



# What's For Dinner?

from A Life Less Complicated

# WHAT'S COMING

- Intro (p3-4)
- The Brilliantly Simple Method Explained (p5-11)
- How to effortlessly think up meals (p12-19)
- Shopping lists (p20-22)
- Recap (p23) ([go here for the TL;DR version](#))
- Let's do it (p24)

## A QUICK NOTE

Inside these slides you'll find step-by-step instructions for creating a 3-month meal plan. You might read it and straight away think "OMG Lesley, this is perfect" (yay!), or you might think "hmm I'm not sure about that part".

My advice is this: trust the process.

My Brilliantly Simple Method is brilliantly simple because it contains a level of repetition (but don't worry, you won't be eating the same meal every night). You can tweak the amount of repetition to suit you - and you definitely should - but do it my way first!

Don't make it more complicated before you've even tried it. A completed, imperfect plan is better than an unfinished, perfect one that you never use.

Hi, I'm Lesley!



- ✓ Efficiency Expert
- ✓ Mum
- ✓ Project Manager
- ✓ Small Business Owner
- ✓ Avid Tea Drinker

A Life Less Complicated is where I use my 15 years of professional know-how to help people feel less burdened by the daily grind.

The idea is to get life admin done as efficiently as possible, so we have more time and energy to LIVE life.

So let's get cracking...

# THE BRILLIANTLY SIMPLE METHOD EXPLAINED

Want to know why this method is SO GOOD?

**Because all you need to have a varied, easy-to-create, easy-to-stick-to, 3-month meal plan is 15 meals. YES 15 MEALS!**

Let me explain... 2 strategies underpin the Brilliantly Simple Method:

1. Double-up batching (NOT the all-day-cookathon kind of batching)
2. Strategic repetition

# 1. DOUBLE-UP BATCHING

Instead of making enough bolognese for one dinner, make enough for 2

- ✓ Doesn't take any longer to do
- ✓ You get a night off another time
- ✓ Often cheaper





