

2019 MENU PLANNER

MEALS

ARE SMALL ACTS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE,

MOMENTS

set aside for conversation, reflection, and relationship.

-ALEXANDRA STODDARD



THE BENEFITS OF MENU PLANNING

5 p.m.

Do you recognize that “exasperating hour” when the household starts to fray around the edges? Have you felt the lack of ideas while standing in front of the pantry or refrigerator door? Have you resorted to a frozen lump of ground beef in hopes of inspiration?

My euphoria of “ground beef stimulus” is usually short-lived as I make choices and straight-way eliminate them. “Sloppy Joes- *no bread.*” “Taco Salad- *no chips.*” “Chili Soup- *no beans.*” At the last minute, ingredients are thrown together that do not complement each other in taste or appearance, and...

...the kitchen is a mess,
...I'm in a stress,
...the family tries to guess-
What is for supper?

I haven't always been a menu planner. In fact, I was a bit dubious when I first heard the concept. Wouldn't it take the fun out of preparing a home-cooked meal? What if I wanted to eat pizza on the day the menu said mashed potatoes?

After our third child was born, the trips to town that were previously enjoyable turned into a frustrating experience. After a few chaotic episodes, my husband suggested that he stay with the children on a Saturday morning, while I did a month's worth of grocery shopping.

At that point, it seemed logical to plan menus since the trips to town were less frequent. True, we still needed to purchase perishable items, but that was less daunting than a huge list. Time eventually changed the stage of our family and our method of grocery shopping, but I am still an avid menu planner.

I soon discovered that menu planning had many benefits. In place of spending much needed brain power on “what to make for supper,” my mind was clearer to focus on other things that required my attention.

When the menu is only in my head, it is more difficult to delegate meal preparation tasks. As a result, I end up doing most of the work. Children are great helpers and most times there are little jobs that they can do. If the menu says: Pizza, veggies and dip, fruit and cookies, it is easier to assign small tasks. Someone can get a jar of fruit; another can prepare veggies and so forth.

If you think about it, we are extremely repetitious in the kitchen. How many times do we grate cheese, chop onions and fry hamburger in one week? or two weeks? If menus are planned, we can look ahead to see if we will need to prepare those foods again. With little additional time and energy, we can easily double or triple those amounts and we have the convenience of ready-to-use ingredients.

Menu planning does require some forethought and effort, but it actually saves time in the long run. It is a work in progress that will take practice, but the more you do it, the easier it will become. The two types of menu planning discussed are a **weekly menu plan** and a **four-week menu plan**. Both methods share the following benefits:

- *Grocery shopping is easier*
- *Meals are more balanced and include more variety*
- *Money is saved*
- *Added flexibility*
- *More likely to try new recipes*
- *Sale items taken advantage of*
- *More prepared for impromptu guests*

There is not one perfect way to plan a menu. My sister-in-law, Beverly generally plans a week of menus on Monday and she consults the sale flyers for current specials. She has easy access to several grocery stores and she usually makes a weekly shopping trip. In my area, local choices are limited, but we do have a large city close by. I typically plan menus four weeks at a time and buy in larger quantities.

Choose a theme to help steer you to a particular section of a recipe book. Here is an example: Monday- casserole, Tuesday- meat and potatoes, Wednesday- soup, Thursday- casserole, Friday- Italian or Mexican, Saturday- grill or CORN (clean out refrigerator night).

Check your calendar for upcoming events and note on your meal planner anything that will affect your blueprint – birthdays, parent/teacher meeting, church events, youth activities... Take thought as you choose recipes so that you are not planning a time consuming meal after a full day. As things come up throughout the week, menus can be altered.

Start menu-planning by looking in your freezer, refrigerator, garden and pantry. This provides you with knowledge of items on hand and may be a springboard for menu ideas.

Select your recipes to be used. To make the planning process easier, use a few cookbooks and/or your own personal recipe collection at one planning session. An abundance of cookbooks and food magazines may tend to bog us down with too many options. With the four-week method, it is easy to incorporate everyone's favorite foods throughout that time frame or to try a new tantalizing recipe.

Make a shopping list at the same time you plan menus. For Beverly, this is the list she uses immediately. As I lay out a month of menus, I have a list for each week. Sometimes, I purchase all of the non-perishables items in one shopping trip, and then pick up the perishables locally. If you know what is on the menu, you can easily take advantage of advertised sales and seasonal produce.

Select a format for menu planning. Notebooks, blank month calendars and white boards are good options. Beverly uses The Homemaker's Friend Daily Planner's space for menu planning. I use a four-week computer print-out; then transfer the basic information to my planner. Notations are made in my planner of any prep work that is needed like defrosting meat or getting food in the crockpot.

Take note of similar recipes that could be made at the same time. It saves much time in clean-up and ready-made food in the freezer is like money in a savings account.

With the four-week method, you can easily double recipes one week and then, have a similar menu two weeks later. Occasionally that extra dish in the freezer becomes the perfect gift to help a friend through a crisis and it is a blessing to use our resources in this way.

