

## How to use your Meal Planning Template:

1) **Non-negotiables.** Check your calendar for any firm commitments – these are your weekly staples that are a part of your normal routine during mealtimes. For example, each week we have dinner with our small group from church. We also have a date night on either Friday or Saturday evenings. That's already two meals spoken for! Our small groups are potluck style, so we make sure we plan for that dish as well when grocery shopping.

2) **Special events.** These are dinners or lunch meetings that would affect your meal plan but aren't weekly regulars. For example: Holiday parties, dinner with friends, etc. (Date nights do NOT fall into this category – they should be non-negotiables. ;) )

3) **Fill in the rest.** Now you get to do the fun part! Decide what you want to eat this week. At first, it may feel strange planning out all your meals, but after a while, you'll be hooked. Some like to add variety to their weekly meals – go for it! J and I are such creatures of habit that eating the same thing every day doesn't really bother us, so we like to keep it simple and just switch it up week by week. I recommend doing this if you're just beginning to meal plan. It will help you get the habit down without being overwhelmed by multiple recipes and lots of meal prep.

4) **Make your grocery list!** Once you've finished planning your meals for the week, use it to make a grocery list for everything you will need to make those meals! At our stage in life, we prefer doing meal planning one week at a time. (It also helps us to actually eat all of the food/fresh produce we buy before it goes bad.) You can adjust it easily depending on what works best for your schedule!

\*See an example of a filled-out template below

# Meal Planning

Week of: 8/4 - 8/10

	Breakfast	Snack	Lunch	Snack	Dinner	GROCERY LIST
	A: yogurt + granola J: smoothie	A: smoothie J: —	pesto chicken + veggies	A: — J: apple	Hamburger + veggies	
	A: yogurt + granola J: smoothie	A: smoothie J: —	pesto chicken + veggies	A: — J: apple	Dinner w/ Atkins + Bring Salad	
	A: yogurt + granola J: smoothie	A: smoothie J: —	pesto chicken + veggies	A: — J: apple	Brinner (Eggs + Bacon)	
	A: yogurt + granola J: smoothie	A: smoothie J: —	pesto chicken + veggies	A: — J: apple	Hamburger + veggies	
	A: yogurt + granola J: smoothie	A: smoothie J: —	pesto chicken + veggies	A: — J: apple	Brinner (Eggs + Bacon)	
	Leftovers	X	Leftovers	X	Date Night	
	Leftovers	X	Leftovers	X	Small group - Make potatoes	