

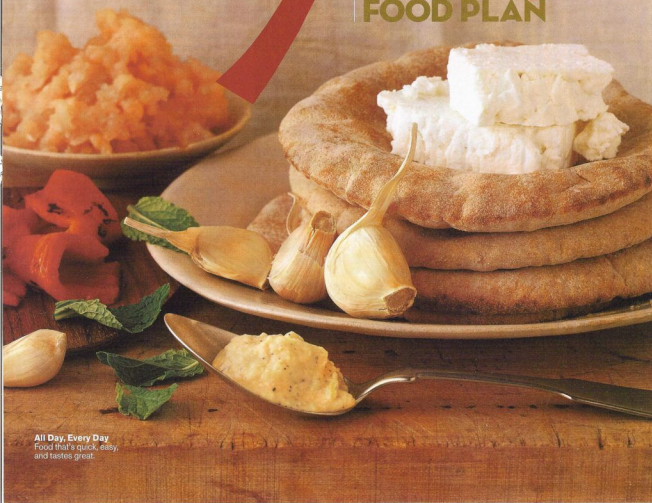
With this time-saving, healthy week of meals, you'll be savoring 'fast food' the way it ought to be

BY DEVIN ALEXANDER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JIM FRANCO

THE BUSY GAL'S

7-day FOOD PLAN



All Day, Every Day
Food that's quick, easy,
and tastes great.

These days, it's easy to think of good food as an endangered species.

Lattes and vending-machine crackers form major food groups. Panda Palace takes the number-4 slot on your speed dial. And you're so pressed for time that the only kitchen appliance you can name off the top of your head is the light switch. But being time-challenged doesn't have to mean being nutritionally challenged. Even when your life tornadoes out of control, you can still eat right, eat fast, and eat to lose weight. The answer? The *WH* 7-day Busy Gal's Food Plan.

Efficiency rules here. We want your mind to feel like you've blitzed through the drive-thru, your waist to feel like you've OD'd on celery, and your taste buds to feel like you've indulged in a five-star, six-course meal.

With this plan you'll shop once a week, multitask your leftovers in innovative ways, and spend less time prepping a meal than you would waiting in line for one—all while decreasing the hidden fats in foods, increasing your energy, and providing the nutritional balance your body needs.

This plan was designed for the fairly active woman, giving you a choice between 1,500 and 1,800 calories a day—breakfasts and snack A are 300 each, lunches and dinners are 400 each, and snacks B and C are 200 each. You can eat all six times for 1,800 calories, or eliminate one 200- or 300-calorie snack to lower your total intake. You can substitute any meal throughout the week for others in the same category. But if you follow the plan the way we've laid it out, you'll take the most advantage of the time-saving tricks that make this plan stress-free as it is guilt-free.

WILLIAM SMITH FOOD STYLING: JIM BEAR PHOTOS

THE PLAN Besides shopping, you'll use this day to prepare foods to save time during the week. Place all breads that you won't use within 3 days in the freezer, and store the remaining ones in plastic baggies in the fridge. In addition to making today's meals, do this work now to save time:

- » Marinate the London Broil early in the day.
- » Make Lemon Blueberry Muffins and freeze ones you won't eat Monday.
- » Make Gao to Chopping Meatloaf and mix seasonings for Fajita Seasoned Grilled Chicken Tenders.
- » Pack Monday's lunch from tonight's dinner leftovers.

THE MEALS

Breakfast Breakfast Burrito

Scramble $\frac{1}{2}$ c egg whites or egg-white substitute. Place in whole-wheat soft-taco-sized tortilla with 2 oz low-fat cheddar, $\frac{1}{4}$ c drained fresh salsa, and salt and pepper.

Lunch Greek Goddess Pizza

prep and cooking time under 10 minutes

6½-inch diameter whole-wheat pita circle

4 oz extra-lean ground turkey breast

1½ Tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves

garlic powder and salt, to taste

1 oz crumbled reduced-fat feta cheese

1½ Tbsp garlic-flavored hummus

$\frac{1}{4}$ c roasted red peppers, cut into strips
olive oil spray

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place pita circle directly on oven rack and bake for 5 to 10 minutes (until it starts to crisp). Spray a small nonstick frying pan and place over medium-high heat. Add turkey and season it with mint, garlic, and salt. Crumble and cook through. Stir in feta and mix until it just starts to melt. Remove pita from oven and spread hummus evenly over one side, then lay red peppers in a single layer over hummus. Spoon turkey mixture on top.

