

MACHEESMO

- MEALS -

SMART SHORTCUTS

Learning to be a great home cook takes practice and time. One of the hardest things to learn is when (and if) you can cut corners in a recipe. Is it really necessary to do ALL those steps? Can I use a different method or shave some time off?

Over the years, I've learned lots of these tricks and this meal plan has some of my favorite smart shortcuts. By switching an ingredient or using a slightly different method, you can sometimes trim a lot of time and work off a recipe without too much worry. And the meals are still delicious!

Helpful Equipment:

- Baking Dish
- Dutch Oven
- Slow Cooker



You can click on these to zap you to Amazon and see my recommendation for each.

MEAL 1

- Slow Cooker French Dips

MEAL 2

- Chicken Casserole (No Bake)

MEAL 3

- Artichoke Piccata

BREAKFAST!

- Breakfast Sliders

#macheesmomeals: If you make anything in the meal plan, I would love it if you snapped a quick photo and shared it on Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag #macheesmomeals ! Thanks!

MEAL 1 | Slow Cooker French Dips



The slow cooker is a classic shortcut. It makes complicated recipes super easy. The classic french dip sandwich would have to roast for hours and hours while you stood over it, basting and watching. This version can be made while you're at work!

French Dips Sandies

Yield: 4 servings | **Time:** 4 hr.

Ingredients:

2 pounds beef chuck roast
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 tablespoon sriracha chili sauce
1 quart beef stock
2 cups water (optional)
4 large french rolls

Directions:

- 1) Season roast with salt and pepper and add to a slow cooker. Add the sriracha and beef stock. If the liquid doesn't come at least half-way up the beef, add water by the cup until it does.
- 2) Cover slow cooker and cook on high for 3 to 4 hours or overnight (8 to 10 hours) on Low.
- 3) Remove beef and shred. Pour off cooking liquid and add to a medium pot. Bring liquid to a simmer for 25-30 minutes until liquid is reduced by about a third. This will be the dipping sauce.
- 4) Return beef to slow cooker with 1 cup of the cooking liquid and keep warm until serving.
- 5) Slice rolls in half and toast in a 350 degree oven for 6-8 minutes.
- 6) To make a sandwich, pile shredded beef high on half of a French bread loaf. Drizzle with sriracha (optional) and serve with au jus sauce on the side for dipping!





MEAL 2 | No Bake Chicken Noodle Casserole

This is a shortcut that I've been experimenting a bit with lately. Typically, for noodle casseroles like this, you mix them all together and then bake them for like 45 minutes. I'm learning that for some recipes (like this one) you can skip the baking entirely and just serve it with crispy breadcrumbs.

Bowtie Chicken Noodle Toss

Yield: Serves 4 | Time: 40 min.

Ingredients:

2 medium chicken breasts, poached
8 oz. cremini mushrooms, sliced
1/2 white onion, diced
1 carrot, sliced thin
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 sprigs thyme
3 tablespoons olive oil
3 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
4 cups chicken broth
1/2 cup cream or whole milk
Salt and pepper
12 ounces bowtie pasta, cooked
1 cup Panko breadcrumbs
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
Fresh parsley, garnish

Directions:

- 1) For chicken, bring a medium pot of lightly salted water to a simmer. Add chicken breasts, cover, and turn heat down to low. Poach until chicken breasts are just cooked through, 13-15 minutes. Then remove chicken, let cool, and shred.
- 2) In a large pot or Dutch oven, add olive oil over medium heat. Add sliced mushrooms and cook until they are browned around the edges and have released their liquid. Remove mushrooms once they have cooked.
- 3) Add butter to the pot along with onion, carrot, celery, and thyme. Season with salt and pepper and cook until veggies soften, 2-3 minutes. Then whisk in flour and cook for another minute or two.
- 4) Whisk in chicken broth in a slow stream and bring to a light simmer to thicken the mixture. Stir in cream or milk and season with salt and pepper. Fold in cooked mushrooms and shredded chicken. Keep warm over low heat.
- 5) In a small skillet, melt butter over low heat. Add breadcrumbs and stir to combine. Toast until they are lightly browned and crispy.
- 6) Cook pasta according to package. Then drain pasta and toss in with chicken mixture. Stir to combine and let mixture thicken a bit more.
- 7) Serve Pasta mixture in large bowls garnished with crunchy breadcrumbs and fresh parsley.



Veggie Version!

If chicken isn't your thing, double the amount of mushrooms that you cook and use vegetable stock instead of chicken stock. It'll still be a great pasta dinner.