As mentioned before, there is not one perfect way to plan a menu. But with a little practice, you can change that “exasperating hour” to a “prepared hour.” Try it.

...the kitchen might still be a mess...
...but the stress will be less,
...you won't need to guess,
...*what is for supper?*

SUNDAY 2	MONDAY 3	TUESDAY 4	WEDNESDAY 5	THURSDAY 6	FRIDAY 7	SATURDAY 8
SUNDAY 9	MONDAY 10	TUESDAY 11	WEDNESDAY 12	THURSDAY 13	FRIDAY 14	SATURDAY 15
SUNDAY 16	MONDAY 17	TUESDAY 18	WEDNESDAY 19	THURSDAY 20	FRIDAY 21	SATURDAY 22
SUNDAY 23	MONDAY 24	TUESDAY 25	WEDNESDAY 26	THURSDAY 27	FRIDAY 28	SATURDAY 29
SUNDAY 30	MONDAY 31	NOTES				
DECEMBER 2018						

NOTES		TUESDAY 1	WEDNESDAY 2	THURSDAY 3	FRIDAY 4	SATURDAY 5
SUNDAY 6	MONDAY 7	TUESDAY 8	WEDNESDAY 9	THURSDAY 10	FRIDAY 11	SATURDAY 12
SUNDAY 13	MONDAY 14	TUESDAY 15	WEDNESDAY 16	THURSDAY 17	FRIDAY 18	SATURDAY 19
SUNDAY 20	MONDAY 21	TUESDAY 22	WEDNESDAY 23	THURSDAY 24	FRIDAY 25	SATURDAY 26
SUNDAY 27	MONDAY 28	TUESDAY 29	WEDNESDAY 30	THURSDAY 31		
J A N U A R Y						

NOTES					FRIDAY 1	SATURDAY 2
F E B R U A R Y						
SUNDAY 3	MONDAY 4	TUESDAY 5	WEDNESDAY 6	THURSDAY 7	FRIDAY 8	SATURDAY 9
SUNDAY 10	MONDAY 11	TUESDAY 12	WEDNESDAY 13	THURSDAY 14	FRIDAY 15	SATURDAY 16
SUNDAY 17	MONDAY 18	TUESDAY 19	WEDNESDAY 20	THURSDAY 21	FRIDAY 22	SATURDAY 23
SUNDAY 24	MONDAY 25	TUESDAY 26	WEDNESDAY 27	THURSDAY 28	FRIDAY 1 MARCH	SATURDAY 2 MARCH

SUNDAY 3	MONDAY 4	TUESDAY 5	WEDNESDAY 6	THURSDAY 7	FRIDAY 8	SATURDAY 9
SUNDAY 10	MONDAY 11	TUESDAY 12	WEDNESDAY 13	THURSDAY 14	FRIDAY 15	SATURDAY 16
SUNDAY 17	MONDAY 18	TUESDAY 19	WEDNESDAY 20	THURSDAY 21	FRIDAY 22	SATURDAY 23
SUNDAY 24	MONDAY 25	TUESDAY 26	WEDNESDAY 27	THURSDAY 28	FRIDAY 29	SATURDAY 30
SUNDAY 31	NOTES					
	M A R C H					

	MONDAY 1	TUESDAY 2	WEDNESDAY 3	THURSDAY 4	FRIDAY 5	SATURDAY 6
SUNDAY 7	MONDAY 8	TUESDAY 9	WEDNESDAY 10	THURSDAY 11	FRIDAY 12	SATURDAY 13
SUNDAY 14	MONDAY 15	TUESDAY 16	WEDNESDAY 17	THURSDAY 18	FRIDAY 19	SATURDAY 20
SUNDAY 21	MONDAY 22	TUESDAY 23	WEDNESDAY 24	THURSDAY 25	FRIDAY 26	SATURDAY 27
SUNDAY 28	MONDAY 29	TUESDAY 30	NOTES			
			A P R I L			

NOTES			WEDNESDAY 1	THURSDAY 2	FRIDAY 3	SATURDAY 4
M A Y						
SUNDAY 5	MONDAY 6	TUESDAY 7	WEDNESDAY 8	THURSDAY 9	FRIDAY 10	SATURDAY 11
SUNDAY 12	MONDAY 13	TUESDAY 14	WEDNESDAY 15	THURSDAY 16	FRIDAY 17	SATURDAY 18
SUNDAY 19	MONDAY 20	TUESDAY 21	WEDNESDAY 22	THURSDAY 23	FRIDAY 24	SATURDAY 25
SUNDAY 26	MONDAY 27	TUESDAY 28	WEDNESDAY 29	THURSDAY 30	FRIDAY 31	SATURDAY 1 JUNE

