The Baseline Week

Keep the in-between days simple so you can enjoy the parties.

Per person | 5 baseline days | ~1,250–1,300 cal/day

Here is the plan: December gets busy for everyone, me included. This month, your plan is a steady baseline. Pick one or two meals for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and eat them on five regular days. Then enjoy two planned days off for parties, dinners out and treats. Return to your baseline the next day.

How the week works

1. Pick your meals

Choose one or two options each for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snack from page 2.

2. Cook once, repeat

Prep on Sunday and eat the same meals on your five baseline days.

3. Enjoy your days off

Choose two planned days off each week. Enjoy every bite of the parties and treats.

Your plate formula

4 to 5 oz cooked
Protein
Chicken, fish, lean beef, eggs or Greek yogurt

1.5 to 2 cups
Veggies
Fresh or frozen, roasted, steamed or raw

About 1/2 cup
Starch
Cooked rice or quinoa, or 1 small sweet potato

1 tsp to 1 tbsp
Fat & flavor
Olive oil, avocado or cheese

As much as you like
Free
Mustard, hot sauce, lemon, herbs and spices

Why the same meals work in December

Easy prep

Cook once on Sunday, then assemble. Lunch and dinner come together in about 5 minutes.

Budget friendly

Buy the same few foods in bulk, like chicken, frozen veggies and rice, while holiday spending climbs everywhere else.

Little planning

No daily "what's for dinner" decision. Your brain gets a break during the busiest month of the year.

Easier to stop when satisfied

Plain, familiar food tends to be less tempting to overeat. Many people find they feel satisfied sooner, which leaves room for the treats they love.

Calories: a sample day adds up to about 1,285. Hungrier days happen, so add a second snack and you land near 1,400. Calories are estimates based on standard portions.

THE MONTHLY PLATE · DECEMBER 2026

Pick Your Meals

Choose one or two from each list. Meat and fish weights are cooked unless marked otherwise.

Breakfast	Pick one or two · ~285–300 cal	
Greek Yogurt & Berries	1 cup plain Greek yogurt, 1/2 cup berries, 2 tbsp walnuts · **No cook**	**~290**
Scrambled Eggs, Cheese & Spinach	2 eggs, 2 tbsp shredded cheddar, 1 cup spinach, 1 tsp olive oil, plus 1 small orange · **About 5 min**	**~300**
Cottage Cheese, Berries & Walnuts	3/4 cup low-fat cottage cheese, 1/2 cup berries, 2 tbsp walnuts, 2 tsp chia seeds · **No cook**	**~290**

Lunch	Pick one or two · ~410–420 cal	
Chicken Protein Bowl	4 1/2 oz cooked chicken, 1/2 cup cooked brown rice, 2 cups chopped veggies (greens, cucumber, tomato), 1 tsp olive oil, lemon, mustard · **Assemble in 5 min**	**~420**
Tuna & Chickpea Salad	5 oz canned tuna (drained), 1/2 cup chickpeas, 2 cups greens and chopped veggies, 2 tsp olive oil, lemon, mustard · **No cook**	**~410**
Lean Beef Bowl	4 oz cooked lean ground beef, 1/2 cup cooked brown rice, 2 cups chopped veggies, 1 tsp olive oil, hot sauce · **Assemble in 5 min**	**~420**
Turkey & Sweet Potato Bowl	5 oz cooked turkey breast, 1 small sweet potato, 2 cups chopped veggies, 1 tsp olive oil, lemon, mustard · **Assemble in 5 min**	**~410**

Dinner	Pick one or two · ~430–440 cal	
Baked Chicken, Broccoli & Sweet Potato	5 oz cooked chicken, 2 cups broccoli, 1 small sweet potato, 1 tsp olive oil · **Sheet pan**	**~435**
Salmon & Green Beans	4 oz cooked salmon, 2 cups green beans, 1/2 cup cooked brown rice, 1 tsp olive oil, lemon · **About 20 min**	**~440**
Lean Beef & Brussels Sprouts	4 oz cooked lean beef, 2 cups Brussels sprouts, 1 small sweet potato, 1 tsp olive oil · **Sheet pan**	**~430**
Big Chicken Salad	5 oz cooked chicken, 2 cups greens and chopped veggies, 1/2 cup cooked quinoa, 1 tsp olive oil, lemon, mustard · **No cook**	**~435**

Snack	Pick one or two · ~130–140 cal	
Apple + Peanut Butter	1 small apple, 2 tsp peanut butter	**~140**
String Cheese + Orange	1 string cheese, 1 small orange	**~140**
Cottage Cheese + Berries	1/2 cup low-fat cottage cheese, 1/2 cup berries	**~130**

My picks this week

Breakfast: _____

Lunch: _____

Dinner: _____

Snack: _____

Calories are estimates based on standard portions, so brands can shift the numbers a little. **Vitality Transformations · vitalitytransformations.com**

Shop and Prep

Weekly amounts for one person on five baseline days. Pantry staples like salt and pepper are not included.

