

Parent Guide



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We're excited to share this activity with you. If you are interested in finding more engaging, fun and interesting activities for you and your children, then check out these links to different areas of the [Twinkl Parents](#) website.

games



crafts



puzzles



experiments



word searches



Our Parenting on a Budget: Food Planning resource contains lots of helpful tips on how to make meals on a budget, how to avoid food waste and two weekly food plans with helpful shopping lists to make meal planning so much easier.

What skills does this practise?

Food Preparation

Organisation

Healthy Eating

Further Activity Ideas and Suggestions

Take a look at some of our more affordable and healthy meal recipes, for instance, [Turkey and Pepper Fajitas](#), [Spaghetti Bolognese](#) or our [Courgette Pasta Bake](#) recipe.

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Food Planning

Why plan your meals?

- Planning for the week means you are less likely to get tempted by supermarket offers.
- Having a food plan means you only buy exactly what you need.
- Writing a weekly plan helps you stick to a budget.
- Knowing what you are having for dinner that week takes away the stress of quickly trying to rustle up a meal in the evening.
- Food planning helps with variety. Sitting down and planning what you are going to eat could make weekly meals more interesting. Try a new recipe each week, rather than sticking to old favourites.
- Only one trip to the supermarket! No more picking up food during the week or risking going over your weekly food budget.

Tips for making meals on a budget:

- Have herbs and spices in the cupboard and the necessary essentials, such as pasta and rice. It may be a bit of an investment at first, but then you have them for months.
- To make meals go further, add beans and pulses, for instance chickpeas and lentils or just add more chopped veggies.
- Try switching to own-brand or value ranges, you may be pleasantly surprised. Canned tomatoes, lentils, chickpeas and beans will keep the cost down, without a difference in taste. Also, try bulk buying long life foods, like pasta and rice.
- Try batch cooking for the week. This not only saves time, but also cuts costs on your energy bill. It's also super handy to have some meals ready in the freezer that you can just pop in the oven or microwave.
- Cut down on the meat you buy. Meat is one of the most expensive ingredients, so try to make it last a little longer by adding more vegetables or beans and pulses. You could even try meat alternatives.
- Try cheaper cuts of meat, for example chicken thighs or drumsticks are cheaper than chicken breast. Instead of chicken, you could try turkey - it cooks the same, but can be slightly cheaper. Instead of using beef mince in your meatballs, try pork mince. It's more affordable, plus it's a delicious alternative.
- Try frozen fruit and vegetables. Frozen berries taste great in a smoothie or scattered on top of some porridge.
- Buy ready-chopped garlic and ginger in tubs or jars, rather than buying fresh each week.
- If you have any vegetables that are about to go off, cut them up and put them in the freezer. You can roast vegetables straight from frozen or add them to sauces.
- Before you plan your weekly meals, take a look at what you already have in the cupboard. Organise your meals around what needs to be used up in the cupboards, fridge or freezer. You don't have to buy everything each week - you'll be surprised at what you already have.

Shopping List - Week 1

We have compared our list with a popular supermarket chain and the cost of this week's shopping was approximately £60 - 65 for a family of four. Your shopping costs could be higher or lower, depending on your chosen supermarket, any special offers and deals, if you already had some of the cupboard staples and if you chose own-brand products.

- 4 salmon fillets (fresh or frozen)
- 500g beef mince
- 500g chicken breast
- 400g thin-cut steak
- 200g frozen prawns
- 350g smoked bacon
- 12 pack of chipolata sausages
- Tinned tuna (4 pack)
- 1 pack of sliced ham
- 1 pack of sliced cooked chicken
- 2 dozen eggs
- Cheddar cheese
- 100g parmesan cheese
- Halloumi (225g)
- 500g Greek yoghurt
- 8 pack of wholemeal wraps
- 2 loaves of wholemeal bread
- 4 pack of ciabatta rolls
- 4 pack of wholemeal rolls
- Crackers
- 4 pack of English muffins
- 400g tin of chopped tomatoes
- 400g tin of chickpeas
- 198g tin of sweetcorn
- 4 pack of baked beans in a tin
- 500g red lentils
- 190ml jar of hoisin sauce
- 190g jar of green pesto
- Jar of olives
- 4 baking potatoes
- 750g sweet potato
- Maris piper potatoes (2.5kg)
- Bag of frozen peas
- 500g carrots
- 320g pack of stir fry vegetables
- 1 lettuce
- 1 cucumber
- 6 pack of salad tomatoes
- 3 peppers
- 3 onions
- 300g leeks (2 medium size)
- 240g green beans
- 1 pack of garlic (3)
- 50g root ginger
- 1 fresh chilli (optional)
- 350g frozen mixed berries
- 3 lemons
- 2 large bananas
- 400g grapes
- 500g linguine
- 500g spaghetti
- 500g penne pasta
- 500g basmati rice

