

Four Tips For Back To School Stress Free Dinners

Now that your child(ren) are back to school, there are days when cooking dinner just doesn't seem possible. After school activities, appointments, and the endless number of errands make it difficult to bring the family together for dinner. However, there are several ways to make your suppers stress-free while avoiding the take-out temptation.

1. Create a weekly menu plan
Once a week, sit down and plan out your next weeks' dinner menu. On the nights you know you need something quick, plan on a quick dinner – something you can make in under 20 minutes. Some great examples are tacos, omlettes, stir fry, or spaghetti and meatballs. By creating a weekly plan, you can eliminate multiple trips to the grocery store and go only once getting everything you need for your dinners and then adding in lunch items and snacks and the staples like milk, juice, butter, etc. Eliminating multiple trips to the grocery store will save you time and money.
2. Keep some staples in the house
There are lots of items that you should keep in your house that you know you can use to whip up some quick meals. For example, keeping ground beef, chicken, eggs, pasta, spaghetti sauce, a frozen bag of veggies, and some others that you always use can make dinners a snap.
3. Pre-Make some dinners
On a weekend or a night that you are not that busy, make an extra large casserole or a couple of extra pieces of chicken in your chicken dish so that you have 2 dinners. Freeze the extra and then you can take it out the next week, defrost it in some water for the day and pop it in the oven or microwave when you get home. If you always have 2 or 3 pre-made dinners in your freezer, you will have easy dinners with little work.
4. Use a crock pot
Many people think that you can't make great meals in the crock pot. There are so many crock pot recipes that are all-in-one meals that taste like you've spent all day preparing them. The MunchkinMenus 'n More cookbook has some great crock pot recipes like Baked Lemon Chicken, Italian Chicken, Beef Stroganoff, Fuss-Free Swiss Steak, and Ham & Potatoes with Cheese to name a few. The other great thing about crock pot recipes is that, in general, there aren't several instructions on the preparation method to be used. All (or most) ingredients are added simultaneously so there are no directions to sort through to make sure you are making it correctly.

Families have different styles of cooking. The one thing we all have in common is a busy lifestyle. Cooking doesn't have to take a lot of time, effort, or ingredients to be delicious and nutritious.

