

# QUICK & EASY WEEKNIGHT MEALS





# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Meet Holly,**  
Cook, Photographer, and Writer behind the popular food blog



Spend With Pennies began as a way to share shopping tips, but after countless recipe requests from friends and family, Holly began to share her kitchen adventures too. Believing that the kitchen table is a place for families to reconnect, she creates simple and approachable recipes for the everyday home cook.

In addition to cooking for her own family of six, Holly has completed several food and cooking courses including private cooking classes in Italy and a Culinary Boot Camp. Her recipes have been featured on BuzzFeed, MSN, All You, Food & Wine, InStyle, and Real Simple.

Holly loves all types of creating, crafting, and traveling and most of all, spending time with her husband and four children.

All content in this book is copyright protected and not to be republished.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	15 Minute Mac And Cheese
5	20 Minute Lemon Pasta
6	Creamy Spinach Pasta
7	Fettuccine Alfredo
8	Pork Fajitas
9	Crispy Air Fryer Pork Chops
10	Air Fryer Bone-In Chicken Breasts
11	Sesame Ground Turkey Bowls
12	Fish Tacos
13	Quick Weeknight Chili
14	Tuscan Chicken Pasta
15	Shortcut Shepherd's Pie
16	Shrimp And Veggie Skillet
17	Egg Roll in a Bowl
18	Air Fryer Pork Tenderloin

# 15 MINUTE MAC AND CHEESE

This quick and easy mac and cheese recipe takes about 15 minutes to make (from scratch!!), including cooking the pasta and making the cheesy sauce! It's an easy weeknight favorite that the whole family will love! [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 12 ounces elbow macaroni or short pasta (approx 3 cups dry pasta)
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- 2 dashes of hot sauce, such as Tabasco
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- ½ cup Parmesan cheese, shredded

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook according to package directions. Drain well, do not rinse.
- 2 While pasta is cooking, melt butter in a saucepan. Whisk in flour and cook for 1-2 minutes.
- 3 Add milk and broth a small amount at a time, whisking smooth after each addition.
- 4 Add dry mustard, salt, pepper, onion powder, and hot sauce. Continue to cook over medium heat and allow to come to a boil. Boil 1 minute while whisking.
- 5 Remove from heat, add cheeses, and whisk until smooth.
- 6 Stir in pasta. Season with additional salt & pepper to taste.

yield: 4 servings

# 20 MINUTE LEMON PASTA

Light and bright in flavor, this lemon pasta dish is made with a simple sauce of lemon, butter, and a splash of cream tossed with freshly cooked pasta! It is super quick to prepare and makes for the perfect lunch or as a “nest” under your favorite protein. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

8 ounces dry pasta (approx 2 cups)  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 lemon, zested and juiced  
½ cup heavy cream  
3 tablespoons capers  
1 tablespoon fresh parsley, chopped  
freshly grated Parmesan cheese, optional

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and cook pasta al dente according to package directions. Drain pasta, reserving ½ cup pasta water.
- 2 Zest the lemon and set the zest aside. Juice 3 tablespoons of lemon juice.
- 3 While pasta is boiling, add butter and garlic to a 10" skillet. Cook just until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
- 4 Add 1 teaspoon lemon zest, 3 tablespoons lemon juice, heavy cream, and capers to the skillet. Simmer 5-6 minutes or until slightly thickened (if doubling the recipe, thickening will take longer).
- 5 Remove from heat and toss with pasta and chopped fresh parsley. Stir in pasta water to reach desired consistency.
- 6 Garnish with Parmesan cheese and additional lemon slices if desired.

yield: 4 servings

# QUICK CREAMY SPINACH PASTA

Made with fresh or frozen spinach, this quick and creamy spinach pasta puts a delicious main dish on the table in about 30 minutes! Made simple with a shortcut cream cheese Parmesan sauce and tender pasta, this easy weeknight meal is always a family favorite. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

½ pound medium pasta penne, bow ties, or rotini  
2 tablespoons butter  
½ onion, diced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
4 ounces cream cheese  
1 cup chicken broth  
10 ounces frozen spinach, thawed and squeezed dry  
½ cup Parmesan cheese, shredded  
salt & pepper to taste

