. Transfer to a piping bag or zip bag with the corner snipped.
3. Heat a griddle over medium heat. Pour batter into circles, immediately pipe a cinnamon swirl spiral onto each.
4. Cook 2-3 minutes until bubbles form, flip and cook 1-2 more minutes.
5. Whisk cream cheese, powdered sugar and maple syrup together for the glaze, adding a splash of milk to thin if needed.
6. Cook sausage links in a skillet. Drizzle glaze over the pancakes and serve with sausage on the side.

Megan's Tip: Pipe the cinnamon swirl on right after pouring the batter, not before. If you wait too long the batter starts to set and the swirl won't sink in properly.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 21 DINNER

Crockpot Chicken and Dumplings

Prep 10 min · Cook 6 hrs · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken thighs — 2.5 lbs
Carrots, diced — 3
Celery, diced — 2 stalks
White onion, diced — 1
Chicken broth — 6 cups
Heavy cream — 1/2 cup
Refrigerated biscuit dough, cut into strips — 1 can
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place chicken, carrots, celery and onion in the slow cooker.
2. Pour in chicken broth. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Cook on LOW 6 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours until chicken is tender.
4. Remove chicken, shred with two forks, return to the pot. Stir in cream.
5. In the last 30 minutes, drop torn pieces of biscuit dough into the pot.
6. Cover and cook until dumplings are cooked through and no longer doughy in the center.

Megan's Tip: Drop the dumpling dough in during the last 30 minutes only, not any earlier. Adding them too soon turns them mushy instead of fluffy and tender.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 22 DINNER

One Pot Pumpkin Chicken Chili

Prep 10 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken breasts, diced — 2 lbs
White onion, diced — 1
Pumpkin puree — 1 cup
Diced tomatoes — 14.5 oz can
Chicken broth — 2 cups
Black beans, drained — 1 can
Chili powder — 2 tbsp
Cumin — 1 tsp
Shredded cheese and sour cream — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook chicken and onion in a large pot over medium-high heat until chicken is browned through.
2. Stir in chili powder and cumin, cook 1 minute.
3. Add pumpkin puree, diced tomatoes, broth and black beans.
4. Bring to a boil, then simmer 15-18 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Taste and adjust seasoning.
6. Serve topped with shredded cheese and sour cream.

Megan's Tip: The pumpkin doesn't make this taste like dessert, it just adds body and a subtle sweetness that balances the chili spices beautifully. Nobody will guess it's in there.

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 23 DINNER

One Pot Beef and Rice Skillet

Prep 5 min · Cook 18 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
White onion, diced — 1
White rice, uncooked — 1.5 cups
Beef broth — 3 cups
Worcestershire sauce — 1 tbsp
Garlic powder — 1 tsp
Shredded cheddar — 1.5 cups
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef with onion in a large skillet. Drain excess fat.
2. Stir in Worcestershire sauce and garlic powder.
3. Add rice and broth. Bring to a boil.
4. Cover and reduce to a simmer 15-18 minutes until rice is tender.
5. Remove from heat, let sit covered 5 minutes.
6. Sprinkle cheese over the top, cover 2 minutes until melted, and serve.

Megan's Tip: Let the rice sit covered off heat for 5 extra minutes after cooking. It finishes steaming and gives you fluffier grains instead of anything sticky or wet.

One Pot Creamy Sausage and Tortellini

Prep 5 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Smoked sausage, sliced — 1 lb
Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
Chicken broth — 2 cups
Heavy cream — 1 cup
Refrigerated cheese tortellini — 20 oz
Fresh spinach — 2 cups
Parmesan, grated — 1/2 cup
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown sausage slices in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add garlic, cook 1 minute.
2. Pour in broth and cream, bring to a simmer.
3. Add tortellini directly into the sauce. Cover and cook 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Stir in spinach until wilted.
5. Stir in parmesan until melted and smooth.
6. Season with salt and pepper and serve straight from the pot.

