



Budget-Friendly Vegan Meal Prep

grocery list + meal prep + recipes



Thank you to ALDI for sponsoring
this shopping list and meal guide!

ALDI Grocery List*

- **Dried goods**

- Long-grain brown rice (I purchased [this one](#))
- Simply Organic Raw Cashews
- Southern Grove Roasted Pistachios with Sea Salt
- Canned chickpeas (2 cans)
- Simply Organic Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Simply Nature Organic Linguine (optional)

- **Produce**

- Lemons
- Garlic
- Yellow onions
- Flat-leaf parsley (1 or 2)
- Cabbage (2 medium or large heads)
- Simply Nature Organic Chopped Kale (1 bag)

- **Refrigerated / Frozen**

- Earth Grown Organic Extra-Firm Tofu
- Earth Grown Classic Meatless Meatballs

** The meal prep here should make about 10 meals for one person, so feel free to adjust the quantity of groceries and meal prep according to your needs. The cost of the groceries used to make these 10 meals came out to just around \$22(!) at my local ALDI (I included only the cost of the dried goods actually used in the meal prep, since they're shelf-stable and can be used again in the future; of course, prices may vary by store location).*

Pantry Staples

- Kosher salt
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Dijon mustard
- Maple syrup
- Apple cider vinegar
- Spices
 - Cayenne pepper
 - Red pepper flakes
 - Paprika
 - Ground cumin

Supplement ideas*

- Avocado
- Pickled onions
- Sauerkraut
- Any other fresh veggies you have in your fridge
- Any other seeds or nuts in your pantry

*None of these are necessary, but will add more variety into your meals.

Meal Prep Order of Operations

General Tips

- With any meal prep, start with the item that will take the longest to cook.
1. **Soak the cashews** for the cabbage-cashew sauce
 - a. Note: if you don't have a high-powered blender, I recommend soaking overnight or covering them with water in a saucepan and boiling for 15 minutes.
 2. **Slice/prep cabbage, onions, and garlic**
 - a. Cut the cabbage into 6-8 steak-style cuts
 - b. Cut the remaining cabbage into wedges
 - c. Cut the onion into wedges
 - d. Slice and drizzle the garlic with oil and wrap in foil
 - e. Toss the cabbage and onion with olive oil, salt and pepper
 3. **Roast cabbage, onions, and garlic in the oven at 425°F; flip after 20-25 minutes**
 - a. While the veggies are roasting
 - i. Cook the **brown rice** in the **Instant Pot** (or **stovetop**)
 - ii. Make the **spiced pistachios** on the **stovetop**
 - iii. Massage the **kale**
 - iv. Prep the **chickpeas** (drain, rinse, dry + toss with oil, salt & pepper)
 - v. Prep the **tofu** (drain and pat dry well)
 4. **Take the cabbage, onions, and garlic out of the oven**
 5. **Roast the chickpeas in the oven**
 - a. While the chickpeas are roasting
 - i. Pan-fry the **tofu** on the **stovetop**
 - ii. Make the **cabbage-cashew sauce** (**blender**)
 - iii. Flip the **tofu** (**stovetop**)
 - iv. Make the **tofu glaze** (**stovetop**)
 - v. Make the **pistachio pesto** (**food processor**)
 6. **Take the chickpeas out of the oven**

Meal Prep Instructions

Maple-Dijon Crispy Tofu

- Prep time: 5 minutes
- Cook time: 15 minutes
- Total time: 20
- Serves: 3 to 4

Ingredients

- 1 (14-ounce) block of extra-firm tofu
- 1 ½ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil*
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 2 ½ tablespoons maple syrup
- ⅛ teaspoon cayenne pepper (¼ teaspoon for spicy)

Directions

1. Drain the tofu and pat it well with a clean dish towel or paper towels to remove excess water. Slice the tofu widthwise into ½-inch thick slices (10 to 12 slabs on a 14-ounce block). Cover with a dry dish towel or paper towels and gently press down to remove as much water as you can without crushing the tofu.
2. Heat the oil in a large nonstick frying pan over medium-high heat. Line a sheet pan or large plate with paper towels. Once the oil is nice and hot, add the tofu slices. Cook for 7 to 8 minutes, gently moving the tofu slabs around the pan as needed to coat evenly in the oil, or until the bottom is golden browned.** Using a spatula, flip the tofu and cook for 5 to 6 minutes on the other side until evenly browned. Transfer the tofu to the paper towels and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Note: I find it helpful to use a large spatula and a smaller offset spatula or butter knife to flip the tofu.
3. Whisk together the mustard, vinegar, maple syrup, and cayenne pepper in a small bowl. Reduce the heat to medium-low and pour the glaze into the hot pan. Simmer for 30 to 45 seconds, stirring frequently, until thickened a bit. Turn off the heat and add the tofu slabs back to the pan and coat well in the sauce. Take off the heat.

