Eat More, Weigh Less

Want satisfying, delicious meals that won’t pack on the pounds? Try these 5 dinner recipes and our easy slim-down meal plan.

If you’re tired of hearing diet advice to eat less, we have news you’re going to love. “By picking foods that are naturally lower in calories but larger in volume, you can eat a lot more food without worrying about what it will do to your waistline,” says Barbara Rolls, Ph.D., author of The Ultimate Volumetrics Diet (William Morrow, 2012). In fact, we tend to choose our food based on volume—not calorie count—and the quantity of food we eat each day stays remarkably consistent even though the number of calories we wolf down can vary. So, “lowering your food’s calorie density,” as researchers call it, is a smart—and healthy—way to satisfy your appetite and cut calories.

These five quick recipes and research-tested tips let you put this concept into practice. Try the big, hearty Buffalo chicken salad (page 6) or the robust spice-rubbed flank steak with mushrooms (page 7), which you’ll swear has more than just 309 calories and 3 grams of saturated fat. (It doesn’t!) To help you keep calories in check the rest of the day, turn to our handy 5-day slim-down meal plan (page 2). —Karen Ansel, M.S., R.D.

Recipes: David Bonom & Marge Perry Meal Plan: Jim Romanoff
# healthy in a hurry

## Weeknights

### 5-Day Slim-Down Meal Plan

If you want to lose weight, following a meal plan is the simplest way to start. This 1,500-calorie-a-day plan (a level at which most people will lose weight) was designed by EatingWell’s Test Kitchen team and registered dietitians, using the 5 Weeknights dinners (pages 3-7) plus suggestions for rounding out the day. An added bonus: this plan ensures you’re getting enough calcium and fiber and it limits sodium and saturated fat.

Plus the menus balance variety and convenience—it keeps your grocery list in check (you buy one bag of clementines and eat them all week; see page 8) and the amount of cooking to a minimum (for instance, on Tuesday you make homemade black-eyed pea dip for a snack and then eat the leftovers on other days).

Blue indicates a recipe in this plan.  indicates leftovers.

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<tr>
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<td>1 cup spoon-size shredded wheat cereal</td>
<td>6 oz. nonfat plain Greek yogurt</td>
<td>Egg sandwich: Lightly coat pan with cooking spray and fry or scramble 1 large egg; top with 2 oz. low-fat Swiss cheese and 2 tomato slices. Serve on 1 multigrain sandwich thin.</td>
<td>1 cup spoon-size shredded wheat cereal</td>
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<td>6 oz. nonfat vanilla Greek yogurt</td>
<td>1 oz. Cheddar cheese</td>
<td>1 pear</td>
<td>1 medium banana</td>
<td>2 Tbsp. unsalted dry-roasted peanuts</td>
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<td>Raita spread: Mix 6 oz. nonfat plain Greek yogurt with 1 cup each chopped tomatoes and cucumber and 1 Tbsp. chopped onion</td>
<td>Tuna sandwich: Mix 5 oz. canned chunk light tuna (drained) with 1/2 avocado (mashed); spread on 1 multigrain sandwich thin</td>
<td>Turkey sandwich: Mix 1 Tbsp. low-fat mayonnaise with 2 finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes; spread on 1 multigrain sandwich thin. Top with 1 oz. deli roast turkey breast, 2 oz. low-fat Swiss cheese and 2 tomato slices.</td>
<td>Chef salad: Toss 2 cups mixed salad greens, 6 cherry tomatoes, 1/2 avocado (diced), 2 oz. deli roast turkey breast, 1 oz. low-fat Swiss cheese with 1 Tbsp. Creamy Garlic Dressing</td>
<td>Avocado sandwich: Mix 1 Tbsp. low-fat mayonnaise with 2 finely chopped sun-dried tomatoes; spread on 1 multigrain sandwich thin. Top with 1/2 avocado, 2 oz. low-fat Swiss cheese and 2 tomato slices.</td>
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<td>6 rye crispbreads</td>
<td>1/2 cup Blue-Eyed Peanut Dip (p. 4)</td>
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<td>Bean &amp; Barley Soup (p. 3)</td>
<td>Shrimp Fried Rice (p. 4)</td>
<td>Quick Pasta Bolognese (p. 5)</td>
<td>Buffalo Chicken Salad (p. 6)</td>
<td>Spice-Rubbed Steak with Sautéed Wild Mushrooms (p. 7)</td>
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<td>Side salad: Toss 2 cups mixed salad greens, 6 cherry tomatoes and 1/2 avocado (diced) with 1 Tbsp. Creamy Garlic Dressing</td>
<td>Side salad: Toss 1 cup fresh spinach with 1 tsp. sesame oil and 2 Tbsp. unsalted dry-roasted peanuts</td>
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**Bean & Barley Soup**