Build your list

PROTEIN

Lunch and dinner: 10 servings a week

- [ ] Chicken breast or thighs about 2 lb raw per 5 servings
- [ ] Lean ground beef (93%) or sirloin about 1 3/4 lb raw per 5 servings
- [ ] Salmon fillets about 1 1/2 lb raw per 5 servings
- [ ] Canned tuna (5 oz cans) 5 cans per 5 servings

VEGGIES

About 2 cups per lunch and per dinner

- [ ] Broccoli or green beans, fresh or frozen about 2 lb per 5 servings
- [ ] Brussels sprouts about 2 lb per 5 servings
- [ ] Salad greens and chopped veggies about 1 1/2 lb for 5 bowls

STARCH

About 1/2 cup or 1 small sweet potato

- [ ] Brown rice or quinoa 1 cup dry makes about 3 cups cooked
- [ ] Sweet potatoes 5 small (about 2 lb)
- [ ] Canned chickpeas (15 oz) 2 cans per 5 servings

FAT & FLAVOR

A little goes a long way

- [ ] Olive oil about 5 tbsp for the week
- [ ] Avocado 1 per 4 servings
- [ ] Shredded cheddar 1 small bag (8 oz)

BREAKFAST

Pick one or two, 5 mornings

- [ ] Plain Greek yogurt 5 cups (about 40 oz)
- [ ] Berries, frozen is fine 1 bag (12 oz)
- [ ] Walnuts 1 small bag
- [ ] Eggs 1 dozen
- [ ] Spinach 1 bag (5 oz)
- [ ] Small oranges 5

SNACK

Pick one or two, 5 days

- [ ] Small apples and peanut butter 5 apples, 1 jar
- [ ] String cheese and small oranges 5 of each
- [ ] Low-fat cottage cheese and berries 20 oz and 1 bag (12 oz)

FREE FLAVOR

Stock up, these are free

- [ ] Mustard and hot sauce
- [ ] Lemons 2 to 3
- [ ] Garlic, herbs and spices

A filled-in example

PROTEIN & DAIRY

- [ ] Chicken breasts 4 lb
- [ ] Plain Greek yogurt 40 oz

PRODUCE & FROZEN

- [ ] Broccoli, fresh or frozen 2 lb
- [ ] Mixed greens 1 large container
- [ ] Cucumbers 2
- [ ] Cherry tomatoes 2 pints
- [ ] Sweet potatoes 5 small
- [ ] Small apples 5
- [ ] Frozen berries 1 bag (12 oz)
- [ ] Lemons 2

PANTRY

- [ ] Brown rice 1 bag
- [ ] Walnuts 1 small bag
- [ ] Peanut butter 1 jar
- [ ] Olive oil staple
- [ ] Mustard and spices staples

Prep tips that save your week

Sunday: cook your protein

Chicken: bake at 400°F for 20 to 25 min (165°F inside). **Turkey breast:** roast at 350°F to 165°F inside, 30 to 40 min. **Lean beef:** brown ground beef 8 to 10 min (160°F). **Salmon:** bake at 400°F for 12 to 15 min. Cook only what is on your list.

Sunday: roast, simmer, chop

Roast veggies at 425°F with a little olive oil: broccoli 20 to 25 min, Brussels sprouts or cubed sweet potatoes 25 to 30 min, green beans 15 to 20 min. Cook a pot of rice (40 to 45 min) or quinoa (15 min). Wash and chop salad veggies.

Midweek reset and assembly

Cooked chicken, beef, turkey and fish keep 3 to 4 days in the fridge, so cook a second small batch midweek or freeze half on Sunday. Pack lunches with protein, starch and veggies. Dinner is a scoop of each, plus oil, lemon and spices.