

UPGRADED HEALTH

The Mediterranean Quick-Meal Vault

25 five-ingredient meals

Ready in 20 minutes or less

Simple food for the days when your schedule changes, your refrigerator looks empty, or breakfast needs to leave the house with you.

Good food. A shorter ingredient list.

5 portable breakfasts

10 quick lunches and dinners

9 pantry-only meals + 1 pantry-and-bread meal

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

Recipes serve two adults. Adjust portions to your appetite.

By Upgraded Health

Start here

What five ingredients means

Each recipe lists exactly five ingredients. Oil, lemon juice and seasonings count. Water does not. Purchased foods such as hummus, pesto and bread count as one grocery item, but contain multiple components; always read their labels. No extra salt or pepper is required.

What 20 minutes means

Times are estimated total preparation and cooking times for two servings, including chopping and heating. There is no overnight chilling requirement. Use the exact ready-cooked, canned, quick-cooking or thawed ingredients specified. Cooking dry beans, rice or lentils, boiling eggs, cooking raw chicken or thawing seafood is additional work. These recipes have not been kitchen-tested; appliances and preparation speed vary.

How to use the vault

Swap one vault recipe for a breakfast, lunch or dinner in your main plan. Update that week's grocery list with these ingredients. Start with two breakfasts and three backup meals you would actually enjoy; you do not need to stock all 25 recipes.

Flexible portions and substitutions

Most recipes are designed as two adult meals; some are lighter. Add a side or increase portions to suit your needs. Extras change the five-ingredient count. For gluten-free meals, replace bread and pasta with labeled gluten-free versions and couscous with ready-cooked quinoa; follow the new package timing. Check sauces, broth and other packaged foods too. These are general cooking ideas, not a prescribed diet.

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Berry-Walnut Yogurt Jars

RECIPE 01 / 5 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

2 cups plain Greek yogurt

1 cup blueberries

1/2 cup rolled oats

1/4 cup chopped walnuts

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Make it

First

Divide yogurt between two lidded jars.

Finish

Top each with half the berries, oats, walnuts and cinnamon. Eat immediately for crunchy oats, or refrigerate for softer oats.

Quick-meal note

Pack walnuts separately to keep them crisp. Makes two generous breakfast jars.

Banana-Almond Breakfast Wraps

RECIPE 02 / 5 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

2 whole-wheat tortillas (8-inch)

1/4 cup almond butter

2 medium bananas

1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Make it

First

Spread each tortilla with half the almond butter and yogurt.

Next

Peel bananas and place one on each tortilla. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Finish

Fold in the ends, roll tightly and wrap for carrying.

Quick-meal note

Best assembled the morning you eat them. Carry chilled because the filling contains yogurt.

Apple-Cinnamon Cottage Cheese Cups

RECIPE 03 / 7 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

2 cups cottage cheese

1 medium apple

1/2 cup rolled oats

1/4 cup chopped walnuts

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Make it

First

Wash, core and finely dice the apple.

Next

Divide cottage cheese into two lidded containers. Add apple, oats and cinnamon.

Finish

Top with walnuts and eat with a spoon.

Quick-meal note

Keep the walnuts in a separate container if preparing the evening before.

Hummus-Egg Breakfast Pitas

RECIPE 04 / 8 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 2 small whole-wheat pitas
- 4 purchased hard-boiled eggs
- 1/3 cup hummus
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 1 medium tomato

Make it

First

Slice the cooked eggs and dice the tomato.

Next

Cut pitas open and spread the insides with hummus.

Finish

Divide spinach, tomato and eggs between pitas. Wrap and keep chilled.

Quick-meal note

The timing uses ready-cooked, peeled eggs. Cooking and cooling raw eggs adds time.

Peach-Pistachio Breakfast Boxes

RECIPE 05 / 5 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

1 1/2 cups plain Greek yogurt

2 medium peaches

1/4 cup shelled pistachios

8 whole-grain crispbreads

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Make it

First

Divide yogurt into two sealed cups and stir in cinnamon.

Next

Slice peaches and divide between two breakfast boxes with the yogurt cups.

Finish

Pack pistachios and crispbreads in dry compartments.

Quick-meal note

Use containers with separate compartments and an ice pack for transport.

Lemon Tuna & White Bean Salad

RECIPE 06 / 10 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 2 cans tuna in water (5 oz each), drained
- 1 can cannellini beans (15 oz), drained and rinsed
- 1 medium cucumber
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Dice the cucumber and place in a bowl with tuna and beans.

Next

Whisk lemon juice and oil together.

Finish

Toss with the salad and divide between two bowls.

Quick-meal note

A no-cook lunch. Mash a few beans into the dressing for a creamier texture.

