



Rural Rhythms

The Kitchen Compass for
Simplifying Meals & Saving
Money Every Week.

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Cassandra Comeau

The Rural Kitchen with Cassandra

Introduction

Welcome to The Rural Kitchen with Cassandra! I'm Cassandra, and I believe that food isn't just about eating; it's about gathering, sharing stories, and celebrating the moments and memories we create around the table. That's the heart behind my cookbook, Made with Love Vol 1, and it's the same spirit that inspired the Rural Rhythms Meal Planning Guide.

In my kitchen, I'm always looking for ways to simplify the daily rhythm of cooking while making it feel meaningful, sustainable, and joyful. Rural Rhythms brings together a love for seasonal, hearty meals with practical tools for meal planning, helping busy families prepare wholesome food that everyone can enjoy—even those with picky palates!

It's more than a guide; it's a way to reconnect with food, find balance, and bring a little warmth and tradition back into our everyday lives.

Whether you're here for meal ideas, seasonal inspiration, or a little taste of the rural lifestyle, I'm excited to share this journey with you. Let's keep the conversation going! I'd love to hear about your own kitchen memories, meal successes, or even the mishaps (we've all had them). Join me on social media to connect, share, and be part of a community that values food, family, and the simple joys of home.

From my kitchen to yours,

Cassandra



Batch Cooking Blueprints

Cook Once, Eat All Week (or Month or when in a Hurry!)

You know those weeks when time just seems to vanish, but everyone still needs to eat? That's where Batch Cooking Blueprints come in handy! Think of this as your way to spend a little time cooking upfront, then kick back and enjoy delicious meals that are ready to go whenever you need them.

Each of these blueprints starts with one simple recipe, designed to stretch into a few different meals. So, whether you've got a pot of hearty chili or a batch of roasted veggies, you can turn them into tacos, soups, bowls, and more—keeping things interesting without extra work. Plus, it's a great way to work around picky eaters because everyone can make it their own.

This section also has tips on how to store your meals to keep them fresh and even a quick guide on adjusting portions so you're set, whether it's just you or the whole family at the table. Batch Cooking Blueprints are all about saving time, eating well, and having a little fun with flavours—all while making meal prep one less thing to worry about.

Let's dig in and see how a little prep can set you up for a week of meals that everyone will love.

Blueprint 1: One-Pot Chili Base

Core Recipe: A hearty, classic chili made in one pot with beans, tomatoes, onions, and ground meat or a meatless alternative. Packed with flavor and easy to customize, this chili is perfect for satisfying a variety of taste buds.

Meals You Can Make:

- **Chili Mac:** Mix the chili with cooked pasta and a sprinkle of cheese for a comforting twist.
- **Stuffed Peppers:** Spoon chili into halved bell peppers, sprinkle with cheese, and bake until tender for a delicious, veggie-forward meal.
- **Chili Baked Potatoes:** Pour chili over baked potatoes, top with sour cream, and sprinkle with green onions for a hearty meal.
- **Taco Filling:** Spoon chili into tortillas, add toppings like shredded lettuce, sour cream, and salsa for a quick taco night.

Storage Tips: Portion chili into containers, storing in the fridge for up to 5 days or freezing for up to 3 months. This chili base freezes well, making it a handy go-to for busy weeks.

Why It Works: This chili is a crowd-pleaser that's rich in flavor and easy to adjust to individual preferences—ideal for busy families with diverse tastes.

[Made With Love Vol 1 Recipe](#) - you could use my spaghetti sauce recipe as a base to make your chili!

Blueprint 2: Roasted Veggies Mix

Core Recipe: Roast a large tray of seasonal veggies like carrots, broccoli, sweet potatoes, and bell peppers. Lightly seasoned with olive oil, salt, and pepper, these versatile veggies are perfect for building balanced meals.

Meals You Can Make:

- **Grain Bowls:** Combine roasted veggies with quinoa or rice, top with tahini, avocado, or a sprinkle of seeds for a satisfying meal.
- **Breakfast Hash:** Sauté the veggies with eggs and greens for a nourishing breakfast or brunch option.
- **Tossed Pasta:** Stir into cooked pasta with a drizzle of olive oil, parmesan, and fresh herbs for a quick, flavorful dinner.
- **Veggie Soup:** Blend roasted veggies with broth for a cozy, quick soup. Add a splash of cream or coconut milk for extra richness.

Storage Tips: Keep roasted veggies in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days. To reheat, use a skillet to restore their crisp texture.

Why It Works: These roasted veggies are a flexible, nutritious base that can be tailored for different meals, offering easy ways to boost flavor and sneak in vegetables for picky eaters.

[Made With Love Vol 1 Recipe](#) - this would be an amazing side option to put with any main dinner OR replace sides you and your family typically have each time - to switch things up!