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook al dente (firm) according to package directions.
- 2 While pasta is boiling, cook onion in butter over medium heat until tender. Add garlic and cook just until fragrant.
- 3 Add cream cheese to the pan and whisk until melted and smooth. Add chicken broth a little bit at a time and add spinach. Simmer 3-4 minutes or until slightly thickened.
- 4 Stir in pasta simmer 1 minute more. Stir in Parmesan cheese, season with salt & pepper to taste and serve.

yield: 4 servings

# FETTUCCINE ALFREDO

Fettuccine Alfredo is quick and easy to make with just a few fresh ingredients! Made with a rich and creamy Parmesan sauce, this fettuccine Alfredo recipe is a must-add to your regular dinner rotation. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

12 ounces fettuccine  
5 tablespoons butter, unsalted  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
1 ½ cups heavy cream  
1 ½ cups Parmesan cheese, grated  
pinch nutmeg\*  
½ teaspoon each salt & pepper or to taste  
fresh parsley and additional Parmesan for garnish, optional

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook fettuccine until al dente (slightly firm). Reserve ½ cup pasta water. Drain pasta (do not rinse) and set aside.
- 2 Meanwhile, melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add garlic and cook just until fragrant, about 1 minute.
- 3 Stir in the heavy cream and bring to a simmer. Let simmer uncovered until slightly thickened, about 5-7 minutes.
- 4 Remove the cream mixture from the heat and whisk in Parmesan cheese and a pinch of nutmeg. Season with salt & pepper.
- 5 Add cooked fettuccine to the skillet and toss with the sauce adding additional pasta water if needed.
- 6 Garnish with parsley and additional Parmesan cheese if desired.

\*A pinch is about 1/16th of a teaspoon. Use your index finger and thumb to squeeze a little bit out of the spice jar.

# PORK FAJITAS

When it comes to pork fajitas, this recipe is quick and easy to make while still tasting like a restaurant quality dish! Strips of lean pork are tossed in a simple homemade seasoning and cooked with onion and bell peppers for the perfect weeknight meal. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 medium onion
- 3 bell peppers red, yellow, green, or orange
- 1 pound pork tenderloin or lean pork, cut into strips
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 ½ tablespoons fajita seasoning

## FOR SERVING

- 8 flour tortillas 6" each or corn tortillas
- toppings as desired

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Heat tortillas according to package directions.
- 2 Slice onion and peppers, set aside.
- 3 Cut pork into thin strips and place in a bowl. Toss pork with seasoning, lime juice, and 1 tablespoon olive oil.
- 4 Preheat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium high. Add the pork in small batches and cook just until browned, about 3-4 minutes. Set cooked pork aside.
- 5 Add 1 tablespoon of oil to the same pan and cook onions 1-2 minutes, stir in peppers and cook 2 minutes more.
- 6 Add pork and cook until heated through, do not overcook the pork.
- 7 Serve with warmed tortillas and your favorite fajita toppings.

# CRISPY AIR FRYER PORK CHOPS

Pork chops have never been easier to make! Coated with flavorful crispy Parmesan breadcrumbs and cooked in the air fryer, they come out crispy on the outside and super tender and juicy on the inside, all in less than 30 minutes. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 4 boneless pork chops  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick
- salt & pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup flour
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup seasoned bread crumbs
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Panko bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon paprika or smoked paprika
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Dab pork chops dry with a paper towel. Season both sides with salt & pepper.
- 2 Whisk flour and Italian seasoning. Place in a shallow bowl or plate.
- 3 In another dish, combine bread crumbs, Panko, Parmesan cheese, paprika, and salt & pepper to taste.
- 4 Lightly dredge pork with flour and then dip into beaten egg. Finally, dip into the breadcrumb mixture pressing to adhere.
- 5 Preheat air fryer to 400°F.
- 6 Spray each side of the pork chops with cooking spray or olive oil spray and place in the air fryer basket ensuring there is room for the air to circulate.
- 7 Cook 5 minutes. Flip the pork chops over and cook an additional 4-6 minutes or until browned and the thickest part reaches 140°F with a meat thermometer.
- 8 Remove pork from the air fryer basket and place on a wire rack. Let rest 5 minutes before serving.

yield: 4 servings

# AIR FRYER BONE-IN CHICKEN BREASTS

Bone-in chicken breasts are a favorite dinner and for good reason! They are really easy to make in the air fryer and come out extra tender and juicy with a deliciously crispy skin! [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