Recipe Notes

*If not using a nonstick pan, you will need a bit more oil, about 2 tablespoons.

** You may need to stand back to avoid oil sputter.

Storage & Reheating

- Store cooled tofu in an airtight container for 4 to 5 days.
- To reheat tofu, add a touch of oil or cooking spray to a nonstick frying pan over medium heat. Once hot, add the tofu and cook for 3 minutes, flip, and cook for another 3 minutes. If desired, you can make more glaze and brush it on after reheating.

Pistachio-Parsley Pesto

- Prep time: 3 minutes
- Cook time: 5 minutes
- Total time: 8 minutes
- Serves: A scant 1 cup. Feel free to double this recipe!

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup (40-45g) roasted or toasted pistachios (unsalted or salted)*
- 2 cups (25-30g) parsley leaves and tender stems
- 3 small garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 medium lemon, zested
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice, more as needed
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- 1/4 cup (56 mL) extra virgin olive oil
- 1-2 tablespoons water, plus more as needed

Directions

1. Add the pistachios to a food processor and process until the pistachios are in very small pieces. Add the parsley, garlic, lemon zest, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, and black pepper to taste. Blend until a paste forms, scraping down the sides as you go along.
2. Add some of the extra virgin olive oil and blend until it starts to form a sauce. Scrape down the sides again, and stream in the rest of the oil until you have a smooth yet thick texture. If it is not smooth enough, add a bit more oil or water, one spoon at a time, until the sauce comes together into a creamy, spoonable consistency. Taste for seasonings, adding more salt or pepper or lemon juice as desired.

Recipe Notes

*If using salted pistachios, don't add salt to the pesto while blending. After blending, taste, and add a pinch of salt as needed. If using unsalted pistachios, add about ¼ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more as needed to taste.

Storage

- Store in an airtight jar in the fridge for 1 week. The pesto will thicken as it rests. Feel free to stir in a teaspoon or two of water to thin.

Roasted Cabbage, Garlic, and Onions

- Prep time: 10 minutes
- Cook time: 40 minutes
- Total time: 50 minutes
- Serves: 6 to 8 servings of cabbage + 1 batch of cabbage-cashew sauce

Ingredients

- 1 large head of garlic
- 2 medium or large green cabbage heads
- 1 small or medium yellow onion, quartered
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Remove the outer layers of the garlic head and then slice off a thin layer off the top and sides to expose the skin of all of the cloves. Rub the exposed cloves with a bit of olive oil. Wrap in aluminum foil to make a packet.*
2. Remove any of the dark loose outer leaves on the cabbage and slice off the bottom nub. Slice the cabbage to get six or eight 3/4" thick steak-style slices. With any remaining cabbage, slice into wedges (or steak-style cuts, it's up to you).
3. Place the cabbage steaks on a rimmed sheet pan and drizzle the first side with 1 ½ to 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and rub it in. Season generously with salt and pepper. Flip and repeat with the oil and salt and pepper on the second side. Do the same with the cabbage wedges and onion wedges.
4. Spread out the cabbage and onions across two sheet pans. Add the garlic packet on one of the pans.
5. Roast for 20 to 25 minutes, until there is some browning on the top of the cabbage steaks. Carefully flip the cabbage steaks to avoid breaking. The cabbage steaks will need another 15-20 minutes in the oven, depending on their size. If the outer leaves are browning, don't worry - they are so tasty! The cabbage wedges, onion wedges, and garlic should only need another 10ish minutes. The garlic is done when cloves are very soft and practically oozing out of their skins.

Recipe Notes

*Or, you can wrap the garlic directly in parchment paper and then wrap in foil. The garlic will take about 10 extra minutes to roast this way.

