



7

**ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR
SAVING TIME**

in the kitchen

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Introduction

In this guide you'll learn exactly what it takes to become a master at kitchen time management.

Here are the 7 essential tips for anyone wanting to cook, but struggling with making time.

1. Cook in Bulk

Many things can be cooked in bulk quantity and will ultimately save you time. Some of the easiest things to cook or prepare in advance are ingredients such as beans or grains.

Grains aren't as crucial for saving time as beans are, since they generally take less than 30 minutes – during which time you can be working on the other parts of the meal.

Beans on the other hand, need to be soaked 6-18 hours in advance of cooking with them, and should be prepared in a pressure cooker; otherwise they can take hours to cook on the stove in a traditional pot.



If time is super important for you right now, go the convenience route and use canned beans during the week - or on your busy days - and home-cook your beans during off days or the weekend.

Cooking your own beans is preferred because there are no preservatives or chemicals; whereas in a can there are. Whenever possible in cooking, always go with the freshest ingredients – it's the best choice in terms of health.

Finally, a great way to practice cooking in bulk is by increasing the serving size of a recipe. If you're single, cook for 3. If you have a family of 4, cook for 8.

If you don't care for leftovers, use the ingredients you prepared in bulk for a different recipe the next day – this way it doesn't feel like you're having leftovers.

This is a great time-saving tip and isn't hard to remember to make extra grains, vegetables, sauces, etc.

2. Order of Operations

Being strategic in the kitchen is essential to saving time; and always cooking the longest items first is a good habit to have. This way the items that take longer to cook are ready when it's time to sit down for a meal.



Before you start pulling out ingredients and chopping stuff up, first run through all the ingredients and steps in the recipe. Do you have to cook rice or quinoa, roast potatoes, steam vegetables? Maybe it's something as easy as pre-heating the oven before you even start to look through the rest of the recipe.

Perhaps you're making sweet potato fries to go along with the main dish. Because they take 35-40 minutes to bake, you should definitely tackle those first.

Sometimes you've got multiple things that go in the oven at different temps. Simply decide which needs to go first or figure out which would keep warm better or eat at room temperature.

There's nothing worse than getting towards the end of preparing a meal and you forgot about something you should have done 20 minutes ago. Make this simple tip a habit and you'll be a MUCH happier cook!

3. Keep Recipes Simple

At least during peak times in the week, make sure you don't kill yourself with a 6-step recipe when you need to be saving time the most. You might regret even deciding to cook that night – which isn't good – cooking is important work.

Here are 2 simple recipe formulas you can use to make recipes that are highly nutritious, extremely versatile and fast.

Grain Bowl Formula

- 1-2 Cups Grains, cooked. Try quinoa, rice or millet
- Steamed Vegetables. Try onion with either bok choy, brussels sprouts or mushrooms with some tamari or soy sauce

- Sauce – Create a tahini sauce with tahini, lemon juice, chopped parsley, tamari, chopped onion and garlic powder. Or make a hummus to put in the middle of your bowl – hummus can be very simple and just has chickpeas, lemon, tahini, cumin, paprika and salt
- Fresh Veggies on Top – Try sliced tomato or grated carrots/zucchini
- Seeds on Top – a great way to add additional nutrition, add either sesame seeds, sunflower seeds or hemp seeds



Salad & Dressing Formula

Salad Base

- Leafy Greens, chopped. Try alternating between green leaf, red leaf, romaine & spinach
- 2-3 vegetables. Try chopped and quartered cucumbers, diced tomato and sliced onion

- Fruit (optional). It's nice to mix it up and add some fruit to give it different textures and flavors. Avocado, tomato, orange slices, cranberries and persimmons are all excellent
- Seeds & Nuts. Try putting crush walnuts over your salad, or even just sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds

Salad Dressing

Salad dressings can be tricky at first, but to give you an idea of how they're made here is a recipe list. We've noticed that most recipes use only a handful of different ingredients – most of which you can keep on hand.

