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# Sheet pan dinners: The weeknight hero

By

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## Learn how to save time and money with our tips for making the perfect sheet pan dinner!

With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, you may feel like you don't have time to cook dinner, but that's okay because sheet pan dinners always deliver great flavor! Sometimes you will stop and pick up take out because it seems like the easiest option, but is it the healthiest option? While treating the family to take out once in a while isn't necessarily a bad thing, it shouldn't be your go-to option for busy nights. Registered Dietician [Laura Ashley Johnson](#) has a great option for those nights when putting dinner on the table seems impossible: sheet pan meals. She sent us this [Tomato & Shrimp Gnocchi recipe](#) that will save you time and money, all while serving a healthy and delicious meal.

We are all looking for time savers: ways we can hack our lives so that we have more time to spend doing the things that we love. Whether it's spending more time with the family or pursuing a hobby, we all want to spend less time doing the things we "need" to do so we can do more of the things we want to do! While some people love being in the kitchen and creating delicious meals, there isn't always enough time in a day to get it all done. That's where the sheet pan dinners come in handy! Laura Ashley has provided an easy family dinner recipe and we've put together some tips for making a healthy, balanced meal all in one dish that turns out perfect every time.

A little preparation is key to saving time later and cutting down on cleanup. When these types of recipes come together, the preparation takes very little time – you can even do it the night before – and the clean-up is a breeze. Just follow these tips and apply them to every sheet pan dinner recipe, for great results every time.



**Add food in stages**

Foods of varying sizes will take different lengths of times to cook thoroughly. Some recipes you will need to start with the proteins first because they will need a longer time to cook than more delicate veggies. Heartier vegetables, like potatoes, will take longer than some proteins to cook.

Laura used [RedRoyals® Sweet Cherry Tomatoes On-the-Vine](#) for this recipe. Bursting with rich, majestically sweet flavor, they are a complement to every meal. There's no need to pick them off the vine for roasting either! For her recipe, you will start cooking the tomatoes and gnocchetti first for about 12 minutes before you add in the shrimp.

### **Position the ingredients wisely**

When you're spreading ingredients out on your sheet pan, you'll want to take into account where they will absorb the most heat in order to cook properly. That's why you will want to make sure that if you're cooking meat or fish, you place it in the center of the pan and then scatter the veggies around it.

### **Oil your pan and ingredients**

A sheet pan dinner as delicious as this should never be dry or stick to the pan, so make sure you coat the pan and ingredient generously in olive oil. The best way to do this is to put the ingredients in a bowl, add the oil and any other seasonings you'd like to use, then with a spoon or using your hands, gently toss to cover everything thoroughly.

In Laura's recipe, she uses the oil from the marinated mozzarella balls to coat the ingredients. It's a great way to save money – plus, that marinating oil will be full of flavor!



Don't over crowd the pan

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If the food is packed too tightly on the pan, there won't be room for air to circulate and cook your dinner evenly. Any moisture that the ingredients are holding won't be released if there's not enough space. Excess water is the enemy of sheet pan dinners. It set off a chain of events involving cook times in which certain ingredients don't cook properly or on time.

### **Add flavor boosters**

There are a lot of ways to add flavor to meals without affecting the calories too much. Premade seasoning blends you can buy from the grocery store, like a simple Italian seasoning, can add flavor and dimension to a meal. Simple squeezing fresh citrus, like lemon or lime, can elevate the flavor profile of a dish. Using aromatics, like Laura does in her recipe with basil, is another great way to boost flavor in your sheet pan dinner and keep those calories in check

For Laura's full Tomato & Shrimp Gnocchi recipe, [click here](#).

*This article is brought to you by [Pure Flavor®](#) and [Laura Ashley Johnson](#)*

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