

The Perimenopause Kitchen

The 20-Minute Perimenopause Kitchen

*A Quick Menopause Diet Cookbook with 52 Easy Recipes for One
44 Ready in 20 Minutes or Less, Plus 8
Make-Ahead Batch Dishes for Busy Weeknights*

 perimenostage

Contents

BEFORE YOU COOK

Using This Book	5
How These Recipes Save Time	8
Batch Cooking Safely	10
Quick Food Can Still Be Good Food	12
Check With Someone First If...	14
Measures and Oven Temperatures	15

PART 1. BREAKFAST

Egg and cheddar breakfast tacos	19
Smoked salmon and egg on gluten-free toast	21
Smoked salmon and egg on rye	23
Spinach and feta omelette with toast	25

PART 2. LUNCH

Beef and barley vegetable soup	29
Chicken and rice noodle slaw with peanut dressing	31
Chicken caprese pasta salad	33
Chicken, hummus and crunchy veg wrap	35
Chicken, quinoa and roast vegetable bowl	37
Chickpea pasta salad with feta and cucumber	39
Crab, mango and avocado rice salad	41
Egg salad sandwich with yogurt	43
Egg, edamame and avocado rice bowl	45
Egg-fried quinoa with vegetables	47
Folded black bean and cheese quesadilla	49
Ginger beef lettuce wraps with brown rice	51
Greek salad with chickpeas, feta and pita	53
Lactose-free cottage cheese and lentil salad	55
Mushroom, spinach and black bean quesadilla	57
Salmon salad sandwich	59
Salmon, avocado and edamame rice bowl	61
Smoked salmon and quinoa salad with dill yogurt	63

Stuffed sweet potato with black beans and cheddar	65
Tuna and white bean salad	67
Tuna melt on whole-wheat with an apple	69
Turkey, hummus and salad pita	71

PART 3. DINNER

Beef and snap pea stir-fry with rice noodles	75
Beef and turkey meatballs with whole-wheat spaghetti	77
Beef chili con carne with rice	79
Chicken noodle soup with white beans	81
Chickpea and cauliflower korma with yogurt	83
Egg fried brown rice with peas and edamame	85
Ginger-glazed salmon rice bowl with broccoli	87
Miso-glazed cod with bok choy and rice	89
Mushroom and cheddar omelette with toast and tomatoes	91
Mushroom, pea and ricotta pasta	93
One-pan chicken, rice and peas	95
Pork and pineapple rice bowl	97
Quick bean, cheese and rice bowl	99
Quick chicken and broccoli rice bowl	101
Shrimp, zucchini and tomato pasta	103
Spinach and ricotta pasta bake	105
Tuna puttanesca pasta	107
Turkey and bean chili	109
Turkey and black bean stuffed sweet potato	111
Turkey and vegetable stir-fry with rice noodles	113

PART 4. SNACKS

Boiled egg, apple and cheddar	117
Cheddar, crackers and grapes	119
Cottage cheese and cucumber on a rice cake	121
Kefir with a banana	123

Pork tenderloin slices with apple and mustard	125	Swaps for What's in the Fridge	130
Smoked salmon on crackers	127	Recipe Finder	131
AT THE BACK		Where to Go Next	138
A Week of Fast Dinners	128	Sources	139
		Index	141

Using This Book

This book is for the evenings when there's no time and not much energy left. It has 52 recipes: 4 breakfasts, 22 lunches, 20 dinners and 6 snacks. Forty-four of them are ready in 20 minutes or less. The other eight are batch dishes, such as chili, soup and a pasta bake, that take 30 to 60 minutes, most of it simmering or baking while you do something else, and give you meals for later in the week.

The recipes come from four kinds of kitchen, and each one is labeled: 21 are vegetarian, 13 pescatarian, 11 use poultry and 7 include beef or pork. The Recipe Finder at the back sorts them by time, protein, fiber, calcium and sodium.

Reading the times

The time under each title runs from the moment you start to the moment you eat, with the ingredients already out. Where a recipe uses cooked rice, quinoa or lentils from a pouch or from your fridge, the time counts that shortcut. The egg fried rice starts from rice cooked the day before, and its method says so. Batch dishes show their full time, hands-off simmering included.

