

MY 7-DAY MEAL PLAN

BY CINDY FREEMAN



Alabama Power Company
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CINDY FREEMAN'S PERSONAL GUIDELINES FOR FUELING UP AND FEELING GOOD

I am passionate about helping others reach their health goals, which is why I'm excited to share my go-to breakfast, lunch, and dinner healthy meal options. It brings me great joy to see our employees explore and discover ways to pursue a healthier lifestyle, and I also love to cook for friends and family. So, creating a meal plan for our employees is a win-win! Check out my 7-day guide to healthy eating, including recipes and healthy alternatives to help keep you aligned with your nutrition goals. As always, I am just a phone call or an email away, so feel free to reach out with any questions on how you can live your healthiest life!



GRANDMA'S COOKIN' WAS SEASONED WITH LOTS OF LOVE & CRISCO

Growing up, I spent weekends and summers with two of the best cooks ever, my grandmothers. They both cooked with lots of love and Crisco. One thing they were big on was including vegetables and fruit at almost every meal. I learned to cook from them, but it wasn't until I was working on a cardiac intensive care unit that I learned, maybe I wasn't eating as healthy as I should be. I worked with a nurse from New York, and I remember her saying the first impression she had of Alabama was Country Boy Eddie at 5:00 AM and the fact we put "grease" in our vegetables...I learned a lot about how to eat vegetables in their natural state and to this day a meal of vegetables and fruit is my go-to favorite.

WHEN WE KNOW BETTER, WE DO BETTER

I tend to stick to chicken and fish most of the time, and I prefer most of my meals to incorporate high quality plant-based foods. Remember, if you are on a low residue diet or gluten free meal plan, there are always options to modify a diet to meet your needs.

GUILTY PLEASURES

Everyone loves a good splurge every now and then, and I am no exception! A few of my favorite indulgences...small piece of cake (no icing for me!), Latte with almond milk and sugar free vanilla syrup, or frozen fruit bars (coconut or mango). And let's not forget the days I have bar-b-que and all the sides, but that luxury is reserved for special occasions!





Gotta Eat This!

EAT THIS, NOT THAT: SKIP THE CRISCO

While my grandmothers both prepared delicious meals and taught me a great deal about cooking, I have learned to tweak what they have taught me to accommodate my now healthier lifestyle. An easy and relatively inexpensive place to start when choosing healthier options is with your cooking oils. Skip the Crisco and instead opt for olive oil, avocado oil, ghee (butter alternative—use sparingly), or coconut oil. These healthy fat options are great alternatives to Grandma's seasoning and are sure to add plenty of flavor to your daily dishes.

SNACK TIME

A few of my favorite go-to snacks include frozen grapes and blueberries, raw baby carrots, Lara bars, or Kind Bars, small portions of deluxe mixed nuts, dark chocolate Ghirardelli (1 square), dried apples or fresh coconut. And I love almost any fruit!

KEEPIN' IT LEAN AND GREEN

I love a plate full of colorful foods like fresh fruit and veggies! My protein of choice is most often a lean option like chicken or fish, which helps me get an adequate amount of protein in without sacrificing heart health.



I have recommended certain name brands solely as an example because of known flavor or nutritional content, but you may substitute other brands as well.*

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IN THE KITCHEN WITH CINDY:

SIMPLE AND HEALTHY RECIPES



EGG BITES

Mix 1 egg per two egg bites needed. Add chopped fresh spinach, minced onions, chopped sweet peppers, and Cabot mozzarella cheese to egg mixed with 2 Tbsp 1% milk. Spray egg bite silicone tray or muffin pan with EVOO and add mixture. If using silicone cookware, microwave 4 minutes on high. If baking in oven, bake 8-10 minutes.

TURKEY SAUSAGE QUICHE

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees. Brown $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. turkey sausage with $\frac{1}{2}$ c. water in skillet. Drain well. Mix 8 eggs (may use egg whites) with $\frac{1}{2}$ c. 1% milk, and $\frac{3}{4}$ c. shredded cheddar cheese. Add tsp dried mustard. Stir in 1 cup of raw spinach leaves. $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt (optional) and black pepper. Pour into unbaked pie shell. Bake 30-40 minutes until firm to touch. If trying to cut calories or cooking gluten free you can bake this in a well-greased pie pan with no pie shell.

SPINACH CHEESE AND TOMATO QUICHE

Use above recipe adding chopped spinach in the mixture and place Roma tomato slices or any small tomato on top of pie before baking.