Chickpea-Feta Pita Pockets

RECIPE 07 / 10 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed
- 2 small whole-wheat pitas
- 1 medium cucumber
- 1/2 cup crumbled feta
- 2 tbsp lemon juice

Make it

First

Dice cucumber. Mash about half the chickpeas with lemon juice.

Next

Fold in remaining chickpeas, cucumber and feta.

Finish

Open pitas and divide filling between them.

Quick-meal note

Keep filling separate from bread until serving if packing ahead.

Chicken-Hummus Wraps

RECIPE 08 / 10 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

2 whole-wheat tortillas (10-inch)
8 oz ready-cooked chicken breast
1/2 cup hummus
2 cups baby spinach
1 cup shredded carrots

Make it

First

Slice the ready-cooked chicken into thin strips.

Next

Spread tortillas with hummus, then add spinach, carrots and chicken.

Finish

Fold in the sides and roll tightly. Cut in half.

Quick-meal note

Use refrigerated ready-to-eat chicken; this recipe does not include cooking raw chicken.

Tomato-Mozzarella Chickpea Bowls

RECIPE 09 / 10 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed

2 cups cherry tomatoes

4 oz fresh mozzarella

1/4 cup fresh basil leaves

2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

Make it

First

Halve tomatoes, tear mozzarella into small pieces and slice basil.

Next

Combine chickpeas, tomatoes, mozzarella and basil.

Finish

Drizzle with balsamic vinegar, toss and divide between bowls.

Quick-meal note

Drain mozzarella well so the bowls stay fresh instead of watery.

Lemony Lentil-Cucumber Bowls

RECIPE 10 / 10 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

2 cups ready-to-eat cooked lentils

1 medium cucumber

1/2 cup crumbled feta

2 tbsp lemon juice

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Drain lentils if needed. Dice cucumber.

Next

Whisk lemon juice with oil.

Finish

Toss lentils, cucumber and feta with the dressing; divide into two portions.

Quick-meal note

Buy canned or refrigerated cooked lentils. Dry lentils will not fit the time estimate.

Spinach-Feta Egg Skillet

RECIPE 11 / 15 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

4 large eggs

4 cups baby spinach

1 cup cherry tomatoes

1/3 cup crumbled feta

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Halve tomatoes. Heat oil in a nonstick skillet over medium heat.

Next

Cook tomatoes for 3 minutes. Add spinach and stir until wilted, about 2 minutes.

Finish

Beat eggs, add to the skillet and stir gently until fully set. Scatter feta over the top and divide in two.

Quick-meal note

Serve as a light meal. For a larger appetite, add bread or fruit separately; these are not included in the five ingredients.

Lemon Shrimp & Couscous

RECIPE 12 / 20 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

10 oz raw peeled small shrimp, fully thawed
3/4 cup dry whole-wheat couscous (5-minute type)
2 cups baby spinach
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Bring the package-specified water amount to a boil. Stir in couscous, cover and remove from heat for the package time, about 5 minutes.

Next

Meanwhile, pat shrimp dry. Heat oil in a skillet over medium-high heat; cook shrimp for 2-3 minutes per side, until pearly and opaque.

Finish

Stir spinach into the shrimp until wilted. Fluff couscous and fold in shrimp, spinach and lemon juice.

Quick-meal note

Frozen shrimp must be thawed before starting. Choose quick couscous, not pearl couscous.

Salmon-Chickpea Pesto Skillet

RECIPE 13 / 15 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

2 cans salmon (5 oz each), drained

1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed

2 cups cherry tomatoes

3 cups baby spinach

3 tbsp prepared basil pesto

Make it

First

Halve tomatoes. Add them to a nonstick skillet with 2 tablespoons water; cook covered over medium heat for 4 minutes.

Next

Add chickpeas and salmon in chunks; stir gently for 3-4 minutes until hot.

Finish

Fold in spinach until wilted, then stir in pesto and divide between two bowls.

Quick-meal note

Prepared pesto counts as one purchased ingredient. Check its label for milk and nuts.

Chicken & Broccoli Brown Rice Bowls

RECIPE 14 / 15 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 8 oz ready-cooked chicken breast
- 1 pouch plain microwave brown rice (8.8 oz)
- 3 cups frozen broccoli florets
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Microwave broccoli in a covered microwave-safe bowl with a splash of water, following the package directions. Drain.

Next

Heat rice as directed. Dice the chicken.

Finish

Combine rice, broccoli and chicken; microwave until chicken reaches 165°F. Toss with lemon juice and olive oil.

Quick-meal note

Choose broccoli that cooks in 5-7 minutes. A microwave is needed for this timing.

