

Batch Cooking 101

Foundations for Your Bowl Building Adventures



Plant-Strong Bowl Building is Easy!

Batch cooking your base ingredients is key.

This document is a step by step guide to basic batch cooking methods for common ingredients that we use in plant-strong meals following the Engine 2 Seven-Day Rescue plan.

Choose Your Ingredients

1

ITEMS YOU LOVE

Fill your fridge with ingredients you love—you'll be eating them all week!

2

START SMALL

Until you know how much your family will eat, start with small batches.

3

STORAGE CONTAINERS

Have containers ready to store your batch.



Breakfast Bowl

Try red quinoa as your morning meal.



Lunch Bowl

Roasted potatoes make salads filling and satisfying.



Supper Bowl

Brown rice goes with everything!

Plan Your Batch Cooking for the Week

This is just one of the hundreds of ways you can put batch cooking to work for you. The options are endless!

The base ingredients may then be stored in the fridge and used to build bowls, salads and "flats" (open-faced sandwiches). Today we will show you how to batch russet potatoes, brown lentils, red quinoa and brown rice. We will use full packages just to keep it simple but you might use different amounts or ingredients for your household. Our goal is to show how fast and easy this can be done. Follow along as we batch cook all of these in 45 minutes from start to finish.



PREHEAT YOUR OVEN TO 400 DEGREES

All ovens are different. Gas or electric, convection or traditional—they can all yield different cooking times and results. Get to know your appliances! It may take a few tries to know what temperatures and times are perfect for your oven. Check your ingredients often and take note of what works best.





Prepare Your Ingredients

Scrub and pierce your potatoes. Quinoa should be rinsed in a fine mesh strainer under running water to remove its natural coating, called saponin, which can make it taste bitter or soapy. Lentils should also have a quick rinse as you sift through them to make sure there is no debris in the package.

For rice, rinsing removes the surface starch that can make your rice sticky. For long grain brown or brown basmati, you can use the same strainer you used for the quinoa and run the rice under cold water. The water does not have to run clear.



Ready - Set - GO!

Note the time—we are starting at 10:30 AM and will finish everything at 11:15 AM. Only 45 minutes to batch cooking success! Fill your pots of quinoa, brown rice and lentils by checking each package for how much water to use for each. Typically, it's one part grain to two parts water but read your ingredient directions!

PRO TIP: While things are cooking you can dice veggies or fruit for adding to bowls or salads—or for snacks throughout the week.



Place Potatoes in the Oven

Potatoes traditionally take the longest to cook, so we will start them first. Some like to wrap in aluminum foil. This method keep them hot longer once they come out of the oven and gives potatoes a softer, steamed skin, if that's what you like.

PRO TIP: You can cook different varieties of potatoes together! The cook time will vary according to size and type—simply check for tenderness with a fork during the 45 minute cooking time.



Stovetop

Bring each pan to a boil, cover and reduce heat to simmer. Now's a good time for an exercise break—how about some squats? Exercise is the 7th Pillar of the Engine 2 Seven-Day Rescue program!

PRO TIP: If you have an Instant Pot, you can batch cook a pound of dried beans in this same time frame. Rinse your beans and sort through them to make sure there is no debris. Follow the instructions in your appliance and get your beans cooking too!



Quinoa Cooks Fast!

Whether you cook red, white or black quinoa, it will be done first. Quinoa also comes in TRI-color varieties. Fun fact: the darker the quinoa, the more firm the cooked grain will be! Red and black varieties are great for salads where you might want more texture.

PRO TIP: Quinoa lasts up to a week in the fridge. Rice should be consumed in 4-6 days. Potatoes and lentils will last 3-5 days in the fridge. Be sure you remove foil from potatoes before placing in fridge!



Quinoa—How to Know if it's Done

Quinoa is ready when it looks like this. Each grain of quinoa will have a sprout coming out of the center when it's done. Make sure you cook your quinoa to this stage.

PRO TIP: Quinoa is really versatile. Though it's prepared like a grain, it's actually a member of the spinach, chard, and beet family and is considered a seed! Try it in breakfast bowls, salads, soups and bowls.



The Lentils are Next!

You'll know lentils are done when they are firm but tender in the center. Brown, black or French Green lentils hold their shape pretty well and work well for batching. Red and yellow lentils tend to disintegrate while cooking and are best used in soups.

PRO TIP: All lentils have a slightly different texture. Try them all or combine different varieties to make a great taco filling with amazing texture! Green lentils have a nutty taste and are great in salads or as a side dish. Black lentils have an earthy flavor that goes great with mushrooms. Brown lentils are mild and really go with everything. Red and yellow are sweeter in flavor and are commonly used in Indian and Middle Eastern dishes.



Brown Rice is finished!

Our rice is done next, usually at the 35-40 minute mark. Fluff with a fork and check for tenderness. Cook a few minutes longer if needed.

PRO TIP: Rice comes in an amazing array of flavors and colors—40,000 varieties to be exact, but who's counting? Try red rice, wild rice, black rice (sometimes called Forbidden Rice) or rice blends. If your store carries brown (whole grain) jasmine rice, you are really lucky! Jasmine rice has a floral aroma and tastes slightly oaty.



Potatoes Cross the Finish Line!

Our potatoes are done last. Check the time on the clock! We finished in 45 minutes and in less than an hour, a full week of plant-strong meals will be faster and easier.

PRO TIP: Refrigerate your baked potatoes and use them for oven roasted fries (just slice, season and roast under a broiler to brown them) or chop them up into cubes with seasoning for tossing in salads or bowls.



45 Minutes!

In less than one hour from start to finish our base ingredients are prepped for the week. Now what to eat? Use fresh or frozen veggies and leafy greens to build bowls. Try making a simple dressing like [one of these oil-free options](#) or use condiments or hummus to add some zip.

PRO TIP: Store your ingredients in containers that allow you to take what you need and reheat only that portion in a bowl to prevent drying out. If you made too much, you can freeze any of your batch cooked grains by letting them cool first on a sheet pan in the fridge, then transfer to a freezer-safe container. Congratulations! You have mastered the basics of batch cooking. Show us your plant-strong methods on Facebook or Instagram—tag @engine2diet in your posts!