



The Make-Ahead Cook

America's Test Kitchen (Editors)

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The ultimate plan-ahead cookbook that delivers on flavor

Harried home cooks learned the hard way that the best possible way to maintain their mealtime sanity is to make things ahead. This stress-saving America's Test Kitchen cookbook collects 150 reliable recipes for make-ahead meals including everything from ready-to-serve entrees to braises to slow-cooked specialties to oven-ready casseroles and Sunday main meals. Another great addition to a popular cookbook series.

The Make-Ahead Cook Details

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From Reader Review The Make-Ahead Cook for online ebook

Beth says

I love cookbooks--and I read them pretty much cover to cover. This one, however, was so thoughtfully put together with full explanations of procedures, ingredients and (especially) how to make them, safely freeze, thaw and cook them. This will be one of the books I purchase for myself soon. Note: I accidentally chose the wrong edition and title. The Actual book read and to become my own soon is The Complete Make-Ahead Cookbook, same author(s)...tried to edit this and ended up with another whole (but undated read time) entry.

Jennifer Vaughn says

Pulled 17 recipes to try later. Loved that it was organized into so many sections; the meal plans and the Sunday cook sections were fun. Though I'll be honest, I'm not much of a make ahead cook in the first place. Hopefully some of these recipes will spur me into better planning, but for many of them I didn't see the need to truly make ahead - most of the ready to cook meals don't gain much by prepping ahead.

Christine says

i think this book will save my life! So far I've only tried a few of the recipes (all yummy) so am excited to incorporate more strategy into eating great meals!

Du says

I'm sure I'll come back to this many times, as I have other America's Test Kitchen books we own. the recipes look great and are simple. I love the make ahead or shop for similar ingredients aspect and will try some of the meals in the coming week.

Kamal says

A book of decent recipes written in the typical, somewhat over-explained style of America's Test Kitchen. This a great book for those who enjoy or want to get into batch cooking. It will help you plan out and prepare a few weeks' worth of dinners.

Alyse says

Great pictures, but I feel like this cookbook has complicated recipes instead of what I was looking for, something quick and easy to make ahead of time instead of slaving away in the kitchen for 2 days.

Maria says

Chock full of super flavorful recipes, this one was a hit with my Cookbook Club. The best beef stew I've ever made, and super delicious chicken pot pie and shepherd's pie recipes. Lots of kid-friendly dishes too!

Abigail says

Love it, Want it.

Ricki says

This book had some great tips about how to freeze food and how to modify recipes to optimize them for freezing. That was the most helpful thing for me.

The complaints I have against the book are really complaints against the society in and for which it is written.

-The snobby tone. Over and over, in almost every recipe, they say that if you just make a regular recipe and freeze it, it will be "bland," "dry," "tasteless," etc. I do not have a very discerning palate, and I know that I would be completely fine with eating the frozen food that the authors are turning up their noses at. It seems to me a kind of selfishness and pride to insult good, healthy, perfectly fine food because it wasn't five stars in the taste department--rich America demanding only the best. I honestly can't afford to be so picky.

-I'm also too time-poor to do a lot of these recipes. I can't help but feel like it's false advertising: "No-Stress Dinners for the Time-Pressed Cook." In order to make dinner come together quickly today, you had to spend an hour or two of prep time yesterday. This cookbook is really more about shifting the time spent, not actually shrinking it.

-The wastefulness. They advise the use of disposable goods in almost every recipe: an endless amount of paper towels, plastic wrap, plastic bags, aluminum foil, aluminum baking pans. Zero concern for the environment.

-No concern for health. The recipes won't help the reader eat more veggies or less sugar. It's the standard American diet, including cooking in aluminum and plenty of microwaving.

I'm sure the recipes taste great, because it's a team of staff testing them very rigorously. I'm sure it's very helpful to many people. But I am so not that type of person.

Judy says

This is an ingenious book from America's Test Kitchen, which also writes Cook's Illustrated, Cook's Country, etc. The book is specifically for meals to make ahead - don't look to this for a recipe to make for today, because the recipes are designed to be served the next day (or later, in the case of frozen foods). Casseroles are saucier, so that when liquid is absorbed overnight the food won't be dry when baked the next day. Stews are designed to continue cooking for a while after being taken off the stove - and then chilled

stock is added to them so that they will cool, and go into the refrigerator, quickly. Savory touches are added at the end, so that the flavors aren't dulled by the wait between prep and meal.