Makes one serving: 394 calories, 43 g protein, 42 g carbohydrates, 8 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 6 g fiber

Dinner Herbed London Broil

prep time 5 minutes cooking time 8-12 minutes

3 Tbsp low-sodium soy sauce

2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar

5 medium garlic cloves, crushed or minced

2 tsp dried rosemary

2 tsp fresh ground black pepper

1½-lb London broil or top round steak

Tenderize the steak by pounding it on both sides with the teeth-end of a meat mallet. Combine all ingredients except steak in a large plastic bag. Add steak and marinate in refrigerator for at least 3 hours. Preheat grill or broiler to highest heat, and grill or broil about 4 to 6 minutes per side until meat reaches desired doneness. Allow to sit 10 minutes, then slice thinly.

Makes five 4-oz servings. Per serving (based on consuming only $\frac{1}{2}$ of marinade): 199 calories, 30 g protein, 4 g carbohydrates, 10 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, trace fiber, 389 mg sodium

Serve with: $\frac{1}{2}$ c cooked brown rice mixed with $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp hot mustard, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp low-sodium soy sauce, $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp toasted sesame oil, and 1 c steamed veggie of choice.

DAILY NUTRITIONAL VALUE

1,820 calories, 169 g protein, 203 g carbs,
43 g fat, 14 g saturated fat, 28 g fiber

SNACK CHOICES

a English Muffin Melt On half of a toasted whole-wheat English muffin, add 2 oz low-sodium water-packed tuna mixed with 1 tsp olive oil and 1 tsp lemon juice. Top with 1 slice tomato and ½ oz low-fat cheddar cheese. Place under broiler until cheese melts. Also eat one small apple.

b Shrimp Cocktail Snack 4 oz cooked medium shrimp with 1½ Tbsp seafood cocktail sauce, served with ½ c celery sticks, ½ c baby carrots, and 3 Tbsp light sour cream mixed with onion soup or ranch dip mix, to taste.

c Aloha Smoothie In a blender, mix ½ c low-fat vanilla yogurt, ½ c drained pineapple chunks, ½ c soy milk, ½ tsp vanilla extract, and 8 ice cubes.

monday

THE PLAN Pack Tuesday's lunch when you prepare dinner and make an extra baked potato or two to morph into breakfast potatoes later in the week. (Peel them before refrigerating.)

THE MEALS

Breakfast Mixerless Lemon Blueberry Muffins

Make Sunday
prep time under 10 minutes cooking time 20 minutes
 2/3 c frozen blueberries, chopped
 1 tsp + 1/2 c + 1 Tbsp sugar, divided
 2 egg whites
 1 tsp lemon extract
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 1/4 c low-fat lemon yogurt
 1/4 c light butter, melted
 3/4 c reduced-fat buttermilk
 1 1/2 c unbleached, all-purpose flour
 1 Tbsp dried lemon peel
 2 tsp baking powder
 1 tsp salt
 butter-flavored cooking spray

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray 10 cups of a standard muffin pan with cooking spray. In a small bowl, toss blueberries with 1 tsp sugar. In a large bowl, using a spatula, mix 1/3 c sugar, egg whites, and extracts. Add in yogurt, butter, and buttermilk and mix until ingredients are well combined. Next mix in remaining ingredients (except for the last Tbsp of sugar). Stir in berries and divide batter among cups in prepared pan. Sprinkle tops evenly with remaining sugar. Bake muffins approximately 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out dry. Cool 10 minutes. Eat one; store remaining muffins in an airtight plastic container or bag in freezer (for leftovers, wrap in aluminum, and reheat in 400°F oven for 10 minutes).

Makes 10 muffins. Per muffin: 150 calories, 4 g protein, 28 g carbohydrates, 3 g fat, 2 g saturated fat, 1 g fiber

Serve with: 2 oz extra-lean turkey bacon or 3 Healthy Choice Low Fat Breakfast Sausages.

