

Meal Plan Week 45

PREP DAY

Day 1: Baked Potato Soup with Salad

- Bake potatoes for soup. While they are baking, use this as prep time to make the Thai meatballs. Mix, roll and bake them and then place in fridge for tomorrow night.
- Prepare soup as directed.
- Serve with a bagged salad (or your own creation) with your favorite dressing.
- Also prepare the Chinese Beef and Green Onion Pot Stickers and place in freezer.

Day 2: Thai-Inspired Meatballs in Coconut Peanut Sauce over Rice with Steamed Broccoli

- Remove meatballs from fridge. Mix together the sauce ingredients in a large saucepan and add meatballs to heat up.
- Prepare twice as much rice as you need so you have leftovers to make Fried Rice.
- Steam broccoli in stovetop or in microwave. Toss with butter and salt.

Day 3: Coconut and Beef Curry over Noodles with Edamame

- Prepare coconut beef curry.
- Prepare noodles as directed on package.
- Steam edamame in microwave, then toss with salt.

Day 4: Meatball Subs with Homemade Tomato Basil Sauce with Caesar Salad

- Either prepare meatballs from scratch and pull frozen meatballs from freezer.
- Make sauce and heat meatballs in the sauce.
- Prepare salad.
- Broil sandwiches.

Day 5: Chinese Beef and Green Onion Pot Stickers with Fried Rice and Sauteed Green Beans with Almonds

- Pull pot stickers from freezer and cook according to recipe.
- Prepare fried rice.
- Saute green beans in some olive oil and top with slivered almonds.

Baked Potato Soup

4 large potatoes
2/3 cup butter
2/3 cup flour
5 cups milk

2 cups chicken stock
1 garlic clove, minced
1 cup light sour cream
6 green onions, chopped
1/3 lb bacon, cooked till crisp and crumbled
1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Wash potatoes and poke full of holes. Bake for approximately one hour or until tender. This part can be done the day before to save time, or alternatively you could place all 4 potatoes in the microwave for approximately 12 minutes.

Scoop the flesh out of the potatoes and place in a bowl. Mash with a fork. Save about 1/2 of the potato peels and chop up and add to the bowl. Fry bacon until crisp and set aside.

In a large pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Slowly add the flour and whisk to incorporate them into a roux. Let the mixture cook for 1-2 minutes until the roux is a pale, golden color. Slowly add the milk, whisking to incorporate the roux and milk together. Once combined, add chicken stock and garlic. Turn heat to medium high and let milk mixture heat up.

Once hot (but not boiling), stir in the potatoes, green onions and bacon. Turn heat down to low and stir in sour cream. Slowly add the grated cheddar so it doesn't all clump together. Season well with salt and pepper to taste.

Thai Inspired Meatballs in Coconut-Peanut Sauce

Meatballs

1 lb ground beef
2 tbsp hoisin sauce
2 tbsp breadcrumbs (or you know crushed crackers or oats)
3 green onions, finely chopped
1/2 tbsp cilantro, minced
1 egg
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp fresh ginger, grated
1 tsp sesame oil

Sauce

1 cup light coconut milk
1/3 cup hoisin sauce
2 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp light peanut butter
2 tbsp cilantro, minced
1 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
2 tsp lemon zest
1/8 tsp crushed red pepper flakes

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Cover the bottom of a baking sheet with foil and a light coating of cooking spray. Combine all meatball ingredients in a bowl and roll into 1 to 1 1/2 inch balls. That should be about 16-20 balls. Place meatballs on prepared baking sheet and bake 18-20 minutes until golden brown.

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat combine all sauce ingredients and whisk to combine. Be liberal with the lemon zest...it adds great freshness to the sauce. Continue to stir until sauce comes to a bowl, then turn the heat down to medium and let cook 3-4 minutes. Turn to low simmer until meatballs are done. When the meatballs are done baking, remove them from the pan and add to the coconut-peanut sauce. Serve over vermicelli noodles (rice noodles) and garnish with a little more chopped cilantro.

Coconut and Beef Curry with Noodles

8 oz vermicelli rice noodles or angel-hair pasta
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 lb beef sirloin cut into 2 inch long strips
1 red onion, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
1 red bell peppers, sliced
1/4 cup water
1 tbsp red Thai curry paste
1 14 oz can coconut milk
Optional: 2 tsp fish sauce and 2 tsp sugar

1 cup packed basil leaves
1 tbsp fresh lime juice

Bring a large pot of water to a boil; add a generous amount of salt. Cook noodles until tender.

Meanwhile in a large skillet, heat the 1 tbsp oil over medium high season beef with salt and pepper; add half the beef to the skillet. Cook without stirring until browned on one side, 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer beef to a plate and continue with the other half of beef.

Add onion, peppers and water to skillet. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until vegetables are tender crisp, 3-4 minutes. Add curry paste; cook, stirring and scraping the bottom of the skillet, until fragrant and combined about 1 minute.

Return beef and accumulated juices to skillet; add coconut milk. Stir in fish sauce and sugar if using. Simmer until sauce thickens slightly, 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in basil and lime juice and season with salt and pepper. Add the noodles to the sauce and toss to combine.