Portions and numbers

Each recipe is written for one person. The panel under the headnote gives five figures for that serving: calories, protein, fiber, calcium and sodium. They were calculated from USDA FoodData Central, ingredient by ingredient, for exactly the amounts listed. To cook for two or four, multiply every ingredient; the per-serving figures stay the same. A fuller pan can take a few minutes longer, so go by the doneness cue in the method rather than the clock alone.

Sodium is on the panel because convenience food carries salt: cheese, canned beans, salsa, broth, tamari and smoked fish all bring some. US guidance sets a daily limit of 2,300 mg. Forty-one recipes here have under 700 mg a serving. The eleven that run higher, between 727 and 888 mg, are the two quesadillas, the sweet potato with black beans and cheddar, the bean, cheese and rice bowl, the Greek salad, the two rice-noodle stir-fries, the salmon and avocado rice bowl, the two soups and the smoked salmon on rye. Two recipes use a little maple syrup, 2.4 to 3 grams of added sugar per serving; the other 50 have none.

Labels on each recipe

The line under the title gives the total time, the diet and any flags. *Vegetarian* recipes may include eggs and dairy; *pescatarian* adds fish and shellfish; *no red meat* adds poultry; *everything* includes beef or pork. *Batch* marks the dishes that keep and reheat, *leftovers* the dinners that make a good lunch the next day, *budget* the ones built on inexpensive staples, and *spicy* the two chilis.

The *Contains* line names the major allergens in the ingredients as written: milk and lactose, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat or gluten, soy and sesame. Packaged foods differ and change, so check the label of anything you buy if you have an allergy.

Quantities are in US cups, spoons and ounces with grams in brackets. Oven settings are in Fahrenheit with Celsius in brackets.

Food safety

Fast cooking still has to be safe cooking. Every recipe with raw meat, poultry, fish, shellfish or eggs gives a doneness cue based on the USDA’s safe minimum internal temperatures. An instant-read thermometer is the quickest way to know; push it into the thickest part, away from the pan.

FOOD	COOK UNTIL IT REACHES
Steaks and pork tenderloin	145°F (63°C), then rest 3 minutes
Ground beef	160°F (71°C)
Ground turkey, and meatballs made with it	165°F (74°C)
Chicken breasts and thighs	165°F (74°C)
Fish and shellfish	145°F (63°C); fish flakes easily, shrimp turn opaque
Eggs	white and yolk firm; scrambled eggs not runny
Casseroles and pasta bakes	165°F (74°C)
Leftovers and reheated dishes	165°F (74°C)

Source: USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service.

The eggs in this book are cooked until the yolk is firm, as the USDA advises, including the boiled ones on toast. Batch Cooking Safely, a few pages on, covers cooling, storing and re-heating.

Batch Cooking Safely



Batch cooking saves hours, but only if the food stays safe between the day you cook it and the day you eat it. The rules in this chapter come from the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS).

Cool it quickly

Bacteria grow fastest between 40°F and 140°F (4°C and 60°C), the range FSIS calls the danger zone. Refrigerate cooked food within two hours, or within one hour if the room is above 90°F (32°C). A pot of chili left on the stove to cool overnight has spent far too long in that range.

A big pot holds its heat for a long time, so divide soups, stews and chilis into shallow containers, and cut large pieces of meat into smaller portions. FSIS says hot food can go straight into the fridge; there's no need to wait until it reaches room temperature.

How long it keeps

Refrigerated leftovers keep three to four days. In the freezer, FSIS says, food kept constantly at 0°F (–18°C) is always safe. Quality is another matter: frozen leftovers lose moisture and

flavor over time, so FSIS suggests eating them within three to four months. A label with the dish and the date saves guessing.

Cover leftovers, wrap them airtight or seal them in containers. That keeps bacteria out, holds moisture in and stops them from picking up smells from the rest of the fridge.

Hard-boiled eggs follow their own rule. Get them into the fridge within two hours of cooking and eat them within a week. FSIS advises against freezing them.