Megan's Tip: Use refrigerated tortellini, not frozen or dried. It cooks directly in the sauce in just a few minutes, which is what makes this genuinely a one pot, 25 minute meal.

Sheet Pan Loaded Potato Bar

Prep 5 min · Cook 60 min oven or 15 min Instant Pot · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Russet potatoes — 6 large
Olive oil — 2 tbsp
Salt — generously
Butter — to serve
Shredded cheddar, bacon bits, sour cream, chives — to top
Broccoli, steamed, optional — to top
Chili or taco meat leftovers, optional — to top

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425F. Scrub potatoes and pat dry.
2. Rub with olive oil and salt. Place directly on a sheet pan.
3. Bake 50-60 minutes until fork-tender all the way through.
4. Have an Instant Pot? Skip the oven entirely. Add 1 cup water to the pot, place potatoes on a trivet or steamer basket, and pressure cook on HIGH for 12-15 minutes depending on size, followed by a quick release. Ready in under 20 minutes total.
5. Split each potato open and fluff the inside with a fork.
6. Set out all the toppings in small bowls.
7. Let everyone build their own loaded potato exactly how they like it.

Megan's Tip: Wrap the potatoes individually in foil if you want soft skins, or leave them unwrapped directly on the pan for crispier skins in the oven. If you have an Instant Pot, that is genuinely the fastest route here, potatoes done in under 20 minutes instead of an hour.

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 26 DINNER

Baked Mac and Cheese with Smoked Sausage

Prep 15 min · Cook 30 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Elbow macaroni — 1 lb
Smoked sausage, sliced — 1 lb
Butter — 4 tbsp
Flour — 1/4 cup
Whole milk — 3 cups
Sharp cheddar, shredded — 3 cups
Mustard powder — 1/4 tsp
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Cook macaroni according to package directions, drain.
2. Brown sausage slices in a skillet, set aside.
3. Melt butter in a large pot over medium heat. Whisk in flour, cook 1 minute.
4. Slowly whisk in milk. Simmer until thickened, about 4-5 minutes.
5. Remove from heat, stir in cheddar and mustard powder until melted and smooth. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Combine cheese sauce, pasta and sausage. Transfer to a baking dish and bake 20-25 minutes until bubbly and golden on top.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — this one freezes well both baked and unbaked. See the Stock Your Freezer section for full storage and reheating instructions.

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27 DINNER

Breakfast Burritos

Prep 15 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Breakfast sausage, crumbled — 1 lb
Farm eggs — 10
Frozen shredded hash browns — 3 cups
Shredded cheddar — 2 cups
Large flour tortillas — 8
Butter — 2 tbsp
Salt and pepper — to taste
Salsa, for serving — optional

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook sausage in a large skillet over medium heat until browned. Remove and set aside.
2. In the same skillet, add hash browns and cook 8-10 minutes until golden. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Push hash browns to one side. Melt butter and scramble the eggs in the empty space.
4. Combine sausage, hash browns and eggs together in the skillet.
5. Warm tortillas, fill each with the egg mixture and cheddar, and roll tightly.
6. Serve immediately, or wrap extras in foil and freeze for busy mornings ahead.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — make a double batch tonight and wrap the extras individually in foil for the freezer. See the Stock Your Freezer section for the full storage and reheating method.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 28 DINNER

Crockpot Lasagna Soup

Prep 10 min · Cook 6 hrs · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
White onion, diced — 1
Garlic, minced — 3 cloves
Crushed tomatoes — 28 oz can
Beef broth — 5 cups
Italian seasoning — 1.5 tsp
Broken lasagna noodles — 8 noodles
Ricotta cheese — 1 cup
Shredded mozzarella and parmesan — to serve

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef with onion and garlic in a skillet, drain excess fat.
2. Transfer to the slow cooker. Add crushed tomatoes, broth and Italian seasoning.
3. Cook on LOW 6 hours or HIGH 3 hours.
4. In the last 20 minutes, stir in broken lasagna noodles and cook until tender.
5. Ladle into bowls and top each with a dollop of ricotta.
6. Finish with shredded mozzarella and parmesan before serving.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — freeze the soup base without the pasta and cheese. Add fresh cooked pasta and a dollop of ricotta when reheating so it doesn't turn mushy.