Lunch Simple Steak Sandwich

On a 2-oz whole-grain roll, add 4 oz of leftover Herbed London Broil, 1 oz sliced mozzarella, 1/4 c mixed lettuce leaves, 3 slices tomato, red onion slivers, and 1 tsp hot mustard. Also, have 1/2 c celery sticks, 1/3 c carrot sticks, and 3 Tbsp light sour cream mixed with onion soup or ranch dip mix, to taste.

Dinner Ciao to Chopping Meatloaf

Make Sunday
prep time under 10 minutes
cooking time 35-40 minutes
 1 lb extra-lean ground turkey
 2 egg whites
 1/2 c prepared plain bread crumbs
 1/2 c grated carrots
 1/4 c grated zucchini
 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
 1 tsp dried sweet basil
 1 tsp dried oregano leaves
 1 tsp Italian seasoning
 1 tsp garlic powder
 1 tsp salt
 olive oil spray

Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray a standard nonstick loaf pan with cooking spray. In a large bowl, mix all ingredients except spray. Press mixture into prepared pan. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes or until no longer pink inside. Let it stand 10 minutes, then slice it into 10 equal slices. Serve two slices immediately, then store leftovers in refrigerator in an airtight plastic container.

Makes five 4-oz servings. Per serving: 162 calories, 26 g protein, 11 g carbohydrates, 2 g fat, trace saturated fat, 1 g fiber, 652 mg sodium

Serve with: half of a 6-oz baked potato with 1/3 c salsa and 1 1/2 Tbsp light sour cream, and 1 1/2 c grilled (or sautéed) zucchini prepared with 2 tsp olive oil.

SNACK CHOICES

a Pepperoni Broccoli Pizza

prep time 5 minutes
cooking time 10-14 minutes
 1 whole-wheat soft-taco-sized flour tortilla
 2 oz finely shredded, low-fat mozzarella cheese
 1/4 c jarred pizza sauce
 1/2 slice turkey pepperoni
 1/3 c chopped broccoli
 dried oregano leaves, to taste

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place tortilla on a nonstick baking sheet and bake for 8 to 10 minutes until crisp. Remove from oven and top evenly with sauce, then cheese,

then pepperoni and broccoli. Sprinkle with oregano, then bake another 2 to 4 minutes until cheese is completely melted. Slice and serve.

Makes one serving: 320 calories, 23 g protein, 48 g carbohydrates, 8 g fat, 3 g saturated fat, 8 g fiber, 1,385 mg sodium

Cottage Cheese and Berries
 1 c low-fat cottage cheese, followed by 1 c raspberries.

Shrimp and Frozen Treat
 2 oz cooked medium shrimp with 1 Tbsp cocktail sauce and one low-fat frozen treat (try Weight Watchers).

DAILY NUTRITIONAL VALUE

1,806 calories, 152 g protein, 211 g carbs, 52 g fat, 16 g saturated fat, 33 g fiber

tuesday

THE PLAN Pack Wednesday's lunch while the ingredients are out for Antipasto Kebabs (keep dressing on the side), and transfer 1 lb chicken tenders from freezer to refrigerator around dinner time.

THE MEALS

Breakfast Chocolate Raspberry Smoothie

Blend 2/3 c frozen raspberries, 4 oz sugar-free, fat-free raspberry yogurt, 1/4 c vanilla soy milk, 1 Tbsp cocoa powder, 4 ice cubes; also eat 2 1/2 Tbsp almonds.

Lunch Meatloaf Marinara Sandwich

Put 4 oz leftover Ciao to Chopping Meatloaf on sprouted-wheat sourdough roll and 1/4 c pizza sauce (reheated in microwave). Top with 1 oz low-fat mozzarella. Have 1 medium orange.

Dinner Balsamic Goat Cheese Steak Salad

4 oz leftover Herbed London Broil, 4 c chopped mixed baby lettuce, 1/2 c each chopped tomatoes, red bell pepper, yellow or orange bell pepper, and cucumber, 1/4 c red onion, 1/2 oz crumbled goat cheese, and 2 Tbsp light balsamic dressing.

