

# a black girl's guide to... **WEIGHT LOSS**

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## **THE BGG2WL MEAL PLAN**

by Erika Nicole Kendall



a black girl's guide to...  
**WEIGHT LOSS**  
 culturally sound tools, tips, and advice

## WEEKLY MEAL PLANNER

Use the chart below to plan out your meals and snacks to help you eat clean! For each day, plan out what you'll have for breakfast, lunch, dinner and for two snack breaks. Be sure to spread your meals out far enough that you don't need to eat in the middle of the night, but don't have

them so far apart that you wind up hungry - that negates the point of eating 5 times a day! Mapping out your meals will help you in preparing for each day's meals, as well as shopping for groceries for the week. Best of luck to you in your quest to live healthily and eat clean!

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
BREAKFAST		Oatmeal - see notes for info					
SNACK							
LUNCH	Free Space!	Leftover Chana Masala	Leftover Stew	Leftover Ramen	Leftover Beans & Rice	Leftover Dal	Leftover Stir Fry
SNACK							
DINNER	Chana Masala	Kale and Potato Stew	Loaded Ramen	Beans and Rice	Dal	Stir Fry	Pasta

# OATMEAL 101

If you've decided to take the plunge into oatmeal - how dramatic - congratulations! I hope you didn't purchase the little instant packets, though. That negates the purpose of avoiding processed food, since those little packets are full of not only a ton of sugar, but loads of fake fruit bits and chemicals to make the oatmeal thicken and become creamier once you pour your water into it.

Believe it or not, oatmeal isn't that complicated. Here are some tips for how to cook yours quickly.

You can just as easily pour your oats into your bowl, pour enough water in the bowl to just barely cover the oats and toss it in the microwave for a minute. You can also heat some water on your stove, and pour that in there, as well. If you want creamier oatmeal, you can add butter. You can also use heated milk or cream instead of water. You have loads of options, here.

That being said... here are five fantastic ways to cook your oatmeal!

1. Bananas and cream - cut up 1 banana into thin slices, and drop them on top of your oatmeal after you've cooked it. Let the bananas soften a bit, then stir them deep into your oatmeal. Before you know it, your oatmeal is sweet and creamy without the use of additional cream or sugar.
2. Cinnamon and maple syrup - a fourth of a teaspoon of cinnamon and a tbs of maple syrup. Though maple syrup is sweet, maple syrup doesn't cause the same sugar rush that typical sugar causes, therefore resulting in a much less jarring sugar shock. Your syrup must be Grade B, though. No excuses, no "maple flavored."
3. Oatmeal Raisin Oatmeal - add a little butter to your blend, and add a few tablespoons of raisins. Boom.
4. Dried cranberries and walnuts - if you can, snag a bag of a "cranberry mix" - usually contains walnuts - and pour those into your oatmeal.
5. Apple chunk oatmeal - if you're an apple lover, chop up enough apple to get you through a few days in advance, add a bit of lemon juice, and drop the apples in your oatmeal with a little cream and a pinch of salt. Heavenly!

# ON LUNCH

A big part of clean eating - specifically for lunch - is cooking well when you can, and being prepared for the times when you can't cook. For many of us, lunch is one of those times.

One of the fun things about cooking veggies is that you can often put the leftovers back in the fridge, and save 'em for another day. We won't be doing that, though. We'll be tossing them right back into your tupperware over some leaves for the next day's lunch. Spinach, red fire, leafy green... pick your lettuce or leaf. Either way, you've got to get it situated. Pack your lunch before you plate your dinner, so that you know you've got it set.

Re-purposing your leftovers - especially when you've got plenty - is one of the best money savers ever, once you figure out how to swing it!

# SMALL NOTES

All recipes accommodate approximately two to three servings. Add or subtract as accordingly.

In regards to lunch, always plan for the next day's lunch while cooking dinner. Set aside food from the current dinner before you divide up portions for dinner.

The shopping list may feel extensive, but you'll appreciate having these things on hand. Lots of them - namely the spices and condiments - will come in handy in the future, and lots of them will last a long time. Stocking a clean eating kitchen might be a challenge, but the larger your collection grows, the easier it becomes to shop for your plan.

The most important thing to do, in regards to the shopping list, is to take your list, print it out, go in your kitchen and *cross out the things you already have first!* Don't buy what you already own!



