

S I M P L E I G H



C O O K E D



*FROM COMFORT FOOD TO SALAD*

# *Simpleigh Dinners, Top 10 Go-To Meals*

(a.k.a, “How to Get an Amazing Dinner on the Table Quickly Because Everyone’s Getting Fussy.”)

*DEDICATION: This e-book is dedicated to my beloved Mother, Becky, and my Thia Marilyn (thia is “aunt” in Greek), the two women who modeled the importance of family gatherings, serving delicious meals with joy, and laughing until it hurts. While I will forever miss my Mom, her memory lives on in my heart and in my kitchen. I have enjoyed passing along her many recipes and fun traditions, such as teaching my kids the importance of using a wooden spoon as a microphone when singing and dancing in the kitchen.*



# *Yikes! It's dinner time? Don't worry, we got your back.*

People often stress so much about dinner, and that's a shame because the evening meal is such a wonderful opportunity to get people together to converse and connect. That's why we created this Top 10 booklet. Yes, these recipes are healthy and use whole foods and ingredients you can pronounce, but the real focus is on simplicity and yumminess. Once you make the [Roasted Tomato Basil Soup](#) or the [Easy Lemon Caper Salmon](#), your family will be asking for it again next month. So consider rotating these 10 recipes into your regular dinner schedule and you will quickly become a hero in your own home!

Enjoy!

*Ashley C  
xo*

**Warning:** This e-book was made in a facility that regularly produces nuts, such as family members Shawn, Brooklynn and Nicholas.



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# Roasted Tomato Basil Soup

A family favorite that's super-fast to make with just a handful of easy-to-prepare ingredients. Bonus: It's like getting a giant hug! Garlic, onion, tomatoes and fresh basil blended to make your belly, heart and soul full and warm. Ahhh ...

*One of  
Ashleigh's  
Favorites!*

## INGREDIENTS

- 10 to 12 (3 lbs) tomatoes (we like Roma), halved
- 8 garlic cloves, peeled (you could use more but you might not get kissed for a day or two!)
- 1 yellow onion, roughly chopped into 6 chunks
- 1 bunch or package fresh basil, large stems removed

*As always*

- Sea salt
- Olive oil, about 1/4 c
- Freshly ground black pepper

*Optional (but highly recommended)*

- Goat cheese
- Fresh basil, chopped

## DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400° F.
- Place tomatoes, garlic cloves and onions on baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil.
- Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

- Bake 30 minutes.
- Transfer to blender (I love my Vitamix!); add basil.
- Blend until smooth and pour into bowls.
- If you'd like, garnish with several pinches goat cheese and several leaves chopped fresh basil before sharing the love.

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# Greek Salad

Turn a salad into your main dish and use the oven another day. Crunchy textures and tart flavors make this salad popular: romaine lettuce, feta cheese, cucumber, red onion, Kalamata olives and lemon. It's super easy to make, really fresh and absolutely delightful!



## INGREDIENTS

- 2 heads romaine lettuce, core removed
- 4 small tomatoes (I used tomatoes on the vine, but any kind will do!), quartered or halved
- 1/2 cucumber, peeled
- 1/2 red onion, thinly sliced
- 1/3 c Kalamata olives, pitted and halved (I use half a jar ... or sometimes a whole jar!)
- 1/4 c feta cheese, crumbled
- Juice from 1/2 lemon
- 1/2 tsp dried dill weed
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 3 large fresh basil leaves, sliced into chiffonade
- 1/4 c red wine vinegar
- 1/2 c olive oil

As always

- Sea salt

## DIRECTIONS

- Using kitchen shears, cut lettuce into large bowl.

- Place chopped tomatoes in medium-sized bowl.
- Slice peeled cucumber lengthwise, then chop long halves crosswise into half-rounds. Add to tomatoes.
- Add onions and olives to bowl.
- Add feta and toss lightly with hands.
- Squeeze lemon over salad.
- Sprinkle with dill weed and paprika.
- Stack basil leaves, roll up and slice into thin strips (chiffonade).
- Add basil, salt, vinegar and olive oil to salad.
- Toss to coat ingredients well; taste and adjust seasonings.
- Serve a heapin' helpin' to your grateful family.

