



# Kitchen TREATY

TOP 10 EASY WEEKNIGHT DINNERS





# INTRODUCTION

I have a really silly question to ask you.

No really. I already know the answer. But I'm asking it anyway.

## **Do you ever find yourself at a loss for weeknight dinner ideas?**

You know, as in, it's Monday night – again – and you've just arrived home after a long day. An extra-long day, actually, because somehow Mondays are three times longer than every other day of the week.

You're starving. Your family is starving. And you have no idea what you're going to do. (This is when cold cereal begins to look pretty appealing).

I know it's a silly question because of *course* you've been there. We've all been there. Okay, if you haven't, you're a freak of nature and you should probably stop reading this now. But for the rest of us, well, we need as many easy weeknight dinner ideas as we can get our hot little hands on.

And so, here are some of Kitchen Treaty's tried-and-true weeknight dinner recipes – 10 of them – here in one place. I gathered five reader favorites – the top-viewed easy dinner recipes on KitchenTreaty.com. And then I added to that my own top five personal favorites, the recipes I turn to time and again to get me through the week.

In typical Kitchen Treaty fashion, all of the recipes are vegetarian, many with options. Many are full-on vegan, but you might be surprised by how the carnivores gobble it up. Others have meat options for those of you with omnivorous loved ones (or, of course, if you're a meat-eater yourself). The slow cooker is my weeknight savior, so you'll find a good bit of those recipes mixed in as well.

These easy dinner recipes won't necessarily make Mondays shorter, but I hope they at least help make them a little more delicious.

**Read on for Kitchen Treaty's Top 10 Easy Weeknight Dinners!**

☺ - Kare



### **A little about me ...**

I'm a vegetarian home cook living among carnivores. I love creating irresistible and flexible recipes that help mixed-diet families like mine keep the peace - deliciously. Find more recipes on [KitchenTreaty.com](https://www.kitchentreaty.com)!



# RECIPE INDEX

## Your Top 5

*The most-viewed easy weeknight dinner recipes on [Kitchen Treaty](#)*

#5: Creamy Vegan Stovetop Mac & “Cheese”	3
#4: Slow Cooker Quinoa & Sweet Potato Chili	4
#3: Slow Cooker Black Bean Pumpkin Chili	5
#2: Easy Refried Bean Burritos	6
#1: One-Pot Creamy Pumpkin Pasta	7

## My Top 5

*The recipes I personally turn to over and over again.*

#5: 12-Minute Scrambled Tofu Fried Rice	8
#4: Buffalo Chickpea Salad	9
#3: Veggie-Loaded Peanut Noodle Salad	10
#2: TLTs (Tofu, Lettuce, & Tomato Sandwiches)	11
#1: Slow Cooker Chana Masala	12

# CREAMY VEGAN STOVETOP MAC & “CHEESE”

Vegan comfort food at its finest, this easy vegan mac and cheese is made with sweet potatoes, butternut squash, and other mainstream real-food ingredients. No weird stuff here – just pure macaroni and cheese-like deliciousness!

Vegan

GF OPTION

Prep: 10 minutes

Serves 4

Cook: 25 minutes

Total: 35 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 8 oz. penne or macaroni pasta (shells and rotini are also good) | 1 medium clove garlic, minced                      |
| 3 c. diced butternut squash (about 1/2 small squash)            | 1 t. dry mustard                                   |
| 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced (about 2 c.)            | 1/2 t. smoked paprika                              |
| 1 T. olive oil  | 1/2 t. kosher salt + more to taste                 |
| 1/2 medium yellow onion, diced (about 1 c.)                     | 1/8 t. freshly ground black pepper + more to taste |
|   | 1/2 c. vegetable broth                             |
|   | 3/4 c. canned coconut milk                         |
|   | 1 t. to 1 T. Tamari or soy sauce, to taste         |

