

Guide

FROM KITCHEN-SHY TO COOKING SMART

**Simple Strategies to
Get Comfortable &
Capable in the
Kitchen**



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WELCOME FROM AMY

Cooking feels overwhelming when no one ever taught you the basics — and that's not your fault.

Here's the good news: You're not behind. You've just never been given the right roadmap — until now.

I created this guide because I know exactly how it feels to be tired, confused about food, and unsure where to start. At 50, I was bloated, burned out, and living on takeout... even though I had a culinary degree.

The truth? Most of us were taught how to cope, not how to cook. That changes today.

Inside this guide, you'll learn:

- 5 simple skills every woman over 50 needs in the kitchen
- A starter set of real meals you can make on autopilot
- My R.E.A.L.™ Plan — your backup dinner system for tired nights

This isn't about being perfect. It's about finally feeling calm, confident, and capable in your own kitchen.



Take a deep breath —
it's not too late, and
you're not alone. Let's
get cooking.



WHY KITCHEN CONFIDENCE MATTERS

Most of us were never really taught how to cook. We grew up on casseroles, calorie-counting, and “be good” food rules — but no one showed us how to actually make real meals that feel good to eat.

So of course cooking feels stressful.
Of course takeout feels easier.
Of course the fridge becomes a graveyard of good intentions.

But here’s the truth: this isn’t about discipline or perfection. Cooking is a skill — and skills can be learned.

Once you start to feel confident in the kitchen, everything shifts:

- Your meals taste better
- Your energy feels steadier
- You stop second-guessing yourself

It’s not about cooking fancy. It’s about cooking real food that works for real life.





Knives

Skill #1 Master the Basics

COOKING DOESN'T HAVE TO FEEL FRUSTRATING

The truth? Most recipes rely on just a few simple skills repeated over and over again. Once you know them, everything feels easier.

Here are the essentials every woman over 50 can master — without hours in the kitchen:

◆ **Master the Basics**

Knife safety, seasoning, and simple techniques form the foundation of every meal. You don't need to know it all — just a few moves you can trust.

◆ **Understand Cooking Methods**

You don't have to be a gourmet chef. Roasting, sautéing, and steaming will cover almost everything you'll cook at home.

◆ **Make Meal Prep Work for You**

Prepping doesn't mean all-day Sunday marathons. It's as simple as doubling protein while dinner cooks or chopping an extra veggie for tomorrow.

Master a few simple moves, and you'll feel ten times more confident in the kitchen.



Skill #2 Flavor
is Everything

FLAVOR IS WHAT MAKES IT STICK

- ◆ Bland food doesn't build habits — crave-worthy food does.
- ◆ If you've ever quit "eating healthy" by Wednesday, it probably wasn't because you weren't disciplined.
- ◆ It's because your food didn't taste good enough to keep going.
- 💡 Here's the secret: you don't need complicated recipes to make meals taste amazing. You just need a few go-to boosters:
 - Salt + acid (like lemon juice or vinegar)
 - Healthy fat (like olive oil or avocado)
 - Heat or punch (like chili crisp, feta, or balsamic glaze)

Flavor isn't a luxury — it's the reason healthy eating lasts.

Seasonings for Different Proteins

Using the right seasonings can elevate the flavor of your meals and make healthy eating more enjoyable. This guide provides easy-to-follow tips on which seasonings pair best with different types of protein.

Chicken

Seasonings

- **Herbs:** Thyme, rosemary, basil, oregano
- **Spices:** Paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, cumin
- **Others:** Lemon zest, black pepper, cayenne pepper

Tips:

- For a classic taste, try a mix of garlic powder, onion powder, and paprika.
- For a fresh and zesty flavor, use lemon zest and thyme.



Beef

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Thyme, rosemary, parsley
- **Spices:** Black pepper, garlic powder, paprika, chili powder
- **Others:** Mustard powder, coriander, Worcestershire sauce

Tips:

- A simple blend of black pepper, garlic powder, and paprika can bring out the natural flavors of beef.
- Add a touch of Worcestershire sauce for an extra depth of flavor.



Pork

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Sage, thyme, rosemary
- **Spices:** Garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, cumin
- **Others:** Brown sugar, mustard powder, apple cider vinegar

Tips:

- For a sweet and savory combination, use brown sugar & mustard powder.
- Sage and rosemary work well with pork, especially when roasting.



Seasonings for Different Proteins

Fish

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Dill, parsley, thyme
- **Spices:** Paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper
- **Others:** Lemon zest, lemon juice, capers



Tips:

- A mix of dill, lemon juice, and black pepper pairs perfectly with most fish.
- For a Mediterranean twist, try parsley, garlic, and lemon zest.

