

Easy Cooking Methods

Supports: Building Block 7 — Food: Satisfaction, Seasoning & Preparation

Why It Matters

Cooking at home does not have to be complicated to be nourishing and satisfying. A handful of simple methods can carry you through the week with meals that come together fast and let you use up what you have. The goal is not fancy technique — it is finding a few approaches that fit your life and feel doable. Pick one that sounds appealing and let the rest wait until you are ready.

What to Know

A handful of easy methods

Each of these lets you cook once and enjoy the results for days. Try whichever one fits your week and your equipment.

- Slow cooker: set it and forget it for soups, whole chickens, roasts, oatmeal, or homemade applesauce.
- Grilling: foil packets and kabobs make quick work of fish, chicken, and colorful vegetables.
- Grain bowls: layer a whole grain, a protein, vegetables or fruit, and a simple sauce for a whole meal in one bowl.
- Jar salads: build a portable salad with dressing on the bottom and greens on top so it stays fresh for a day or two.
- Green smoothies: blend fruit, spinach, a liquid, and a source of fat for an easy, drinkable meal or snack.

Cook a batch of whole grains

Cooking a pot of a whole grain like quinoa, brown rice, or barley gives you a ready base all week. Quinoa, for example, cooks with equal parts grain and liquid: rinse it well, bring the liquid to a boil, add the quinoa, then cover and simmer about 15 minutes and let it rest before fluffing. Store it covered in the fridge and add it to bowls, salads, stir-fries, or even a warm breakfast.

Ease into it — progress, not perfection. You do not have to overhaul everything at once. Start with half regular and half whole-grain or bean-based pasta, try spaghetti squash or zucchini noodles when you are ready, and let small changes add up over time.

Cooking with your household

Other people's tastes matter too, so bring the family along at their pace. Build-your-own bowls, jars, and smoothies let everyone customize; you can also cook one base and let each person top it their way, and blend new foods in gradually rather than all at once.

Try This

Pick one method that sounds appealing and imagine trying it this week. For full recipes, see Appendix C (A Year in the Kitchen) and the Meal Plan & Recipe Collection.

- ? Which of these easy methods feels most doable for you right now?
- ? What is one whole grain you could batch-cook to use across several meals?
- ? How could you invite others in your household to help build or customize a meal?