

A chef's advice: Plan once, eat twice

How do you plan a menu for a meal? What food item do you start with? Well, traditionally, the meat was chosen first, probably because it was the most expensive item and then you chose other food items to accompany the entrée. I (Gerry) still plan the majority of our meals this way.

Sometimes, you are working with leftover meat. What a great start on a meal to have entrée leftovers. Planning for this is not a difficult task—when you cook your dinner meat, make enough for two meals or choose whole roasts, chickens, turkeys, and casseroles, something that will give you more mileage for your efforts.

To ease meal preparation, when you are in the kitchen preparing tonight's dinner, prepare something for tomorrow at the same time. Utilize the oven for more than one thing—it's smart management of time and energy-conscious all at the same time!

Some suggestions could be to cook some potatoes for potato salad, boil eggs for devilled eggs, prepare the meatloaf or casserole to pop in the oven when you get home the next night or start a homemade soup. You could also clean your salad vegetables, prepare a dessert or make a sauce. Five minutes of prep today will greatly ease tomorrow's busy night with a helpful head start.

Meal planning should have some forethought—textures, flavours, colour, shape and size are all considerations to be planned when arranging a meal. Some foods just don't go together. As an example, the first menu is well



thought out and the second one isn't.

- Menu #1**
- Spinach Salad
 - Boneless Chicken Breasts with Tomato Herb Sauce
 - Roasted Parisienne Potatoes
 - Dilled Green Beans

- Menu #2**
- Cream of Mushroom Soup
 - Boneless Chicken Breasts with White Wine Mushroom Sauce
 - White Rice
 - Roasted Cauliflower

Menu one offers colour—green, red and white, after all you eat with your eyes first! There is texture with crunch in the green beans and the salad, flavours with sweet creamy dressing on the salad, tangy tomato herb sauce, fresh dill in the beans and buttery crisp-skinned potatoes. It offers sizes and shapes with baby potatoes, elongated beans and a large single piece of meat.

Menu two has no colour contrasts—brown soup, brown chicken, brown sauce, white rice, brown cauliflower. Also, there is no texture other than soft and way too much creaminess! Flavours are too similar, especially serving mushrooms twice, shapes and sizes are not distinct enough.

Spend a little time with these thoughts and soon you will be creating fabulous menus and eye=appealing meals with just a little extra effort!

Have fun and keep cooking!

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Roast Beef Sandwich with Roasted Garlic Horseradish Mayonnaise

(Recipe supplied by Ace Bakery; makes four sandwiches)

Ingredients

- 1/4-cup good quality mayonnaise
- 1/8-cup well-drained horseradish
- 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1-2 cloves roasted garlic (see below)
- 8-12 thin slices of roast beef
- 8 slices Ace Organic White bread
- 8-12 baby spinach leaves, arugula or lettuce
- salt and freshly ground pepper

Method

In a small bowl, mix together mayonnaise, horseradish, mustard and peeled, mashed, roasted garlic.

Spread a thin layer of the mayonnaise mixture on four slices of bread.

Place the roast beef slices over the spread and then add the baby spinach. Season with salt and pepper and top with the four other slices of the bread.

Leftover spread will keep, refrigerated, for up to five days.

Roasted garlic: Preheat oven to 300 F. Slice 1/4-inch off top of garlic head, drizzle each head with 1 tbsp olive oil, wrap in tin foil and roast until soft (approximately one hour). Squeeze individual cloves, when cool enough to handle, into bowl and combine to make a paste.



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