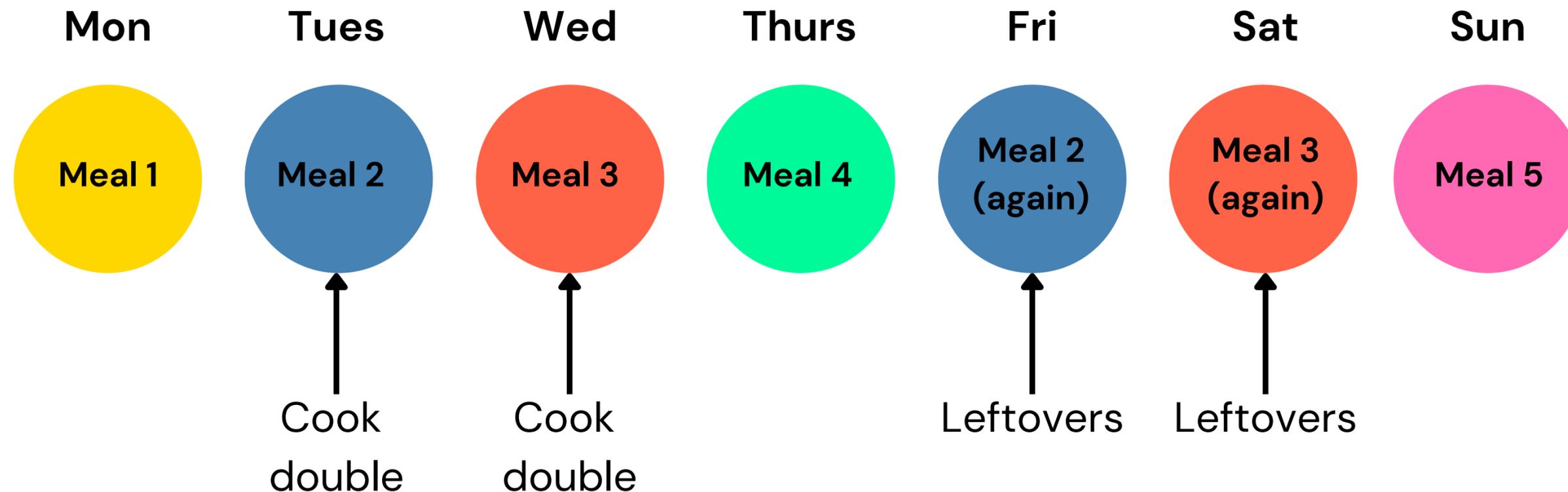
## 2. STRATEGIC REPETITION

Repeating often enough to get the benefits below, but not so often that you get bored of eating the same thing.

- ✓ Cooking is easier (you know the recipe by heart)
- ✓ You can cook on autopilot (less brain drain)
- ✓ You get quicker at making it
- ✓ Meal planning is simpler

Drum roll please...here it comes! (Get ready for lots of colourful dots!)

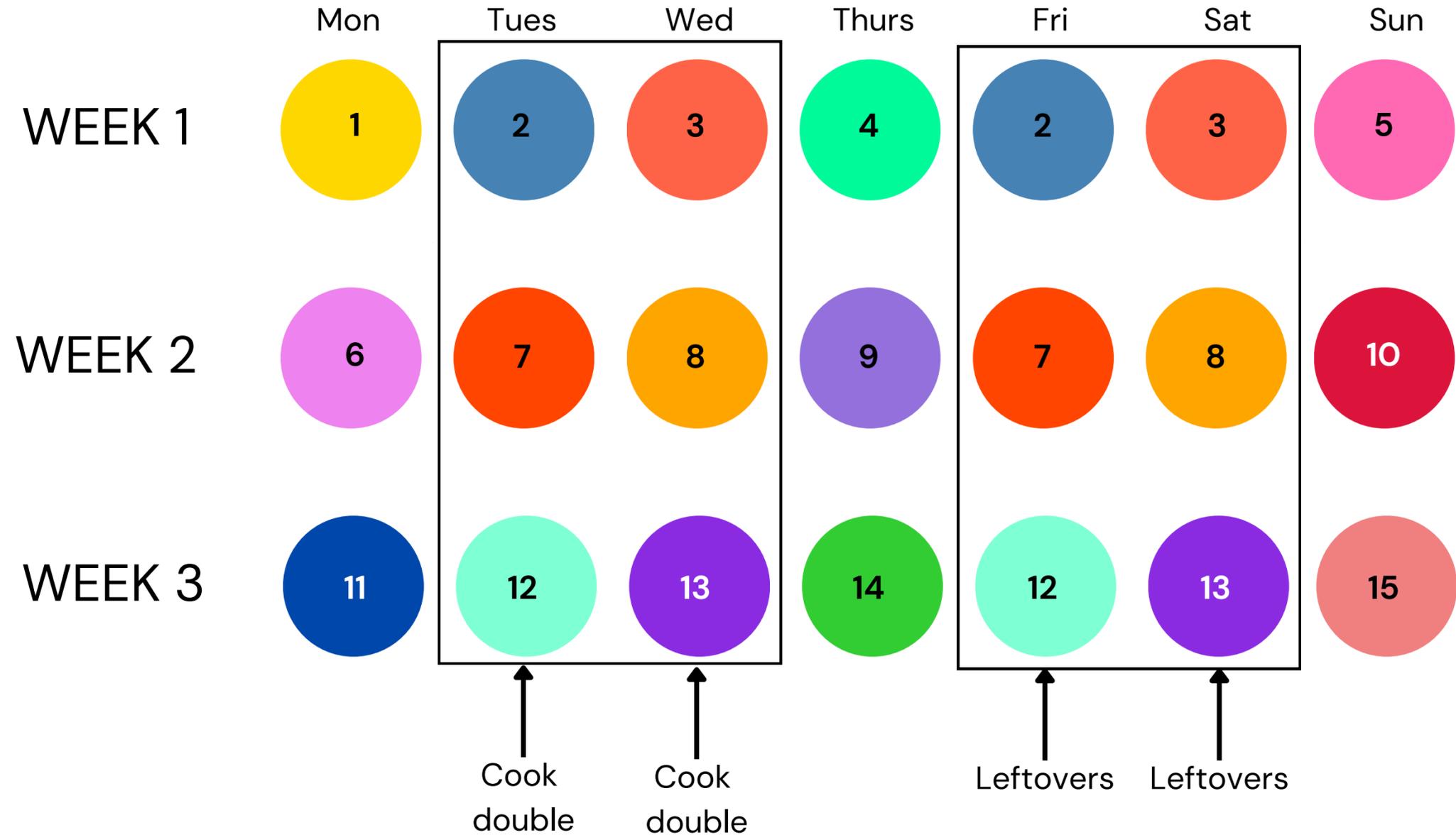
In The Brilliantly Simple Method, you batch cook twice a week so you can eat leftovers on 2 other nights.