# THE ANCIENT ART OF SNACK-FU

Yes... because it has truly become an art form for me. Trying to diagnose when I'm hungry – truly hungry, and not just craving something because of a memory or a scent – then slowly determining just how hungry I am followed up with finding the proper item to feed my hunger? Yeah, that's an art form. And once you've perfected it, your solutions may not look anything like mine or anyone else's – and that's okay, trust me – but they will work for you. How often do you snack?

It's not how often you snack, it's what you're snacking on. You have to truly think about your day, and what you're eating (and if you're writing in a food diary, are you even including the little candies and cookies you snack on in your diary?) throughout the day. Every time you stick something in your mouth, you're snacking. Is it candy? Is it office cookies? Are they empty calories – calories with neither nutrients nor real food (like cookies, cakes, candies)?

Consider how much time goes between your meals. Do you leave for work at 6am, with no lunch break until 1pm? Chances are, you might overeat at your 1pm meal because it's been at least 7 hours since the last time you ate! We can't have that!

If you know you're going to have a long day... plan! Prepare in advance. How?  
Tools of the Trade

Let me tell you how I snack.

First of all, I keep food everywhere that I know I'd have a hard time convincing myself to not seek out a quicker, cheaper, less healthy option. Like... the car. Or... my desk. Perhaps, even, my kitchen. Yes.. the kitchen. If the name of the game is to avoid overeating, you head yourself off at the pass by providing little things that can quickly satiate an immediate hunger, and give you enough time to make sound decisions about what you want to eat. So for me, snacking helps curb that “hungry” feeling – if I avoid eating at the last minute (which is what causes that “hungry” feeling) and eat a little bit each time on a set schedule, I will never

encounter that hungry feeling (or if I do, it'll be rare) and I'll never have a reason to overeat. I'll never encounter that "Ohhh, I'm starving" feeling that usually propels me to overindulge.

I keep a bag of grapes in the freezer. Why? Because they're healthy, low-calorie, they take a while to eat and actually make me stop and think about whether or not I'm really hungry. I just grab a couple of frozen grapes, bite and chew them slowly (I'm quick to get brain freeze, so I'm careful and chew slowly) and before too long, I can assess just how hungry I am. Will I need only a few more grapes? Should I consider cooking? I get time to think about these things while I chew my grapes – slowly and carefully so as to avoid brain freeze! – and enjoy myself.

I keep a ziploc bag with half a cup (which is, essentially, two servings) of sunflower seeds in the bottom of my purse. Sunflower seeds are high in protein and fiber, so it doesn't take a lot of 'em to get you where you need to be. They won't satisfy me if I'm having that "Grrr, I'm starving" feeling, but if I'm eating on my proper schedule, I should never encounter that feeling, right?

I keep a bag of freeze dried banana chips in the car. This is usually for both myself and my daughter, just in case I'm stuck in traffic. They're naturally sweet, very nutritious, and very satisfying to me. I just eat them one at a time – even if it means I eat the entire little ziploc bag of 'em.. I eat them one at a time. Remember, if I'm eating on my proper schedule, I should not have that ravenous "eat-six-at-a-time" feeling, right?

The grocery sells sliced cantaloupe, so I keep some in the fridge. A slice or two usually tides me over for the next hour or so. In fact, if you don't have time to tend to fruit yourself, those grocery store fruit salads might work pretty well altogether. A small one should help out pretty well!

These are a few things that, over time, have proven to work for me. I had to look at my routine. I had to check out my diary and see where I was the most vulnerable, and that's when the answers started pouring out.

# CHANA MASALA

*1 bag frozen broccoli*  
*2 15oz cans chickpeas*  
*1 onion, diced*  
*2 cloves garlic, sliced*  
*2 tbsp peanut or olive oil*  
*1 tsp dried ginger powder (optional)*  
*1 tsp red pepper flakes*  
*1tbsp cumin*  
*1 tsp coriander*  
*1 tsp turmeric*  
*1 tbsp paprika*  
*2 tsp garam masala*  
*1/4 tsp cayenne*  
*1 small can tomato paste*  
*1/2 cup cilantro*  
*1 lime*  
*1 tsp kosher salt*

In a medium pot or skillet, pour 3 tbsp of water over low heat. Add broccoli. Cover. Cook for 10 minutes until broccoli is steamed and cooked all the way through.