- Vinegar (balsamic, apple cider vinegar or rice vinegar)
- Oil (though many can simply use water these days)
- Sugar (Sometimes this is maple syrup, but many times it's a juiced orange)
- Sour (lemon or lime juice)
- Salt (Either tamari, Braggs Liquid Aminos or just sea salt)
- Seasonings (Such as dried basil and thyme)
- Dijon Mustard
- Garlic (fresh or dried)
- Ginger (fresh or dried)

The combinations for salad dressings are endless, but I would strongly recommend using our recipes at first.

The key message here is to keep it simple. All of these ingredients are completely interchangeable. Once you start cooking regularly, start to figure out what seasonings you like and customize your dishes.

And lastly, try to memorize the recipes of your favorite ones. When time is tight, it's nice to have a couple you can go to that are good and easy.

4. Kitchen Layout

The layout of your kitchen can make a huge difference in the speed at which you prepare food. Most people cover their counters with decorations, gadgets and equipment. Do yourself a favor and clear them off as much as possible.

At minimum, have 1 area dedicated to chopping vegetables. You'll need to be able to squeeze in a full size cutting board, bowls, fresh ingredients and even an area for waste. Salads require the most counter space to prepare due to the nature of the ingredient sizes.



By clearing off your counters, you'll be able to have multiple stations too – thus allowing you to multi-task on different projects. Once you make these changes you will achieve high efficiency in the kitchen.

One more note on kitchen layout. Only have gadgets and things on your counter that you regularly use. If you don't use it...get rid of it.

5. Prepare Things in Advance

There are compelling reasons for you to prepare food in advance whether you work from home or go to the office every day.

If you work from home, it's tempting to only make something when you want it. The downside to this is you could already be eating it by the time you've pulled out the ingredients to make it.



We covered this a bit in Tip #1: Cooking in Bulk.

Sometimes you don't necessarily need to 'cook' it in advance though. You can simply prep for it, so you can just throw it all together when the time comes. Here are two classic examples of this:

- Salad – Preparing the salad base and having the dressing separate in a baggy or container – this way the salad doesn't get mushy.
- Oatmeal – You can have the oats portioned out so you just have to add liquid, with the toppings in a separate container and ready to pour into the oatmeal. This saves time in the morning and even some mental energy too.

6. Take Care of Your Kitchen

If you really want to save time in the kitchen, here are 2 more ideas for making that possible.

1 – *Keep basic ingredients stocked*

As you begin cooking, you'll begin to notice what spices you prefer and what ingredients you need on a regular basis. By always having them on hand, nothing can stop you!



2 – *Always keep dishes clean*

As soon as you're finished with dinner, tackle the dishes.

Or if you don't wash your dishes every night, at least keep them rinsed. There's nothing worse than reaching for that pan from last night that still has food caked on it.

If nothing else, soak it! You'll be so glad you did.

7. Shift Your Priorities

The best time saver of all is shifting your mindset towards your food. If you can fully embrace cooking you will become faster, more creative and start enjoying the process a bit more.



Whether you're trying to eat healthier or save money, spending more time in the kitchen *is* the solution. If you want to spend more time in the kitchen, but can't seem to justify it, try thinking about it as an investment. The minutes and hours spent on preparing your meals every week pays off in your health and wellness.

We promise, once you start cooking more often, you'll begin to notice restaurant and convenience foods just don't match up to your own cooking. That's simply because you know your tastes better than others do. (And most likely, you're using fresher and higher quality ingredients)

When you cook at home, you're also using foods that are fresh, nutritious and preservative/chemical free.

Happy Cooking

Thanks for checking out our 7 Essential Time-Saving Kitchen Tips!

We look forward to hearing more about your journey to true, sustainable health.

We would love to hear some of your tips for saving time in the kitchen. Join our [Facebook Group Here >>](#)

Happy Cooking!

Sarah & Peter

The Seasonal Diet