It doesn't matter which days you double up but it makes sense to plan for leftovers on your busiest days.

Then you plan 2 further weeks in the same way, giving you 15 meals across 3 weeks.

(Each meal is shown by a coloured dot with a number. You can see blue+2 is shown twice, meaning you will eat that meal (pesto pasta, or whatever it is) twice in the 3 week block.



Finally – and here comes the really clever part – repeat your 3-week block 4 times.



You can see you only eat meal #1 (yellow) in weeks 1, 4, 7 and 10 so you won't get too sick of it!

That's it! That's the method.

**15 meals**

**3-week rotation**

**Double-up twice a week**

As I said, you can play with the details: double-up just once a week or do it 3 times, throw in the odd takeaway, swap out one of your planned meals for a new recipe you've been keen to try...

Make it work for you. But the important thing is that you actually do it! So don't overcomplicate it, you can tweak it later.

# CHOOSING SIMPLE MEALS

**Now let's talk about how you are going to come up with your 15 meals. Again, we want this to be SIMPLE!**

That means:

- Short ingredient lists
- Not many instructions

If you're struggling to think of a single meal right now, read on...



# MIND BLANK!

What to do when you can't think up a single meal...

1. Use recipes you already know
2. Use my back-to-basics meal builder
3. Get ChatGPT to figure it out (promise it's not scary)
4. Look in recipe books (but choose wisely)