Soften onion in large pot with peanut oil over medium heat. Add garlic, and cook for 1 minute. Add chickpeas (with the liquid of the can) and tomato paste, and stir to mix tomato paste in with broth. Add all spices and salt, and stir.

Serve chickpea mixture over broccoli.

(For step-by-step instructions, [click here.](#))

# BROCCOLI & CHICKPEA “STIR-FRY”

*1 bag frozen broccoli, thawed  
1 15oz can chickpeas, drained  
1 red pepper, sliced  
1/2 cup cilantro  
3 tbsp peanut oil (olive oil if peanut isn't an option)  
1 tsp Chinese 5-spice  
1 onion, sliced  
1 cup mushrooms  
generous pinch of salt*

In a large skillet, cook chickpeas and onions in 2 tbsp peanut oil over medium heat. When onions are softened, add red peppers and mushrooms. Add broccoli, and cook until broccoli heats up. Add 5-spice and kosher salt, stir to spread the spice around.

Optional: Serve over brown rice.



# LENTILS OVER RICE

*2 cups brown rice, uncooked*  
*3 tbsp peanut oil, divided*  
*1 medium onion, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices*  
*1 tsp dried ground mustard*  
*1/2 tsp coriander*  
*1/2 tsp cumin*  
*1 whole clove*  
*1/4 tsp ground cinnamon*  
*1/8 tsp ground cardamom (optional, but you totally want it)*  
*1 tbsp red pepper flakes*  
*1 garlic clove, minced*  
*4 cups vegetable broth*  
*1 cup dried small red lentils*  
*1 14oz can diced tomatoes, undrained*  
*1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro*  
*1 tablespoon fresh lime juice*

Cook brown rice according to instructions.

Heat 1 tbsp peanut oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion to pan, and cook it until onion is softened.

Add mustard, coriander, cumin, and clove to skillet. Cook 1 1/2 minutes or until fragrant, stirring frequently. Remove from heat. Add cinnamon, cardamom, and red pepper flakes.

Add garlic to skillet, and saute for 1 minute. Add broth, lentils, and tomato (with the liquid in the can) to pan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in cilantro and juice.

Serve lentils over brown rice. Eat like a boss.

# KALE & POTATO STEW

*1 bag frozen kale  
1 bag frozen diced carrots, thawed  
1/2 cup thin-diced celery  
1 large onion, diced (or one bag of frozen onion  
1 15oz can navy beans  
2 potatoes, diced  
3 cloves garlic, sliced  
2 tbsp tomato paste  
1 tablespoon dried thyme  
1 teaspoon paprika  
2 bay leaves (optional)  
2 tbsp vinegar (apple cider preferred)  
1 tbsp salt*

In a large skillet, sauté your carrots and onions. In a large pot, bring approximately 5 quarts of water to a boil. Add your tomato paste, and use a whisk or fork to blend it in with the rest of the broth. Add the rest of your ingredients except for your kale. When you add the navy beans, be sure to also add the liquid from inside the can. Let cook on medium heat for 45 minutes. Add kale, cook for 15 more minutes.

Devour.

# SPINACH & RED PEPPER PASTA

*whole wheat spaghetti noodles  
1 bag frozen spinach, thawed  
1 red pepper, sliced into strips  
1 small onion, sliced into strips  
1 cup sun-dried tomato (optional)  
5 tbsp olive oil  
1 clove garlic  
1 tbsp oregano  
1/4 tsp red pepper flakes  
1 generous pinch of kosher salt*

Cook pasta according to instructions.  
Toss with 2 tbsp olive oil once drained.

In a skillet on medium heat, cook onion in 2 tbsp olive oil until it softens, then add red pepper and sun-dried tomato. Add garlic and spinach. Sprinkle 1/8tsp kosher salt, oregano, and red pepper flakes over skillet, and cover. Cook for 5 minutes.

Serve spinach over pasta with optional parmesan cheese.

