

15 GREAT KITCHEN TOOLS TO MAKE MEALS MORE MANAGEABLE

Setting aside time to meal prep each week is a super effective way to ensure real food meals all week long. Meal prep is often avoided because it seems like a chore. If you're using the wrong kitchen tools it can be even more daunting. Here are some must-have kitchen tools to make meal prep manageable.

You can find all of these tools on Amazon, and at many kitchen supply stores. Keep your eyes peeled for items at thrift stores and garage sales as well.

1 | Programmable 6-Quart Slow Cooker - A slow cooker is a must-have for getting real food meals together on busy weeknights and activity -filled weekends. Go for the 6-quart size, as it makes enough to feed a crowd *and* yields enough leftovers to enjoy later on.

I prefer a slow cooker with a programmable option because you can set it for a specific amount of time, and then it will automatically switch to "warm" until you get home. Prep slow cooker ingredients ahead of time so you can drop and go during the week.

2 | Hand Blender - A handy alternative to the standard countertop alternative, hand blenders are a must for making creamy soups and sauces at home, without having to transfer hot liquids to a blender. Use it directly in your slow cooker for the smoothest, silkiest soups. Prep and blend a slow cooker recipe during the weekend and have a fully -cooked dinner ready to go!

3 | Sided cookie sheet - Sheet pans are an essential part of any meal prep arsenal. Prep a giant batch of roasted veggies by throwing your favorite chopped veggies on a sheet pan, drizzling on some olive oil, and roasting in the oven until golden brown. Enjoy as a side dish all week, as well as in bowls and salads.

4 | Fine Mesh Stainless Steel Strainers - A set of strainers makes rinsing a breeze. Use them to wash berries, grapes, veggies, and the like so they're ready to go. They're also essential for rinsing whole grains like brown rice and quinoa prior to cooking. Put the rinsed grains to use to cook a big batch and then use in bowls and salads.

5 | Measuring Cups and Spoons - Every kitchen needs these. They come in many many styles.



6 | Wide-Mouth 4, 8, 16 and 32-oz Mason Jars - Mason jars are perfect for pre-prepped meals and snacks because they can go directly in fridge or freezer and the lid screws on tight to avoid drips and leaks in bags and backpacks. Wide mouth and standard are both very useful. Great for storing bulk items like beans, popcorn, oatmeal or nuts.

7 | Glass or Plastic Storage Containers - This set of sealable containers is another great option for storing leftovers and prepped lunches and dinners for the week ahead. The tightly sealing lids help prevent leaks when taken on -the-go.

8 | Stackable Lunch/Bento Box - Pre-pack lunches during meal prep and you can grab -and-go during the week. Bento boxes allow you to divide items in separate containers.

9. | Nut/ Coffee Grinder – Used for grinding flax/ sunflower or pumpkin seeds, walnuts/ almonds or hazelnuts and herbs, as well as blending a nutrient dense, high fiber mixture for soup, yogurt or other dishes. If you grind coffee, use a second one to keep the two separate.

10. | Salad dressing Bottle - the bottle has recipes for eight different salad dressings written right on the glass. Very simple, very versatile!

11. | Herb scissors – These scissors have five parallel blades, and come with a cover to both clean and store the scissors. Great for snipping parsley, basil or other fresh herbs.

12. | Frother – Originally sold for making lattes, a frother can be used to blend salad dressing, gravy, hot chocolate, and many more recipes. A popular item in my kitchen.

13. | Better Can Opener – This amazing can opener cuts a can open so that the top of the can has no sharp edges, and becomes a lid for the can. It can go directly into the refrigerator without needing a separate storage container.

14. | Water Hotter – Also known as an electric tea kettle. This is a fast way to heat water with much less electricity or gas on a stove. If you use it for something other than water, be sure to wash it well before the next cup of tea.

15. | Great grater – A solid metal grater will stay sharp and last longer than ones with plastic on them. Choose one with several different types of cut.