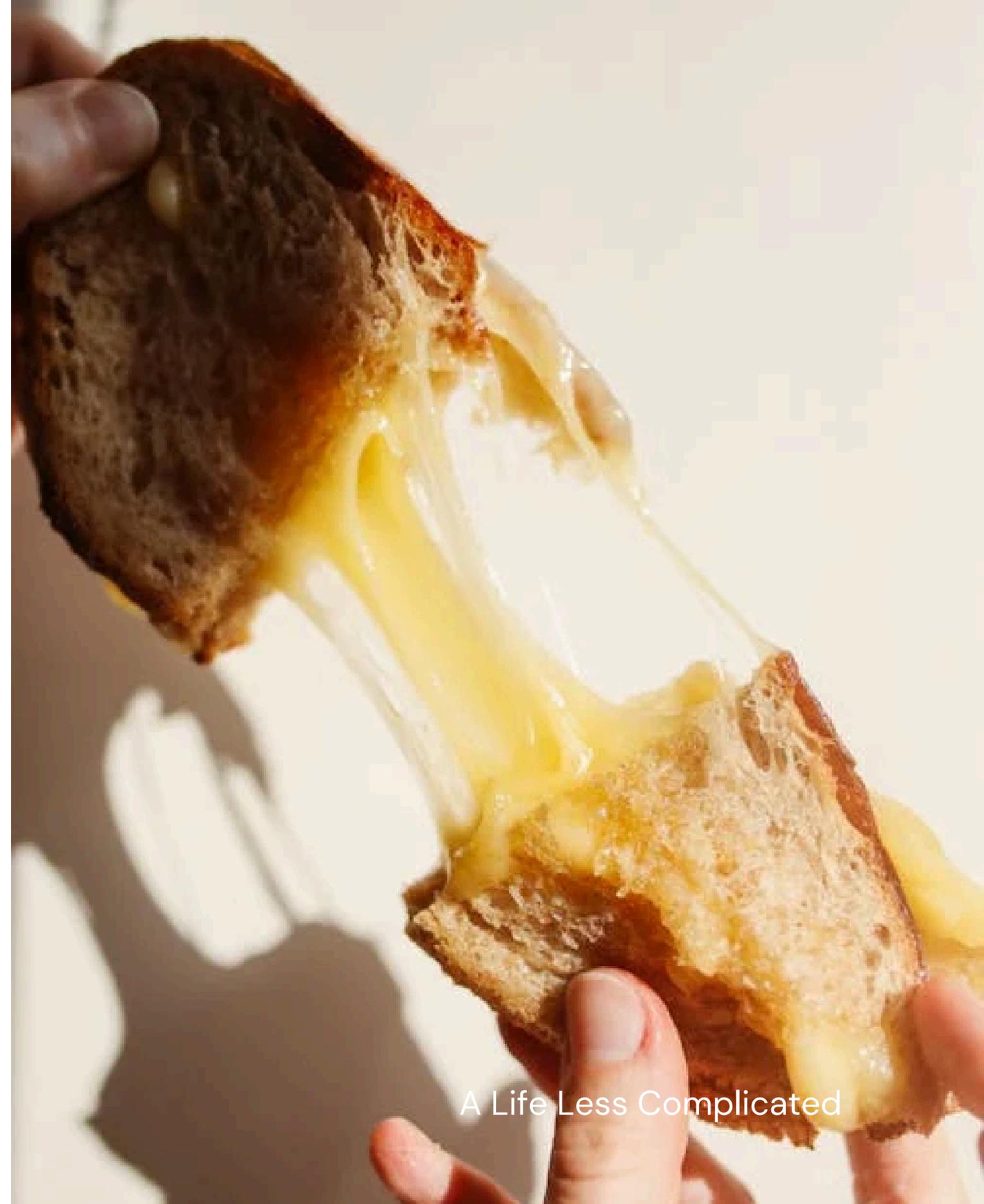


# 1. RECIPES YOU ALREADY KNOW

By far the best strategy as it involves the least thinking!

Which meals can you make right now, without having to think twice? It can be as simple as cheese on toast with salad, or a loaded jacket potato

- ✓ Easy wins
- ✓ Take advantage of auto-pilot mode (kind to your brain)
- ✓ Don't overcomplicate!



## 2. BACK-TO-BASICS MEAL BUILDER

Think of meals in their component parts

Decide how many of each you want (personally I aim for 1 protein, 1 carb and 2+ veg).

Pick accordingly, then add sauce/herbs/spices for flavour.

Don't overthink it! Your meal doesn't have to have a name.



Here's a list of ingredients from each food group for you to build your meals from. Pick 'n' mix as you please!

(Carbs and veg on the next page).

## PROTEIN

### Chicken

Breasts  
Thighs  
Whole

### Turkey

Mince

### Beef

Steak  
Burgers  
Mince  
Stewing steak

### Pork

Chops  
Tenderloin  
Bacon  
Sausages  
Gammon

### Lamb

Chops  
Mince  
Stewing steak

### Fish

Salmon  
Tuna  
White fish  
Prawns

### Plant-Based

Tofu  
Lentils  
Chickpeas  
Black beans  
Kidney beans  
Baked beans  
Butter beans  
Cannellini beans  
Borlotti beans  
Pinto beans  
Black eyed beans  
Haricot beans