## DIRECTIONS

1. Fill a large pot 2/3 full with water and place over high heat. Once boiling, add a few generous pinches of salt and the pasta. Cook according to package directions until al dente. Drain and return to pan (off heat). Set aside.
2. While the pasta cooks, fill another large pot 2/3 full with water and place over high heat. Add squash and sweet potatoes. Bring to a boil and cook until the veggies are tender, 7-8 minutes. Drain and add to the pitcher of a high-powered blender. Set aside.
3. Place a medium saute pan over medium heat. When hot, add olive oil. Add onion and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for another minute. Add dry mustard, paprika, salt, and pepper. Stir. Remove from heat. Pour in vegetable broth and stir to release browned bits of onion and spices. Pour into blender pitcher. Add coconut milk and 1 teaspoon soy sauce. Puree until smooth. Taste and add additional soy sauce, a teaspoon at a time, to taste, along with more salt and pepper if desired.
4. Pour sauce over cooked pasta in the pan. This recipe makes a lot of sauce (I like it saucy!) so you might not want to use it all. Stir gently until the pasta is coated. Serve.

## GLUTEN-FREE OPTION

Use brown rice pasta and gluten-free Tamari.

[More vegan recipes](https://www.kitchentreaty.com) on KitchenTreaty.com



# SLOW COOKER QUINOA & SWEET POTATO CHILI

An unbelievably easy, protein-rich, and hearty chili to warm up the coldest of winter nights.

Vegan

Gluten-Free

MEAT  
OPTION

Prep: 15 minutes

Cook: 8 hours

Total: 8 hours 15 mins Serves 6

## INGREDIENTS

1/2 c. uncooked quinoa, rinsed well in cool water	2 T. cocoa powder
2 (15-oz.) cans black beans, drained (about 3 cups)	1 T. chili powder
2 c. vegetable broth	2 t. cumin
2 (14-ounce) cans diced tomatoes	1/4 t. smoked paprika
1 medium yellow onion, diced (about 2 c.)	1/4 t. cayenne pepper (more or less to taste)
1 med. green bell pepper, diced	1 t. kosher salt
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced*	Additional salt and pepper to taste
2 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and diced	

## TOPPING IDEAS:

- " Cilantro
- " Vegan sour cream
- " Chopped green onions
- " Plain Greek yogurt, sour cream, or shredded cheddar (not vegan)

## DIRECTIONS

Add all ingredients (except additional salt and pepper and toppings) to a 3-quart or larger slow cooker. Cook on low for 8-10 hours or on high for 5-6 hours. Taste and add additional salt and pepper if desired. Serve with toppings. Keeps refrigerated in an airtight container for about 3 days. Freezes well, too!

*\*Because jalapeno peppers can vary greatly heat-wise, I like to take a quick taste and see how hot it is. If it's fairly mild, I'll add seeds along with the flesh. If it's pretty spicy, I'll discard the seeds and even sometimes use only half of the pepper. Go with what you're comfortable with!*

## MEAT OPTION

Add cooked diced chicken or browned ground turkey to half of the batch or to individual portions.

[More chili recipes](#) on KitchenTreaty.com

# SLOW COOKER BLACK BEAN PUMPKIN CHILI

Black beans, pumpkin, chili spices, and pumpkin spices simmer together in your Crock Pot to make a perfect - and perfectly healthy - fall meal.

Vegan

Gluten-free

Prep: 10 minutes

Serves 6

Cook: 8 hours

Total: 8 hours 10 mins

## INGREDIENTS

3 (15-oz.) cans black beans,  
drained (about 4 1/2 cups)  
2 (14.5-oz.) cans diced tomatoes  
1 c. [pureed pumpkin](#) (not pumpkin  
pie mix)  
1 med. onion, diced (about 2 c.)  
1 med. yellow bell pepper, diced  
1 T. chili powder  
1 t. cinnamon  
1 t. cumin  
1/4 t. ground nutmeg  
1/8 t. ground cloves  
1/2 t. kosher salt + more to taste

1/2 t. coarse ground black  
pepper + more to taste

### TOPPING IDEAS:

- " Diced avocado
- " Cherry tomatoes
- " Chopped scallions or onion
- " Fresh cilantro
- " Tapatio sauce (if you want to  
add some heat)
- " Or, if not vegan, shredded  
cheddar or jack cheese and  
sour cream

## DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients except additional salt and pepper and toppings to a 4-quart or larger slow cooker. Stir.
2. Cook on low for 8 - 10 hours.
3. Taste and add additional salt and pepper if desired.
4. Serve with assorted toppings.