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 29 DINNER

One Pot Beef and Cheese Taco Pasta

Prep 5 min · Cook 18 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 1.5 lbs
Taco seasoning — 3 tbsp
Rotini pasta — 12 oz
Beef broth — 2.5 cups
Diced tomatoes with green chilies — 10 oz can
Cream cheese — 4 oz
Shredded cheddar — 1.5 cups
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef in a large skillet. Drain excess fat.
2. Stir in taco seasoning, then add broth, diced tomatoes and uncooked pasta.
3. Bring to a boil, cover and reduce to a simmer 12-14 minutes, stirring occasionally, until pasta is tender.
4. Stir in cream cheese until melted and combined.
5. Remove from heat, fold in shredded cheddar.
6. Serve topped with your favorite taco toppings.

Megan's Tip: Reserve a splash of the cooking liquid before draining, if using regular pasta instead of the one-pot method. A little starchy liquid stirred back in makes the cheese sauce extra silky.

One Pot Chicken Alfredo

Prep 10 min · Cook 18 min · Serves 6 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Boneless skinless chicken breasts, sliced — 2 lbs
Fettuccine or penne pasta — 12 oz
Butter — 3 tbsp
Garlic, minced — 4 cloves
Chicken broth — 2 cups
Heavy cream — 1.5 cups
Parmesan, grated — 1 cup
Salt and pepper — generously

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Melt butter in a large pot over medium-high heat.
2. Cook chicken 5-6 minutes until golden and cooked through. Remove and set aside.
3. Add garlic to the same pot, cook 30 seconds.
4. Pour in broth and cream. Add uncooked pasta. Bring to a boil, then cover and simmer 12-14 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Remove from heat, stir in parmesan a handful at a time until smooth.
6. Return chicken to the pot, toss to coat, and serve warm.

Megan's Tip: Add the parmesan off heat, a handful at a time, stirring between each addition. Adding it all at once over direct heat can cause the sauce to break and turn grainy.

BONUS SECTION

Breakfast Staples

3 recipes to make mornings run smoother

BREAKFAST STAPLE

Pumpkin Overnight Oats

Prep 5 min · Cook Overnight · Serves 1 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Old-fashioned oats — 1/2 cup
Milk of choice — 1/2 cup
Pumpkin puree — 3 tbsp
Greek yogurt — 1/4 cup
Maple syrup — 1 tbsp
Pumpkin pie spice — 1/2 tsp
Pecans or granola, for topping — small handful

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Combine oats, milk, pumpkin puree, yogurt, maple syrup and pumpkin pie spice in a jar or container with a lid.
2. Stir well until fully combined.
3. Cover and refrigerate overnight, at least 6 hours.
4. In the morning, stir and top with pecans or granola. Eat cold straight from the fridge, or warm 30 seconds if preferred.

Megan's Tip: Make a big batch on Sunday in individual mason jars, one per school morning. By Thursday you have not thought about breakfast once all week.

BREAKFAST STAPLE

Apple Cinnamon Baked Oatmeal Cups

Prep 10 min · Cook 22 min · Serves 12 cups · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Old-fashioned oats — 2.5 cups
Baking powder — 1 tsp
Cinnamon — 1.5 tsp
Salt — 1/4 tsp
Milk — 1.5 cups
Eggs — 2
Maple syrup — 1/3 cup
Apple, diced small — 1
Vanilla extract — 1 tsp

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Grease a 12-cup muffin tin well.
2. Whisk oats, baking powder, cinnamon and salt together.
3. In a separate bowl whisk milk, eggs, maple syrup and vanilla.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients, fold in diced apple.
5. Divide evenly among muffin cups. Bake 20-22 minutes until set and lightly golden.
6. Cool 5 minutes before removing. Store in the fridge up to 5 days, or freeze for longer.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — these freeze beautifully. Cool completely, freeze in a single layer, then transfer to a bag. Reheat from frozen in the microwave 45-60 seconds for an instant school morning breakfast.