### Other

Eggs

# CARBS

## Rice

White  
Brown  
Wild  
Red  
Risotto  
Paella

## Pasta

Spaghetti  
Lasagne sheets  
Shapes  
Macaroni  
Gnocchi

## Noodles

Egg  
Rice  
Udon  
Soba  
Glass

## Bread

Sliced  
Pita  
Bagels  
Baps  
Rolls  
Tortilla wraps

## Potatoes

**/sweet potatoes**  
Fries  
Roast  
Boiled  
Mashed  
Jacket  
Wedges  
Potato salad  
Fried  
Gratin  
Hash browns

## Other

Tacos  
Nachos  
Quinoa  
Couscous  
Pearl barley  
Polenta  
Buckwheat  
Millet  
Pastry

# VEGETABLES

Asparagus  
Aubergine/eggplant  
Beans (see protein column)  
Beetroot  
Bell peppers  
Broccoli  
Butternut squash  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Celery  
Corn  
Courgette/zucchini  
Cucumbers  
Green beans  
Kale  
Leeks  
Lettuce  
Mushrooms  
Parsnips

Peas  
Radishes  
Swede  
Sweet potatoes  
Tomatoes

# 3. CHATGPT

I can't emphasise enough how useful this tool is for brainstorming!

Just go to <https://chat.openai.com/>, create an account and tell it what you want. Be really specific e.g. "my child won't eat crunchy foods"

## Example prompt

"Give me 10 meal ideas for [e.g. a family of 4] that are quick, easy and healthy. They should be so easy that I don't need a recipe. Each idea should contain [1 protein, 1 carb and 2+ vegetables]. They must be [vegan/gluten-free etc]. They must NOT contain [cauliflower/fish etc]."



A Life Less Complicated

## 4. RECIPE BOOKS

You don't need to have every ingredient or follow every step precisely.

Watch out for recipes with lots of steps and/or ingredients. And don't forget, you can cut corners – skip and combine steps to simplify. (I never add stock to risotto a spoonful at a time despite every recipe saying I must!)

Use recipe books as inspiration, don't take them as gospel.

**Find my favourite simple books [here](#)**  
(affiliate link to my Amazon Store)



# MASTER SHOPPING LIST

Once you have your 15 meals, it will save you a load more time if you create a master shopping list while it's top of mind.

You need 3 lists – one for each of the 3 weeks in your rotation. It won't take long as you already know what you'll be making.



# CHEAT INGREDIENT SWAP

As you work through your shopping lists, think about how you can simplify your meal prep.

One of the best things you can do is some simple ingredient swaps.

Stop dicing onions and crushing garlic, and buy them ready-prepared!



## Some of my faves:

These are based on my experience of UK food products – sorry if they're not all available or relevant for where you live. Hopefully they will give you inspiration nonetheless.

**Frozen vegetables** – diced, sliced, steam bags...all of it!

**Frozen fruit** – ideal for smoothies and breakfast toppings

**Frozen potatoes** – baked potatoes, chips, mash

**Fresh vegetables** – diced, sliced and ready to go

**Garlic** – granules, frozen, puree, jar

**Ginger** – puree, jar, powder, frozen, paste

Ready-grated **cheese**

**Microwave pouches** – rice, grains

**Tins** – lentils, chickpeas, tuna, veg, fruit

**Frozen herbs**

**Sauces and pastes** – pasta sauce, curry sauce, curry paste

# RECAP: The Brilliantly Simple Meal Planning Method

- ✓ 5 different meals a week
  - *Make double quantity twice a week*
  - *Eat leftovers twice a week*
- ✓ 3 weeks of 5 different meals
  - 15 meals in total
- ✓ 3-week block repeated 4 times
  - 12 weeks sorted
- ✓ Pick EASY meals
- ✓ Simplify meal prep with smart ingredient swaps
- ✓ Simplify grocery shopping with repeatable shopping lists

# LET'S DO IT

## 1. List your 15 meals

- Recipes you already know
- Back-to-basics meal builder
- ChatGPT
- Recipe books

## 2. Decide when to eat them

- Pick your leftover nights
- Make groups of 5 for each of the 3 weeks

## 3. Create your 3 shopping lists

**Put your plan somewhere you can easily find it (phone notes work well).**



# YOU'RE DONE!

I really hope you've found this helpful. Either way, please do drop me a note to let me know