The book is divided into eight sections, based on how you want to do the advance work: Prep Ahead; Reheat and Eat (stews, patties, etc.); Bake and Serve (casseroles); From Fridge to Table (meals that you can serve cold, including salads, sesame noodles, and picnic fried chicken); Shop Smart (12 fresh ingredients plus pantry staples = 3 meals); The Sunday Cook (big roasts plus "creative second meals"); Come Home to Dinner (slow cooker recipes); and Stock the Freezer. The slow cooker recipes are designed to cook for 6-7 hours, with some requiring 9-10 hours, so you would have to start some of them pretty early in the day.

There is a good range of recipes, from Indian-spiced Chicken with Yogurt Sauce to roast chicken with vegetables, and Cheeseburger Pasta Bake. There are at least some vegetarian recipes (like Chickpea Cakes with Cucumber-Yogurt Sauce) in each section.

Marathon County Public Library says

If you're looking for tested dinner recipes that you can trust, this is your cookbook! It includes tips and over 150 recipes, most of which are easy casseroles, freezer meals, slow cooker recipes, or ready-to-serve entrees. Also included are 'One Grocery Bag, Three Meals'; one grocery list is provided and three different recipes you can make using the ingredients that are then shown. The recipes are not too intimidating, and with cooler weather arriving, many are the perfect stews, soups, and casseroles that I, for one, am ready for.

Sarah M. / Marathon County Public Library

Find this book in our library catalog.

Jeanine says

Excellent suggestions offering multiple strategies for getting your meals together. I would have liked a bit more on freezer to table, but I have found this book to be tremendously helpful.

Diane says

America's Test Kitchen has long been one of my favorite cookbooks (I own several). The set up of the book itself -- description - detailed about how many people the recipe will serve, safe storing, prep work, cook and serve instructions are all well organized and crystal clear. Most of the recipes do involve some prep time, but the recipes (there are 150) and all are recipes that will appeal to most people -- even choices for vegetarians.

There are tips to cut down on prep time, recommended cooking and storage containers. The sections are divided into -- "8 Smart Strategies" :

1. Prep Ahead

2. Reheat and Eat
3. Bake and Serve
4. From Fridge to Table
5. Shop Smart
6. The Sunday Cook
7. Come Home to Dinner
8. Stock the Freezer

Some of the recipes that I plan to try are: All American Meatloaf (brown sugar glaze), Miso Salmon, Salmon Burgers, One Pan Roast Chicken with Root Veggies, Stuffed Acorn Squash, Chicken Pot Pie with Crumble Topping, Chicken Enchiladas, 24-Hour Chopped Salad, Skillet Pizza with Broccoli and Red Onion, Chicken Pot Pie, Spinach Manicotti and several excellent looking slow cooker recipes as well.

Not all of the recipes in this book are new as I'm pretty sure I've seen a few in other ATK cookbooks, but that didn't bother me a bit. The illustrations that accompany the recipes are great and honestly, each recipe is all encompassing from prep to cooking, to storage and photo all on 2 pages per recipe. I love this book and think it would be especially helpful to anyone with a family to plan and cook for.

Charity says

Before *The Make Ahead Cook* by America's Test Kitchen was due back at the library, we made five recipes from three of the eight sections of the book:

1. Chicken Baked in Foil with Potatoes and Carrots (we added leeks)
2. Classic Chicken Stew
3. White Chicken Chili
4. Indian Style Vegetable Curry
5. Curried Chicken and Brown Rice with Red Peppers

We didn't prepare anything from "From Fridge to Table" because with temps getting cooler, we want HOT food, and we didn't make anything from the "Stock the Freezer" section because we are already really pushing the limits of our freezer. The "Shop Smart" and "The Sunday Cook" are interesting ideas, but I'm not sure I'm likely to use those particular strategies.

This book is subtitled "8 Smart Strategies for Dinner Tonight," but it should actually be called, "8 Smart Strategies for Dinner Tomorrow Night or Maybe Next Week Sometime" because all of the recipes require advance prep time (some require quite a lot of prep time) and can't generally be made for eating the same day, at least not at my house.

The recipes we tried were all very good meals we would be happy to have again---the curries were my ten-year-old's especial favorites---but I'm not sure if I'll buy the book or not. Many of the recipes would need to be modified significantly to remove dairy and/or gluten, and we've not been eating red meat, so those recipes are off the list for us right now without omitting the meat or subbing ground turkey or something. I'll have to decide if the great recipes are great enough for us want to own this one.

Mary Lisic says

Most of my favorite cook books lately are by America's test kitchen, so that's probably why I noticed duplicate recipes from other books. Parts so far are great, and other parts are just ok. Since I just got it a week ago, it will probably take awhile to really try every chapter.
