CourseMints

GUIDE

Smart Nutrition System

Personalized Meal Planning Templates

SELF-PACED PDF COURSE

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Smart Nutrition System

Personalized Meal Planning Templates

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How to Use This System

Most people do not need more nutrition facts. They need a way to get decent meals on the table on a Tuesday night, within their budget, with food they actually like. That is what this system is for. It replaces “eat healthier” with a handful of simple frameworks, a weekly planning routine and a set of templates, all of which you adapt to your own schedule, budget, tastes and household.

There is no calorie counting in this system, no banned foods and no special products. You will learn to build balanced meals by eye, put protein and fiber at the center of each meal, plan a week in about 30 minutes, shop from one list, cook in batches and handle eating out without guilt.

What is in this bundle

Part	What it is	When you use it
The Guide (this book)	12 chapters: the frameworks, how to personalize them, and how to plan, shop and prep	Read once, then return to chapters as needed
The Templates	Printable pages: weekly meal plan, grocery list by aisle, batch-cook planner, pantry list, daily checklist, recipe cards and more	Every week
The Meal Planner spreadsheet	An Excel file (it also opens in Google Sheets and other spreadsheet apps): choose meals from your recipe bank and it builds your grocery list and checks protein, fiber and vegetables for each day	Every week, if you prefer planning on a screen

How the system fits together

1. **The frameworks** (Chapters 1 to 4): the plate method, protein and fiber at every meal, a short daily checklist instead of calorie counting, and meal formulas that let you cook without recipes.
2. **Personalization** (Chapters 5 to 7): you fit the frameworks to your schedule, your budget, and your tastes, diet and household, through a series of guided choices.
3. **The weekly routine** (Chapters 8 to 11): plan, shop, prep, and handle the days that do not go to plan.
4. **Keeping it going** (Chapter 12): a short review, a troubleshooting table and when to get professional advice.

"Personalized" here means that you make the choices. The exercises walk you through them, and the results go onto the "My Nutrition Profile" page in your Templates. It is not a medical diet. If you have a health condition that depends on what you eat, read the caution below.

How to get the most from it

- **Do the exercises in writing.** Your answers in Chapters 5 to 7 are what make the plan yours.
- **Start small.** Plan four dinners in your first week, not twenty-one meals.
- **Use the templates every week** for at least a month. Planning gets faster each time.
- **Judge by the month.** A few takeout nights or a skipped plan do not undo anything.

TIP

About the examples

The people in the example boxes are composites, written to show the system in use. They are not real customers. Nutrient amounts in this guide are approximate and rounded; check product labels for exact values.

CHAPTER 1

The Plate Method

01

The plate method is the simplest balanced-eating tool there is. You do not weigh, count or look anything up. You look at your plate.

Why it works

A plate divided into simple proportions builds in the things most people's meals are short of (vegetables and fiber) and keeps protein and starchy foods in a sensible balance. It works with any cuisine and any budget, it scales to any appetite, and you can use it at home, at work or in a restaurant.

THE SCIENCE

Where the plate comes from

Several respected bodies use a version of the plate. The USDA introduced MyPlate in 2011 to replace the older food pyramid. The Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health publishes a Healthy Eating Plate that emphasizes whole grains, healthy oils and water. The American Diabetes Association teaches a Diabetes Plate Method built on the same proportions. The details differ, but they agree on the core: half the plate vegetables (and fruit), a quarter protein, a quarter starchy food or grains.

The basic plate

Part of the plate	What goes there	Examples
Half	Vegetables, plus some fruit	Salad, roasted vegetables, stir-fried greens, steamed broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, berries

Part of the plate	What goes there	Examples
A quarter	Protein	Chicken, fish, eggs, tofu, beans, lentils, lean meat, Greek yogurt
A quarter	Starchy foods and grains, ideally higher in fiber	Brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, potatoes with skin, whole-grain bread, oats, corn tortillas, quinoa
A little	Fat for cooking and flavor	Olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, cheese, butter
On the side	A drink	Water, sparkling water, unsweetened tea or coffee, milk

Note that potatoes, corn and peas belong in the starchy quarter, not the vegetable half. Beans and lentils can sit in either the protein or the starchy quarter, and they bring fiber wherever they go.

How to build a plate

1. **Start with the vegetable half.** Decide on your vegetables first, not last. Two kinds is easier than it sounds: a bag of salad plus a tray of roasted vegetables, or frozen green beans plus sliced tomatoes.
2. **Add a protein,** about the size and thickness of your palm.
3. **Add a starchy food,** about the size of your cupped hand or fist.
4. **Add a little fat for flavor,** about the size of your thumb: a drizzle of oil, a sprinkle of cheese, a few nuts.
5. **Check the plate.** Is half of it vegetables? If not, add a quick side: a handful of cherry tomatoes, a microwaved bag of frozen vegetables, a few slices of cucumber.

Hand portions, roughly

Your hand is a portable, rough measuring tool. It is not precise, but it tends to scale with body size and it is always with you.

Food	Rough portion per meal
Protein	1 to 2 palms

Food	Rough portion per meal
Vegetables	1 to 2 fists
Starchy foods	1 to 2 cupped hands
Fats	1 to 2 thumbs

Use the lower end if you are smaller or less active, and the higher end if you are larger, very active or still hungry. These are starting points; your appetite is the final judge.

Mixed dishes and other meals

Not every meal comes in neat sections. For mixed dishes, apply the plate to the pot or the bowl:

- **Pasta, curries, stir-fries and casseroles:** bulk them up with vegetables in the pot, add a protein if there is none, and serve a smaller scoop with a side salad or vegetables.
- **Soups and stews:** look for protein (beans, lentils, meat, tofu) and plenty of vegetables; add bread or crackers as the starch.
- **Sandwiches and wraps:** protein inside, salad inside or alongside, and fruit or vegetable sticks on the side.
- **Breakfast:** the plate applies loosely. Aim for a protein (eggs, yogurt, milk, nut butter) plus fruit or vegetables plus a whole grain, for example oatmeal made with milk and topped with berries.

EXAMPLE

Kofi's pasta night

Kofi, 27, lives alone and his default dinner was a big bowl of pasta with jarred sauce. With the plate method he did not give up pasta. He cooked a smaller portion (about a quarter of the plate), added canned white beans and spinach to the sauce, and served it with a bag of salad. It took four extra minutes and the meal kept him full until bedtime instead of sending him to the snack cupboard at 9 pm.

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PLANNER

Smart Nutrition System Templates

Printable Meal Planning Pages

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PART 1

Weekly Pages

1

Print these four pages every week: Weekly Meal Plan, Grocery List by Aisle, Daily Checklist, and Batch-Cook Planner and Freezer Log.

Day types: **F** = Full (45 minutes or more to cook), **S** = Short (about 20 minutes), **M** = Minimal (10 minutes or less: leftovers, freezer or assembly meals), **O** = Out.