

UPGRADED HEALTH

15 High-Protein Mediterranean Lunches

Simple bowls, wraps and lunch boxes for busy days.

Build lunch around familiar foods: chicken, fish, eggs, yogurt, tofu, beans and lentils. Add vegetables, a grain when useful and a simple dressing.

Inside this bonus

15 complete recipes serving two

Protein estimates with calculation notes

10-25 minute assembly and cooking times

Pack-ahead instructions and gluten-free swaps

A companion to The 30-Day Mediterranean Meal Plan System.

By Upgraded Health

A better lunch routine

Two servings, ready for your schedule

Every recipe makes two adult lunches. Share both today or save one for tomorrow. Times assume the stated cooked chicken, cooked shrimp, hard-boiled eggs, cooked lentils and cooked grains are ready. Cooking or thawing those ingredients from scratch adds time. Follow packaged food instructions, including heating when required. Recipes and times have not been kitchen-tested.

What the protein numbers mean

The estimates focus on the main protein contributors, use the reference amounts at the back and divide by two. They are rounded planning estimates, not laboratory analyses or individualized targets. Vegetables and minor ingredients may add a little more. Brand, drained weight, cooked weight and substitutions can change the total. A food label is the best check for your purchased product.

Use the amount, not just the can

Weigh cooked chicken and cooked shrimp after cooking. For beans and lentils, measure after draining. The tuna recipes assume about 20 g protein per 5 oz can, while salmon bowls use four small pouches with about 13 g each. Choose thick plain Greek yogurt with about 18 g per 170 g and cottage cheese with about 13 g per 1/2 cup. If your labels differ, update the estimate.

Pack cold; reheat thoroughly

Keep perishable lunches at 40°F or below in the refrigerator. For transport, use an insulated bag with two cold sources. Refrigerate within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F. Use cooked leftovers within 3-4 days; for texture, assemble salads and wraps within 1-2 days. Existing ingredients do not get a new storage clock when mixed. Reheat leftovers to 165°F. [A, B]

Make it fit your needs

There is no universal protein target in this guide. Adjust portions and follow any prescribed diet. Gluten-free substitutions may change protein and require label checks and clean preparation surfaces.

Pick your lunch

Chicken

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Eggs, dairy & plant-based

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Lemon-Dill Chicken & Lentil Bowls

RECIPE 01 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 38 g per serving

Ingredients

8 oz cooked chicken breast, chilled and diced
1 1/2 cups cooked lentils, drained
1 cucumber, diced
2 cups baby spinach
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp chopped fresh dill
1/4 tsp black pepper

Make it

Start. Divide spinach between two bowls. Add chicken, lentils and cucumber.

Next. Whisk lemon juice, olive oil, dill and pepper.

Finish. Toss with the bowls just before eating.

Pack it

Pack dressing separately. Use ready-cooked lentils and chicken for the stated time.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free-labeled lentils when needed and check chicken seasoning.

Protein check: Chicken 59 g + lentils 18 g, divided by 2 = about 38 g.

Chicken, Farro & Roasted Pepper Salad

RECIPE 02 / SERVES 2 / 20 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 37 g per serving

Ingredients

8 oz cooked chicken breast, diced
1 1/2 cups ready-cooked farro
1 cup jarred roasted peppers, drained and chopped
1/2 cucumber, diced
2 tbsp chopped parsley
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil
1/4 cup crumbled feta

Make it

Start. Warm farro if its package requires it, then spread briefly on a plate to cool for immediate serving.

Next. Combine chicken, farro, peppers and cucumber.

Finish. Toss with parsley, lemon juice and oil. Top with feta and divide into two portions.

Pack it

For a cold packed salad, use chilled ready-to-eat farro; do not seal warm grain into a lunch bag.

Gluten-free swap

Replace farro with 1 1/2 cups cooked quinoa. Recheck the protein estimate.

Protein check: Chicken 59 g + farro 9 g + feta 5 g, divided by 2 = about 37 g.

Chicken Tzatziki Pita Boxes

RECIPE 03 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 40 g per serving

Ingredients

8 oz cooked chicken breast, sliced
2 small whole-wheat pitas
170 g plain Greek yogurt
1 cucumber
1 cup cherry tomatoes
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp chopped dill
1 tbsp olive oil

Make it

Start. Grate 1/3 of the cucumber and squeeze out excess moisture. Dice the rest; halve tomatoes.

Next. Mix yogurt with grated cucumber, lemon juice and dill.

Finish. Pack chicken, pitas, chopped vegetables and yogurt sauce separately. Drizzle vegetables with oil at serving.

Pack it

Keep pitas dry and assemble at lunchtime. Choose yogurt with about 18 g protein per 170 g.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free pitas or serve with cooked rice. Check seasoned chicken.