Herbs, Spices and Sauces List

- Soy sauce
- Mayonnaise
- Plain flour
- Milk
- Vegetable oil
- Olive oil
- Chilli flakes
- Ground cumin
- Mixed herbs
- Turmeric
- Salt and pepper
- Honey
- Baking powder
- Vanilla extract
- Chicken stock cubes
- Beef stock cubes
- Muesli/cereal
- Porridge oats

Weekly Meal Plan

Breakfast

Monday

Quick Scrambled Eggs: Serve your scrambled eggs on wholemeal toast.

Chicken Salad: Serve pieces with mixed pepper. Fill with chicken filling.

Tuesday

Overnight Oats: The night before serving, mix 50g of rolled oats with 100ml of water or milk. The next day, top your oats with yoghurt, mixed berries and honey for a really quick and easy breakfast.

Carrot and Coriander Soup: Cook with 450g of sliced carrots for 4 minutes. Stir in coriander for 1 minute. Next add chicken stock to boil. Let it simmer until soft and then blitz.

Wednesday

Beans on Toast: For an easy and hearty breakfast, try beans on toast.

Jacket Potatoes: Bake in the oven and top with a mix of tuna and mixed peppers. Serve with a squeeze of lemon.

Thursday

Porridge and Mixed Berries: Allow your frozen berries to thaw and scatter them on top of warm porridge.

Cold Pesto Pasta: Cook pasta and leave to cool. Stir in pesto and add your choice of vegetables like chicken, cooked and drained. Give it a good mix, pop in the fridge.

Friday

Muesli or Cereal: Add a side of sliced apple or grapes.

Lentil Soup: Heat oil and cook onions, leeks and bring to a boil until the lentils have softened.

Saturday

Banana Pancakes: Mash up 2 bananas and stir in 4 beaten eggs and a pinch of baking powder. Spoon the batter into a frying pan and cook for 1 - 2 minutes on each side. Serve with honey, yoghurt and left over fruit from the week.

BLT Roll-ups: Roll up these sliced meats and vegetables.

Sunday

Chipolata Sausage and Egg Muffins: Slice English muffins in half, add cooked sausages and a fried egg. You could add a slice of cheese and your choice of sauce.

Cheesy Quesadillas: Cook in a hot pan with mixed pepper softened in oil. Place on a tortilla wrap, cut in half and cook.

Plan - Week 1

Lunch

Mad Sandwiches: Mix cooked chicken with mayonnaise or yoghurt and some salt and pepper. Toast two slices of wholemeal bread with your grill and add lettuce and sliced cucumber.

Onion Soup: In a pan, cook 1 sliced onion and 2 sliced carrots in 1 tbsp of vegetable oil for 3 - 5 minutes. Add 1 tsp of ground coriander and cook for 1 minute. Add 2 pints of vegetable stock and bring to the boil. Simmer for 10 - 15 minutes until the vegetables are soft. Blitz your soup with a hand blender until smooth.

Potatoes with Tuna: Cook your baked potatoes in the oven. Prepare your tuna topping using a tin or two of tuna, mixing it with mayonnaise and some salt and pepper. Serve with a side of lettuce and cucumber.

Pasta Salad: Cook pasta al dente, drain and stir in some pesto. Stir in some mayonnaise or Greek yoghurt and some sliced vegetables and protein. You could add egg, ham, and cooled peas or green beans. Pop it into a container and chill until ready to eat.

Vegetable Soup: Heat 2 litres of vegetable stock in a pan with 100g of butter. Add 6 finely chopped carrots, 2 sliced onions and 1 sliced leek. Bring to the boil. Simmer for 45 - 60 minutes until the vegetables have broken down.

Bacon Rolls: Cook slices of bacon and add to wholemeal rolls with lettuce, tomatoes and mayonnaise.

Chilli Fajitas: Chop up a yellow pepper and add to a pan with a tin of sweet corn. Cook until the peppers are slightly soft and put aside. Add the vegetables to a tortilla wrap and add a layer of grated cheese. Fold in half and cook each side in a pan and cut up in wedges.

Dinner



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Sweet Potato and Chickpea Curry: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Hoisin Salmon with Noodles: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Spaghetti Carbonara: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Lemon Chicken and Halloumi Tray Bake: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Steak Ciabattas with Sweet Potato Wedges: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Lemon and Garlic Prawn Linguine: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Cottage Pie: Cook up a delicious cottage pie using beef mince, onions, beef stock, chopped carrots and peas. Serve with a side of green beans.