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*TIP: Put your salad together just before you serve it, and don't drizzle the dressing and toss until the last minute. You don't want your salad to be limp and soggy!*



# Skillet Lemon Caper Chicken

On hectic days, I often make one of my favorites: Skillet Lemon Caper Chicken. I made a more complicated version of this dish a few times in culinary school and messed it up, so I decided to create an easier version for you, without all the extra impress-your-instructor steps!



*One of  
Ashleigh's  
Favorites!*

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 lemons, well scrubbed
- 2 chicken cutlets
- 1 c white wine
- 1/2 (3.5-oz) jar capers, with liquid
- 2 tbsp butter

*As always*

- Olive oil, about 3 tbsp
- Sea salt

## DIRECTIONS

- Slice 1 lemon and set aside.
- In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat.
- Add chicken to skillet.
- Zest remaining lemon over chicken.
- Cook chicken 6 minutes on each side, turning when they're a nice, light brown color.
- Pour wine over chicken.
- Add capers and butter. (I like to use a good grass-fed butter.)

- Sprinkle with salt.
- Place reserved lemon slices on chicken.
- Cover, turn off heat and let simmer a few minutes.
- To serve, place cutlets on platter, cover with caper-wine sauce then pour a glass of white for yourself!

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# One-Pan Egg Casserole Happiness

Here's a "loveleigh" oven-baked omelet with sun-dried tomatoes, feta cheese and fresh basil — an herb that just might be the second love of my life! Oh, and for my little people, I make a plain version with just egg and cheese. It's so easy and makes everyone happy. I love happy people!



## INGREDIENTS

- 8 eggs, more depending on how many people you're serving (Rule of Thumb: 2 eggs per person — unless you're feeding my husband, who can eat 4!)
- 1/2 c feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 (8-oz) jar sun-dried tomatoes, in oil, chopped  
2 tbsp butter, cut into cubes
- 1 handful fresh basil leaves (gotta be fresh!), sliced into chiffonade

### *As always*

- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

### *As needed*

- Cooking spray

## DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350° F.
- Coat 9x9 baking dish with cooking spray (use 9x13 when serving more than 4).

- Crack eggs into baking dish (no need for separate mixing bowl) and whisk.
- Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
- Add feta cheese and sun-dried tomatoes, distributing evenly over eggs.
- Scatter butter cubes across dish.
- Bake 25 to 30 minutes, until eggs are set. Test for doneness as you would with brownies: Stick in a fork, take it out, and if you see any raw egg, bake a few minutes longer until fork comes out clean.
- Remove from oven.
- While dish cools, stack basil leaves, roll up and slice into thin strips (chiffonade).
- Cut casserole into squares, top with generous pinch of basil and serve. Mmmmm.

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*TIP: Always coat the pan with cooking spray to prevent burning and sticking to the pan.*



# Crock-Pot Beef Stew

This recipe offers the flavors of parsnip, carrot, beef, onion and bay leaves. The tenderness of the beef complements the sweetness of the carrots and parsnips. Instead of water, I use a beef stock and red wine to enrich the flavor. This dish is even better the following day!



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 lb beef stew meat, cubed
- 6 carrots, peeled and cut into large chunks at an angle (don't they look pretty that way?)
- 2 large parsnips, peeled and cut into large chunks
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 1 1/2 lb beef stew meat, cubed
- 1 1/2 (32-oz) cartons beef stock
- 1 c red wine
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme

*As always*

- Olive oil, about 3 tbsp
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

## DIRECTIONS

- Heat skillet over medium-to-high heat.
- Add stew meat and drizzle with olive oil.
- Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

- When it's nicely browned, pour meat and pan drippings into Crock-Pot.
- Add carrots, parsnips, onions, stock, red wine and bay leaves.
- Pull the leaves off thyme sprig and sprinkle over ingredients.
- Sprinkle with additional salt and pepper, and give it a quick stir.
- Cover Crock-Pot, set on Low and step away from the house.
- After at least 7 hours, return to a wonderful-smelling home and a fantastic dinner! (Just remember to take out the bay leaves before

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*TIP: Resist the urge to open the lid and stir! Stirring usually is not necessary with Crock-Pot recipes. Each time you open the lid during the cooking process, it will add at least 15 to 20 minutes of additional cooking time.*



# Lemon and Garlic Chicken Drumsticks

A family favorite, even for the kids. Chicken, garlic, white wine and lemon. I use drumsticks for this recipe because they're tender and flavorful. And since it's baked in the oven, you don't have that messy spattered oil you'd get from searing or frying in the pan. Takes just 30 minutes!