Turkey

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Sage, thyme, rosemary
- **Spices:** Paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper
- **Others:** Lemon zest, cumin, chili powder

Tips:

- Sage and thyme are traditional herbs that complement turkey well.
- For a bit of a kick, add some chili powder and cumin.



Tofu

Seasonings:

- **Herbs:** Basil, cilantro, parsley
- **Spices:** Garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, cumin
- **Others:** Soy sauce, ginger, turmeric



Tips:

- Tofu absorbs flavors well, so marinate it in soy sauce, garlic, and ginger for a delicious result.
- For a more vibrant dish, add turmeric and cumin.



Skill #3 Pantry Confidence

STOCK WHAT YOU'LL ACTUALLY USE

One of the biggest reasons cooking feels stressful?
Decision fatigue.

Instead of asking “What should I make?” start with “What do I already have?”

 Here's the formula:

1 protein + 1 veggie + 1 carb or fat = dinner.

Your Core 4 Grocery List might look like:

- **Proteins:** chicken, eggs, tuna, shrimp
- **Veggies:** spinach, peppers, broccoli
- **Carbs:** rice, sweet potatoes, bread
- **Flavor:** soy sauce, garlic salt, lemon

When these are stocked, you'll never feel completely stuck.

You're not behind — you're just one grocery trip away from feeling prepared.

Anatomy of a Pantry Meal

A "Pantry Pull Meal" is all about convenience, using non-perishable items to whip up dishes that are both satisfying and healthy. This handout walks you through the essentials of a well-stocked pantry and how to combine them into delicious, balanced meals.

Canned

Chicken	Chickpeas
Tuna	Kidney Beans
Salmon	Black Beans
Sardines	Lentils



Grains & Pastas

Brown Rice	Oats
Quinoa	Buckwheat
Whole-Wheat Pasta	Wild Rice

Vegetables & Fruits

Tomatoes	Pears
Green Beans	Peaches
Corn	*In juice

Healthy Fats

Nuts/Seeds	Olive Oil
• Almonds	Coconut Milk
• Walnuts	
• Sunflower	Nut Butter

Flavor

Spices: Chili, cumin, garlic, curry
Sauces: Soy, hot, salsa
Stock: Vegetable, chicken, beef

Anatomy of a Pantry Meal

These recipes are flexible enough for you to decide your own proportions of ingredients.

RECIPES

Quinoa Lentil Salad

Quinoa (cooked)
Lentils (canned)
Olive oil
Lemon juice
Spices: cumin, garlic powder, salt, pepper

- In a large bowl, combine cooked quinoa, and lentils
- Drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice.
- Season with cumin, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste.
- Toss well and serve as a nutritious meal or side.

Quick Tuna Pasta with Tomato Sauce and Chickpeas

Whole-wheat pasta (cooked)
Canned tuna
Jarred tomato sauce
Chickpeas (drained and rinsed)

- Heat the jarred tomato sauce in a saucepan.
- Stir in the chickpeas and drained tuna, and simmer for 5-7 minutes.
- Toss the cooked pasta with the sauce mixture until well-coated.
- Serve warm and enjoy a hearty meal.

Chia Oat Pudding

Oats
Chia seeds
Plant-based milk (coconut milk, almond milk, etc.)
Vanilla extract
Walnuts

- In a bowl or jar, combine 1/2 cup oats, 2 tablespoons chia seeds, and 1 cup plant-based milk.
- Add a splash of vanilla extract and stir well.
- Cover and refrigerate overnight (or at least 4 hours) until the mixture thickens.
- Top with chopped walnuts before serving.

Three-Bean Salad

Chickpeas
Kidney beans
Green beans (canned or fresh)
Olive oil
Lemon juice or vinegar
Spices: garlic powder, salt, pepper

Directions:

- Drain and rinse the chickpeas, kidney beans, and green beans.
- In a bowl, mix the beans together.
- Drizzle with olive oil and lemon juice or vinegar.
- Add garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste.
- Toss well and serve as a side or light meal.

Framework

YOUR BACKUP DINNER PLAN (FOR THE DAYS THAT WENT SIDEWAYS)

If you've ever stood in the kitchen at 6:30pm, hungry, tired, and ready to order takeout, you're not alone.

The R.E.A.L.™ Plan isn't about motivation. It's about having a rhythm you can trust when your energy's gone.

This 4-step plan gives you autopilot dinners, quick decisions, instant flavor, and tiny habits that save you tomorrow.

