Weekly Meal Planning Checklist

A weekly checklist to plan every meal, check your calendar and build the shopping list in one sitting.

Take Inventory First

- [ ] Check the fridge for items to use up this week
  Plan meals around what's already nearing its use-by date.
- [ ] Scan the freezer for proteins and ready components
- [ ] Review pantry staples like rice, pasta, and canned goods
- [ ] Note fresh produce that needs eating soon
- [ ] List anything running low that you'll need to restock

Check Your Week's Calendar

- [ ] Mark nights you'll be out or eating elsewhere
- [ ] Flag busy evenings that need quick or leftover meals
- [ ] Find one slot for a longer recipe or batch cook
- [ ] Note any guests or special occasions to cook for
- [ ] Decide which night you'll do the grocery shop

Plan Breakfasts and Lunches

- [ ] Choose two or three repeatable breakfasts for the week
- [ ] Plan grab-and-go options for rushed mornings
- [ ] Decide on packed lunches or planned leftovers
- [ ] Pick lunches that reuse dinner ingredients
- [ ] Add any work or school lunch requirements

Plan Dinners

- [ ] Assign a dinner to each night of the week
- [ ] Repeat a theme like taco night or pasta night to simplify
- [ ] Choose recipes that share key ingredients
- [ ] Plan a deliberate leftovers or clean-out-the-fridge night
- [ ] Balance the week with variety in proteins and vegetables
- [ ] Keep one easy backup meal for unexpected changes

Plan Snacks and Drinks

- [ ] List everyday snacks for the household
- [ ] Add lunchbox or after-school snacks for kids
- [ ] Plan a few healthier options like fruit and yogurt
- [ ] Note drinks, coffee, and beverages to restock

Build the Shopping List

- [ ] Write every ingredient from your planned meals

- [ ] Cross off anything you confirmed you already have
- [ ] Group the list by aisle or store section
- [ ] Add household and staple items that are low
- [ ] Estimate the total against your weekly budget
  Swap in sale items or cheaper proteins to hit your target.
- [ ] Post the meal plan on the fridge for the family to see