Sweet Potato and Chickpea Curry

Week 1

Cook 1 finely sliced onion and then add 2 crushed garlic cloves, 50g grated root ginger, 1 tsp cumin and 1 tsp chilli flakes to the pan and mix. Then add one 400g tin of chickpeas, 750g of chopped sweet potato and one 400g tin of chopped tomatoes and combine. Add enough water to cover the sweet potatoes and simmer over a low heat for 25 - 30 minutes. Serve with 200g of basmati rice.

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Hoisin Salmon with Noodles

Week 1

Brush 1 tbsp of hoisin sauce across your salmon fillets and pop them under the grill for 8 - 10 minutes. Cook your noodles according to the pack instructions. Using a packet of stir fry vegetables, add this to a pan and stir-fry with 2 crushed garlic cloves. Then, add 1 tbsp of hoisin sauce, 3 tbsp of light soy sauce and the cooked noodles and stir-fry for another minute. Serve the noodles and vegetables with a salmon fillet on top (you can use fresh or frozen salmon fillets).

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Spaghetti Carbonara

Week 1

In a bowl, beat 5 egg yolks with 25g of grated parmesan cheese. Cook 130g of chopped bacon in a pan while cooking 350g of spaghetti in a pan filled with water. Add the cooked pasta to your bacon, reserving some of the cooking water. Remove from the heat and add the beaten egg yolks, 50g of grated parmesan and a few tbsp of pasta water. Mix well and season.

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Lemon Chicken and Halloumi Tray Bake

Week 1

In a bowl mix 3 cloves of crushed garlic, 1 tsp of turmeric, 1 tsp mixed herbs, 1 tsp of cumin, the juice and zest of 1 lemon and add 4 chicken breasts to the mixture. Make sure the chicken is well coated and add the chicken to a baking tray. In the same baking tray, add 1 sliced onion, a handful of olives, 200g of sliced halloumi and slices of lemon. Bake in an oven until the chicken is cooked through and add to basmati rice.

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Steak Ciabattas with Sweet Potato Wedges

Week 1

Toast your ciabattas and add mayonnaise and lettuce. Cook your steak to your preference and add to your ciabattas. Fry onions and peppers in a pan with some Cajun spice and add to your ciabattas. To make Cajun wedges, slice potatoes into wedges and boil for 8 minutes. Then add them to a baking tray. Sprinkle Cajun seasoning onto your wedges and brush with oil, then bake for 40 minutes at 180°C.

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Lemon and Garlic Prawn Linguine

Week 1

Defrost a bag of prawns the night before or add them to a bowl of cold water. In a bowl, mix 6 cloves of crushed garlic, the juice and zest of a lemon, 1 fresh chilli chopped (omit if cooking for young children), olive oil, salt and pepper and your defrosted prawns. Let the prawns marinate for at least an hour. Fry the mixture in a pan and add 6 cherry tomatoes. Cook for 5 minutes or until the prawns are cooked through. Cook your linguine and add to the prawn mixture.

Shopping List - Week 2

If you decide you would like to plan your meals two weeks in advance, this could also save you money. Have a look at what you already have in the cupboard left over from the previous week and plan your meals accordingly.

Buying in bulk can also save you money. Instead of buying 500g of chicken breast, buy 1kg and put half in the freezer. The same with pasta or spaghetti, as it is dried, it will last in the cupboard, so buy 1kg instead of 500g.

Week by week your cupboard staples will increase too. You will soon have a range of herbs, sauces and spices that will enhance any meal.

- 4 reduced fat beef burgers
- 500g pork mince
- 500g chicken breast
- 4 frozen salmon fillets
- 10 veggie sausages
- 350g pack of smoked bacon
- 200g feta
- Cheddar cheese
- 125g mozzarella
- 160g brie
- 300ml double cream
- 12 eggs
- 320g puff pastry
- Pita bread (pack of 6)
- 2 loaves of wholemeal bread
- 4 wholemeal rolls or ciabattas
- 8 pack of wholemeal wraps
- 5 bananas
- 227g strawberries
- 6 pack of apples
- 1 lime
- 750g sweet potato
- 500g baby potatoes
- Bag of mixed peppers
- 1 lettuce
- Mixed leaf salad 200g
- 2 butternut squash
- 1 aubergine
- 440g cherry tomatoes
- 400g mushrooms
- 300g spinach
- 3 red onions
- 3 brown onions
- 500g carrots
- 1 leek
- 300g jar of salsa
- 200g hummus
- 200g vegan falafel
- Dried couscous (100g packets of flavoured couscous)
- Tomato purée
- 400g tin tomatoes
- 500g tomato passata
- 2 x 198g tin sweetcorn
- 500g tinned new potatoes