Protein check: Chicken 59 g + yogurt 18 g + pitas 4 g, divided by 2 = about 40 g.

Chicken, White Bean & Avocado Salad

RECIPE 04 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 39 g per serving

Ingredients

8 oz cooked chicken breast, diced
1 1/2 cups canned cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 medium avocado, diced
2 cups romaine, chopped
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil
1/4 tsp black pepper

Make it

Start. Divide romaine, chicken, beans and tomatoes between bowls.

Next. Whisk lemon juice with oil and pepper.

Finish. Add avocado and dressing just before eating; toss gently.

Pack it

Pack the avocado whole and cut at lunch for the best color, or coat it with some of the measured lemon juice.

Gluten-free swap

Check prepared chicken; all remaining ingredients can be chosen gluten-free.

Protein check: Chicken 59 g + beans 18 g, divided by 2 = about 39 g.

Tuna & Chickpea Yogurt Pitas

RECIPE 05 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 32 g per serving

Ingredients

2 cans light tuna in water (5 oz each), drained
1 cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
85 g plain Greek yogurt
2 small whole-wheat pitas
1 celery stalk, finely diced
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp chopped parsley
1/4 tsp black pepper

Make it

Start. Mash half the chickpeas with yogurt and lemon juice.

Next. Fold in tuna, remaining chickpeas, celery, parsley and pepper.

Finish. Divide filling between pitas immediately before eating.

Pack it

Keep filling in a sealed chilled container and pitas separate.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free pitas; check tuna and yogurt labels.

Protein check: Tuna 40 g + chickpeas 12 g + yogurt 9 g + pitas 4 g, divided by 2 = about 32 g.

Tuna, White Bean & Quinoa Salad

RECIPE 06 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 31 g per serving

Ingredients

2 cans light tuna in water (5 oz each), drained
1 cup canned cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 cup cooked quinoa, chilled
1 cucumber, diced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp chopped parsley

Make it

Start. Combine tuna, beans, quinoa, cucumber and tomatoes.

Next. Whisk lemon juice and olive oil together.

Finish. Toss salad with dressing and parsley, then divide into two lunch containers.

Pack it

Cook quinoa ahead or use a ready-cooked pouch; cooking dry quinoa is additional time.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free-labeled quinoa when needed; check tuna ingredients.

Protein check: Tuna 40 g + beans 12 g + quinoa 8 g, divided by 2 = about 30 g, plus vegetables.

Salmon, Lentil & Mustard Bowls

RECIPE 07 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 33 g per serving

Ingredients

4 plain salmon pouches (2.5 oz each)
1 cup cooked lentils, drained
2 cups arugula
1 cucumber, diced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil

Make it

Start. Divide arugula, salmon, lentils, cucumber and tomatoes between two bowls.

Next. Whisk mustard, lemon juice, olive oil and 1 tablespoon water.

Finish. Spoon dressing over bowls just before serving.

Pack it

Use pouches with about 13 g protein each for the estimate shown. Brands vary.

Gluten-free swap

Check mustard and salmon pouches; choose gluten-free-labeled lentils as needed.

Protein check: Salmon 52 g + lentils 12 g, divided by 2 = about 32 g, plus vegetables.

Lemony Salmon & White Bean Mash Toasts

RECIPE 08 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 32 g per serving

Ingredients

4 plain salmon pouches (2.5 oz each)
1 cup canned cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
4 slices whole-grain bread
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp chopped dill
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1/4 tsp black pepper

Make it

Start. Mash beans with lemon juice, olive oil and pepper.

Next. Toast bread. Spread with bean mash and top with salmon and dill.

Finish. Serve two toasts per person with tomatoes.

Pack it

Pack salmon, mash and bread separately. Toast bread near serving if possible.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free bread and a clean dedicated toaster or toaster bag.

Protein check: Salmon 52 g + beans 12 g, divided by 2 = 32 g before bread; actual total depends on bread.

Shrimp, Chickpea & Cucumber Bowls

RECIPE 09 / SERVES 2 / 20 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 34 g per serving

Ingredients

10 oz cooked peeled shrimp, thawed
1 1/2 cups canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 cucumber, diced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp chopped parsley
1/4 tsp black pepper

Make it

Start. Pat ready-to-eat shrimp dry. Cut large shrimp in half if desired.

Next. Combine shrimp, chickpeas, cucumber and tomatoes.

Finish. Whisk lemon juice, oil, parsley and pepper. Toss with the salad and divide between two bowls.

Pack it

Use cooked chilled shrimp. Thawing frozen shrimp safely is additional time.

Gluten-free swap

Check shrimp for added sauces and seasonings.

Protein check: Shrimp 50 g + chickpeas 18 g, divided by 2 = about 34 g.

