

The Perimenopause
Kitchen

*A Mediterranean-Style Menopause Diet
Cookbook with 60 Easy Recipes for One
Everyday Meals for Muscle, Bone, Heart and Steady Energy*

 perimenostage

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How to Use This Book

This is a cookbook for women in perimenopause and the years after it. There are 60 recipes: 12 breakfasts, 15 lunches, 22 dinners and 11 snacks. Before them come a few short chapters on what food can and can't do at this stage of life, and after them a sample week, a recipe finder and swaps to help you put the recipes together.

You don't need to read the front chapters first. If you want to cook tonight, turn to the recipes. If you want to know why most plates in this book lean on beans, fish, yogurt and tofu, the chapter on the four building blocks explains it.

Every recipe serves one

Each recipe makes one serving. That's deliberate. The nutrition numbers are worked out for exactly the amounts listed, and they stay accurate only if you cook those amounts. To feed two or four people, double or quadruple everything. The numbers per serving don't change. Cooking times mostly stay the same too, though a fuller pan or pot may need a few extra minutes, so go by the doneness cue in the method.

Reading a recipe page

Each recipe sits on one page, opposite a photograph of the finished dish. Under the title you'll find the time, the diet the recipe fits, and a few flags. *Batch* means it reheats or keeps well, so it's worth making more than you need. *Leftovers* means dinner can become tomorrow's lunch. *Budget* marks recipes built on cheaper staples like canned beans, lentils and oats.

The diet labels run from strict to relaxed. *Vegan* recipes contain no animal foods at all. *Vegetarian* recipes may include eggs and dairy. *Pescatarian* adds fish and shellfish. *No red meat* adds poultry. *Everything* recipes include beef or pork. A vegan recipe suits everyone, and a pescatarian recipe suits a vegetarian once you swap the fish (see Swaps at the back).

The nutrition panel lists five numbers per serving: calories, protein, fiber, calcium and sodium. They come from the USDA's FoodData Central database, matched ingredient by ingredient. Nobody estimated them by eye. Packaged foods differ by brand, so your plate may come out slightly different.

The *Contains* line lists common allergens: milk (dairy and lactose), eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and gluten, soy and sesame. It reflects the ingredients as written. Pack-

ged foods can contain allergens that a recipe line doesn’t show, so check every label if you have an allergy.

Ingredients are in US measures, with grams in brackets. If you have a kitchen scale, the grams are the more precise of the two. Oven temperatures are in Fahrenheit, with Celsius in brackets.

Doneness cues and cook’s notes

Wherever a recipe uses raw meat, poultry, fish, shellfish or eggs, the method gives you a doneness cue based on the USDA’s safe minimum internal temperatures. An instant-read thermometer takes the guesswork out of these and is the one gadget this book recommends. Push it into the thickest part of the food, away from bone and away from the pan.

FOOD	COOK UNTIL IT REACHES
Steaks and pork (whole cuts)	145°F (63°C), then rest 3 minutes
Ground beef, pork or turkey	160°F (71°C) for beef and pork, 165°F (74°C) for turkey
Chicken and turkey pieces	165°F (74°C)
Fish	145°F (63°C), or until it’s opaque and flakes easily with a fork
Shrimp	flesh pearly white and opaque
Eggs	yolk and white firm
Egg dishes such as bakes and frittatas	160°F (71°C)
Casseroles, leftovers and reheated soups	165°F (74°C)

Source: USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Some recipes end with a cook’s note: a practical tip on timing, texture or a common snag. Ovens, pans and stoves vary, so treat every time in this book as a guide and trust what you see in the pan.

Links in this book

A few pages point to free tools at perimenostage.com. The free stage check at perimenostage.com/kitchen takes about two minutes and tells you which stage of the transition your symptoms suggest. Other links are listed in Where to Go Next at the back of the book.

A note on words: this book says “women” because the studies it draws on studied women. Trans men and nonbinary people with ovaries go through perimenopause too, and everything here applies to them.



Tofu scramble with peppers and potatoes

Calcium-set tofu crumbles into a scramble that browns well with potatoes and red pepper. Turmeric gives it color. Check the label: tofu set with calcium sulfate is the reason this plate has over 1,000 mg of calcium.

396 KCAL	30g PROTEIN	8.1g FIBER	1,075mg CALCIUM	210mg SODIUM
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Contains: soy

INGREDIENTS

- Serves 1 · doubles or quadruples easily.*
- 5½ oz (150 g) firm tofu (calcium-set)
 - ½ medium potato (120 g)
 - ½ red bell pepper (60 g)
 - 1 cup (30 g) baby spinach
 - ½ tbsp (7 g) olive oil
 - a pinch of ground turmeric
 - a pinch of garlic powder
 - a pinch of salt
 - a pinch of black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Dice the potato and cook in the oil, covered, 10 minutes.
- 2 Add the pepper, then crumble in the tofu with the turmeric, garlic powder, salt and pepper; cook 5 minutes.
- 3 Stir in the spinach until it wilts.

COOK'S NOTE
Press the tofu between paper towels for a few minutes if it's very wet. It browns better.



Chickpea, feta and quinoa bowl with yogurt dressing

Chickpeas, quinoa and feta with cucumber and tomatoes, under a dill and yogurt dressing. With a pouch of cooked quinoa this lunch takes 10 minutes, and it packs well.

490

KCAL

26g

PROTEIN

13g

FIBER

317mg

CALCIUM

694mg

SODIUM

Contains: milk (dairy), lactose

INGREDIENTS

Serves 1 · doubles or quadruples easily.