*Makes: 4 servings, 2 1/2 cups each*
*Active time: 30 minutes*
*Total: 45 minutes*
*To make ahead: Refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 6 months.*
*Cost per serving: under $4*

This hearty soup tastes like it has simmered for hours, but actually it’s quite quick to throw together. Plus it freezes beautifully. If you have cooked barley on hand, omit the quick-cooking barley and stir in 1 1/2 cups cooked barley along with the broth in Step 2.

4 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 medium fennel bulb, cored and chopped  
5 cloves garlic, minced  
1 teaspoon dried basil  
1 15-ounce can cannellini or other white beans, rinsed  
1 14-ounce can fire-roasted diced tomatoes  
6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth  
3/4 cup quick-cooking barley  
1 5-ounce package baby spinach (6 cups)  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese  
1/4 teaspoon ground pepper

1. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion, fennel, garlic, and basil; cook, stirring frequently, until tender and just beginning to brown, 6 to 8 minutes.

2. Mash 1/2 cup of the beans. Stir the mashed and whole beans, tomatoes, broth and barley into the pot. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the barley is tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in spinach and cook until wilted, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat and stir in cheese and pepper.

**Per serving:** 323 calories; 7 g fat (2 g sat, 4 g mono); 4 mg cholesterol; 55 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 13 g protein; 13 g fiber; 767 mg sodium; 795 mg potassium. **Nutrition bonus:** Vitamin A (98% daily value), Vitamin C (67% dv), Folate (28% dv), Potassium (23% dv), Calcium (20% dv), Iron (18% dv).
Shrimp Fried Rice

Makes: 4 servings, 2 cups each  
Active time: 40 minutes  
Total: 40 minutes  
Cost per serving: under $3

This shrimp fried rice is packed with vegetables and makes 4 generous servings, so you’ll need to use a large skillet that is at least 12 inches wide. A large wok also works well. If you have cooked rice on hand, omit Step 1 and add 2½ cups cooked rice to the pan in Step 5.

1 1/2 cups water  
1 cup instant brown rice  
2 tablespoons hoisin sauce (see Tip)  
4 teaspoons reduced-sodium soy sauce  
2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil  
4 teaspoons canola oil, divided  
2 large eggs, lightly beaten  
8 ounces peeled and deveined raw small shrimp (51-60 per pound; see Tip)  
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger  
4 cups stringless snap peas (12 ounces)  
1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 1/2-inch pieces  
2 medium carrots, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced  
4 scallions, chopped

1. Combine water and rice in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until the water is absorbed, 10 to 12 minutes. Spread the rice out on a large baking sheet to cool.

2. Combine hoisin sauce, soy sauce and sesame oil in a small bowl; set aside.

3. Heat 1 teaspoon canola oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add eggs and cook, stirring to help break into smaller pieces, until just set, about 45 seconds. Transfer the egg to a bowl.

4. Add another 1 teaspoon canola oil to the skillet and return to medium-high heat. Add shrimp and cook, stirring occasionally, until pink, 1½ to 2 minutes. Transfer the shrimp to the bowl.