Warm Shrimp & Spinach Quinoa

RECIPE 10 / SERVES 2 / 20 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 33 g per serving

Ingredients

10 oz cooked peeled shrimp, thawed
1 1/2 cups ready-cooked quinoa
4 cups baby spinach
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 cup crumbled feta

Make it

Start. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Cook garlic for 30 seconds; add tomatoes and cook 3 minutes.

Next. Add quinoa, shrimp and 2 tablespoons water. Cover and heat until shrimp reach 165°F when reheating.

Finish. Stir in spinach until wilted. Add lemon juice and feta and divide into two bowls.

Pack it

If packing for later, cool promptly in shallow containers and refrigerate. Reheat thoroughly at lunch.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free quinoa and check shrimp seasoning.

Protein check: Shrimp 50 g + quinoa 12 g + feta 5 g, divided by 2 = about 33 g.

Egg & Greek Yogurt Salad Wraps

RECIPE 11 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 32 g per serving

Ingredients

4 purchased hard-boiled eggs, peeled
340 g plain Greek yogurt
2 whole-wheat tortillas (8-inch)
1 celery stalk, finely diced
2 cups baby spinach
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp chopped dill

Make it

Start. Chop eggs and combine with yogurt, celery, mustard, lemon juice and dill.

Next. Lay spinach on tortillas and divide egg mixture between them.

Finish. Fold in the ends and roll tightly. If tortillas are small, serve some filling alongside with a spoon.

Pack it

Use thick Greek yogurt to keep the filling firm; boiling and cooling eggs is additional time.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free tortillas and check mustard.

Protein check: Eggs 24 g + yogurt 36 g + tortillas 4 g, divided by 2 = about 32 g.

Savory Cottage Cheese & Chickpea Plates

RECIPE 12 / SERVES 2 / 10 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 33 g per serving

Ingredients

2 cups plain cottage cheese
1 cup canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 cucumber, sliced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
8 whole-grain crispbreads
1 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp lemon juice
1/2 tsp dried oregano

Make it

Start. Divide cottage cheese and chickpeas between two plates or lunch boxes.

Next. Add cucumber and tomatoes. Drizzle with olive oil, lemon juice and oregano.

Finish. Pack four crispbreads per person separately and use them for scooping.

Pack it

Select cottage cheese with about 13 g protein per 1/2 cup. Keep crispbreads away from moisture.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free crispbreads and check cottage cheese ingredients.

Protein check: Cottage cheese 52 g + chickpeas 12 g, divided by 2 = 32 g, plus crispbreads.

Lentil & Yogurt Mezze Bowls

RECIPE 13 / SERVES 2 / 15 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 32 g per serving

Ingredients

2 cups cooked lentils, drained
340 g plain Greek yogurt
1 cucumber, diced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1/4 cup crumbled feta
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp chopped mint

Make it

Start. Stir half the lemon juice and mint into yogurt. Divide between two wide bowls.

Next. Toss lentils, cucumber and tomatoes with remaining lemon juice and olive oil.

Finish. Spoon lentil mixture alongside yogurt and sprinkle with feta.

Pack it

This is a generous vegetarian lunch. Keep components separate until serving if you prefer.

Gluten-free swap

Use gluten-free-labeled lentils as needed and check dairy labels.

Protein check: Lentils 24 g + yogurt 36 g + feta 5 g, divided by 2 = about 32 g.

Lemon-Oregano Tofu & Lentil Bowls

RECIPE 14 / SERVES 2 / 25 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 32 g per serving

Ingredients

16 oz extra-firm tofu, drained
2 cups cooked lentils, drained
2 cups baby spinach
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp dried oregano
1/4 tsp black pepper

Make it

Start. Pat tofu very dry and cut into 3/4-inch cubes. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat.

Next. Cook tofu for 8-10 minutes, turning occasionally, until golden. Add lentils with 2 tablespoons water and heat through.

Finish. Divide spinach and tomatoes between bowls. Add tofu and lentils; drizzle with remaining oil, lemon juice, oregano and pepper.

Pack it

Use tofu with about 8 g protein per 3 oz. Lentils add enough protein without a powder or supplement.

Gluten-free swap

Use plain gluten-free tofu and gluten-free-labeled lentils when needed.

Protein check: Tofu about 43 g + lentils 24 g, divided by 2 = about 33 g; rounded conservatively to 32 g.

Warm Lentil Pasta with Cottage Cheese & Basil

RECIPE 15 / SERVES 2 / 25 MIN TOTAL

Estimated protein: about 35 g per serving

Ingredients

6 oz dry red-lentil pasta
1 1/2 cups plain cottage cheese
2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
3 cups baby spinach
1 tbsp olive oil
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 cup chopped basil
1 tbsp lemon juice

Make it

Start. Bring a pot of water to a boil and cook pasta according to its package. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking water and drain.