Blueprint 3: Slow-Cooked Shredded Chicken

Core Recipe: Use 2-3 lbs of boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cooked in a slow cooker with broth, onions, and mild spices until tender and shreddable. This yields approximately 6-8 cups of shredded chicken, or about 1.5-2 cups per person for a family of four.

Meals You Can Make:

- Chili Mac: Mix the chili with cooked pasta and a sprinkle of cheese for a comforting twist.
- Stuffed Peppers: Spoon chili into halved bell peppers, sprinkle with cheese, and bake until tender for a delicious, veggie-forward meal.
- Chili Baked Potatoes: Pour chili over baked potatoes, top with sour cream, and sprinkle with green onions for a hearty meal.
- Taco Filling: Spoon chili into tortillas, add toppings like shredded lettuce, sour cream, and salsa for a quick taco night.

Storage Tips: Portion chili into containers, storing in the fridge for up to 5 days or freezing for up to 3 months. This chili base freezes well, making it a handy go-to for busy weeks.

Why It Works: This chili is a crowd-pleaser that's rich in flavor and easy to adjust to individual preferences—ideal for busy families with diverse tastes.

[Made With Love Vol 1 Recipe](#) - you could use my spaghetti sauce recipe as a base to make your chili!

Blueprint 4: Ground Beef (or Meatless Crumbles)

Core Recipe: Brown 2 lbs of ground beef with onions, garlic, and basic seasoning (salt, pepper, paprika). This yields about 4 cups of cooked ground beef, or approximately 1 cup per person for a family of four.

To Increase Portions: For additional servings, add $\frac{1}{4}$ lb (roughly $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked) of ground beef per person.

Meals You Can Make:

- **Beef Tacos:** Use 1 cup of cooked beef as taco filling, add toppings like lettuce, cheese, and tomatoes.
- **Stuffed Bell Peppers:** Mix 1 cup of beef with rice, seasonings, and diced tomatoes. Stuff into bell peppers and bake until tender.
- **Spaghetti Bolognese:** Stir 1-1.5 cups of beef into marinara sauce and serve over pasta.
- **Beef and Veggie Stir-Fry:** Sauté 1 cup of beef with fresh or frozen vegetables and serve over rice or noodles.

Storage Tips: Refrigerate ground beef in a sealed container for up to 4 days or freeze portions for up to 2 months.

[Made With Love Vol 1 Recipe](#) - this would be a great use for the bread or to mix into the spaghetti sauce - if you are lucky enough to live with people who like ground meat!

Blueprint 5: Roast Beef or Pork Shoulder

Core Recipe: Roast a 3-4 lb beef chuck roast or pork shoulder with simple herbs, garlic, and a splash of broth or wine. After roasting, shred the meat. This yields about 8 cups of shredded meat, which provides roughly 2 cups per person for a family of four.

To Increase Portions: For larger groups, add $\frac{1}{2}$ lb (about 1 cup cooked) per additional person.

Meals You Can Make:

- Beef (or Pork) Tacos: Use 1-1.5 cups as a filling for tacos, with toppings like cilantro, diced onions, and avocado.
- Pulled Pork Sandwiches: Mix 1 cup of shredded pork with BBQ sauce and serve on buns.
- Roast Beef Wraps: Use 1-1.5 cups of shredded beef in wraps with lettuce, tomatoes, and a drizzle of ranch dressing.
- Beef or Pork Stew: Add 1 cup of shredded meat to a pot with broth, diced potatoes, carrots, and celery for a comforting stew.
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Storage Tips: Store shredded beef or pork in a sealed container in the fridge for up to 4 days or freeze in portions for up to 3 months.

[Made With Love Vol 1 Recipe](#) - The sky is the limit with this option - remember, you can change up your seasonings when you cook the protein initially so that you can incorporate in other meal ideas like the ones listed above.

Blueprint 6: Baked Salmon or White Fish

Core Recipe: Bake 2-3 lbs of salmon fillets or white fish (e.g., cod) with olive oil, lemon, and herbs. This yields about 4 cups of cooked fish, roughly 1 cup per person for a family of four.

To Increase Portions: For additional servings, add $\frac{1}{4}$ lb (about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked) per extra person.

Meals You Can Make:

- Fish Tacos: Use 1 cup of cooked fish as taco filling, adding cabbage slaw, lime, and cilantro.
- Salmon (or Fish) Cakes: Mix 1-1.5 cups of fish with breadcrumbs, egg, and herbs, form into patties, and pan-fry until golden.
- Fish and Veggie Bowls: Serve 1 cup of fish over rice or quinoa with roasted vegetables and a drizzle of lemon yogurt sauce.
- Fish Salad: Flake 1 cup of fish into a salad with greens, cucumbers, and a light vinaigrette.

Storage Tips: Refrigerate cooked fish in an airtight container for up to 3 days. Fish does not freeze well after cooking, so plan to use within the week.