## INGREDIENTS

- 8 chicken drumsticks
- 2 tbsp garlic, minced
- 1 lemon, well scrubbed
- 2 tbsp Italian seasoning
- 1 c white wine

*As always*

- Olive oil, about 1/4 c
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

## DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400° F.
- Place drumsticks on rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil.
- Sprinkle with salt and Italian seasoning.
- Distribute garlic across chicken.
- Zest lemon onto drumsticks (use a second lemon if you like!), then slice lemon and remove seeds.
- Squeeze lemon slices onto drumsticks, then arrange lemon slices on top.

- Pour white wine over drumsticks.
- Bake 30 minutes, turning at the 15-minute mark, until golden brown.
- Place on serving platter — don't forget the roasted lemon slices — and watch them disappear!

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# Turkey Taco Lettuce Cups

You had me at “tacos.” This Turkey Taco Lettuce Cups recipe is delicious, and it offers some healthy twists on the standard taco, including reduced-fat ground turkey instead of ground beef, and lettuce instead of the fried taco shell. Plus, a homemade seasoning mix!



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 c turkey stock (or chicken stock is fine too)
- 2 to 3 heads bibb (aka Boston or butter) lettuce, large leaves separated out
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 avocado, sliced
- salsa verde (as much as you want!)

### *Taco seasoning*

- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- 1 tbsp garlic powder

### *As always*

- Olive oil, about 3 tbsp
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

## DIRECTIONS

### *For the taco seasoning*

- Put all the spices in a small bowl and stir. (Yes, that’s all there is to it!)
- Set aside.

### *For the tacos*

- In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium to high heat.
- Add ground turkey.
- Once it’s nicely browned, sprinkle with your homemade seasoning, salt and pepper.
- Add turkey stock; Mix well and cook about 5 minutes to meld flavors.
- Place lettuce leaves side by side on serving dish and fill each with 3 tbsp turkey mixture.
- Top with diced onion, sliced avocado and salsa verde (or any other topping you’d like!).
- Enjoy the healthy crunch of green instead of the heavy crackle of yellow.

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# Mediterranean Orzo Pasta

I love the flavor of this dish because it's so tangy and fresh. It offers the intensity of the sun-dried tomatoes, the tartness of the olives, the creaminess of the feta, and the wonderful crunch of the pine nuts. It's colorful, refreshing, and a good dish for entertaining.



## INGREDIENTS

- 12-oz dried orzo pasta
- 1 c pine nuts
- 2 tbsp garlic, minced
- 1 small jar sun-dried tomatoes
- 1 c Kalamata olives, halved
- 1 c feta, crumbled
- 1/4 c fresh basil, sliced into chiffonade
- 1 lemon to zest

*As always*

- Olive oil, about 1/4 c
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

## DIRECTIONS

- Bring a large pot of water to a boil.
- Cook orzo according to package instructions.
- Meanwhile, in a large skillet, toast pine nuts until golden brown, about 3 minutes.
- Remove pine nuts from skillet and set aside.
- In the same skillet used to toast pine nuts, heat

- olive oil over medium-high heat.
- Add garlic, sun-dried tomatoes and Kalamata olives.
- Add cooked orzo to the skillet; mix well.
- Add toasted pine nuts, feta, salt, pepper and basil; mix well again.
- Zest with lemon, shout “Opa!” and serve.



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# Spaghetti with Meat Sauce

I love this dish when I'm in the mood to make comfort food. It offers onion, garlic and red wine ... the Holy Trinity of flavorful Italian cooking. I use red wine because it makes many Italian dishes special, and be sure to choose marzano for the tomatoes. A great dish for a big crowd!