Maple Pecan Baked Oatmeal

Prep 10 min · Cook 35 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Old-fashioned oats — 3 cups

Baking powder — 2 tsp

Cinnamon — 1.5 tsp

Salt — 1/2 tsp

Milk — 2.5 cups

Eggs — 2

Maple syrup — 1/2 cup

Butter, melted — 4 tbsp

Pecans, chopped — 3/4 cup

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Grease a 9x13 baking dish.
2. Whisk oats, baking powder, cinnamon and salt together in the dish.
3. In a separate bowl whisk milk, eggs, maple syrup and melted butter.
4. Pour over the oat mixture and stir to combine. Sprinkle pecans evenly over the top.
5. Bake 30-35 minutes until set and golden.
6. Scoop into bowls and serve warm with extra milk or maple syrup if desired.

Megan's Tip: Assemble this the night before and refrigerate unbaked. In the morning, just pop it straight in the oven, no need to bring it to room temperature first, just add 5 extra minutes to the bake time.

BONUS SECTION

Stock Your Freezer

4 recipes built specifically to make ahead and freeze

Freezer Breakfast Burritos

Prep 15 min · Cook 20 min · Serves 12 burritos · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Breakfast sausage, crumbled — 1.5 lbs
Farm eggs — 14
Frozen shredded hash browns — 4 cups
Shredded cheddar — 3 cups
Large flour tortillas — 12
Butter — 3 tbsp
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook sausage in a large skillet over medium heat until browned. Remove and set aside.
2. In the same skillet, cook hash browns 8-10 minutes until golden. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Melt butter in the skillet, scramble the eggs until just set.
4. Combine sausage, hash browns and eggs together.
5. Warm tortillas, fill each with the egg mixture and cheddar, and roll tightly.
6. Let burritos cool completely, then wrap each individually in foil. Freeze in a labeled freezer bag up to 3 months. Reheat from frozen in the microwave 2-3 minutes.

Megan's Tip: Wrap each burrito individually in foil before freezing, then group them in one large freezer bag. That way you can grab exactly one at a time without thawing the whole batch.

Tater Tot Casserole

Prep 15 min · Cook 45 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 2 lbs
White onion, diced — 1
Cream of mushroom soup — 2 cans
Milk — 1/2 cup
Frozen tater tots — 1 bag (32 oz)
Shredded cheddar — 2.5 cups
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375F. Brown ground beef with onion, drain excess fat. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Whisk cream of mushroom soup and milk together. Stir into the beef.
3. Spread the beef mixture into a 9x13 baking dish.
4. Layer frozen tater tots evenly over the top.
5. Sprinkle cheddar over the tots.
6. Bake 40-45 minutes until bubbly and golden. To freeze: assemble through step 5, cover tightly and freeze unbaked up to 3 months. Bake from frozen at 375F for 65-70 minutes.

Megan's Tip: Assemble the whole casserole but hold off on baking. Cover tightly and freeze unbaked, then bake straight from frozen, just add an extra 20-25 minutes to the bake time.

FREEZER STASH RECIPE

Million Dollar Chicken Casserole

Prep 15 min · Cook 35 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

Rotini or penne pasta — 1 lb
Cooked shredded chicken — 3 cups
Cream cheese, softened — 8 oz
Sour cream — 1 cup
Cottage cheese — 1 cup
Cream of chicken soup — 1 can
Shredded cheddar — 2 cups
Garlic powder and onion powder — 1 tsp each
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Cook pasta 2 minutes less than package directions, drain.
2. Mix cream cheese, sour cream, cottage cheese, cream of chicken soup, garlic powder and onion powder until smooth.
3. Fold in shredded chicken and cooked pasta.
4. Spread into a 9x13 baking dish. Top with shredded cheddar.
5. Bake 30-35 minutes until bubbly and golden. To freeze: assemble through step 4, cover tightly and freeze unbaked up to 3 months. Bake from frozen at 350F for 55-60 minutes.