Meatball Subs with Homemade Tomato Basil Sauce

Meatballs:

1 lb ground beef
1/4 cup bread crumbs
1 egg
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp oregano
Salt
Pepper

Sauce: 19 oz. can of tomato sauce

5.5 oz can of tomato paste
1 tbsp olive oil
1/4 small onion, grated
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp oregano
2 tbsp fresh basil, slivered

Salt and pepper

4-5 hoagie rolls (I also really like using ciabatta rolls)

1/2 cup grated mozzarella (or more depending on your tastes)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Mix together ground beef, bread crumbs, egg, garlic, oregano, salt and pepper. Roll into 1 1/2 inch size balls and place on a baking sheet lined with foil. You should have about 16-20 meatballs. Place in the oven and bake for 10-12 minutes or until cooked all the way through.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, add the olive oil. Add the grated onion and a pinch of salt and let cook for a minute or two to soften. Add the garlic and cook the onion mixture for a couple more minutes. You don't really want the onions and garlic to get color and turn brown, just to soften and release the flavors. Add can of tomato sauce, tomato paste, oregano, salt and pepper. Turn heat down to medium-low and simmer for about 5 minutes. Thinly slice fresh basil leaves and stir into the tomato sauce and remove from heat. Taste and adjust seasonings and when meatballs are done baking add them to the sauce.

Turn oven to Broil.

Split the hoagie or ciabatta rolls in half and place on baking sheet. Place under broiler for about 1 - 1.5 minutes just to get slightly toasted. Remove from oven and place about 4 meatballs on the bottom of each hoagie roll and spoon a little extra sauce over the meatballs. Sprinkle a couple tablespoons of grated mozzarella on top of the meatballs (or more if you like them really cheesy). Place back under the broiler for 1-2 minutes just to melt the cheese.

Freezer Directions: These meatballs freeze really well. After baking, remove from the oven and let cool. Place the tray of meatballs directly into the freezer for a couple of hours. Remove and place the meatballs in a ziplock bag and label.

When you go to use the meatballs, place them directly from the freezer into the sauce and let simmer on low until heated through.

Chinese Beef and Green Onion Pot Stickers

1 lb lean ground beef
2/3 cup green onions, finely chopped
1 1/2 tbsp fresh ginger, grated
1/2 tsp salt
1/8 tsp black pepper
1/3 cup chicken stock or water
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp Shaoxing rice wine or dry sherry
1 1/2 tbsp canola oil
1 1/2 tbsp sesame oil

1 package of gyoza skins (also called Shanghai dumpling wrappers)
1/4 cup water
1 tsp cornstarch

Filling the Pot Stickers:

Before you start making the pot stickers, prepare your workspace. Get out a large baking sheet and moisten a clean kitchen towel or paper towel until just damp. In a small bowl mix together the water and cornstarch.

In a large mixing bowl mix together the ground beef, green onions, ginger, salt, pepper, chicken stock, soy sauce, rice wine, canola oil and sesame oil. You can let this sit covered in the fridge for 30 minutes (or up to 24 hours) to develop the flavors.

To begin filling your pot stickers, hold a dumpling wrapper in one hand. Dip your finger in the cornstarch water and moisten all around the outside edge of the wrapper. Place a heaped teaspoon of filling in the middle of the wrapper. Fold the gyoza wrapper in half and pinch in the middle. To make a pleat, you'll need to make a small fold to the left of the middle. Pinch that together. Make another fold to the left of the pleat you just made and pinch together. Make the same pleats pinching them together on the other side until the dumpling is completely sealed. In the palm of your hand or on a hard surface, stand the gyoza up and tap to make a flat bottom.

When you are all done folding and making the potstickers, you could at this point place your whole baking sheet in the freezer. The pot stickers will freeze in about an hour or two and can then be placed in a ziplock bag. This prevents them from freezing into a big

potsticker ball. When you are ready to use them, just pull them out of the freezer and add an extra minute or two for cooking time.

Cooking the Pot Stickers:

Whether cooking these fresh or frozen, get out a large non-stick skillet that has a tight fitting lid. Place a couple teaspoons of oil in the pan and turn the heat up to high. Get a 1/2 cup of water ready and place on the counter beside you. Place the pot stickers in the pan on the flat side with their pleats sticking up. Depending on the size of your pan you should be able to fit about 12 or so into the pan (if I'm serving this as a meal for 4, I have two frying pans going at once). After about a minute or two the bottoms of the pot stickers will be browned and crispy. Grab the lid to the frying pan in one hand and the 1/2 cup of water in the other. Quickly pour the water into the pan and put the lid on. Turn the heat down to low and set a timer for 10 minutes. The dumplings will finish cooking in the pan by steaming.

After 10 minutes remove the lid of the pan. If not all the water is gone let them sit another minute or two to let the water evaporate and let the bottoms of the pot stickers get crispy again. Remove to a serving dish.

Serve the pot stickers with your choice of dipping sauce:

#1 Soy Sesame Dipping Sauce

2 tbsp rice vinegar

2 tbsp soy sauce

1 tsp sesame oil

Mix ingredients together in small bowl and serve with gyoza.

#2 Tangy Chili Dipping Sauce

3 tbsp rice vinegar

1 tsp chili oil (Layu chili oil)

Dash of chili pepper (Ichimi togarashi)

Mix ingredients together in small bowl and serve with gyoza.

Both of these are great dipping sauces. I serve both to give my guests choice. My personal favorite is the two sauces mixed together.