

# lesson 1 the easy meal planning process

## WELCOME!

Welcome to *Easy Meal Planning* – your recipe for dinner success with less stress! I'm thrilled you're joining me for this workshop. You are about to simplify a really important task, one you do every single day: getting dinner on the table for you and your family. I've been planning weekly meals for my family since my kids were young. When my kids came along, I realized the wing-it-and-hope-for-the-best-and-if-the-worst-happens-call-for-carryout system was no longer working. Back then, I commuted almost an hour to and from work. Even if I did get home by 5:30 or 6 p.m., spending time with my toddler and baby were my first priorities. And often, *their* priority was eating dinner after a long day at daycare.



My meal planning goals have always been simple:

1. Eat together with my family.
2. Prepare simple, healthy meals.
3. Enjoy the evening with my family instead of stressing about dinner or spending hours in the kitchen slaving over a hot stove.

Flexibility and minimal food waste also became important to me along the way.

Maybe you can relate to this story, or maybe what you're living today is something completely different. But since you're here in this workshop, my guess is that something about your approach to getting dinner on the table isn't working ideally. Regardless of your starting point, you will enjoy many benefits by adopting a proactive approach to meal planning. The main goal of this workshop is to teach you a simple, customized approach to planning your menus, so you know what's for dinner ahead of time and can stop stressing out about getting food on the table. But that's just scratching the surface! More on that in a bit, but first, let me give you a quick overview of what's ahead.



## Workshop Overview

Whether you love cooking or prefer to spend as little time as possible in the kitchen, whether you're cooking for one or many, whether you are cooking for adventurous eaters or picky ones, and whether your kids are toddlers or teens, this workshop will help you simplify every aspect of meal planning!

Get excited to learn how to:

- \* Design and implement a personalized approach to getting dinner on the table that will take into account your goals, cooking preferences and schedule.
- \* Create a flexible, adaptable meal plan that fits your lifestyle. (You won't be tied to eating or preparing foods you aren't in the mood for.)
- \* Overcome your obstacles to planning dinner ahead of time.
- \* Prioritize your goals and step-up your approach to meal planning, so you enjoy more of the many benefits of meal planning.
- \* Learn a do-it-yourself approach to meal planning as well as alternatives for delegating the planning process (and even meal prep!).
- \* Successfully change your approach to planning menus (even if you have tried before and weren't happy with the results.)

In this workshop, you'll focus in on clarifying your goals and developing an effective system that works great for you and your lifestyle.

With all this talk about what you're going to get out of this workshop, I can't wait to get started – I hope you are equally excited! Let's do it!



## CLARIFY YOUR MEAL PLANNING GOALS

### The Benefits of Meal Planning

As I mentioned earlier, my main goal in putting together this workshop is to show you a simple, customized approach to planning what to make for dinner, so dinner time becomes a stress-free and enjoyable experience for you and your family. But what do *you* want out of meal planning? What are you hoping to learn and put into place in your home? Here are some of the other benefits you can realize when you plan your meals ahead of time.

Which of these benefits appeal to you most? Put a star next to them or circle them. Jot down your own ideas in the space below.



You will...

...spend less time making last-minute trips to the store and spend more time enjoying dinner with your family.

...make it easier (and more possible) for other people to pitch in and help with meal prep. Not only will this save you time, but you'll also have the opportunity to teach your kids cooking skills or simply enjoy the company of cooking alongside friends and loved ones.

...eliminate the stress from your food prep "recipe."

...save time by shopping less often and by avoiding peak shopping times (when the users of the wing-it-and-hope-for-the-best-and-if-the-worst-happens-stop-by-the-store-for-something-frozen system are racing through the aisles). Plus, fewer trips to the store means fewer impulse purchases, which can help you save money and stick to healthier eating habits.

...spend less and stay within your budget by planning meals around coupons and sales.

...avoid carryout and drive-thru dinners, which means you'll eat healthier and save money!

...add more variety to your diet, prepare more nutritious meals and feel better!

...plan your meals based on what's fresh at the store, or what you find at the farmer's market or get from your CSA.

...waste less food because your grocery shopping will be more intentional and based on what you plan to eat. This is good for you, the planet and your wallet!

This is a sample of *Easy Meal Planning*—a workshop from simplify 101. To continue on with this workshop, visit [www.simplify101.com](http://www.simplify101.com).