MEAL 3 | Artichoke Lemon Piccata

This is a vegetarian take on a classic Italian dish, chicken piccata. It's faster to make because it skips the chicken frying part, and lighter, but still totally filling enough to make a meal. Most important ingredient? Lemon zest!

Artichoke Piccata

Yield: Serves 4 | **Time:** 30 minutes

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 white onion, diced
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 cup chicken stock
2 tablespoons pesto
1 (14-oz.) can artichokes, drained
1/4 cup capers, drained
1 (15-oz) can white beans, drained
1 lemon, zest and juice
Salt and pepper
12 ounces capellini pasta, cooked
Parmesan cheese, for serving
Fresh parsley, garnish

Baguette, for serving

Directions:

- 1) Bring a large pot of salted water to a simmer for pasta and set it aside for later.
- 2) In a second large skillet or pot, add olive oil and butter over medium heat. Add diced onion and cook until soft, about 2 minutes.
- 3) Add flour to the pot and stir and cook flour for 30 seconds. Then stir in chicken stock and pesto and stir to combine. Turn heat down to medium low.
- 4) Add pasta to boiling water and cook until al dente, probably 2-3 minutes if you're using a thin pasta like capellini. Reserve 2 cups of pasta cooking water and drain pasta.
- 5) Add 1/2 cup of pasta water to pot with sauce and stir. Then stir in artichokes, capers, drained beans, lemon juice, and cooked pasta.
- 6) Stir together and add enough extra pasta water to form a sauce that just coats the pasta.
- 7) Divide pasta between bowls or plates and top with grated Parmesan cheese, lemon zest, and parsley. Serve with toasted baguette!





Breakfast Sliders

These are a really quick way to make a bunch of little breakfast sandwiches. You basically just make a big breakfast casserole and while it bakes you can do a few chores. Then when it's done, slice it up and breakfast is ready!

Denver Breakfast Sliders

Yield: Serves 4 | **Time:** 45 min.

Ingredients:

1 cup diced ham
1 green pepper, diced
1/2 red onion, diced
1 tablespoon olive oil
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
Salt and pepper
1 teaspoon unsalted butter, softened
8 large eggs, scrambled
4 ounces cheddar cheese, grated
9 slider buns, toasted

Directions:

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Dice onion, pepper, and ham. In a large skillet add a drizzle of oil over medium heat. Cook the ham and veggies together for 5-6 minutes until ham is lightly browned and veggies are soft. Season the mix with red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper.
- 2) Lightly butter an 8x8 baking dish. Whisk together eggs and pour eggs into the baking dish. Sprinkle ham mixture over the eggs.
- 3) Bake the eggs at 350 degrees F. for about 20 minutes until they are just set in the middle.
- 4) Sprinkle eggs with cheese and return to oven to melt just (just a minute or two).
- 5) Meanwhile cut slider buns in half and lay out on a baking sheet. Toast for a few minutes.
- 6) When eggs are done, remove from oven and cut into 9 even squares.
- 7) Serve eggs on toasted slider buns!





SHOPPING LIST

This is a full list of all the ingredients used in every meal in this week's plan. I recommend reviewing it for stuff you probably already have on hand before rushing out to the store and buying everything! If items on the list don't have amounts, it is most likely because the recipe uses a very small amount of that ingredient or it is used as a garnish.

Fresh Produce

- Carrot (1)
- Celery (1 stalk)
- Cremini mushrooms (8 oz.)
- Green pepper (1)
- Lemon (1)
- Parsley
- Red onion (1/2)
- Thyme (2 sprigs)
- White onion (1)

Meat, Poultry, Seafood

- Beef chuck roast (2 lb.)
- Chicken breasts (2)
- Ham (1 cup)

Dairy

- Butter, unsalted (7 Tbsp.)
- Cheddar cheese (4 oz.)
- Cream (1/2 cup)
SUB: Whole milk
- Eggs (8)
- Parmesan cheese, garnish

Spices and Pantry Items

- All-purpose flour (1/2 cup)
- Artichokes, in water (1 14oz. can)
- Baguette, for serving with pastas
- Beef stock (1 qt.)
- Black pepper
- Bowtie pasta (12 oz.)
- Capellini pasta (angel hair) (12 oz.)
- Capers (1/4 cup)
- Chicken broth (5 cups)
- French rolls (4)
- Kosher salt
- Olive oil (6 Tbsp.)
- Panko breadcrumbs (1 cup)
- Pesto, store-bought (2 Tbsp.)
- Red pepper flakes (1/2 teas.)
- Slider buns (9)
- Sriracha sauce (1 Tbsp.)
- White beans (1 15 oz. can)