2 split chicken breasts

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon lemon pepper seasoning, more to taste

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

## DIRECTIONS

1 Preheat air fryer to 375°F.

2 Rub chicken with oil and evenly coat with the seasonings.

3 Place in the air fryer basket and cook for 25-27 minutes or until chicken reaches 165°F.

yield: 4 servings

# SESAME GROUND TURKEY BOWLS

Ready in less than 20 minutes, these flavorful sesame ground turkey bowls are filled with nutritious ingredients and topped with a homemade sweet and savory sauce. Light, flavorful, and loaded with crunchy veggies, they are perfect for a quick lunch or an easy dinner! [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

1 pound lean ground turkey  
1 ½ teaspoons ginger, minced  
3 cloves garlic finely, minced  
2 cups coleslaw mix  
2 green onions, sliced  
hoisin sauce and sesame seeds for garnish  
rice or noodles for serving

## SAUCE

⅓ cup water  
⅓ cup beef broth or chicken broth  
¼ cup low sodium soy sauce  
1 tablespoon brown sugar  
1 teaspoon sriracha  
1 teaspoon sesame oil  
1 tablespoon cornstarch

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Cook turkey, ginger and garlic until no pink remains. Drain fat.
- 2 While the turkey is browning, measure and mix sauce ingredients except cornstarch and set aside.
- 3 Add coleslaw mix to the turkey and cook 2-3 minutes or just until slightly softened.
- 4 Move the turkey and coleslaw to the edges of the pan. Stir the sauce mixture and add it to the center of the pan cooking until hot and bubbly.
- 5 Mix 1 tablespoon of water and 1 tablespoon of cornstarch to make a slurry and whisk into the sauce until it reaches the desired consistency. Simmer for 2 minutes.
- 6 Remove from heat and garnish with green onions and sesame seeds. Serve over rice.

yield: 4 servings

# FISH TACOS

These mahi mahi tacos, whether grilled or baked, are quick and easy to make! Flaky white fish is seasoned with a flavorful homemade rub, cooked to perfection, and topped with a delicious fruit salsa before serving. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 3 mahi mahi filets 6 ounces each, about 1" thick
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 8 6" corn tortillas or flour tortillas
- 1 lime, wedged
- toppings to taste

## SEASONING

- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Heat grill to medium-high heat or preheat oven to 425°F. Combine the seasoning mix in a small bowl.
- 2 Dab mahi mahi filets with a paper towel and brush the filets with olive oil. Sprinkle with seasoning.
- 3 To Grill: Grill the fish filets for about 3-4 minutes skin side down (if fish has skin). Flip the fish over with a spatula and cook an additional 3-4 minutes or until the fish reaches 140°F.
- 4 To Bake: Place filets on a baking sheet and bake 12-17 minutes or until the fish reaches 140°F.
- 5 While fish is cooking, heat tortillas according to package directions.
- 6 Remove fish from the grill or oven and squeeze lime over top. Break fish apart into chunks and serve in tortillas with toppings.

yield: 4 servings

# QUICK WEEKNIGHT CHILI

This easy chili recipe is made with flavorful ingredients and simple instructions that make it so quick to prepare. It's a hearty and healthy meal that is worth keeping at the front of the recipe box. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ pounds ground beef
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 15 ounces red kidney beans, drained & rinsed
- 14 ounces diced tomatoes
- 14 ounces tomato sauce
- 1 cup beef broth
- 1 ½ tablespoon chili powder

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Brown beef in a large pot over medium high-heat with garlic and onion. Cook until no pink remains and drain the fat.
- 2 Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil.
- 3 Once boiling, turn down to a simmer and cook uncovered for 45-55 minutes or until it thickens.

yield: 4 servings

# TUSCAN CHICKEN PASTA

Creamy tuscan chicken pasta is an elegant and upscale main dish that's ready in minutes! Cooked chicken is tossed with pasta in a creamy Alfredo sauce with sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, and spinach for a delicious dish that everyone will ask for time and time again! [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 12 ounces medium pasta, penne or bowtie
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon garlic, minced
- ½ cup sun-dried tomatoes in oil, drained and chopped
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- 16 ounces Bertolli Alfredo sauce
- 2 cups cooked chicken or rotisserie chicken
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add pasta and cook until al dente (tender but firm). Drain and reserve ½ cup pasta water.
- 2 Heat oil in a skillet over medium-low heat. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds.
- 3 Stir in the sun-dried tomatoes and spinach. Cook until the spinach is wilted.
- 4 Add the pasta sauce and chicken, then turn heat up to medium until hot, about 5 minutes.
- 5 Toss with drained pasta and Parmesan cheese. Add extra pasta water if needed and season to taste.