[Made With Love Vol 1 Recipe](#) - There are some amazing recipes in the book that would be great ideas to pair with seafood!

Blueprint 6: Baked Salmon or White Fish

Core Recipe: Bake 2-3 lbs of salmon fillets or white fish (e.g., cod) with olive oil, lemon, and herbs. This yields about 4 cups of cooked fish, roughly 1 cup per person for a family of four.

To Increase Portions: For additional servings, add $\frac{1}{4}$ lb (about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked) per extra person.

Meals You Can Make:

- Fish Tacos: Use 1 cup of cooked fish as taco filling, adding cabbage slaw, lime, and cilantro.
- Salmon (or Fish) Cakes: Mix 1-1.5 cups of fish with breadcrumbs, egg, and herbs, form into patties, and pan-fry until golden.
- Fish and Veggie Bowls: Serve 1 cup of fish over rice or quinoa with roasted vegetables and a drizzle of lemon yogurt sauce.
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[Made With Love Vol 1 Recipe](#) - There are some amazing recipes in the book that would be great ideas to pair with seafood!

Blueprint 7: Roast Whole Chicken

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Core Recipe: Roast a 4-5 lb whole chicken seasoned with herbs, garlic, and lemon.

This provides approximately 8 cups of shredded chicken or roughly 2 cups per person for a family of four.

To Increase Portions: For larger families, roast an additional 2-3 lb chicken or add $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of chicken per person.

Meals You Can Make:

- **Chicken Salad:** Mix 1 cup of shredded chicken with mayo, celery, and herbs, and serve in a sandwich or on a bed of greens.
- **Chicken and Rice Casserole:** Combine 1 cup of chicken with cooked rice, veggies, and a creamy sauce. Bake until bubbly.
- **Chicken Noodle Soup:** Add 1-1.5 cups of chicken to broth with noodles, carrots, and celery for a quick, comforting soup.
- **Chicken Pizza:** Use 1 cup of chicken as a topping for homemade or store-bought pizza dough, along with mozzarella and barbecue or marinara sauce.

Storage Tips: Store shredded chicken in the fridge for up to 4 days or freeze in portions for up to 3 months.

[Made With Love Vol 1 Recipe](#) - this is the most versatile way to feed so many people - family, kid's friends and so much more... even freezing the bones to make broths for more meal options!

Your Kitchen Compass:

The Rural Rhythms Meal Planner Spreadsheet

Welcome to Your Kitchen Compass—the ultimate digital tool to simplify shopping, meal planning, and keeping track of everything you have on hand. Whether it's your pantry staples, fridge essentials, or freezer finds, this spreadsheet makes it easy to stay on top of your kitchen stores, turning meal prep into a stress-free part of your week.

And with today's tech—whether you pull it up on a tablet, smartphone, or even a smart fridge—you'll have all your kitchen essentials at your fingertips!

Inside, you'll find thoughtfully organised tabs for Pantry, Fridge, and Freezer Inventory, along with a Seasonal Foods List to guide your shopping and cooking by what's freshest each season. There's also a Meal Planner that helps you map out weekly meals based on what you already have and what you need to pick up, making every grocery trip and every dinner choice that much easier.

Your Kitchen Compass isn't just about keeping lists; it's about creating a kitchen rhythm that works for you—whether that means reducing food waste, simplifying shopping, or finding joy in cooking and planning again.

So, pour yourself a coffee, get familiar with the tabs, and let this planner guide you as you create delicious meals, stock up smartly, and make the most of every ingredient in your kitchen.

[Get your Compass right here!](#)



My Kitchen Staples & Heirloom Inspiration

Every kitchen has its MVPs — the tools and treasures that make cooking not just easier, but more joyful. These are the staples I rely on day after day, whether I'm pulling together a quick weeknight dinner, batch cooking for the week ahead, or writing recipes for my cookbooks.

My Must-Have Kitchen Tools

Here are a few tried-and-true favourites (with links so you can explore them for your own kitchen):

Cast Iron Skillet – Perfect for one-pan meals, searing, and even baking.

Sharp Chef's Knife – Because chopping is so much easier when your knife does the work for you.

Glass Storage Containers – Keeps leftovers fresh and makes batch cooking a breeze.

Slow Cooker / Instant Pot – My “set it and forget it” lifesaver on busy days.

Sheet Pans – For roasting veggies, baking, and everything in between.

 Want to shop these exact items? You'll find my hand-picked kitchen essentials [Linked Here](#).

From My Kitchen to Yours

Want more than just the tools? Check out my cookbooks filled with family recipes and stories you'll love passing down:

- [Made With Love Vol. 1](#)
- [Made With Love Vol. 2](#)

Your kitchen deserves its own legacy too. That's why I created the Heirloom Cookbook project — a way to preserve your family's recipes and stories in a keepsake you can hold, gift, and pass down. [Learn more here](#)

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Rural Rhythms Meal Planner

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