



READING

LET'S START THE SUNDAY COOK UP

CUT THE FRUIT OF LIFE

To make sure all family members eat plenty of fruit, wash and cut some fruit in advance (in bite size pieces) and pack in containers with today's date and pop the containers in the fridge.

Good fruits for this process are things like watermelon, pineapple, rockmelon, strawberries, grapes etc.

Once you have done this, you will find it handy for things like packed lunches, adding to cereal for breakfast and just for a quick and easy snack. Some whole fruits such as whole apples, pears and bananas can simply be placed in the fruit bowl.

ALWAYS AIM TO REPLENISH THE FRUIT BAR DURING THE WEEK AS IT RUNS OUT.

PREPARE THE SALAD BAR

Wash, slice and cook different salad items for sandwiches and salads for both lunchtime and dinnertime meals for the first part of the week. Wash and slice foods such as lettuce, capsicum, tomato and cucumber etc.

Then slice and roast foods like pumpkin and zucchini. Once cooked, place on a wire rack to chill.

Other ingredients that also can be prepped ahead for the next few days are sliced olives, diced feta, grated parmesan, picked herbs etc. You might also make a salad dressing in a jar, ready to go for the week ahead.

As you place the prepped salad bar items in suitable sized containers, date these containers and place them in the fridge.

By always having a good size salad bar ready in containers, just like the cut fruit, we are making it easier to create healthy sandwiches and salads for lunch and dinner. We are also putting a little bit of pressure on ourselves to eat more fruit, salads and vegetables, which fill us up and are vital for good health.

During the week, once an item has been used up, aim to replenish it that same day.

Keep a shopping list on the go on the kitchen bench, so you can add to it with anything that you are running low on throughout the week.



Now that the kitchen bench is tidy again, from getting all the fruit and salad ingredients away, you can start to prepare dinner.

Because you are spending a big amount of time in the kitchen on this prep day, aim to cook a meal that will last for two days. By putting in some extra effort into your cooking and prep on this day, you will be so far ahead that Monday is virtually a day off for both parents from the kitchen.

Your fruit salad and salad bar are both prepared. Only having to reheat leftovers on the Monday means both parents can relax a little more than usual when dinner time arrives.

So the Sunday and Monday evening meal should be a bulk meal such as a casserole dish, baked pasta dish, roast with vegies, stir fry noodles or another dish that can easily be reheated. Timing and keeping busy in the kitchen is important as then the job ahead does not seem to drag on.

Attack the recipe and quickly peel and dice the vegetables (for this example, we're using a casserole dish). Get a large pot on the stove and seal the meat that has been marinating overnight in the fridge. Remove from the pot once brown.

Add the peeled and diced vegetables and garlic with whatever spices into the pot, as well as herbs and other flavoursome ingredients the recipe requires. Add the sealed brown beef back in the pot with the vegetables with stock, water, tinned tomatoes etc. The casserole dish is then left to simmer.

It's then time to cook the carbohydrates such as potatoes, pasta or rice. Extra vegetables to serve on the side can also be washed, cut and placed in a container ready to steam/boil for a couple of minutes just before serving the meal. By the time you have finished prepping your vegetables, your casserole dish will almost be finished.

Once the sauce is thickened and seasoned, the finished casserole dish should be placed in containers and then set on the kitchen table to cool off before placing in the fridge, do the same with the carbohydrates if you also have cooked these ahead of time. Dinner for Sunday and Monday night is now sorted, as is fruit and salad prep for the beginning of the week for lunches and the rest. It's time to wash all the pots and pans and fill the dishwasher with dirty utensils.

Now, come dinner time, all you have to do is reheat your meal, cook the pre prepped vegetables, and you are done.

If you have the energy and we suggest you do, also think about Tuesday's meal while you are on the job. Chances are, the vegetables you are chopping up during the Sunday meal prep are similar to the ones you will need later in the week – so plan ahead and cut a little extra and store in the fridge.

By always thinking ahead and setting yourself up for success, you are now working like a professional team of chefs. Make the future easier for both of you when working in your kitchen and never stop doing small prep tasks every day.

This prep is the key to reducing the frustration that you might feel, always starting from scratch when cooking dinner. By having these small tasks done ahead of time makes it just that little bit easier.





PACKED LUNCHES FOREVER (FOR MUM AND DAD TOO)

Some parents like to make packed lunches for the children and themselves the night before, some like to make these in the morning fresh. Either way, make sure they are full of healthy foods. Save your money and your health and start to use your now established salad and fruit bar. Make your own lunch every day before going to work. The stay at home parent should also use the salad and fruit bar, remembering to continuously replenish containers as they empty, this is one of the keys to great family health.