Megan's Tip: This one freezes beautifully both baked and unbaked. If freezing unbaked, undercook the pasta by 2 minutes since it will finish cooking when reheated.

FREEZER STASH RECIPE

Freezer Chili Base

Prep 10 min · Cook 30 min · Serves 8 · Easy

INGREDIENTS

80/20 ground beef — 2 lbs
White onion, diced — 1
Kidney beans, drained — 2 cans
Diced tomatoes — 28 oz can
Tomato sauce — 15 oz can
Chili powder — 3 tbsp
Cumin — 1 tbsp
Garlic powder — 1 tsp
Salt and pepper — to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Brown ground beef with onion in a large pot. Drain excess fat.
2. Add kidney beans, diced tomatoes, tomato sauce, chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, salt and pepper.
3. Simmer 25-30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until thickened.
4. Let cool completely. Portion into freezer bags, pressing out excess air, and lay flat to freeze.
5. Freeze up to 3 months. Thaw overnight in the fridge and reheat on the stovetop over medium-low heat.

Megan's Tip: Freeze this flat in a gallon freezer bag, pressing out the air first. Flat bags thaw faster and stack neatly, which means way more freezer space than round containers.

BONUS SECTION

Fall Staple Treats

5 recipes that make the whole house smell like fall

Pumpkin Bread

Prep 10 min · Cook 55 min · Serves 2 loaves

INGREDIENTS

Flour — 3 cups
Baking soda — 2 tsp
Cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves — 1 tsp, 1/2 tsp, 1/4 tsp
Salt — 1 tsp
Pumpkin puree — 2 cups
Sugar — 2 cups
Vegetable oil — 1 cup
Eggs — 4

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Grease two loaf pans.
2. Whisk flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and salt together.
3. In a separate bowl whisk pumpkin puree, sugar, oil and eggs until smooth.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients, stirring just until mixed.
5. Divide batter between the two loaf pans.
6. Bake 50-55 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool in the pans 10 minutes before removing.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — this freezes beautifully. Wrap cooled loaves tightly in plastic wrap, then foil, and freeze up to 3 months. Thaw at room temperature for a few hours.

Pumpkin Bars with Cream Cheese Frosting

Prep 10 min · Cook 25 min · Serves 24 bars

INGREDIENTS

Flour — 2 cups
Baking powder — 2 tsp
Cinnamon and pumpkin spice — 1 tsp each
Salt — 1/2 tsp
Pumpkin puree — 15 oz can
Sugar — 1.5 cups
Vegetable oil — 1 cup
Eggs — 4
Cream cheese, softened — 8 oz
Butter, softened — 1/2 cup
Powdered sugar — 3 cups
Vanilla extract — 1 tsp

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Grease a large sheet pan (half sheet, roughly 13x18).
2. Whisk flour, baking powder, cinnamon, pumpkin spice and salt together.
3. In a separate bowl whisk pumpkin puree, sugar, oil and eggs until smooth.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients until just mixed. Spread evenly onto the sheet pan.
5. Bake 20-25 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool completely.
6. Beat cream cheese and butter together, add powdered sugar and vanilla, beat until smooth. Frost the cooled bars and slice into squares.

Megan's Tip: Let the bars cool completely before frosting, at least an hour. Warm bars melt the frosting right off instead of letting it set into a nice smooth layer.