[More slow cooker recipes](#) on KitchenTreaty.com



# EASY REFRIED BEAN BURRITOS

Easy, breezy, freezy. Roll up a few burritos, bake 'em up, and eat them now or freeze individually for super-easy lunches and dinners down the road. And with brown rice and only a small amount of cheese, they're overall a pretty darn healthy choice, too. Just add chicken for the omnivores!

Vegetarian

MEAT OPTION

Prep: 15 minutes

Serves 6

Cook: 20 minutes

Total: 35 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

2 c. of your favorite refried beans ([our favorite recipe](#) is on KitchenTreaty.com)  
2 c. cooked brown rice  
1 c. salsa (any kind should do fine)  
1 (5-oz.) can diced green chiles  
1 c. frozen corn kernels, thawed

1 c. shredded cheddar cheese plus another 1/2 cup or more for topping  
12 10-inch flour tortillas

### IF ADDING CHICKEN TO HALF:

1 c. shredded cooked chicken

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. In a large bowl, stir together refried beans, rice, salsa, chiles, corn, and 1 cup cheese. If adding chicken to half, move 3 cups of the mix to a separate medium bowl, add the chicken, and stir.
3. Place tortillas on a large plate. Cover with a damp dishtowel. Microwave on high for 30 seconds to steam the tortillas.
4. One at a time, lay the tortillas flat and place 1/3 cup filling just below the center. Fold in the sides of the tortilla so that they nearly touch. Bring up the bottom of the tortilla, pulling the contents tight, and roll the burrito from the bottom up. Keep the sides tucked as you go.
5. Lay the burritos side by side in a 9" x 13" pan (or, if you're making a meaty version and a vegetarian version, keep them segregated by using two 8" by 8" pans).
6. Sprinkle remaining cheese over the top and bake for about 20 minutes, until heated through, cheese is melted, and they're starting to turn golden brown.
7. Serve immediately, or let cool and wrap individual burritos tightly in foil to freeze. To reheat, remove foil and wrap loosely in a paper towel. Microwave on high for about two minutes, then flip, and cook for another minute or so until heated through.

[More freezer-friendly recipes](#) on KitchenTreaty.com

# ONE-POT CREAMY PUMPKIN PASTA

Luxuriously creamy pumpkin pasta in 20 minutes! It's possible with this super-simple vegetarian one-pot pasta recipe. My favorite easy fall dinner.

Kid-friendly note: If you're feeding kids, you may want to omit or reduce the crushed red pepper flakes. You can sprinkle a few flakes over the top of the grown-ups' portions when serving, if some of you still want that kick of heat.

Vegetarian

VEGAN OPTION

Prep: 10 minutes

Serves 4

Cook: 10 minutes

Total: 20 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 8 oz. linguine pasta  | 1/2 t. ground nutmeg                                     |
| 4 c. low-sodium vegetable broth                               | 1/8 t. crushed red pepper flakes (more or less to taste) |
| 1 c. <a href="#">pumpkin puree</a>                            | 1 t. kosher salt + more to taste                         |
| 1/2 c. dry-ish white wine (I like Chardonnay for this recipe) | 1/4 t. freshly ground black pepper + more to taste       |
| 2 T. olive oil  | 1 (4 oz.) log fresh goat cheese (chevre)                 |
| 1/2 medium onion, diced (about 1 c.)                          | 1 small bunch parsley, chopped                           |
| 3-4 large cloves garlic, peeled & minced (about 2 T.)         |  |