Storage & Reheating

- Store cooled vegetables in an airtight container for 4 to 5 days. If desired, stack cabbage steaks on top of each other in a wide container to retain their shape.
- To reheat cabbage steaks, add them to a baking sheet and roast at 400°F for 10-15 minutes until heated through.

Cabbage-Cashew Sauce

- Prep time: 3 minutes
- Cook time: 5 minutes
- Total time: 8 minutes
- Serving: 32 to 36 ounces (a lot!)

Ingredients

- Roasted garlic (from above)
- Roasted onion wedges (from above)
- 4 cups (400g) roasted cabbage
- ½ cup (70g) raw cashews, soaked in boiling water for 30 minutes*
- 1 small lemon, zested
- 1 1/2 to 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 cup (240 mL) water, plus more as needed
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Black pepper

Directions

1. Squeeze the roasted garlic cloves into a blender (don't include any of the papery skin). Add roasted onion wedges, roasted cabbage, soaked cashews, lemon zest, 1 ½ tablespoons lemon juice, 1 cup water, mustard, salt, and pepper. Blend on high until smooth and creamy. You may need to add a bit more water as you go to continue blending.
2. Taste for seasonings, adding more salt, lemon juice, mustard, or pepper as needed. For added richness, add in a tablespoon of extra-virgin olive oil and blend again.

Recipe Notes

*If you don't have a high-powered blender, I recommend adding the cashews to a saucepan, covering with water, and boiling for 15 minutes. Or, soak them in cool water overnight.

Storage

- Store in an airtight jar in the fridge for 1 week. This makes a lot of sauce!

Simple Roasted Chickpeas

- Prep time: 5 minutes
- Cook time: 30 minutes
- Total time: 35 minutes
- Serves: 4 to 8 (depends on use case)

Ingredients

- 2 (15-ounce) cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 4 to 5 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 ½ teaspoons kosher salt
- Freshly cracked black pepper

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Transfer the drained chickpeas to a large clean kitchen towel. Pat dry and gently roll the chickpeas back and forth to remove all water.
2. In a large bowl, toss the chickpeas with the oil, salt and pepper. Spread out on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 20 minutes. Shake the pan and roast for another 5 to 10 minutes until crispy and nicely browned.

Notes

- For *super* crispy roasted chickpeas, you can add the chickpeas in batches to a salad spinner to remove all the water.

Storage & Reheating

- Store cooled chickpeas in a jar or container with the lid slightly ajar. Store on the countertop or in the pantry for 4 to 5 days.
- To reheat chickpeas, transfer to a baking sheet, spray with nonstick cooking spray (or toss with a tiny bit of oil, about ¼ teaspoon) and bake at 300°F for 7 to 8 minutes, until hot and crisp.

Brown Rice

- Prep time: 0 minutes
- Cook time: 35 to 45 minutes
- Total time: 35 to 45 minutes
- Serves: 2 ½ to 3 cups of cooked rice

Ingredients

- 1 cups (180g) brown rice
 - 1 ¼ cups (300 mL) water (Instant Pot) / 2 cups (480 mL) water (stovetop)
 - 1 teaspoon olive oil (optional)
1. **Instant Pot:** Add all ingredients to your Instant Pot and stir. Use the Pressure Cook setting at high pressure and cook for 20 minutes OR use the Rice setting and follow its instructions. Allow a natural pressure release for 10 minutes. Open the pot and fluff with a fork.
 2. **Stovetop:** Add all ingredients to a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat to low, and simmer for 45 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let rest, covered, for 10 minutes. Fluff with a fork.

Notes

- This makes about 3 cups of cooked rice. Feel free to scale up or down as needed. I usually cook 1 ½ cups of rice for myself.

Storage & Reheating

- Once cooled, store rice in an airtight container in the fridge for 4 to 5 days.
- Add rice to a microwave-safe bowl. Add a couple ice cubes and cover the bowl. Heat on high until hot (time will depend on volume of rice).

Massaged Kale

Ingredients

- Chopped kale
- Lemon juice
- Extra virgin olive oil

Directions

1. In a large bowl, add as much kale as you want. Squeeze in a bit of lemon juice and a spoon of olive oil. Use your hands to massage the kale for 1 to 2 minutes.

Storage

- Store in a resealable bag in the fridge for 5 to 6 days.