Next. Meanwhile, heat oil in a skillet. Cook garlic for 30 seconds, add tomatoes and cook 4 minutes. Stir in spinach until wilted.

Finish. Turn off heat. Fold in pasta, cottage cheese, basil and lemon juice. Add reserved water a little at a time until creamy. Divide in two.

Pack it

Choose pasta with about 10 g protein per 2 oz dry. Cottage cheese stays slightly textured unless blended first.

Gluten-free swap

Use pasta explicitly labeled gluten-free; red-lentil ingredients alone do not rule out cross-contact.

Protein check: Pasta 30 g + cottage cheese 39 g, divided by 2 = about 35 g.

Your first four lunches

Make Recipe 1, Lemon-Dill Chicken & Lentil Bowls, and Recipe 5, Tuna & Chickpea Yogurt Pitae. Each recipe makes two servings, giving one person four lunches or two people two lunch days.

Combined shopping list

Section	Buy or measure
Protein & dairy	8 oz cooked chicken breast; 2 cans light tuna (5 oz each); 85 g plain Greek yogurt
Beans & grains	1 1/2 cups cooked lentils; 1 cup drained canned chickpeas; 2 small whole-wheat pitas
Produce	1 cucumber; 2 cups baby spinach; 1 celery stalk; 2 tbsp chopped dill; 1 tbsp chopped parsley; lemons to yield 3 tbsp juice
Pantry	1 tbsp olive oil; 1/2 tsp black pepper

A practical packing session

Wash and chop produce. Drain and measure beans and lentils. Make the chicken bowls, keeping their dressing separate. Mix the tuna filling and pack it separately from the pitas. Refrigerate all perishable components promptly. Prepare this quantity for the next two days when feeding two; for one person, assemble the second recipe later in the week.

Use the leftovers you already have

If the main meal plan produced plain cooked chicken or lentils, use the measured amount here. Check the original cooking date first. If you swap a recipe into the 30-day calendar, replace the original lunch ingredients on that week's grocery list.

Protein reference & sources

These are conservative planning inputs used in the recipe notes. Match the quantity and preparation state. Where a label differs, calculate: protein per labeled serving $\times$ labeled servings used $\div$ 2. Small rounding differences are intentional.

Ingredient	Planning input
Cooked chicken breast	22 g per 3 oz; 8 oz contributes about 59 g
Light tuna in water	20 g per 5 oz can, drained as directed
Plain salmon pouch	13 g per 2.5 oz pouch; check your label
Cooked peeled shrimp	15 g per 3 oz; 10 oz contributes about 50 g
Greek yogurt / cottage cheese	18 g per 170 g / 13 g per 1/2 cup
Cooked beans or lentils	6 g per 1/2 cup, drained; brands vary
Cooked quinoa / farro	8 g / 6 g per cup, respectively
Egg / extra-firm tofu	6 g per large egg / 8 g per 3 oz tofu
Dry lentil pasta / crumbled feta	10 g per 2 oz pasta / 5 g per 1/4 cup feta

Bread, tortillas and crispbreads vary substantially. Their small contributions are conservative approximations. Reference brands illustrate calculations, not endorsements or required purchases.

Example labels: Tyson chicken; StarKist light tuna
<https://www.tyson.com/products/unbreaded/00023700016256>

StarKist: Chunk Light Tuna in Water
<https://starkist.com/product/chunk-light-tuna-in-water-can/>

FAGE: Total 0% Greek Yogurt
<https://usa.fage.com/products/yogurt/fage-total-0>

House Foods: Extra Firm Tofu
<https://www.house-foods.com/products/premium-tofu/premium-tofu-extra-firm>

More label & food-safety references

Use these reference pages with the actual labels on the food you buy. Formulas can change. The recipe numbers remain estimates rather than a complete nutrient analysis.

ONIE Project: Protein Foods reference amounts
<https://onieproject.org/myplate-food-groups-protein/>

Bush's: Chickpeas
https://www.bushbeans.com/en_US/product/garbanzo-beans-chick-peas

Chicken of the Sea: Pink Salmon Pouches
<https://chickenofthesea.com/products/salmon/wild-caught-alaskan-pink-salmon-in-spring-water-packet/>

[A] USDA FSIS: Keeping Bag Lunches Safe
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/keeping-bag-lunches-safe>

[B] USDA FSIS: Leftovers and Food Safety
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/leftovers-and-food-safety>

Your five reliable lunches

Choose a mix of foods you enjoy rather than repeating one protein every day.

Lunch 1: _____

Lunch 2: _____

Lunch 3: _____

Lunch 4: _____

Lunch 5: _____