Tomato & White Bean Gnocchi

RECIPE 15 / 20 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 12 oz shelf-stable potato gnocchi
- 1 can cannellini beans (15 oz), drained and rinsed
- 1 can crushed tomatoes (14.5 oz)
- 3 cups baby spinach
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Heat oil and crushed tomatoes in a wide covered skillet over medium heat until simmering.

Next

Add gnocchi, beans and 1/3 cup water. Cover and simmer for 5-7 minutes, stirring occasionally, until gnocchi are tender; follow package guidance.

Finish

Stir in spinach until wilted. Add a splash of water if needed and serve in two bowls.

Quick-meal note

Choose gnocchi with a short stovetop cooking time. This is a generous two-serving dinner.

Pantry Tuna-Chickpea Bowls

RECIPE 16 / 7 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 2 cans tuna in water (5 oz each), drained
- 1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed
- 1 jar roasted red peppers (12 oz), drained
- 2 tbsp bottled lemon juice
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Slice drained peppers into bite-size pieces.

Next

Combine tuna, chickpeas and peppers.

Finish

Toss with lemon juice and oil and divide into two bowls.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. Everything can be stored unopened at room temperature; refrigerate opened leftovers.

Smoky White Bean Tomato Soup

RECIPE 17 / 15 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

2 cans cannellini beans (15 oz each), drained and rinsed

1 can crushed tomatoes (14.5 oz)

2 cups shelf-stable low-sodium vegetable broth

1 tsp smoked paprika

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Combine tomatoes, broth, paprika and oil in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer.

Next

Mash half the beans with a fork and add all beans to the pot.

Finish

Simmer for 7-8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until hot and slightly thickened. Divide into two large bowls.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. Mashing the beans thickens the soup without cream.

Sardine & Roasted Pepper Crispbreads

RECIPE 18 / 8 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

2 cans sardines in olive oil (3.75 oz each)
8 whole-grain crispbreads
1 jar roasted red peppers (12 oz), drained
2 tbsp bottled lemon juice
1/2 tsp dried oregano

Make it

First

Drain sardines, reserving 2 teaspoons of their oil. Slice peppers.

Next

Mash sardines lightly with lemon juice, oregano and reserved oil.

Finish

Divide sardines and peppers among crispbreads. Serve four per person.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. Assemble just before eating so the crispbreads stay crunchy.

Chickpea Couscous with Raisins

RECIPE 19 / 12 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

3/4 cup dry whole-wheat couscous (5-minute type)

1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed

1/4 cup raisins

1/4 cup sliced almonds

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Bring the package-specified water amount to a boil with the raisins.

Next

Stir in couscous and chickpeas. Cover, remove from heat and stand for the package time, about 5 minutes.

Finish

Fluff with a fork, stir in oil and almonds and divide into two bowls.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. Choose five-minute couscous to keep the total time short.

Artichoke & White Bean Salad

RECIPE 20 / 8 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

1 can cannellini beans (15 oz), drained and rinsed

1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed

1 jar marinated artichoke hearts (12 oz)

1/3 cup pitted olives

2 tbsp bottled lemon juice

Make it

First

Drain artichokes, saving 2 tablespoons marinade; chop artichokes and olives.

Next

Combine both beans with artichokes and olives.

Finish

Toss with reserved marinade and lemon juice. Divide between two bowls.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. The marinated artichokes provide the dressing base; no separate oil is needed.

Tomato-Lentil Couscous Pot

RECIPE 21 / 15 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

3/4 cup dry whole-wheat couscous (5-minute type)

1 can lentils (15 oz), drained and rinsed

1 can diced tomatoes (14.5 oz), with juice

1 tsp dried oregano

1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Bring tomatoes, lentils, oregano, oil and 3/4 cup water to a simmer in a covered saucepan.

Next

Stir in couscous. Cover and remove from heat for 5 minutes or the package time.

Finish

Fluff and check tenderness. Add a little boiling water if dry; cover for another minute. Divide in two.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. Use regular quick couscous. Tomato liquid varies, so check moisture before serving.

Pesto Chickpea Pasta

RECIPE 22 / 20 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

5 oz dry whole-wheat pasta (8-10 minute type)

1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed

1 jar roasted red peppers (12 oz), drained

3 tbsp shelf-stable basil pesto

1 tbsp bottled lemon juice

Make it

First

Start a covered pot of water boiling. Slice peppers while it heats.

Next

Cook pasta as directed, adding chickpeas for the final minute. Reserve 1/2 cup cooking water before draining.

Finish

Toss pasta and chickpeas with peppers, pesto and lemon juice. Add reserved water a tablespoon at a time to loosen.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. Use a small pasta shape with an 8-10 minute cook time and shelf-stable unopened pesto.

