

Back to School meal planning for moms on the go with recipes

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Enjoy lean beef with these Super Lean Laura Joes by Cynthia Chandler, RD
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If you are a single parent, meal planning is essential to ensuring that kids are eating healthy meals and that their routines are powered up for when they return [back to school](#). It's not too late to start a healthy routine now that the kids are back to school. Dallas Single Mom Examiner had an interview with nutritionist and chef Cynthia Chandler on starting the school year nutritionally right and with some tips and recipes from **Laura's Lean** deli meats and beef.

1. How did you become a nutritionist?

As a graduation present from high school, my parents took me on a cross country trip, originating in Kentucky and ending in Santa Barbara, California. As I traveled West I noticed cultural differences that were enlightening and educational but when I reached California I noticed a difference in food! Fresh, colorful, and delightful! I saw a conscientiousness around what is consumed and how it is consumed. That opened my interest in studying nutrition!

To solidify my decision, a frightening event had to occur! One lovely fall afternoon as I was eating with my sorority sisters on campus, I was called to the telephone in the student center to be told my 42 year old father had been rushed to the hospital and had experienced a heart attack! Well, he recovered and is still alive thankfully! I knew then that there was a connection between what I had seen in California and the health of an individual. Foods such as Laura's Lean Beef are examples of choices I make for my family table. Raised on family farms without hormones or antibiotics as well as vegetarian fed, there is level of conscientiousness in the product that the [Laura's Lean Beef company produces](#).

2.What's the biggest frustration transitioning from summer routine to back to school routines?

Time of day! You start earlier and you are more rushed if you are trying to get a family off to school. That leaves little time to make healthy choices for breakfast! Indeed, it takes some pre-planning during the weekend to insure there are planned breakfast meals. They can be simple such as a whole grain cereal and milk or pre-cut fruit and a breakfast bar. For lunch, if you are returning to work you can buy some lunch bags that have insulated pockets to keep food cold and carry your sandwich. Many people I work with like a meat loaf sandwich, using leftovers from the night before. Once again, quality is important and that is why I choose a beef like Laura's Lean with nine grams of fat or less per serving!

3. When meal planning what are few essentials that someone might need in terms of appliances, tools etc?

One of my favorite tools for preparing meals is a crock pot. I can start a meal in the morning, set my appliance and have a healthy and hot meal ready when I return home from work. I also like a Panini press as it turns a simple sandwich into a hot and easy meal. Try layering thin slices of Laura's deli turkey breast with a thin slice of cheese and topped with 1/4 of an avocado in between two pieces of crusty bread and place in a Panini press! The ingredients come together and you have a healthy sandwich in minutes!

Invest in a set of utensils to use in cooking. I like to have three or four wooden spoons, a spatula, a ladle and a slotted spoon right besides my stove at all times.

4. How long should it take to meal prep?

That depends on how much time you have. Just this morning, I started a pot of Italian sauce with some basic ingredients: whole tomatoes, tomato paste, an onion, some fresh rosemary and basil and a pound of ground beef. It is cooking in my stock pot (another wonderful essential to have in your kitchen arsenal) as I write today and will simmer for four hours until it becomes thickened and the flavors come together. I will add a tablespoon of honey and some salt and pepper at the end to season and to neutralize the acidity of the tomatoes. Putting this dish together took about ten minutes. The main issue with meal prep is pre-planning as it takes time to shop for your ingredients. Plan a week of menus and shop in advance so you have the ingredients at your fingertips and it makes cooking so much easier!

5. How does someone organize a grocery list to ensure they have what the need to meal plan?

Start with the layout of the grocery. Begin by looking at your recipes and begin filling in a chart that has these headings:

FRESH VEGETABLES

FRESH FRUIT

MEAT

CANNED GOODS

FROZEN GOODS

CONDIMENTS

MILK AND BUTTER

SEASONINGS

Under each heading fill in the ingredients you need to purchase. As you write in the ingredients, use a highlighter to note on your recipes which ingredients are now on the list. Take the highlighter to the grocery with you so you can note the items you have already put in your basket! It is SOOOO frustrating to plan a meal, go to the grocery to shop, come home and get in the middle of preparation and realize you have forgotten something. Also be sure to check dates on your staples in your refrigerator. You don't want to simply glance to see if you have eggs or milk only to discover that they are out of date when you are getting ready to add them to your meat loaf or your chocolate cream pie!

6. Are there any apps or websites you would recommend to help with meal planning?

Try Pepperplate! It is a way to manage recipes, create menus and make shopping lists and can help with organization in a digital format. Ziplist is a handy meal planning an grocery shopping tool that helps you create a week's worth of menus and from that you develop your shopping list. There are more than 1,300,000 recipes you can access within Ziplist that is very helpful in providing ideas on what to prepare for your next meal or party.

Courtesy of Laura's Lean Beef and Cynthia Chandler is a recipe for **Super Lean Laura Joes**

Super Lean Laura Joes by Cynthia Chandler, RD

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Servings: 6

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 pound Laura's Lean Beef 92% lean ground beef
¾ cup medium white onions, diced
½ medium green pepper, diced
½ medium sweet red pepper, diced
2 garlic cloves, finely minced
¼ cup ketchup
1 tablespoon tomato paste
½ cup tomato sauce
¼ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon dry mustard
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons water
½ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
6 whole wheat sandwich buns (optional)

In a large skillet on medium-high, add olive oil and Laura's Lean Beef and cook until browned, about 8 minutes. Drain any visible liquid, if necessary. Add onions, green and red peppers and garlic and cook until vegetables soften, about 5 minutes. Stir in ketchup, tomato paste, tomato sauce, brown sugar, chili powder, dry mustard, Worcestershire and water and simmer for 15 minutes. Add salt and red pepper flakes and mix. To serve, scoop mixture onto whole wheat buns, lettuce or even a baked potato for added potassium.

Nutrition Analysis (not including wheat buns):

Calories per serving (3 ounces) 260

Carbohydrates: 13 grams

Fat 13 grams

Protein 23 grams

SUGGESTED LINKS

- [Meal Planning for Food You Eat](#)
- [Meal planning made easy](#)



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