## DIRECTIONS

1. Add all ingredients except goat cheese and parsley (and any additional salt and pepper) to a large, heavy pot - I use a 7-quart dutch oven.
2. Place pot over high heat and bring to a rolling boil. As soon as it comes to a boil, set the timer for 9 minutes. Stir and toss with tongs as it cooks, stirring frequently for the first few minutes and then constantly as it thickens. When the time is up, the pasta should be tender and the sauce will have thickened slightly. If the pasta is not yet cooked through, continue cooking for one more minute. Remove from heat.
3. Crumble goat cheese into the pasta. Stir gently until melted and combined. Let sit for 5 minutes (at this point, the pasta will seem soupy, but it will thicken as it sits).
4. Stir and taste. Add additional salt and pepper if desired.
5. Divide between bowls and sprinkle parsley over the top. Serve.

### VEGAN OPTION:

*Substitute 4 ounces of your favorite vegan cream cheese. I'm partial to garlic and herb vegan cream cheese - fabulous in this!*

[More pumpkin recipes](#) on KitchenTreaty.com



# 12-MINUTE SCRAMBLED TOFU FRIED RICE

Tofu replaces eggs for a protein-rich (and vegan) fried rice recipe. From chopping board to table in 12 minutes!

Vegan

Gluten-free

MEAT OPTION

Prep: 3 minutes

Serves 4

Cook: 9 minutes

Total: 12 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 7 ounces (half of a 14-ounce block) extra-firm tofu               | 3 c. cooked brown rice (I like brown Basmati rice; cold, day-old rice is best) |
| 1 T. olive oil  | 1 c. frozen corn kernels   |
| 1/2 c. finely diced yellow onion (about 1/2 small onion)          | 1 c. frozen peas   |
| 1 medium clove garlic, minced                                     | 2-3 T. Tamari or soy sauce   |
| 2 T. toasted sesame oil, divided                                  |  |
| 1 thumb-sized knob ginger, peeled and minced (about 1 tablespoon) | <b>TOPPING IDEAS:</b>  |
| 1/2 t. smoked paprika   | " Chopped chives or other herbs  |
| 1/4 t. ground turmeric  | " Chopped scallions  |
|   | " Sriracha sauce   |
|   | " Sliced avocado   |

## DIRECTIONS

1. Set tofu on a large cutting board and mash with potato masher or fork until crumbled. Set aside.
2. Place a large saute pan over medium heat. Add olive oil. When hot, add onion. Saute until softened, about 3 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add one tablespoon of the sesame oil, then add ginger, smoked paprika, turmeric, and mashed tofu. Cook, stirring until the spices are well-incorporated, about 2 minutes.
3. Increase heat to medium-high. Add remaining sesame oil and rice. Cook, stirring frequently, until the rice sizzles and is thoroughly warmed through, about 2 minutes.
4. Stir in the corn, peas, and Tamari and cook until the veggies are warm, about 1 minute. Taste and add additional Tamari if desired.
5. Serve topped with chives or other herbs of choice, scallions, Sriracha, and/or diced avocado.

## MEAT OPTION

*Top the carnivores' portions with some cooked and crumbled/chopped bacon.*

[More super-fast recipes](https://www.kitchentreaty.com) on KitchenTreaty.com

# BUFFALO CHICKPEA SALAD

Addicting chickpeas, drenched in red hot sauce and then spooned over crisp lettuce and veggies. So good! But the kicker is that cool tahini ranch. (I think this is my favorite salad ever.)