5. Heat the remaining 2 teaspoons oil in the skillet over medium-high heat. Add ginger and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in snap peas, bell pepper, carrots and scallions; cook, stirring occasionally, until tender-crisp, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the rice and the reserved egg and shrimp; cook, stirring until heated through, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat and gently stir in the sauce mixture.

Per serving: 307 calories; 11 g fat (2 g sat, 5 g mono); 165 mg cholesterol; 34 g carbohydrate; 2 g added sugars; 17 g protein; 5 g fiber; 462 mg sodium; 523 mg potassium. 

Nutrition bonus: Vitamin C (157% daily value), Vitamin A (147% dv), Folate (23% dv).

Buy shrimp by the “number per pound” (e.g., 21-25 count) your recipe specifies, rather than the general “small,” “medium” or “extra-large” sizes. For sustainable shrimp, look for fresh (or frozen) shrimp certified by an independent agency, such as the Marine Stewardship Council. If you can’t find certified shrimp, choose wild-caught shrimp from North America.

Look for hoisin sauce, a thick, dark brown, spicy-sweet sauce made from soybeans and a complex mix of spices, in the Asian section of most supermarkets.

BUDGET-FRIENDLY

Vegetables are loaded with fiber, which automatically lowers the calorie density of your food because your body can’t digest it entirely. When South Korean researchers fed women an equal volume of either plain rice or rice with added vegetables, those who feasted on the veggie-filled rice downed 41 percent fewer calories and felt more satisfied afterwards. —K.A.

JAM IT WITH VEGGIES

For an afternoon snack (see page 2) make Black-Eyed Pea Dip: Puree one 16-oz. can black-eyed peas (rinsed) with 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, 2 tsp. red-wine vinegar, 1 minced garlic clove, 1 tsp. dried thyme and hot sauce to taste. Makes 1 ⅔ cups. Serving size: ¼ cup.
Quick Pasta Bolognese

**Makes**: 4 servings, 1 cup pasta & about 1 cup sauce each  
**Active time**: 30 minutes  
**Total**: 40 minutes  
**To make ahead**: Refrigerate the sauce (Steps 1 & 3) for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 6 months.  
**Cost per serving**: under $2  

Who doesn’t love pasta with meat sauce? This crowd-pleasing version is a boon for busy cooks—it’s ready and on the table in just 40 minutes.

1. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, celery and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, until just tender, 6 to 8 minutes.  
2. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add pasta and cook according to package directions. Drain.  
3. Add beef to the vegetables and cook, breaking up with a wooden spoon, until cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high, add wine and cook until almost evaporated, 1 to 1½ minutes. Stir in tomatoes, tomato paste and nutmeg; reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in salt and pepper. Serve the pasta with the sauce.

Per serving: 414 calories; 10 g fat (3 g sat, 5 g mono); 43 mg cholesterol; 55 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 26 g protein; 7 g fiber; 522 mg sodium; 709 mg potassium.  
**Nutrition bonus**: Vitamin A (118% daily value), Vitamin C (39% dv), Zinc (33% dv), Iron (24% dv), Potassium (21% dv), Magnesium (19% dv).

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**Incorporating air into foods puffs them up. “Because airy foods are bigger, they trick your brain into thinking you’re eating more,” says Barbara Rolls. The proof: researchers at Penn State University gave volunteers a similar-size snack of dense Cheetos Crunchy or more voluminous Cheetos Puffs. Those who munched on the puffs ate 70 fewer calories even though they polished off 73 percent more by volume. When possible, opt for airy eats: Cheerios over granola, bread over crackers and tubular pasta like rigatoni in place of spaghetti. —K.A.**

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**Make Creamy Garlic Dressing for a side salad**: Blend ½ cup buttermilk, ¼ cup low-fat mayonnaise, 1¼ Tbsp. lemon juice, 2 Tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese, 2 tsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce, 1 minced clove garlic, ¼ tsp. salt and a pinch of pepper until smooth. Makes 1 cup. Serving size: 1 tablespoon.
Baked Buffalo Chicken Salad

Makes: 4 servings, 2½ cups salad & 3 oz. chicken each
Active time: 35 minutes Total: 35 minutes
Cost per serving: under $3.50

All the flavor of Buffalo wings is packed into this irresistible salad. But unlike wings, you can eat a big serving of this for just 291 calories.

