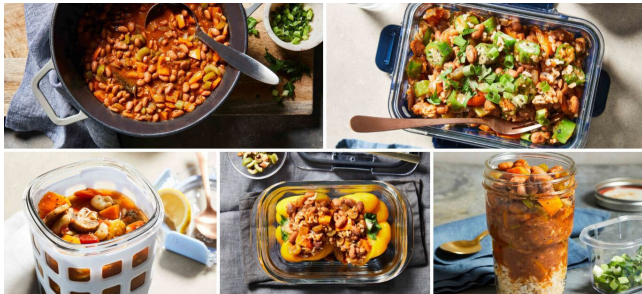




Cook Twice, Eat 6 Times: Vegan Lunch Meal Prep

By Ellen Boeke
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Looking to relieve lunchtime boredom? Our easy one-week vegan lunch prep guide uses two base recipes to create six delectable dishes that will spruce up your midday meal. Spend a couple of hours cooking on the weekend and you'll have grab-and-go lunches ready for the rest of the week. Oil-free and completely plant-based, these healthy and hearty lunch-prep recipes are bound to become favorites in your regular weekday rotation.

For more lunchtime inspiration, check out our full round-up of [Grab-and-Go Lunches for Busy Days](#).

Lunch Prep Base Recipe #1: Italian-Style Veggie Stew



50 minutes | Serves as the base for 3 lunches

This easy stew makes a great heat-and-eat lunch, and you'll use some of it to make hearty veggie wraps and a colorful pasta dish for later in the week.

Ingredients

- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- ¾ cup chopped red bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup sliced carrot
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 15-oz. cans no-salt-added butter beans, rinsed and drained (3 cups)
- 1 14.5-oz. can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 cup chopped yellow potatoes
- 1 cup chopped sweet potatoes
- 2 teaspoons dried Italian seasoning
- 1 teaspoon dried Aleppo pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- ¼ teaspoon sea salt

Instructions

1. In a 5- to 6-quart Dutch oven cook mushrooms, bell pepper, onion, carrot, and garlic over medium 7 to 10 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally and adding water, 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time, as needed to prevent sticking. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Partially cover and simmer 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Remove and discard bay leaf. Let stew cool 30 minutes,

Lunch Prep Variations

Now that you've made your base recipe, here's how to prep it into three different lunches for three different days, plus serving instructions. We recommend prepping these lunches in the order given but eating the wraps for your first meal, since tortillas get soggy fast.

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Variation 1. Italian-Style Veggie Stew



PREP AHEAD: Spoon 3 cups of the stew into a 4-cup microwave-safe container. If you like, use a fork to slightly mash potatoes to thicken the stew. Cover and chill up to 5 days.

SERVE: Loosen lid and microwave on 100% power (high) 2 minutes or until heated, stirring once. Serve with a lemon wedge.

Variation 2. Italian Veggie Wraps



PREP AHEAD: Using a slotted spoon, remove 2 cups of the vegetables from the remaining stew in Dutch oven. Arrange ½ cup fresh spinach leaves over two-thirds of an 8-inch whole wheat flour tortilla. Spoon 1 cup of the stew vegetables over spinach. Top with four thin 6-inch-long strips cucumber, 1½ tablespoons sliced pepperoncini pepper, and 1 thin slice red onion, separated into rings. Roll up tortilla toward empty edge. Wrap in plastic wrap. Repeat to make a second wrap. Chill wraps.

SERVE: Unwrap plastic wrap and eat within 24 hours.

Variation 3. Italian Veggies and Pasta



PREP AHEAD: Place 1 cup cooked and cooled whole wheat or chickpea rotini in an airtight container. Top with 1 cup fresh spinach. In a separate 4-cup microwave-safe container add the remaining stew and liquid from Dutch oven. In a small airtight container combine 2 tablespoons whole wheat panko bread crumbs and 1 tablespoon nutritional yeast. Cover and chill up to 5 days.

SERVE: Loosen lid on stew; microwave on 100% power (high) 1 minute. Stir in pasta and spinach. Microwave 1 minute more or until heated through. Top with panko mixture.

Lunch Prep Base Recipe #2: Spicy Beans and Rice



50 minutes | Serves as the base for 3 lunches

Beans and rice are a classic combo that can easily be dressed up to create drool-worthy meals. This Cajun-inspired recipe is transformed into smoky stuffed peppers and a no-fuss gumbo for easy lunches that pack a powerful punch.

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Ingredients

- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped orange bell pepper
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 1 tablespoon no-salt-added tomato paste
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons no-salt-added Cajun seasoning
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 2 15-oz. cans no-salt-added pinto beans, rinsed and drained (3 cups)
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 teaspoon hot sauce
- 1 bay leaf
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups cooked brown rice, cooled

Instructions

1. In a Dutch oven cook onion, bell pepper, and celery over medium 7 to 10 minutes or until tender, stirring occasionally and adding water, 1 to 2 tablespoons at a time, as needed to prevent sticking. Stir in tomato paste, garlic, Cajun seasoning, and paprika; cook and stir 2 minutes.
2. Stir in the next six ingredients (through black pepper). Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Cover; simmer 15 minutes. Uncover; continue simmering 15 minutes more or until slightly thickened. (Or slightly mash some of the beans to thicken mixture.) Remove and discard bay leaf. Let bean mixture cool.

Lunch Prep Variations

Now that you've prepped your Spicy Beans and Rice, transform it into three different lunches to enjoy

throughout the week. Prep the Stuffed Peppers first and use a dry measuring cup to portion out the bean mixture. This lets you get mostly solids with just a little liquid, which helps them store better.

Variation 1. Stuffed Peppers



PREP AHEAD: Cut 1 large bell pepper in half lengthwise and remove seeds. Place pepper in a 4-cup microwave-safe container. Microwave on 100% power (high) 1 minute. In a bowl stir together 2 cups of the bean mixture, ⅔ cup of the rice, and 3 tablespoons golden raisins. Spoon mixture into pepper halves. In a small airtight container combine 1 tablespoon chopped toasted almonds and 2 tablespoons chopped green olives. Cover and chill up to 4 days.

SERVE: Loosen lid on stuffed pepper. Microwave on 100% power (high) 2 minutes or until heated, rotating container once. Top with almonds and olives.

Variation 2. Spicy Beans and Rice



PREP AHEAD: Spoon ⅔ cup of the rice into a 4-cup microwave-safe container. Top with 2 cups bean mixture. In a small airtight container combine 1

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tablespoon sliced scallion and 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley. Cover and chill up to 5 days.

SERVE: Loosen lid on beans and rice; microwave on 100% power (high) 2 minutes or until heated, stirring once. Top with scallions, parsley, and additional hot sauce.

Variation 3. Gumbo



PREP AHEAD: In a 4-cup microwave-safe container stir together 2 cups bean mixture, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of the rice, and $\frac{2}{3}$ cup frozen sliced okra. In a small airtight container combine 1 tablespoon sliced scallion and 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley. Cover and chill up to 5 days.

SERVE: Loosen lid on gumbo. Microwave on 100% power (high) 2 minutes or until heated, stirring once. Top with scallion, parsley, and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons gumbo file seasoning.

Looking for more support prepping healthy meals that will leave you feeling nourished all week long? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK's easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path. To learn more about a whole-food, plant-based diet, visit our [Plant-Based Primer](#).