[More salad recipes](#) on KitchenTreaty.com

Vegan

Gluten-free

Prep: 15 minutes

Serves 4

Cook: 5 minutes

Total: 20 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

### COOL TAHINI RANCH:

1/3 c. tahini  
3-4 T. unsweetened almond milk  
2 T. freshly squeezed lemon juice  
1/2 t. onion powder  
1/2 t. garlic powder  
2 T. chopped fresh parsley  
2 T. chopped fresh chives  
1/4 t. kosher salt + more to taste  
1/4 t. freshly ground black pepper  
+ more to taste

### SPICY BUFFALO CHICKPEAS:

1 T. olive oil  
1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas,  
drained  
2 T. + 2 T. red hot buffalo sauce,  
divided  
1/4 t. garlic powder or 1 small  
clove garlic, minced

1/4 t. kosher salt

1/8 t. freshly ground black pepper

### SALAD:

5 c. shredded romaine (or your  
favorite salad greens)  
1 batch Spicy Buffalo Chickpeas  
1 celery stalk, diced (1/2 c.)  
1/2 medium cucumber, peeled  
and diced (about 1 c.)  
1 medium ripe avocado, peeled  
and sliced  
1/2 small red onion, sliced into  
half-rounds (soak in a bowl of ice  
water for 10 minutes if you prefer  
to reduce the bite)  
1 batch Cool Tahini Ranch

## DIRECTIONS

1. Make dressing. Add all dressing ingredients to the bowl of a small food processor or blender. Puree until blended, adding additional almond milk if needed to thin. Set aside.
2. Cook chickpeas. Set a medium saute pan over medium heat. When hot, add the oil. Add chickpeas, 2 tablespoons buffalo sauce, garlic or garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Cook, stirring, until warmed through and golden brown in spots, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the remaining 2 tablespoons buffalo sauce. Set aside.
3. Assemble salad. In a large bowl or on plates, arrange a bed of lettuce. Scoop chickpeas over the top. Arrange celery, cucumber, avocado, and onion over each. Drizzle with dressing. Serve.



# VEGGIE-LOADED PEANUT NOODLE SALAD

The Peanut Butter Noodles you love, made extra creamy and bulked up with tons of veggies. We love having this in the fridge for easy lunches and dinners!

Vegan

GF OPTION

Prep: 15 minutes

Serves 6

Cook: 10 minutes

Total: 25 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

1/2 lb. whole wheat spaghetti  
pasta  
1 med. cucumber, peeled,  
quartered and sliced  
2 med. carrots, peeled and sliced  
1 large red, yellow, or orange bell  
pepper, diced  
1 bunch scallions, peeled and sliced  
into rounds (reserve upper green  
parts for garnish)  
1/2 c. chopped peanuts

### PEANUT-SESAME DRESSING:

1/2 c. creamy peanut butter  
1/3 c. sesame oil  
1/3 c. rice wine vinegar  
1/4 c. Tamari or soy sauce  
2 t. grated and peeled fresh  
ginger root (a pinky-sized piece)  
1 med. garlic clove, minced

## DIRECTIONS

1. Cook the pasta according to package instructions. Drain and add to a large bowl. Add the cucumbers, carrots, pepper, and scallions (reserve a few scallions for garnish).
2. Make dressing: Add all of the Peanut-Sesame Dressing ingredients to a small bowl and whisk briskly until blended. Pour over the veggies and pasta. Using tongs or two wooden spoons, toss pasta, veggies, and dressing until well-combined.
3. Top with peanuts and remaining scallions. Serve.
4. Keeps well in an airtight container in the refrigerator for about 3 days.

### GLUTEN-FREE OPTION

Use brown rice pasta and Tamari.

[More pasta recipes](#) on KitchenTreaty.com

# TLTs (TOFU, LETTUCE, & TOMATO SANDWICHES)

Tofu, quickly seared and seasoned, is the “meat” of this hearty, comforting sandwich.