Warm Black Bean & Pepper Rice

RECIPE 23 / 12 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 1 pouch plain microwave brown rice (8.8 oz)
- 1 can black beans (15 oz), drained and rinsed
- 1 jar roasted red peppers (12 oz), drained
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Slice peppers. Combine beans, peppers, cumin, oil and 2 tablespoons water in a saucepan.

Next

Heat over medium heat for 5-6 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Finish

Microwave rice as directed. Divide rice into bowls and top with the bean mixture.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. This Mediterranean-style variation uses beans, whole grains, vegetables and olive oil.

Lemon Salmon & Quinoa Bowls

RECIPE 24 / 10 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 2 cans salmon (5 oz each), drained
- 1 shelf-stable pouch cooked quinoa (8.8 oz)
- 1 can cut green beans (14.5 oz), drained
- 2 tbsp bottled lemon juice
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil

Make it

First

Heat quinoa according to its package directions.

Next

Combine salmon and green beans in a microwave-safe bowl, cover loosely and heat until hot.

Finish

Divide quinoa between two bowls. Add salmon and beans, then drizzle with lemon juice and oil.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY ONLY. Use ready-cooked quinoa; cooking dry quinoa adds time.

Chickpea-Tomato Pita Plates

RECIPE 25 / 10 MIN TOTAL / SERVES 2

Your five ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed
- 1 can diced tomatoes (14.5 oz), drained
- 2 small whole-wheat pitas
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano

Make it

First

Combine chickpeas, drained tomatoes, oil and oregano in a saucepan.

Next

Heat over medium heat for 5-6 minutes, stirring and lightly mashing some chickpeas.

Finish

Warm pitas in a dry skillet or toaster and serve one per person with the chickpea mixture.

Quick-meal note

PANTRY + BREAD. Use pitas within package storage limits, or keep them frozen and warm from frozen.

Build your emergency shelf

These three small kits make six adult servings in total. Each kit makes one full recipe for two. Check your pantry first and replace items after using them.

Kit A: Tuna-chickpea bowls • Recipe 16

2 cans tuna (5 oz each); 1 can chickpeas (15 oz); 1 jar roasted red peppers (12 oz). Shared staples: 2 tbsp bottled lemon juice and 1 tbsp olive oil.

Kit B: White bean tomato soup • Recipe 17

2 cans cannellini beans (15 oz each); 1 can crushed tomatoes (14.5 oz); 2 cups shelf-stable vegetable broth. Shared staples: 1 tsp smoked paprika and 1 tbsp olive oil.

Kit C: Chickpea couscous • Recipe 19

3/4 cup dry quick whole-wheat couscous; 1 can chickpeas (15 oz); 1/4 cup raisins; 1/4 cup sliced almonds. Shared staple: 1 tbsp olive oil.

One combined shopping check

Across the three kits, buy 2 cans tuna, 2 cans chickpeas, 2 cans cannellini beans, 1 jar peppers, 1 can crushed tomatoes and at least 2 cups broth. Add couscous, raisins and almonds in the amounts above. Total shared staples: 3 tbsp olive oil, 2 tbsp lemon juice and 1 tsp smoked paprika.

Keep the shelf useful

Store unopened packages as labeled. Keep the oldest items in front and check dates monthly. After opening, refrigerate foods according to their labels. Pantry meals still need safe storage once assembled. Recipe 25 also requires usable bread; keep a spare pack in the freezer if helpful.

Pack, store & repeat

A breakfast that leaves with you

Choose two breakfast recipes. Portion dry ingredients the evening before, then assemble dairy, fruit and egg fillings close to departure. Carry a spoon for jars and cups. Keep crispbreads, nuts and wet fillings separate until eating.

Keep cold food cold

Refrigerate perishable food at 40°F or below. Use an insulated bag with two cold sources for dairy, eggs, fish, chicken and assembled meals. Refrigerate perishables within 2 hours, or within 1 hour when temperatures exceed 90°F. Portable does not mean shelf-stable.

Leftovers and reheating

Refrigerate cooked leftovers promptly in shallow containers and use within 3-4 days, or sooner if a package label or ingredient's remaining storage life requires it. For best texture, eat assembled breakfasts and salads within 1-2 days. Reheat leftovers to 165°F. Cook eggs until the whites and yolks are firm; scrambled eggs should not be runny. Shrimp should be pearly and opaque.

Your next busy week

My two breakfast choices: _____

My two pantry backups: _____

My quickest dinner: _____

Ingredients to replace: _____

Food-safety references

USDA FSIS: Leftovers and Food Safety; Keeping Bag Lunches Safe.

fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/leftovers-and-food-safety

fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/keeping-bag-lunches-safe

FoodSafety.gov: Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures.

foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/safe-minimum-internal-temperatures