Spiced Pistachios

- Prep time: 3 minutes
- Cook time: 5 minutes
- Total time: 8 minutes
- Serves: 6 to 8

Ingredients

- 2 to 3 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- 3/4 cup (90g) shelled pistachios (unsalted or salted)
- 3/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 3/4 teaspoon paprika
- Pinch or two of cayenne pepper
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon sea salt (omit if using salted pistachios)

Directions

1. Heat a medium frying pan over medium heat. After a minute or two, add the olive oil and pistachios. For roasted pistachios, cook for 1 minute, tossing frequently. For raw pistachios, cook for 3 minutes, tossing frequently.
2. Add the red pepper flakes, cumin, paprika, cayenne, several cracks of black pepper, and salt (only if using unsalted pistachios). Stir almost continuously for 1 minute, then take off the heat.
3. Transfer to a plate and spread out with a spoon, ensuring spices evenly coat the nuts.

Storage

- Once cool, store spiced pistachios in an airtight container or jar in your pantry for 3 weeks (may last longer).

Mix and Match Meal Ideas

1. Grain Bowl #1

- a. Base: Brown Rice
- b. Veggie: Cabbage Steak
- c. Protein: Roasted Chickpeas
- d. Sauce: Cashew-Cabbage Sauce
- e. Topping: Spiced Pistachios
- f. Supplement ideas: any raw veggies in your fridge (shredded or sliced thinly), pickled onions, diced avocado, and/or any toasted seeds/nuts in your pantry

2. Grain Bowl #2

- a. Base: Brown Rice
- b. Veggie: Cabbage Steak
- c. Protein: Maple-Dijon Crispy Tofu
- d. Sauce: Cashew-Cabbage Sauce (or Pistachio Pesto)
- e. Topping: Spiced Pistachios
- f. Supplement ideas: any raw veggies in your fridge (shredded or sliced thinly), pickled onions, diced avocado, and/or any toasted seeds/nuts in your pantry

3. Balanced Plate #1

- a. Base: Brown Rice
- b. Veggie: Cabbage Steak
- c. Protein: Roasted Chickpeas
- d. Sauce: Pistachio Pesto
- e. Topping: Spiced Pistachios

4. Balanced Plate #2

- a. Base: Brown Rice
- b. Veggie: Cabbage Steak
- c. Protein: Maple-Dijon Crispy Tofu
- d. Sauce: Cabbage-Cashew Sauce
- e. Topping: Spiced Pistachios

5. Pesto Pasta & Meatballs + Kale Salad

- a. Base: Linguine
- b. Sauce: Pistachio Pesto
- c. Protein: Earth Grown Meatless Meatballs
- d. Veggie: Massaged Kale salad on the side

6. Pesto Pasta & Meatballs

- a. Base: Linguine
- b. Sauce: Pistachio Pesto
- c. Protein: Earth Grown Meatless Meatballs
- d. Supplement ideas: any green veggie in your fridge (steamed or blanched), or cherry tomatoes

7. Kale Salad

- a. Base: Massaged Kale
- b. Protein: Roasted Chickpeas and/or Maple-Dijon Crispy Tofu
- c. Topping: Spiced Pistachios
- d. Dressing: Pistachio Pesto + lemon juice + extra virgin olive oil
 - i. Or make your favorite vinaigrette
- e. Supplement ideas: pickled onions and/or diced avocado; serve alongside your favorite bread

8. Grain-Salad Bowl

- a. Base: Brown Rice + Massaged Kale
- b. Protein: Roasted Chickpeas or Maple-Dijon Crispy Tofu
- c. Sauce: Cabbage-Cashew Sauce
- d. Topping: Spiced Pistachios
- e. Supplement ideas: pickled onions and/or diced avocado

9. Cabbage Steak & Meatballs #1

- a. Base: Cabbage Steaks
- b. Protein: Earth Grown Meatless Meatballs
- c. Sauce: Cabbage-Cashew Sauce
- d. Supplement ideas: sauerkraut + chopped parsley

10. Cabbage Steak & Meatballs #2

- a. Base: Brown Rice + Cabbage Steaks
- b. Protein: Earth Grown Meatless Meatballs
- c. Sauce: Pistachio Pesto
- d. Supplement ideas: pickled onions + chopped parsley



Thank you!

For more recipes, be sure to visit us at
rainbowplantlife.com or over on my [YouTube](#)
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And don't forget to check out my new cookbook,
[**Big Vegan Flavor!**](#)

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