## INGREDIENTS

- 1 pkg dried spaghetti
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 2 tbsp garlic, minced
- 1/4 c red wine
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 (28-oz) can crushed tomatoes (we used San Marzano)

### *As always*

- Sea salt
- Olive oil, about 1/4 c
- Freshly ground black pepper

### *Optional (but highly recommended)*

- 1/4 c (or more) Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 tbsp fresh basil, sliced into chiffonade

## DIRECTIONS

- Bring a large pot of water to a boil, then season

generously with salt.

- Cook pasta according to package instructions.
- Drain, return to pot and set aside.
- Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium to high heat, brown the beef, about 10 minutes.
- Remove beef from skillet with a slotted spoon and place in a bowl. Set aside.
- In the same skillet used to brown the beef, heat olive oil over medium-high heat.
- Add onions and garlic and cook 3-5 minutes.
- Add red wine, tomato paste and dried oregano; stir to dissolve tomato paste.
- Bring to a boil and simmer, about 10 minutes.
- Add crushed tomatoes and cooked ground beef; mix well.
- Add cooked pasta to skillet and toss to coat.
- Garnish with Parmesan and fresh basil.

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*TIP: As soon as you drop the pasta in the water, stir to ensure it doesn't stick to itself or the pot.*

# Easy Lemon Caper Salmon

This salmon recipe has you baking the fish in a little foil house with white wine, capers and lemon. It's such an easy and delicious way to prepare salmon. And here's a special bonus: No lingering fish odors. This cooking method keeps the fish neatly contained inside the foil house!



*One of  
Ashleigh's  
Favorites!*

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 salmon fillets
- 1 c of white wine
- 1/2 small jar (3.5-oz.) of capers (or use the whole jar)
- 1 lemon to juice and zest (I use 2 lemon slices for 1 piece of salmon)
- 1 c of white wine
- 3 tbsp of butter cut into cubes
- salt, pepper, olive oil

## DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 350.
- Place each salmon fillet on its own foil sheet.
- Fold foil sides together but not closing completely. Let it have a little opening at the top. This will make a little steam house for your salmon.
- Drizzle a little olive oil on fillets, then sprinkle with salt and pepper and add capers.
- Zest lemon onto fillets, then slice lemon and remove seeds.

- Squeeze lemon slices over salmon, then arrange squeezed lemon slices on top. (I use a lot of lemon! Fish + Lemon = perfect marriage!)
- Pour in a little white wine over the fillets, and drink the leftover wine if any is left!
- Place butter on top of each fillet.
- Place on baking sheet and bake 15 to 20 minutes.

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# *My best friends in the kitchen*

OK, so you've got these 10 awesome dinner recipes and you can watch the videos that accompany them. Now make sure you always have these staple ingredients on hand in your kitchen or pantry, because they are essential for planning dinner. I always have these items readily available so I don't get into a bind with hungry little people. I've learned it's vital to my sanity and health, as well as to overall family happiness, to never run out of these!

## FLAVOR FAVS

- White wine (boxed and stored in the [hic!] fridge)
- Butter (grass-fed, unsalted)
- Fresh garlic cloves (or buy minced in a jar, but use it soon)

## FRESH PRODUCE

- Berries
- Broccoli
- Cherry tomatoes
- Green beans
- Herbs (basil, thyme, rosemary, parsley)
- Lemons

## GRAINS

- Pasta (spaghetti, penne)

## PROTEINS

- Beef or pork roast (frozen)
- Chicken breasts or cutlets (organic if available, frozen)
- Chicken drumsticks (frozen)
- Fish (e.g. cod; best fresh, but frozen comes in handy)
- Flank steak (frozen)
- Ground beef (grass-fed is best)
- Ground turkey
- Roasted chicken (pre-cooked)

## SPICES

- Fine sea salt (for your table)
- Course sea salt (for cooking)
- Spice Hunter spice mixes (chili, taco, and others)
- Organic spices and dried herbs

## CONDIMENTS

- Dijon mustard
- Honey

## OILS & VINEGAR

- Olive oil (extra light)
- Olive oil cooking spray
- Balsamic vinegar

## DRIED FRUIT & NUTS

- Dried cranberries or cherries
- Raw nuts (walnuts, pecans, pine nuts, almonds)

## CHEESE

- Goat cheese
- Feta cheese