SUNDAY 2	MONDAY 3	TUESDAY 4	WEDNESDAY 5	THURSDAY 6	FRIDAY 7	SATURDAY 8
SUNDAY 9	MONDAY 10	TUESDAY 11	WEDNESDAY 12	THURSDAY 13	FRIDAY 14	SATURDAY 15
SUNDAY 16	MONDAY 17	TUESDAY 18	WEDNESDAY 19	THURSDAY 20	FRIDAY 21	SATURDAY 22
SUNDAY 23	MONDAY 24	TUESDAY 25	WEDNESDAY 26	THURSDAY 27	FRIDAY 28	SATURDAY 29
SUNDAY 30	NOTES					
						J U N E

	MONDAY 1	TUESDAY 2	WEDNESDAY 3	THURSDAY 4	FRIDAY 5	SATURDAY 6
SUNDAY 7	MONDAY 8	TUESDAY 9	WEDNESDAY 10	THURSDAY 11	FRIDAY 12	SATURDAY 13
SUNDAY 14	MONDAY 15	TUESDAY 16	WEDNESDAY 17	THURSDAY 18	FRIDAY 19	SATURDAY 20
SUNDAY 21	MONDAY 22	TUESDAY 23	WEDNESDAY 24	THURSDAY 25	FRIDAY 26	SATURDAY 27
SUNDAY 28	MONDAY 29	TUESDAY 30	WEDNESDAY 31	NOTES		
				J U L Y		

NOTES				THURSDAY 1	FRIDAY 2	SATURDAY 3
AUGUST						
SUNDAY 4	MONDAY 5	TUESDAY 6	WEDNESDAY 7	THURSDAY 8	FRIDAY 9	SATURDAY 10
SUNDAY 11	MONDAY 12	TUESDAY 13	WEDNESDAY 14	THURSDAY 15	FRIDAY 16	SATURDAY 17
SUNDAY 18	MONDAY 19	TUESDAY 20	WEDNESDAY 21	THURSDAY 22	FRIDAY 23	SATURDAY 24
SUNDAY 25	MONDAY 26	TUESDAY 27	WEDNESDAY 28	THURSDAY 29	FRIDAY 30	SATURDAY 31

SUNDAY 1	MONDAY 2	TUESDAY 3	WEDNESDAY 4	THURSDAY 5	FRIDAY 6	SATURDAY 7
SUNDAY 8	MONDAY 9	TUESDAY 10	WEDNESDAY 11	THURSDAY 12	FRIDAY 13	SATURDAY 14
SUNDAY 15	MONDAY 16	TUESDAY 17	WEDNESDAY 18	THURSDAY 19	FRIDAY 20	SATURDAY 21
SUNDAY 22	MONDAY 23	TUESDAY 24	WEDNESDAY 25	THURSDAY 26	FRIDAY 27	SATURDAY 28
SUNDAY 29	MONDAY 30	NOTES				
S E P T E M B E R						

NOTES		TUESDAY 1	WEDNESDAY 2	THURSDAY 3	FRIDAY 4	SATURDAY 5
SUNDAY 6	MONDAY 7	TUESDAY 8	WEDNESDAY 9	THURSDAY 10	FRIDAY 11	SATURDAY 12
SUNDAY 13	MONDAY 14	TUESDAY 15	WEDNESDAY 16	THURSDAY 17	FRIDAY 18	SATURDAY 19
SUNDAY 20	MONDAY 21	TUESDAY 22	WEDNESDAY 23	THURSDAY 24	FRIDAY 25	SATURDAY 26
SUNDAY 27	MONDAY 28	TUESDAY 29	WEDNESDAY 30	THURSDAY 31		
					OCTOBER	

NOTES					FRIDAY 1	SATURDAY 2
NOVEMBER						
SUNDAY 3	MONDAY 4	TUESDAY 5	WEDNESDAY 6	THURSDAY 7	FRIDAY 8	SATURDAY 9
SUNDAY 10	MONDAY 11	TUESDAY 12	WEDNESDAY 13	THURSDAY 14	FRIDAY 15	SATURDAY 16
SUNDAY 17	MONDAY 18	TUESDAY 19	WEDNESDAY 20	THURSDAY 21	FRIDAY 22	SATURDAY 23
SUNDAY 24	MONDAY 25	TUESDAY 26	WEDNESDAY 27	THURSDAY 28	FRIDAY 29	SATURDAY 30

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SUNDAY 22	MONDAY 23	TUESDAY 24	WEDNESDAY 25	THURSDAY 26	FRIDAY 27	SATURDAY 28
SUNDAY 29	MONDAY 30	TUESDAY 31	NOTES			
D E C E M B E R						



NEED A HAND?

THIS PLANNER WILL HELP YOU ORGANIZE YOUR DAYS & DUTIES

The 5.5" x 8.5" *Homemaker's Friend Daily Planner* is divided into the following seven tabbed sections:

WEEKLY LAYOUT

- » Two-page spread with entries for each day
- » Menu planning & to-do list

MONTHLY CALENDAR

- » Two-page month view

YEAR CALENDARS

- » 2017 and 2018 calendars with place for notations

SHOPPING LIST

- » Perforated shopping lists

TASK LIST AND PROJECT & EVENTS SECTIONS

- » Untitled pages for you to customize for your own duties and ideas

INFORMATION

- » Short-term information that is relevant to 2018

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