Herbs, Spices and Sauces List

- Spaghetti
- Fusilli pasta
- Linguine
- Basmati rice
- Lentils
- Milk
- Butter
- Plain flour
- Cajun seasoning
- Medium curry powder
- Dried oregano
- Ground cinnamon
- Ground cumin
- Smoked paprika
- Balsamic vinegar
- Olive oil
- Vegetable oil
- Museli/cereal
- Baked beans
- Vegetable stock
- Honey
- Mayonnaise
- Mustard
- Ginger
- Tinned tuna
- Jar of pesto
- Jar of olives
- Jar of roasted red peppers
- Garlic
- Frozen peas

Breakfast

Monday

Muesli or Cereal: Add a side of sliced apple and strawberries.

Chicken Slices: Cook chicken slices with sliced mushrooms and black pepper. Fill with chicken filling.

Tuesday

Breakfast Omelette: You could add sliced mushrooms, chopped pepper and diced onions to fill out your morning omelettes.

Mezze: You could add sliced ham, cheese, apple, and sliced mushrooms.

Wednesday

Apple Porridge: Halfway through cooking your porridge, add diced apples and continue to cook until the apples are tender.

Jacket Potatoes: Bake in the oven until the potatoes are tender and serve with your favorite toppings.

Thursday

Peanut Butter and Banana on Toast: On wholemeal or granary bread, spread peanut butter and top with sliced banana. You could even add a sprinkle of cinnamon.

Vegetable Curry: Follow the instructions on the packet for the red peppers and stir through the vegetables.

Friday

Dippy Eggs with Soldiers: Serve with wholemeal bread soldiers.

Cheese and Veggie Sandwiches: Leftover vegetables work well with cheese and cheddar.

Saturday

Breakfast Hash: Fry drained, sliced canned new potatoes and chopped bacon, mushrooms and onion. Serve with baked beans.

Falafel and Pita: Bake falafel in an oven and toast the pita with roasted red peppers, olives and hummus.

Sunday

French Toast Kebabs: In a bowl mix 2 eggs with 1 cup of milk and 1 tsp of ground cinnamon. Dip cubed pieces of bread into the mixture and cook the bread in a pan with some melted butter until golden brown. Skewer the French toast cubes, strawberries, apples and bananas and serve with some honey or syrup.

Puff Pastry Pies: Fill puff pastry, cut into squares and cook with baking paper. Top with tomato paste, your choice of vegetables like spinach, peppers, mushrooms, and onions.

Plan - Week 2

Lunch

Salad Sandwiches: Mix cooked chicken with mayonnaise or yoghurt and some salt and fill two slices of wholemeal bread with your filling and add lettuce and sliced cucumber.

Cheese Board: Fill a plate or board with slices of ham, crackers, slices of cheese, chopped tomatoes, carrots, olives and grapes.

Baked Potatoes with Beans: Bake your potatoes in the oven and simmer the beans in a pan until they are hot. Fill the potato with the beans and serve with lettuce and cherry tomatoes.

Couscous: Cook your couscous according to the instructions on the packet, chop up some roasted vegetables from a jar, cucumber, cherry tomatoes and mix with your couscous. You could even roast some chicken and add some feta cheese.

Vegetable and Mushroom Toasties: You can put any vegetables into toasties, but sliced mushrooms with melted cheese. Use wholemeal bread and cheddar cheese for a quick and tasty lunch.

Chicken and Hummus Pita: Cook your falafel in a pan according to the pack's instructions and serve with the pita bread. Fill with falafel, hummus, sliced red peppers from a jar, salad leaves, and crumbled up feta.

Pizzas: Preheat the oven to 180°C. Unroll the puff pastry into 6 squares and place onto two baking trays lined with parchment. Score a 1cm border around each pastry and cook for 15 minutes. Once cooked, spread the base with tomato purée, sprinkle with 75g of mozzarella and add your choice of vegetables (sweetcorn, red onion, tomatoes, mushrooms or olives). Bake for another 5 - 10 minutes.

Dinner

Chicken Fajitas: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Tuna Pasta Bake: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Veggie Sausage and Mediterranean Vegetables: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Pork Mince Meatballs and Spaghetti: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Salmon, Leek and Potato Traybake: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Lentil, Spinach and Roasted Squash Curry: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.

Brie Burgers with Sweet Potato Fries: For this recipe, please see our recipe cards below.