yield: 4 servings

# SHORTCUT SHEPHERD'S PIE

Filled with meat, vegetables, and potatoes, this shepherd's pie recipe is a comfort food classic! For a quick and easy shortcut, skip the mashed potatoes and use tater tots—there's less work, less clean up, and less oven cooking time. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 4 cups mixed vegetables, defrosted
- 10 ounces condensed tomato soup
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 package tater tots, frozen
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 400°F.
- 2 Cook beef and onion over medium heat until no pink remains. Drain any fat.
- 3 Stir in condensed soup, mixed vegetables and seasonings. Leave in oven safe skillet, or spread into the bottom of a casserole dish.
- 4 Sprinkle ½ the cheese over meat mixture, top with tater tots and then remaining cheese.
- 5 Bake 30-35 minutes or until bubbly.

# SHRIMP AND VEGGIE SKILLET

This shrimp and vegetable skillet makes a quick and easy dinner recipe with two key ingredients – shrimp and vegetables. Made with a savory Cajun seasoning, it's spicy and garlicky, and the best part is that it is so quick to prepare and cook. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound shrimp
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 ½ tablespoons cajun seasoning, divided
- 1 large zucchini, sliced
- 2 bell peppers, cubed

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Toss shrimp in a bowl with 1 tablespoon of oil, garlic, and ½ tablespoon of cajun seasoning. Set aside.
- 2 Heat remaining oil and seasonings over medium heat in a large pan, then add the vegetables. Cook for 4-5 minutes.
- 3 Remove vegetables and set aside in a bowl.
- 4 Add the shrimp to the pan and cook until shrimp is pink and cooked, about 5 minutes.
- 5 Put vegetables back in the pan and cook until heated through, 3-4 minutes.

yield: 4 servings

# EGG ROLL IN A BOWL

Egg roll in a bowl is an Asian-inspired dish that is packed with flavor! This low carb meal has all the classic flavors you love and is the perfect way to still satisfy your craving! Serve over rice, noodles or even zoodles for a heartier dish. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground pork or chicken
- 4 green onions whites/greens, separated
- 2 teaspoons ginger, grated
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 pound coleslaw mix
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil or to taste
- cilantro & sesame seeds for garnish

## DIRECTIONS

- 1 Brown pork in a pan until no pink remains. Drain fat.
- 2 Add the whites of the green onions, ginger, garlic, and coleslaw mix.
- 3 Cook until slaw is tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in soy sauce and sesame oil and stir until coated.
- 4 Garnish with cilantro, greens of green onions, and sesame seeds and serve.

yield: 4 servings

# AIR FRYER PORK TENDERLOIN

When it comes to the perfect pork tenderloin, let the air fryer do the work! Ready in less than 20 minutes, this pork tenderloin is deliciously seasoned and incredibly tender and juicy. [Read More](#)



## INGREDIENTS

1 pork tenderloin, about 1 ¼ to 1 ½ pounds

½ teaspoon kosher salt

¼ teaspoon pepper

## SEASONING MIX

1 teaspoon dijon mustard

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon olive oil

½ teaspoon Italian seasoning

## DIRECTIONS

1 Preheat the air fryer to 400°F.

2 Remove the silver skin from the pork tenderloin by slipping a knife under it. Gently pull the silver area off while cutting with the knife.

3 Combine the seasoning mix in a small bowl and brush over the tenderloin on all sides. Season with salt and pepper.

4 Place the pork tenderloin in the air fryer basket (cut it in half to fit if needed) and cook for 16-17 minutes or until pork reaches 145°F. (I remove the pork from the air fryer a few degrees before as it will continue to rise while resting).

5 Let pork rest at least 5 minutes before serving.



**FOR MORE EASY  
RECIPES, VISIT  
[SPENDWITHPENNIES.COM](https://www.spendwithpennies.com)**