1 cup (150 g) canned chickpeas,
drained and rinsed

½ cup (80 g) cooked quinoa
(pouch or leftover)

¾ cup (80 g) cucumber

½ cup (80 g) cherry tomatoes

1 oz (30 g) feta

¼ cup (60 g) plain nonfat Greek
yogurt

2 tbsp (1 g) dill

1 tsp lemon juice

1 tsp olive oil

METHOD

- 1** Stir the yogurt with the dill and lemon.
- 2** Toss the chickpeas, quinoa, cucumber and tomatoes with the oil.
- 3** Top with the crumbled feta and the yogurt dressing.



Garlic shrimp with white beans and spinach

Garlicky shrimp with white beans and wilted spinach, finished with lemon. A 15-minute dinner with 47 grams of protein, the highest in the book.

589

KCAL

47 g

PROTEIN

14 g

FIBER

324 mg

CALCIUM

852 mg

SODIUM

Contains: shellfish, wheat or gluten

INGREDIENTS

Serves 1 · doubles or quadruples easily.

4½ oz (130 g) raw peeled shrimp

¾ cup (150 g) canned white beans, drained and rinsed

2 cups (60 g) baby spinach

2 garlic cloves (6 g)

½ tbsp (7 g) olive oil

½ tbsp (8 g) lemon juice

2 slices (56 g) whole-grain bread

¼ tsp paprika

METHOD

- 1 Warm the oil with the sliced garlic and paprika until fragrant.
- 2 Add the shrimp and cook 2 minutes a side, until pink and opaque; add the beans and spinach until the spinach wilts.
- 3 Squeeze the lemon over and serve with the bread, toasted.

Build Your Own Week

This book doesn't include a meal plan. A plan someone else wrote rarely fits your schedule, your household or what you like. Here are the principles behind a good week instead, so you can put one together from these recipes in a few minutes.

Start with dinners. Choose three or four dinners for the week, and make at least one of them a batch or leftovers recipe. On busier nights, plan something from the 20-minute list in the Recipe Finder. Leave a night or two open for eating out, leftovers or whatever the week throws at you.

Let dinner make lunch. Recipes flagged *leftovers* turn into the next day's lunch with no extra work. Cook a double portion and pack the second one straight away.

Repeat breakfasts. Most people are happy eating the same two or three breakfasts. Pick one quick option for weekdays, such as a smoothie, chia pudding or oatmeal cups made on Sunday, and one cooked breakfast for the weekend.

Mix your protein sources. Across the week, aim for a spread: fish once or twice, beans and lentils several times, eggs, dairy or tofu, and poultry or meat if you eat them. The DASH plan suggests several servings of nuts, seeds and beans each week.

Count calcium by servings. Two to three calcium-rich foods a day covers most women. The Recipe Finder lists recipes with 300 mg or more per serving.

Shop once. Write the week's recipes down, then go through each ingredient list and note what you don't have. Group the list by store section. Canned, frozen and dry staples from the pantry chapter fill most gaps.

Leave room for the unplanned. A week that works four days out of seven is a good week.

A sample week

Here is one week built on those principles, to show how the pieces fit. It's an example, not a prescription.

Before the week starts: bake a triple batch of oatmeal cups and make a triple pot of minestrone. **Monday:** cook the curry for two and pack the second serving for Tuesday's lunch.

Wednesday night: set the mango chia pudding and the chocolate chia pudding in jars for Thursday.

Saturday: make the shepherd's pie for two; the second serving is Sunday's lunch.

DAY	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER	SNACK
Monday 102 g protein 51 g fiber 1,062 mg calcium	Baked apple oatmeal cups 21	Minestrone with white beans, lentils and pasta 61	Chicken, chickpea and spinach curry 93	Tomato, mozzarella and white bean bites 143
Tuesday 107 g protein 39 g fiber 1,178 mg calcium	Kefir, berry and oat smoothie 31	Chicken, chickpea and spinach curry 93	15-minute sardine and tomato pasta 81	Crunchy roasted paprika chickpeas 129
Wednesday 91 g protein 44 g fiber 1,863 mg calcium	Baked apple oatmeal cups 21	Minestrone with white beans, lentils and pasta 61	Crispy garlic tofu with green beans and rice 99	Ricotta with peaches and honey 139
Thursday 96 g protein 41 g fiber 1,693 mg calcium	Chia and hemp pudding with mango 27	Sardine and chickpea salad with lemon 69	Chicken fajitas with peppers and avocado 89	Chocolate chia pudding 127
Friday 110 g protein 51 g fiber 1,027 mg calcium	Baked apple oatmeal cups 21	Minestrone with white beans, lentils and pasta 61	Garlic shrimp with white beans and spinach 103	Yogurt dill dip with vegetables and pumpkin seeds 145
Saturday 95 g protein 40 g fiber 1,023 mg calcium	Salmon and sweet potato hash with spinach 35	Tomato and white bean soup with a cheese toastie 73	Beef and lentil shepherd's pie 85	Hemp, date and cocoa energy bites 131
Sunday 98 g protein 50 g fiber 1,259 mg calcium	Ricotta toast with strawberries and honey 33	Beef and lentil shepherd's pie 85	Eggplant parmesan-style bake with white beans 101	Black bean dip with vegetable sticks and tortilla chips 125

Every day clears 1,000 mg of calcium, 90 grams of protein and 39 grams of fiber, and stays under 2,100 mg of sodium. The days come to 1,500 to 1,750 kcal. That's a light week for many women, so add fruit, a slice of bread, a glass of milk or a bigger portion of the grain whenever you're hungry.

If you'd like a plan built for you, perimenostage.com/meal-plan builds a 28-day plan from your answers about how you eat, allergies and foods you won't eat, cooking time and household size.