SNACK CHOICES

a Turkey Pinwheels To a whole-wheat soft-taco-sized tortilla, add 4 oz thinly sliced peppered turkey, 2 tsp light mayo, 1/2 tsp (or more) horseradish, 2 Tbsp chopped roasted red peppers, 1/4 c mixed lettuce, rolled then cut into slices. Serve with 1/2 c cherry tomatoes drizzled with 1 tsp olive oil.

b Antipasto Kebabs Skewer 1 1/2 oz peppered turkey, 1 oz low-fat mozzarella, 4 slices turkey pepperoni, 8 slices bell pepper (any color), 4 grape tomatoes, 8 slices red onion, 2 pepperoncini cut into squares, and drizzle with 1 Tbsp light Italian dressing.

c Apple Cinnamon Muffin Treat 1 whole-wheat toasted English muffin topped with 3 Tbsp low-fat vanilla yogurt, a pinch of cinnamon, and half of an apple, sliced thin.

Secret Ingredients
 Just the right mix of good things.

DAILY NUTRITIONAL VALUE

1,786 calories, 141 g protein, 241 g carbs, 45 g fat, 11 g saturated fat, 46 g fiber

wednesday

THE PLAN Prepare Thursday's lunch while making dinner.

THE MEALS

Breakfast Turkey Scramble

Scramble 1 slice (2 oz) leftover Ciao to Chopping Meatloaf, $\frac{1}{2}$ c egg whites or egg white substitute, $\frac{1}{4}$ c chopped onion.

Serve with Quick Breakfast potatoes

prep time under 5 minutes cooking time 5 minutes

- 4 oz leftover baked potato (weighed after being baked and peeled)
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp + $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp extra virgin olive oil
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ c chopped onion
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ c chopped red or green bell pepper
- dried thyme, to taste
salt, to taste
olive oil spray

Chop potato into bite-sized pieces. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp oil to a small nonstick pan. Over medium heat, cook onions and peppers until just tender. Push them to side of pan and add remaining oil. Turn heat to medium-high and add potatoes. Cook until potatoes are hot through and starting to brown, stirring occasionally. Mix with onion mixture and season with thyme and salt, to taste. Serve with ketchup or Tabasco.

Makes one serving: 199 calories, 4 g protein, 36 g carbohydrates, 5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 4 g fiber, 9 mg sodium

Lunch Antipasto Salad

- 2 c spinach leaves
 - $\frac{2}{3}$ c bell pepper
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ c red onion
 - 4 oz peppered turkey breast
 - 2 oz low-fat mozzarella
 - 1 oz turkey pepperoni
- chop all above ingredients
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c grape tomatoes
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp dried oregano
 - 1 Tbsp finely chopped pepperoncini
 - 2 Tbsp light Italian dressing

Mix ingredients together in a medium-size bowl.

Dinner Fajita-Seasoned Grilled Chicken

prep time 5 minutes cooking time under 5 minutes

- 2 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp paprika
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp onion powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 lb chicken tenders (or chicken breasts cut into 1-inch strips)
- 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil

Preheat indoor or outdoor grill to high heat. In a small bowl, combine seasonings. In a medium bowl, toss chicken in olive oil. Add seasonings and toss to coat evenly. Place chicken on grill and grill 2 to 3 minutes per side or until chicken is just cooked through

(no longer pink inside). Serve immediately or store in an airtight plastic container in the refrigerator for later use.

Makes 14 oz cooked chicken, about three and a half 4-oz servings. Per serving: 166 calories, 30 g protein, 2 g carbohydrates, 3 g fat, trace saturated fat, 266 mg sodium

Serve with $\frac{1}{2}$ c preseasoned brown rice (try Lundberg's Santa Fe Grill RiceXpress) and $\frac{1}{2}$ c veggie of choice prepared with 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil.

DAILY NUTRITIONAL VALUE

1,816 calories, 144 g protein, 201 g carbs, 56 g fat, 13 g saturated fat, 39 g fiber



a b c

SNACK CHOICES

Danielle's Power Snack In half of a whole-wheat pita circle, add $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp peanut butter, 2 Tbsp fat-free vanilla yogurt, and half of a medium banana, sliced.

Canadian Bacon Cream Cheese Roll-Ups Spread 6 tsp light cream cheese on four $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz slices of Canadian bacon, roll, and slice. Also eat $\frac{1}{4}$ c raspberries.

Crunchy Yogurt 8-oz sugar-free yogurt and $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp chopped almonds.

thursday

THE PLAN Pack Friday's lunch while you make dinner.