# BEANS & RICE

*1 small onion, diced  
2 cups brown rice, uncooked  
2 tbsp olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, minced (approximately 1  
tbsp if you buy your garlic pre-minced)  
1 tbsp cumin  
2 tsp paprika  
1 tsp coriander  
1/2 tsp kosher salt  
1/8 tsp cayenne pepper  
1 15oz can kidney beans  
1/2 cup cilantro  
1/4 cup celery*

*(PS: I learned the technique in this recipe from Bryant Terry, the vegan soul food king! Be sure to check out his book, The Inspired Vegan to see his take on it!)*

Cook your brown rice according to its instructions. Cook your diced onion in a large skillet over medium heat with your olive oil. Once onion is softened, turn down the heat and add garlic, continuously stirring slowly for 1 minute. Pour your kidney beans - yes, with the liquid from the can - into your skillet and add 1 cup of water, turning the heat back up to medium. Add cumin, coriander, paprika, and cayenne pepper.

HAVE A BLENDER? Take half of the contents of your skillet and put them in a blender with the celery, blending until you have a fine puree. Add back to skillet with the rest of your beans and onions.

NO BLENDER? Using the back of a spatula or ladle, a fork, or a potato masher, smash your beans into you get a softer consistency. Stir mixture until it's mixed together a bit better, and cook on medium heat to reduce the amount of liquid in the skillet.

Serve gravy over rice, top with cilantro.

PS: If you save your rice for leftovers, portion it in freezer bags and save it in the freezer. NEVER save rice in the fridge!

# REAL RAMEN

*1/2lb dried ramen or egg noodles (if you buy top ramen, **do not use the spice packet!**)*

*1/4 cup soy sauce*

*2 tbsp tomato paste*

*2 tbsp peanut oil (use olive if peanut isn't an option)*

*1 tsp chinese five spice*

*1 red pepper, sliced into strips*

*1 green pepper, sliced into strips*

*1 cup mushrooms*

*2 cups cabbage*

*1/2 cup sliced scallions*

*1 tbsp crushed red pepper flakes*

*1 handful diced cilantro*

*1/2 tsp salt*

Bring a large pot of water to boil and salt it. Cook the noodles according to their instructions, prepared until tender but not mushy (taste individual noodles during the cooking process to ensure doneness.) Once noodles are done, drain pot and rinse your noodles in cold water. (This keeps them from continuing to cook while you prepare the rest of the meal.)

Empty out the water (it has starches in it we don't need for this recipe) and replace it with 8 cups of water, brought to a boil. Add your tomato paste, peanut oil and soy sauce, and whisk (or use a fork to stir vigorously) until paste and soy sauce is blended into the water. Add the rest of your ingredients, except for your cilantro.

Cook for 25 minutes on medium heat. Add salt to soup to taste.

Portion out noodles in individual bowls for each serving. Top with broth and noodles. Sprinkle small handful of cilantro across top.

# SHOPPING LIST

## **Spices**

*Chinese five spice*  
*paprika*  
*garam masala*  
*cayenne*  
*cinnamon*  
*cardamom*  
*dried thyme*  
*oregano*  
*bay leaves*  
*dried ginger powder*  
*red pepper flakes*  
*cumin*  
*coriander*  
*turmeric*  
*ground mustard*  
*cloves (whole, not ground)*  
*kosher salt*

## **Fruits**

*lime (2)*

## **Vegetables**

*frozen kale (1 bag)*  
*sun-dried tomato (optional)*  
*onion (7)*  
*1 bag frozen carrots*  
*frozen broccoli (2 bags)*  
*celery*  
*potatoes (2)*  
*mushrooms (2 pkgs)*  
*red pepper (3)*  
*green pepper (1)*  
*cilantro*  
*garlic (1 head)*  
*cabbage*  
*scallions (green onions)*  
*frozen spinach (1 bag)*

*15oz cans chickpeas (3)*  
*15oz can navy beans (1)*  
*15oz can kidney beans (1)*  
*lentils*

## **Grain**

*whole wheat spaghetti*  
*brown rice*  
*1 bag egg noodles or 4*  
*pkg ramen noodles*

## **Condiments**

*vinegar*  
*soy sauce*  
*olive oil*  
*peanut oil*  
*tomato paste (2)*  
*14oz can diced tomatoes*  
*16oz vegetable broth*

## **Oatmeal toppings** *(write in)*

## **Snack options** *(write in)*



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