Apple Crisp

Prep 15 min · Cook 40 min · Serves 8

INGREDIENTS

Apples, peeled and sliced — 8 (a mix of tart and sweet works best)

Flour — 1/4 cup + 1 cup, divided

Cinnamon — 1.5 tsp, divided

Sugar — 1/2 cup

Lemon juice — 1 tbsp

Old-fashioned oats — 1 cup

Brown sugar — 3/4 cup

Butter, cold and cubed — 3/4 cup

Salt — 1/4 tsp

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Toss sliced apples with 1/4 cup flour, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, sugar and lemon juice. Spread into a 9x13 baking dish.
2. In a separate bowl combine oats, remaining 1 cup flour, remaining 1 tsp cinnamon, brown sugar and salt.
3. Cut in cold butter with a fork or your fingers until it looks like coarse crumbs.
4. Sprinkle the oat topping evenly over the apples.
5. Bake 35-40 minutes until the topping is golden and the apples are bubbling.
6. Let cool 10 minutes and serve warm with vanilla ice cream.

Megan's Tip: Toss the apples with the flour and cinnamon before adding sugar. It coats them evenly and helps thicken the juices as it bakes instead of leaving a watery bottom layer.

Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies

Prep 10 min · Cook 12 min · Serves 24 cookies

INGREDIENTS

Butter, softened — 1/2 cup
Sugar — 1 cup
Pumpkin puree — 1/2 cup
Egg — 1
Vanilla extract — 1 tsp
Flour — 2 cups
Baking powder and baking soda — 1 tsp each
Cinnamon and pumpkin spice — 1 tsp each
Salt — 1/2 tsp
Mini chocolate chips — 1.5 cups

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Beat butter and sugar together until fluffy.
2. Beat in pumpkin puree, egg and vanilla.
3. Whisk flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, pumpkin spice and salt together.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients until just mixed. Fold in chocolate chips.
5. Scoop rounded tablespoons onto a parchment-lined baking sheet.
6. Bake 11-13 minutes until set. Cool 5 minutes on the pan before transferring.

Megan's Tip: Freezer Friendly — scoop the dough into balls and freeze on a tray before baking. Once frozen, transfer to a bag and bake straight from frozen anytime, just add 2 extra minutes.

Giant Cinnamon Rolls with Cream Cheese Glaze

Prep 30 min + rise · Cook 25 min · Serves 12 rolls

INGREDIENTS

Whole milk — 2 cups
Butter, softened — 1/2 cup
Sugar — 1/2 cup
Salt — 1 tsp
Instant yeast — 1 tbsp
Eggs, room temperature — 2
Flour — 6 cups
Butter, softened, for filling — 1/2 cup plus 2 tbsp
Brown sugar, packed — 1.25 cups
Cinnamon — 1.5 tbsp
Cream cheese, softened — 2 oz
Powdered sugar — 2.25 cups
Butter, melted, for glaze — 3 tbsp
Vanilla extract — 1 tsp
Milk, for glaze — 2-3 tbsp

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Warm the milk until steaming but not boiling. Pour into a stand mixer bowl with softened butter, sugar and salt. Mix on low until the butter melts and the mixture cools to warm, not hot.
2. Add yeast and eggs, mix until combined. Gradually add flour, switching to the dough hook once it comes together. Knead 2-3 minutes until soft and slightly sticky. Do not add extra flour to compensate, that softness is exactly right.
3. Transfer dough to a greased bowl, cover, and let rise in a warm spot until doubled, about 1 hour.
4. Roll the dough into a large rectangle, roughly 18x12 inches. Spread with softened butter, then sprinkle brown sugar and cinnamon evenly over the top, pressing in gently.
5. Starting from a long edge, roll the dough up tightly into a log. Slice into 12 even rolls using a gentle sawing motion with a serrated knife.
6. Arrange rolls in a greased 9x13 pan or on a lined sheet pan. Cover and let rise again until puffy, 30-45 minutes. Preheat oven to 350F and bake 24-26 minutes until light golden brown.
7. While rolls bake, whisk cream cheese, powdered sugar, melted butter, vanilla and enough milk to make a smooth, pourable glaze. Drizzle generously over the warm rolls before serving.

Megan's Tip: This is genuinely the easiest yeast dough you'll make. It's soft and a little sticky, and that's exactly right, resist the urge to add extra flour. A soft dough is what gives you that pillowy, bakery-style texture instead of a dense, tight roll.