¼ cup crumbled reduced-fat blue cheese plus ¼ cup, divided
6 tablespoons buttermilk
4 teaspoons red-wine vinegar, divided
¾ teaspoon freshly ground pepper, divided
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into ¾-inch pieces

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons hot sauce, such as Frank’s Red Hot
8 cups chopped romaine lettuce
3 large carrots, chopped
3 large stalks celery, chopped
1 large cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped

1. Combine ¼ cup blue cheese in a small bowl with buttermilk, 2 teaspoons vinegar and ⅛ teaspoon pepper; mix well, mashing slightly with a fork. Set aside.

2. Place chicken in another bowl; sprinkle with flour and the remaining ⅛ teaspoon pepper and toss until coated.

3. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until very hot. Add the chicken and cook, turning occasionally, until just cooked through, 6 to 7 minutes. Stir in hot sauce and the remaining 2 teaspoons vinegar and cook, stirring often, until the chicken is coated; about 1 minute.

4. Combine lettuce, carrots, celery and cucumber in a large bowl; add the reserved dressing and toss to coat. Divide the salad among 4 plates and top each with an equal portion of chicken and 1 tablespoon each of the reserved blue cheese.

Per serving: 291 calories; 11 g fat (4 g sat, 4 g mono); 75 mg cholesterol; 15 g carbohydrate; 0 g added sugars; 32 g protein; 5 g fiber; 607 mg sodium; 832 mg potassium. Nutrition bonus: Vitamin A (350% daily value), Folate (44% dv), Vitamin C (25% dv), Potassium (24% dv).
Spice-Rubbed Steak with Sautéed Wild Mushrooms

Makes: 4 servings, 3 oz. steak & ½ cup mushrooms each
Active time: 40 minutes Total: 40 minutes
Cost per serving: under $5.50

Love this steak rub? Make a double, triple or quadruple batch to keep on hand for chicken and firm fish (swordfish, tuna and salmon) too. Store it in a jar or sealable plastic bag in your spice drawer for an instant dinner solution. We love the flavor of wild mushrooms in this mix, but any type of mushroom will work.

2 teaspoons ancho chile powder (see Tip, left) 5 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon ground cumin ½ cup chopped shallots
1 teaspoon packed dark brown sugar 5 cloves garlic, minced
½ teaspoon salt plus ¼ teaspoon, divided 1 pound assorted wild mushrooms, trimmed and sliced
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground pepper plus ⅛ teaspoon, divided ½ cup Madeira or dry sherry
1 pound flank steak, trimmed 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

TRIM THE FAT

“With twice as many calories per bite as carbs or protein, fat calories add up incredibly quickly,” says Rolls. So the more fat on your plate, the less food you can eat without racking up the calories. Keep fat in check by choosing lower-fat options of your favorite foods, such as lean cuts of beef, skinless poultry and nonfat dairy, and trim any visible fat off meat before cooking. —K.A.

1. Position oven rack 3 to 4 inches below broiler; preheat broiler to high.
2. Coat a broiler pan with cooking spray. Combine chile powder, cumin, brown sugar, ¼ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper in a small bowl. Rub the mixture evenly over both sides of steak and place on the prepared pan; let stand at room temperature for about 15 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add shallots and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until starting to soften, about 1 minute. Stir in mushrooms and the remaining ½ teaspoon salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms release their liquid and begin to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Pour in Madeira (or sherry) and cook, stirring until absorbed, about 1 minute. Add broth and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost absorbed, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in parsley and remaining ⅛ teaspoon pepper; cover to keep warm.
4. Broil the steak 4 to 6 minutes per side for medium. Transfer to a clean cutting board and let rest for 5 minutes. Thinly slice the steak against the grain and serve with the mushrooms.