Thawing

You can thaw frozen portions in the fridge, in cold water in a leak-proof bag, or in the microwave. The fridge is slowest, and the food stays safe the whole time; eat it within three to four days, or refreeze it. Food thawed in cold water should be cooked before it goes back in the freezer, and food thawed in the microwave should be heated to 165°F (74°C) straight away. Soups, stews and casseroles can also be reheated from frozen, in a pan, the oven or the microwave. It takes longer, but it's safe.

Reheating

Reheat leftovers to 165°F (74°C), and bring soups, sauces and gravies to a rolling boil. Cover the food while it heats so it stays moist and heats all the way through. Microwaves leave cold spots, so cover and rotate the dish, let it stand for a moment, and check the temperature in more than one place.

Refreezing

Leftovers that you thawed and reheated to 165°F can go back in the freezer. If you froze a big container and need only part of it, thaw it in the fridge, take what you need and refreeze the rest without reheating it.

Cooked protein for the week

Plain cooked chicken, turkey or pork that you'll eat cold in wraps and salads follows the same three-to-four-day rule. Reheat it to 165°F when a recipe serves it hot.



Egg and cheddar breakfast tacos

Two scrambled eggs and cheddar in warm corn tortillas with red pepper and salsa. Ten minutes from fridge to plate, with 22 grams of protein and 312 mg of calcium.

379 KCAL	22^g PROTEIN	4.3^g FIBER	312^{mg} CALCIUM	489^{mg} SODIUM
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Contains: milk (dairy), eggs

INGREDIENTS

Serves 1 · doubles or quadruples easily.

2 large eggs (100 g)

2 corn tortillas (52 g)

½ oz (20 g) reduced-fat cheddar

½ red bell pepper (50 g)

1½ tbsp (30 g) salsa

1 tsp olive oil

METHOD

- 1 Soften the diced pepper in the oil, 3 minutes.
- 2 Add the beaten eggs and scramble until set, with no runny egg left.
- 3 Warm the tortillas in a dry pan and fill them with the eggs, cheddar and salsa.



Ginger beef lettuce wraps with brown rice

Ginger and garlic beef with edamame and brown rice, spooned into lettuce leaves.
15 minutes and 35 grams of protein.

465 KCAL	35g PROTEIN	8.6g FIBER	98mg CALCIUM	559mg SODIUM
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Contains: soy

INGREDIENTS

- Serves 1 · doubles or quadruples easily.*
- 3½ oz (100 g) 95% lean ground beef
- 1 cup (180 g) cooked brown rice (pouch or leftover)
- ½ cup (60 g) shelled edamame (frozen)
- 1¼ cups (60 g) romaine lettuce
- ¾ medium carrot (40 g)
- ¾ scallion (10 g)
- 1¼ tsp tamari, labeled gluten-free
- ½ tbsp (3 g) fresh ginger
- 1 garlic clove (3 g)

METHOD

- 1 Brown the beef with the garlic and ginger, 6 minutes, until no pink remains (160°F/71°C); add the tamari.
- 2 Warm the rice and edamame.
- 3 Spoon rice, edamame, beef and grated carrot into lettuce leaves; top with scallion.



Turkey and bean chili

Ground turkey and kidney beans in a spiced tomato chili, with a spoon of yogurt. It's mildly spicy and freezes well.

453

KCAL

37g

PROTEIN

13g

FIBER

230mg

CALCIUM

416mg

SODIUM

Contains: milk (dairy), lactose

INGREDIENTS

Serves 1 · doubles or quadruples easily.

4 oz (120 g) 93% lean ground turkey

½ cup (100 g) canned kidney beans, drained and rinsed

¾ cup (200 g) canned diced tomatoes, no salt added

½ medium onion (60 g)

½ red bell pepper (60 g)

1 garlic clove (3 g)

1 tsp chili powder

¾ tsp ground cumin

1 tsp olive oil

2 tbsp (30 g) plain nonfat Greek yogurt

METHOD

- 1 Brown the turkey with the onion and pepper in the oil, 8 minutes.
- 2 Add the garlic, chili powder and cumin for 1 minute.
- 3 Add beans and tomatoes; simmer 25 minutes (the turkey should reach 165°F/74°C).
- 4 Serve with a spoon of yogurt.