EGG WHITE OMELET

$\frac{1}{2}$ c egg whites, melt 1 tsp butter in skillet, add egg whites mixed with 2 TBSP milk, pour into hot skillet. Add several fresh spinach leaves, 1 TBSP shredded cheddar cheese, a few slices of mushrooms, diced onions, sweet pepper diced. I save chopped tomatoes (dried on a paper towel) until I am ready to flip omelet. After adding tomatoes. Flip up edge and pull over until edges meet. Cook another 30 seconds, flip omelet and cook an additional 30 seconds.



HOMEMADE SPAGHETTI SAUCE

Brown 1 lb. ground turkey or ground chuck in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water for protein. Drain water. Sautee $\frac{1}{2}$ small onion chopped and two cloves of garlic chopped. Add large can of tomato sauce, 1 sm. can diced tomatoes, sm. can tomato paste, 2 tbsp French's Italian seasoning. Stir frequently. Add your protein. May serve meatless if desired. This is the rapid way to prepare a meal. On weekends, I cut up fresh Roma tomatoes and simmer with onion, garlic, and bell peppers and 1 TBSP olive oil on low for 2 hours. Works well in a crock pot for all day cooking.

HOMEMADE VEGETABLE SOUP

- Four medium tomatoes diced (may use 1 lg can diced tomatoes)
- 1 c. whole kernel yellow corn (fresh, canned, or frozen)
- 1 c. sliced carrots (may use baby carrots whole)
- 1.5 c. peas (purple hull, black-eye, field)
- 1 c. baby lima beans (canned or frozen)
- 1 c. green beans (canned, fresh, frozen)
- 1 small onion chopped
- 6 medium potatoes (russet, white, golden) peeled and quartered.
- ¼ head of cabbage, sliced thinly
- 1 packet Lipton's dry onion soup mix
- 8 c. water
- Black pepper to taste

Bring water to a boil in stock pot or large Dutch oven. Add all vegetables except cabbage. Add pepper and soup mix. Heat to boiling then reduce heat to simmer. Allow to simmer covered 30-45 minutes or until carrots and potatoes are soft. Add sliced cabbage and allow to wilt; an additional 10 minutes of cooking. Adding cabbage too early causes it to overcook. Feeds 8-10.

*For a heartier vegetable and beef soup, brown 1 lb. ground beef in water and drain well in a skillet. Add to vegetable soup.

BREAKFAST OPTIONS

DAY 1: Mix ½ softened avocado with ½ tsp lime juice. 1 slice of a good whole grain bread, lightly toasted. Spread **avocado mixture on toast**. Tomato slices and/or a poached egg. Season with black pepper.

DAY 2: **Egg bites** – see recipe. Blueberries and strawberries.

DAY 3: **Smoothie** – fresh or frozen fruit with just ice is my favorite type of smoothie with ½ tsp honey. Blueberries, strawberries, peaches, and mangoes with just a small amount of orange juice; ¼ quarter cup per 12 oz. smoothie.

DAY 4: **Fresh fruit in season.** ½ c. strawberries and blueberries. Whole wheat pancake 1-2 small, made with egg and applesauce instead of vegetable oil. If I am going to have a busy day, I will whip up ¼ cup of whipping cream to add to the fruit. Maple syrup in small amounts is another option (I save this for heavy workout days).

DAY 5: 4" slice of **Turkey Sausage quiche**. Tomato slices, blueberries, and cantaloupe on the side. Add pepper to taste.

DAY 6: 1 regular size **Lara Bar** made with dates and cashews and 1 c. coconut milk.

DAY 7: **Egg white omelet**, 1 slice toasted plain whole wheat bread and ½ c. sliced strawberries and ¼ c. blueberries.



LUNCH OPTIONS

DAY 1: Veggie Spinach wrap – Spinach wrap with spinach leaves, romaine lettuce, chopped tomatoes, sweet peppers, chopped green and red bell peppers, banana peppers, black olives, craisins, with regular mustard. Add grilled chicken if desired for protein.



DAY 2: Spinach salad mix with fresh raw vegetables – Add blueberries, grapes, blackberries, almond slices, sliced strawberries. Vinaigrette dressing. (My favorite brands of dressing are Skinny Girl or Marie's raspberry or balsamic)

DAY 3: Goat cheese and Strawberry sandwich - My favorite sandwich is a Goat cheese and strawberry grilled sandwich. Using unsalted butter and a good whole grain bread (sliced thin), melt 1 tsp butter in a skillet, then spread softened goat cheese on one slice of bread. Grill both pieces of bread using low heat. Remove from heat and add sliced strawberries on top of cheese.

DAY 4: Vegetable soup (homemade, see recipe) 1 ½ cups. 1 small apple sliced with 1 TBSP - organic peanut butter.