Vegetarian

VEGAN, GF,  
MEAT OPTIONS

Prep: 10 minutes

Serves 4

Cook: 10 minutes

Total: 20 minutes

## INGREDIENTS

### SMOKY SEARED TOFU:

1 T. olive oil  
1 (14-ounce) block extra-firm tofu, cut in 1/4-inch slices (no need to drain)  
Pinch kosher salt  
1/4 c. Tamari or low-sodium soy sauce  
2 t. pure maple syrup  
1/2 t. smoked paprika

### FOR THE SANDWICHES:

8 slices of your favorite crusty artisan bread, toasted  
Smoky Seared Tofu  
2 large ripe tomatoes, sliced  
8 green leaf lettuce leaves, washed and dried (butter lettuce is another fabulous choice)  
1/4 c. mayonnaise  
Salt & pepper to taste

## DIRECTIONS

- 1. Make the Smoky Seared Tofu:** Set a large saute pan over medium-high heat. When hot, add olive oil. Add tofu along with a pinch of salt. The tofu will hiss and jump around a bit. Cook, flipping occasionally, until golden brown on both sides, 8-10 minutes. While the tofu cooks, mix the Tamari, maple syrup, and smoked paprika in a small bowl. When the tofu is golden, reduce heat to low. Pour the Tamari mix over the top. Cook, flipping occasionally, until the sauce has reduced and thickened, about 1 minute. Transfer to a plate.
- 2. Make the sandwiches:** Toast bread then smear each piece with mayo. Top four pieces of bread with tomatoes; sprinkle with a touch of salt and freshly ground black pepper. Add tofu, then pile with the lettuce. Top with remaining bread. Cut in half and serve.

### GLUTEN-FREE OPTION

*Use your favorite GF sandwich bread and Tamari.*

### VEGAN OPTION

*Use a mayo alternative such as Vegenaise.*

### MEAT OPTION

*Just use cooked bacon instead of tofu for the meat-eaters.*



[More sandwich recipes](https://www.kitchentreaty.com) on KitchenTreaty.com



# SLOW-COOKER CHANA MASALA

The classic Indian chickpea curry, slow cooker style! So simple yet so delicious, this easy vegan dinner is on constant rotation in our kitchen. We especially love this spooned over brown rice or spaghetti squash. (I often assemble two batches and freeze one for later on. So easy!)



[More chickpea recipes](#) on KitchenTreaty.com

Vegan

Gluten-free

Prep: 15 minutes

Serves 4

Cook: 8 hours

Total: 8 hours 15 mins

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 T. olive oil
- 1 med. yellow onion, diced (about 2 cups)
- 3 med. cloves garlic, minced
- 1 T. fresh minced ginger (a thumb-sized piece) (can sub 1/2 t. ground ginger)
- 3 cardamom pods, seeds removed and crushed (throw away the husks) (can sub 1/4 t. ground cardamom)
- 2 t. ground cumin
- 1 t. garam masala
- 1/2 t. ground coriander
- 1/8 t. cayenne powder
- 3/4 t. kosher salt + more to taste, if desired
- 1 (28-oz.) can whole peeled tomatoes with juice
- 2 (15-oz.) cans chickpeas, drained (about 3 c.)

## TOPPING IDEAS:

- " Lemon wedges to squeeze over the top
- " Cilantro
- " Plain yogurt (if not vegan)

## DIRECTIONS

1. Place a large saute pan over medium heat. When hot, add the olive oil. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until translucent and golden, 7-8 minutes. Add the garlic and saute, stirring frequently, for one more minute. Add ginger, cardamom, cumin, garam masala, coriander, cayenne powder, and 3/4 teaspoon salt. Stir constantly for about 30 seconds to toast spices a bit. Pour in the tomatoes and stir, breaking up the tomatoes with a spoon and scraping the bottom of the pan to release any onion and spices stuck to the bottom.
2. Pour tomato and onion mixture into the slow cooker. Add chickpeas and stir gently to combine. Cook on low for 8 hours, or high for 3-4 hours. Taste and add additional salt if desired.
3. Scoop into bowls. Serve with a squeeze of lemon juice and plenty of cilantro leaves, and/or plain yogurt if you prefer.