A Week of Fast Dinners

There's no fixed menu in this book, but a busy week goes better with a little structure. Here's how to put one together from these recipes.

Start with a batch dish. Choose a chili, a soup, the korma, the meatballs, the one-pan chicken or the pasta bake. Cook it on your least busy evening for two or more, eat it that night, and portion the rest into shallow containers for the fridge or freezer.

Cook extra protein while it simmers. Two or three chicken breasts or a pork tenderloin cooked alongside give you the base for wraps, bowls and salads. Keep them in the fridge and eat them within three to four days.

Save the quickest meals for the hardest nights. The quesadillas, the rice bowls and the stuffed sweet potatoes need only a pouch of grain, a can and a pan.

Keep a shortcut shelf. Cooked-grain pouches, canned tuna, salmon and beans, frozen vegetables, eggs, tortillas, salsa and Greek yogurt cover most of the recipes here.

Let lunches use dinners. Anything flagged *leftovers* can go into a lunch container the same evening.

Leave room for nights off. A boiled egg with an apple and some cheddar, or a bowl of leftovers, is a perfectly good dinner on a bad night.

A sample week

Here is one week built on those ideas. It's an example, not a prescription.

Monday: cook the turkey and bean chili for two; the second portion is Tuesday's lunch.

Wednesday: bake the spinach and ricotta pasta bake for two, for Thursday's lunch. When you cook the chicken for Wednesday's wrap, cook a second breast for Thursday's rice bowl.

Saturday: make the one-pan chicken, rice and peas for two; the rest is Sunday's lunch. The other four dinners take 12 to 20 minutes.

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK
Monday 102 g protein 29 g fiber 1,031 mg calcium 1,636 mg sodium	Egg and cheddar breakfast tacos 19	Tuna and white bean salad 67	Turkey and bean chili 109	Kefir with a banana 123
Tuesday 100 g protein 24 g fiber 803 mg calcium 1,717 mg sodium	Spinach and feta omelette with toast 25	Turkey and bean chili 109	Ginger-glazed salmon rice bowl with broccoli 87	Cheddar, crackers and grapes 119
Wednesday 88 g protein 26 g fiber 898 mg calcium 1,791 mg sodium	Smoked salmon and egg on rye 23	Chicken, hummus and crunchy veg wrap 35	Spinach and ricotta pasta bake 105	Boiled egg, apple and cheddar 117
Thursday 101 g protein 22 g fiber 1,161 mg calcium 1,445 mg sodium	Egg and cheddar breakfast tacos 19	Spinach and ricotta pasta bake 105	Quick chicken and broccoli rice bowl 101	Kefir with a banana 123
Friday 96 g protein 17 g fiber 812 mg calcium 1,918 mg sodium	Spinach and feta omelette with toast 25	Salmon salad sandwich 59	Pork and pineapple rice bowl 97	Cottage cheese and cucumber on a rice cake 121
Saturday 91 g protein 27 g fiber 1,019 mg calcium 2,191 mg sodium	Spinach and feta omelette with toast 25	Mushroom, spinach and black bean quesadilla 57	One-pan chicken, rice and peas 95	Cheddar, crackers and grapes 119
Sunday 102 g protein 26 g fiber 944 mg calcium 1,687 mg sodium	Egg and cheddar breakfast tacos 19	One-pan chicken, rice and peas 95	Mushroom, pea and ricotta pasta 93	Boiled egg, apple and cheddar 117

Every day reaches at least 88 grams of protein, 17 grams of fiber and 803 mg of calcium, and stays under 2,200 mg of sodium. The days come to 1,261 to 1,637 kcal, which is on the light side for many people, so add fruit, bread, a bigger portion of grain or a second snack whenever you're hungry.

If you'd rather have the planning done for you, perimenostage.com/meal-plan builds four weeks of menus from your answers about diet, allergies, cooking time and household.