Per serving: 309 calories; 13 g fat (3 g sat, 7 g mono); 71 mg cholesterol; 16 g carbohydrate; 1 g added sugars; 29 g protein; 3 g fiber; 591 mg sodium; 969 mg potassium.
Nutrition bonus: Zinc (35% daily value), Potassium (26% dv), Iron (17% dv).

* TIP *
Ancho chile powder, made from dried poblano peppers, has a mild, sweet spicy flavor. Look for it in the spice section of well-stocked supermarkets. Other mildly spicy chile powder can be used in its place.
5-Day Slim-Down Meal Plan: Shopping List

This list outlines everything you need to make all the recipes for the week (pages 3-7), plus all the sides and snacks for ONE person to follow the plan.

### Shop For:

#### Produce

- **Fruit**
  - 1 medium apple
  - 3 medium bananas
  - 4½ cups blueberries
  - 5 clementines or mandarin oranges
  - 2 lemons
  - 3 medium pears

- **Vegetables & Fresh Herbs**
  - 2 avocados
  - 8 oz. Brussels sprouts
  - 1 lb. baby carrots
  - 4 medium carrots
  - 3 large carrots
  - 1 bunch celery
  - 2 large cucumbers
  - 1 head fennel
  - 4 cups mixed salad greens (about 4 oz.)
  - 1 large head romaine lettuce
  - 8 oz. cremini mushrooms
  - 8 oz. shiitake mushrooms
  - 8 oz. white button mushrooms
  - 1 red onion
  - 3 white onions
  - 1 medium red bell pepper
  - 1 bunch scallions
  - 3 medium shallots
  - 12 oz. stringless sugar snap peas
  - 10 oz. baby spinach
  - 1 pint cherry tomatoes
  - 3 medium tomatoes

- **Fresh Herbs & Flavorings**
  - 2 heads garlic
  - 1 2-inch piece ginger
  - 1 bunch parsley

#### Dry Goods & Bread

- ¾ cup quick-cooking barley
- 1 cup instant brown rice
- ½ cup wild rice
- 8 oz. whole-wheat rigatoni or penne
- 2 cups spoon-size shredded wheat cereal
- 6 rye crispbreads
- 4 multigrain sandwich thins
- 1 whole-wheat baguette

#### Canned & Bottled Goods

- 1 16-oz. can black-eyed peas
- 1 15-oz. can cannellini beans
- 1 14-oz. can fire-roasted diced tomatoes
- 1 14-oz. can petite diced tomatoes
- 4 sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil
- 1 5-oz. can chunk light tuna, packed in water
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cups low-sodium beef broth
- 2 Tbsp. hoisin sauce

#### Nuts, Seeds & Fruits

- 6 Tbsp. unsalted dry-roasted peanuts

#### Dairy

- 1 cup buttermilk
- 3 6-oz. containers nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- 2 6-oz. containers nonfat vanilla Greek yogurt
- 3 oz. reduced-fat blue cheese
- 2 oz. Cheddar cheese
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 7 oz. sliced low-fat Swiss cheese

#### Meat & Seafood

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 3 oz. deli sliced turkey breast
- 1 lb. flank steak
- 8 oz. 93%-lean ground beef
- 8 oz. small raw shrimp (51-60 count)

### Check Your Pantry For:

#### Oils, Vinegars & Condiments

- canola oil
- extra-virgin olive oil
- toasted sesame oil
- cooking spray
- red-wine vinegar
- reduced-sodium soy sauce
- hot sauce
- low-fat mayonnaise

#### Flavorings

- salt
- pepper
- ancho chile powder
- dried basil
- ground cumin
- ground nutmeg
- dried thyme

#### Dry Goods

- all-purpose flour
- brown sugar

#### Spirits

- dry red wine
- Madeira

#### Canned & Bottled Goods

- tomato paste

#### Refrigerator Items

- skim milk
- large eggs