Raw vegetables like carrots or celery sticks are a crunchy addition in place of chips.

DAY 5: Vegetable plate – I choose 3 whether eating out or from what I have cooked during the week. Cooked asparagus, carrots, turnip greens, cabbage, squash and onions, green peas, green beans, small, sweet potato (baked and mashed with 1 tsp butter (optional)). Add raw fresh sliced tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, cauliflower, broccoli florets, sweet peppers. ½ cup fruit pears for dessert.

Fruit, especially low glycemic options like most of the fruits listed here, is a great way to satisfy a "sweet craving" without causing a blood sugar spike and subsequent crash.

DAY 6: Fruit plate – Remember serving sizes. I love to choose 3 or 4 fruits and have only fruit for lunch. Strawberries, blueberries, grapes, raspberries, blackberries, kiwi, dragon fruit, and mango or papaya. Keep portion sizes to ¼-½ cup and enjoy a variety of fruit. Some days I add 1 Tbsp of peanut butter on ½ slice of bread.



DAY 7: Mediterranean veggie sandwich – I make my own version of the one from Panera Bread. 2 slices of whole grain bread. Load with Romaine lettuce, tomato slices, cucumber chunks, sliced red onions, Add a tablespoon of a good balsamic vinaigrette dressing. Scoop over vegetables and sprinkle feta cheese on sandwich.

Alternate choices to traditional pasta and meat sauce- Spiral cut zucchini, yellow squash, or butternut squash. Add ¼ c. bone broth, salt black pepper and fresh cilantro chopped. Steam for about 5 minutes add sliced plum or cherry tomatoes. Add chickpeas for extra protein, if desired. Steam an additional 2 minutes. Salt and pepper to taste.

Bone broth is a nutrient dense, protein-packed staple ingredient to keep on hand for marinades, sauces, and even for sipping throughout the day. It is believed to aid in digestion, support gut health, and reduce inflammation, among other benefits.

DINNER OPTIONS

Vegetable dinner – Steamed broccoli, steamed squash and onions, baked sweet potato, steamed green beans, and fresh-sliced tomatoes. Homemade oatmeal & raisin cookies for dessert.

Green salad mix with grilled salmon – Salad with grape tomatoes, radishes, cucumber slices, blueberries, strawberries, and sliced almonds. Grill salmon with one pat of butter and Spinach herb seasoning mix. May add feta cheese to salad if desired and low calorie vinaigrette or lemon juice.



Rotisserie Chicken with steamed vegetables – Steam zucchini, yellow squash, broccoli florets, and onion slices, or steamed asparagus. Fresh pear halves.

Chicken and sausage gumbo – Make roux with Tony Chachere's gumbo roux mix. Stir with water until thickened. Add 1 can of diced tomatoes and okra. Season with filet and Cajun seasoning. If on salt restrictions, limit the amount of Cajun seasoning. Add 3 c. water, chicken, and Conecuh sausage slices. Add hot sauce as desired. Serve with cooked brown rice. By cooking rice separately, you can limit the amount of rice in a serving.

A rotisserie chicken from the deli section of your grocery store is a great "go-to" quick option to have on hand for last minute dinner options.



Whole wheat spaghetti with homemade spaghetti sauce

– 1 cup cooked pasta and ½ cup sauce. 1 Tbsp grated parmesan cheese. Green salad with romaine, or green salad mix loaded with fresh raw vegetables; Tomatoes, radishes, carrots, raisins, sliced almonds, bell peppers.



Grilled chicken wrapped in turkey bacon, quinoa mix, grilled pineapple

– Wrap boneless chicken tenders in turkey bacon. Marinate in pineapple juice and low sodium Soy sauce. Place on grill. Grill pineapple in an aluminum pan on the grill or lay flat on the grill. Prepare quinoa and add ½ cup dried cranberries or golden raisins, and 1/4/c. sliced almonds or healthy nut mix.

Stir fry vegetables with Conecuh smoked sausage (optional)

– This is a quick meal that includes as many vegetables as you want to add. Place 2 tbsp EVOO in a deep skillet. Add broccoli florets, carrots, yellow squash, onion, and zucchini, and stir until tender. Slice sausage in another skillet to cook while vegetables are prepared. Add meat to vegetables. Serve with green or 1 c. of fruit salad (blueberries, strawberries, grapes, apple chunks, blackberries). Baked potatoes (small) with toppings – cheese, scallions, butter, broccoli, plain yogurt.

Remember if dining out, the potatoes at restaurants are usually large, and often one restaurant potato serving size can be split into two servings.