Chicken Fajitas

Week 2

Mix 1 tsp of smoked paprika, 1 tsp ground coriander, a pinch of ground cumin, 2 crushed garlic cloves, 4 tbsp of olive oil and the juice of one lime in a bowl. Add to the marinade, 500g of finely sliced chicken breasts, 1 sliced onion and 1 sliced red pepper. Cook the mixture in a hot pan until the chicken is cooked. Plate the chicken up, heat up a pack of 8 tortilla wraps and serve with a bag of fresh mixed salad and a jar of salsa.

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Tuna Pasta Bake

Week 2

Cook your pasta following the pack's instructions and add 100g frozen peas during the last 3 minutes of cooking time. Meanwhile, melt 50g butter in a pan and add 50g plain flour and cook for 2 minutes. Whisk in 600ml milk until the sauce thickens. Remove from the heat and add 1 tsp Dijon mustard (optional) and season well. Drain the pasta and peas and add to the pan along with 2 tins of tuna and 1 can of sweetcorn. Mix well and tip into a shallow baking dish, top with 100g grated cheese and cook under the grill for 5 minutes.

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Veggie Sausage and Mediterranean Vegetables

Week 2

Preheat the oven to 180°C. In a large roasting tin add 1 sliced red onion, 1 deseeded and chopped butternut squash, 1 aubergine cut into chunks and 1 tsp of dried oregano. Drizzle over olive oil and roast for 15 minutes. Next, add your sausages and cook for a further 30 minutes. Finally, give everything a stir and add 150g of cherry tomatoes and 2 tbsp of balsamic vinegar and roast for a further 10 minutes before serving. **Top tip:** you can also buy bags of ready-chopped butternut squash and sweet potato, if you would prefer!

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Pork Mince Meatballs and Spaghetti

Week 2



Instead of making traditional beef meatballs, try this lighter pork version. Put 500g of pork mince in a bowl with 1 egg, 1 diced onion, 1 tsp garlic powder, 1 tsp dried oregano and salt and pepper. Mix the ingredients together with your hands and make as many meatballs as the mixture allows. Put the meatballs in a large pan to cook on the hob, turn them over once one side is cooked. Meanwhile, make a tomato sauce with 500g of tomato passata, 2 tbsp of tomato puree, chopped peppers, a sprinkle of oregano and salt and pepper. Add your sauce to the pan filled with meatballs, stir, cover and allow to simmer until the meat is cooked through. Serve with spaghetti.

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Salmon, Leek and Potato Traybake

Week 2



Preheat the oven to 180°C. Slice 500g of baby potatoes and boil for 8 minutes. Add the potatoes to a baking tray and toss with olive oil. Cook for 20 minutes, meanwhile add 1 chopped leek to a pan and fry for 5 minutes. Add 2 crushed garlic cloves, 140ml double cream and 150ml of hot water, then bring to the boil. Pour the creamy mixture over the potatoes, then sit the salmon fillets on top, grill for 7 - 8 minutes. Serve with a side salad.

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Lentil, Spinach and Roasted Squash Curry

Week 2



Put 150g of red lentils in a bowl of cold water and set aside. Chop up a butternut squash and roast it in the oven with some oil. Cook 1 diced onion with 3 crushed garlic cloves and 1 tbsp of grated ginger. Fry for 8 minutes. Then stir in 1 tbsp of curry powder, 1 tin of chopped tomatoes and season with pepper. Drain the lentils and add to the pan along with 500ml of vegetable stock, simmer for 20 minutes (add more water if needed). Stir in the spinach and roasted butternut squash and cook for another 3 - 4 minutes. Serve with basmati rice.



Brie Burgers with Sweet Potato Fries

Week 2

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Cut up your sweet potato fries and lay them on a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Drizzle with oil and a sprinkle of salt. Bake for 15 - 20 minutes or until golden and crisp. Meanwhile, cook your reduced fat burgers under the grill or in a frying pan. For the last few minutes of cooking, add slices of brie. Serve your burgers on rolls or ciabattas with slices of tomato, lettuce, mustard and mayonnaise. You could even add a slice of cooked bacon. Serve your burgers with the sweet potato fries.

These recipes may involve the use of knives, hot water and kitchen appliances. It is your responsibility to assess risks and ensure the activity is safe for those participating. We will not be held responsible for the health and safety of those participating and cannot accept any liability. It is your responsibility to ensure you are fully aware of the allergies and health conditions of anyone making or consuming these products. Children should be carefully supervised by a responsible adult at all times, especially when using any sharp items such as knives or graters or when near a heat source. It is the responsibility of supervising adults to ensure the safety of children in their care.