R → Rely on Your Core 4 Meals

E → Easy Inventory Scan

A → Auto-Flavor It

L → Last-Minute Magic

Framework

THE R.E.A.L.™ PLAN

R → Rely on Your Core 4 Meals

Use the handouts to chose your 4 core meals

E → Easy Inventory Scan

Dinner doesn't need to be complicated. Just scan your kitchen for:

1 protein + 1 veggie + 1 carb or fat = meal.

That's it. No second-guessing.

A → Auto-Flavor It

Consistency doesn't come from bland food. It comes from meals you actually want to eat.

This is where flavor boosters do the heavy lifting for you.

L → Last-Minute Magic

While your food cooks, do one tiny thing that makes tomorrow easier:

- Double the protein
- Chop an extra veggie
- Defrost something now

Two minutes tonight can save you twenty tomorrow.

How to Build a Sheet Pan Dinner

Carbohydrates

Starchy

Sweet potatoes
Regular potatoes
Winter squash

Sweet

Grapes
Apples

Non-starchy

Zucchini	Cauliflower
Peppers	Green beans
Brussels sprouts	Broccoli
Asparagus	Carrots

Protein

Chicken
Shrimp
Tofu

Salmon
Scallops
Turkey

Fat

During cooking After cooking

Olive oil	Pumpkin seeds
Avocado oil	Chopped peanuts
Pistachios	Crushed walnuts

Flavor Boosters

During cooking After cooking

Dried herbs	Fresh herbs
Garlic	Citrus juice
Ginger	Salt and pepper



Anatomy of a Stir Fry

Stir fry is a versatile cooking technique popular in many Asian cuisines that involves quickly frying ingredients in a small amount of hot oil while stirring briskly. It's a fantastic method to create meals that are not only quick and delicious but also packed with nutrients. The beauty of stir fry is its adaptability to different ingredients and flavors, making it a perfect dish for creativity in the kitchen.

Protein

Chicken	Tofu
Beef	Tempeh
Shrimp	

Vegetables

Peppers	Carrots
Broccoli	Onions
Snap Peas	Bok Choy

Aromatics

Garlic
Ginger
Green onion

Oils/Sauces

Peanut Oil	Soy Sauce
Canola Oil	Oyster Sauce
Sesame Oil	Hoisin Sauce

Carbohydrates

Brown Rice
Rice Noodles
Quinoa



How to Build a Breakfast Bowl

A breakfast bowl is a versatile and delicious way to start your day. Choose sweet or savory or combine a variety of flavors to suit your taste buds. Here's a simple guide to creating the perfect breakfast bowl, step-by-step.

Anatomy

Base

- Grains: Oats, quinoa, brown rice, farro
- Greens: Spinach, kale, mixed greens
- Starches: Sweet potatoes, regular potatoes



Protein

- Eggs: Scrambled, poached, or boiled
- Meat: Lean bacon, sausage, ham, or turkey
- Plant-based: Tofu, tempeh, or beans
- Dairy: Greek yogurt or cottage cheese



Toppings

- Fruits: Berries, banana slices, apple chunks, avocado
- Vegetables: Tomatoes, bell peppers, cucumbers, carrots
- Nuts & Seeds: Almonds, walnuts, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds
- Cheese: Feta, cheddar, or parmesan



Sauces/Dressings

- Healthy Fats: Olive oil, avocado oil
- Creamy: Greek yogurt, hummus, tahini
- Sweet: Honey, maple syrup
- Savory: Salsa, hot sauce, soy sauce



YOU'RE NOT BEHIND – YOU'RE JUST STARTING SMARTER

Take a breath. Look at what you've just done.

You've learned the core skills that make cooking feel doable again. You've seen how just a few handouts can turn "what's for dinner?" into "I've got this."

And most importantly? You now have the R.E.A.L.TM Plan — a rhythm that works even on your most tired nights. This isn't about perfection. It's about progress you can feel.

Every time you rely on a Core 4 meal, scan your kitchen, add flavor, or do one tiny thing for tomorrow, you're proving something powerful:

👉 You can trust yourself in the kitchen.
And that trust will keep growing, one real meal at a time.

You don't need motivation. You need a rhythm. And now you have one.



The R.E.A.L.™ Plan gives you a rhythm that works when you're tired.

But if you're still not sure how to chop an onion... or what makes a meal truly balanced... or you just want to see it all come together in real time —

👉 That's where **Kitchen Basics: Your First Real Meal** comes in.

Inside, you'll learn:

- Simple knife skills you can trust
- What healthy eating really means (without diet rules)
- A full video walkthrough of a crave-worthy stir fry meal
- Quick-reference veggie prep tutorials
- Lifetime access so you can revisit anytime

In just one hour, you'll feel confident, capable, and proud of what's on your plate.

👉 **Start Your Comeback – Just \$47**