THE MEALS

Breakfast English Muffin Sandwich

On a whole-wheat English muffin, add 1 slice Canadian bacon, 2 fried egg whites, and 1 oz thin slices low-fat cheddar. Have a small apple.

Lunch Taco Salad

Mix together 4 oz leftover Fajita Seasoned Grilled Chicken, 4 c spinach leaves, $\frac{1}{2}$ c fresh salsa (drained), 1 oz low-fat shredded cheddar, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz (approximately 8) broken baked tortilla chips, and 2 Tbsp light Italian dressing. (If you pack it the night before, pack chips and dressing on the side and add when you eat.)

Dinner Warm Brown Rice Salad

Mix together $\frac{3}{4}$ c cooked brown rice, 3-oz pouch salmon, $\frac{1}{2}$ c finely chopped raw spinach leaves, 1 to 2 tsps dried dill leaves, $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp light Italian dressing, 2 Tbsp (or more) lemon juice, and salt and pepper (to taste). Have $\frac{1}{2}$ c canned pineapple in juice on the side.

SNACK CHOICES

Protein Bar 300-calorie high-protein bar (try Premier Nutrition's Caramel Nut Odyssey Bar).

Turkey Cucumber Sub Place 5 oz thinly sliced peppered turkey between two $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick cucumber slices (cut lengthwise) spread with $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp garlic-flavored hummus.

Garden Patch Pita In half of a whole-wheat pita circle, add 3 Tbsp garlic hummus, four $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices cucumber, four $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices large tomato, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sprouts.

DAILY NUTRITIONAL VALUE

1,798 calories, 165 g protein, 210 g carbs, 41 g fat, 11 g saturated fat, 31 g fiber

Main Meals
It all adds up to a healthy slice of life.

The Busy Gal's SUNDAY SHOPPING LIST

This is your starting point to make all of the recipes in the 7-day plan. After week one, you'll only need to replenish fresh items like meats and produce regularly—the other items as needed.

All sizes are for one serving; multiply as needed.

VEGETABLES

- ☐ 1-lb bag baby carrots
- ☐ 1 bag chopped onion
- ☐ 1 bag chopped red and green peppers (or whole peppers)
- ☐ 1 bag or container celery sticks
- ☐ 2 medium portobello mushrooms
- ☐ 16-oz bag fresh spinach
- ☐ 6-oz bag mixed baby lettuce
- ☐ 1 container alfalfa sprouts
- ☐ small bag mixed broccoli and cauliflower florets (or 1 to 2 c of each)
- ☐ 1 container grape or cherry tomatoes
- ☐ 1 bunch fresh mint leaves
- ☐ fresh parsley (optional)
- ☐ 3 medium zucchini
- ☐ 2 1/2 c veggies of choice (in steam)
- ☐ 2 5-oz Idaho or Russet potatoes
- ☐ 1 large tomato
- ☐ 1 medium red onion
- ☐ 3 medium cucumbers
- ☐ 5 medium garlic cloves

DAIRY

- ☐ 2 dozen eggs (for whites) or egg-white substitute
- ☐ 8-oz package low-fat cheddar (try Cabot's 15% Light)
- ☐ 4-oz package goat cheese or goat cheese crumbles
- ☐ 4-oz package crumbled, reduced-fat feta
- ☐ 16-oz package low-fat mozzarella (try Precious or Sorrento)
- ☐ 16-oz container cottage cheese
- ☐ small package light cream cheese
- ☐ 1/4 c light butter
- ☐ 3/4 c reduced-fat buttermilk
- ☐ small carton skim milk
- ☐ 8-oz container light sour cream
- ☐ 1 container sugar-free, fat-free raspberry yogurt
- ☐ 1 container sugar-free, fat-free yogurt, any flavor
- ☐ 6-oz container low-fat lemon yogurt
- ☐ 6-oz container fat-free vanilla yogurt
- ☐ 6-oz container low-fat vanilla yogurt

FRUIT

- ☐ 3 small apples
- ☐ 1 medium orange
- ☐ 3 bananas
- ☐ 2 lemons
- ☐ 2 1/4 c raspberries

MEAT

- ☐ 1 1/2 lbs London broil or top round steak
- ☐ 1/2 lb package Canadian bacon