

Some Favourite Meals:

These are some of my favourite slimming world meals. There are, as far as I'm aware, now all syn-free – unless stated otherwise. There are either ones of my own creation or have been pinched/modified from various Slimming World magazines/books or the main Slimming World website.

Red day Meals:

My weekday meals can get a bit “samey” – I'll put my hands up to that one straight away – but purely for convenience and times sake. They're quick, they're simple and they're tasty – what more would you want after getting in from work and being faced with the prospect of then having to cook?

I've managed to “burn out” two electric steamers in the last 7 months. I've now had to swap to a stove-top one.

Anyhow, weekday meals (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday nights) typically will consist of:

Steak and steamed vegetables (198g of New Potatoes in Skin (Healthy Extra B) with carrots, leeks, asparagus, green beans and mushrooms – not necessarily all those in one meal – depends what's available at the time.

Salmon Fillet and steamed vegetables (as above)

The steak and salmon are always cooked with only a few squirts of fry-light into a good quality griddle pan with minimum seasoning – maybe a few turns of the pepper mill is about it.

Oven roasted chicken breast with steamed vegetables (as above). Roast some chicken breasts at gas 6 (or equivalent) for about 20minutes. I usually sprinkle mine with some seasoning (all purpose Jamaican style or a chicken “spice grinder” I found recently in a cut-price store). Spray chicken and oven tray with fry-light first though before cooking.

I used to do a meat based Bolognese, but have recently converted to using Quorn mince – not only is it free on both days, but is also typically a lot cheaper than the extra lean mince, and as such I'll put that in the green day section – but those who want to change it to mince – feel free to do so – there's nothing that isn't free on either day in it (with the exception of extra lean mince if doing a meat based on).

When I have more time to spend, then I will do my own version of a **Slimming World meatloaf**.

There's two basic quantities – depending on how many you want to feed etc. You will need a tin loaf though – and one 500g pack of extra lean mince (I favour pork, but beef works too) will fill a 1lb loaf tin and give some left over's (if cooking for one), or 2packs for a 2lb loaf tin with plenty of left over's.

Put the mince in a large mixing bowl. Add – finely chopped onions (I'd soften them in some boiling water for 5 minutes and drain too if you want to take some of the onion bite from them), herbs (I favour fresh sage), ground black pepper, tiny bit of salt, some paprika to give a bit of bite and mix together well. Add one beaten egg (one pack of mince, or two if using two packs), and mix in well (by hand is best but it is messy). Transfer to clean bowl and fridge – preferably over night but for at least 2 hours.

Spray loaf-tin with fry-light, and transfer mix into tin. Cover top with foil. Place in a pre-heated oven (gas 6 or equivalent) for about 40 minutes (I suggest putting the loaf-tin in a larger roaster/oven-proof dish as even though it's extra lean mince – there's a lot of juices coming off it sometimes. Take foil off and cook for a further 10 mins.

Variations do include putting hard boiled eggs in the middle of the mince mixture as you are putting it in the loaf-tin. I've also used dried mushrooms (reconstituted with hot water first as per directions on packet) to great effect.

Chicken Nibbles are wonderful snack food, and ideal finger food for buffets. The only problems are – get there first or they'll all be gone, assuming you've left any to get to the party in the first place.

Take chicken breasts and cut up into chunks/strips (however you fancy on the day). Place in a freezer bag with your choice of seasonings – I use mixed herbs, Jamaican all purpose seasoning, paprika, chilli, etc.. Shake to cover chicken well and leave in fridge for an hour or two.

Take a heavy griddle pan and pre-heat it, with just a touch or two of fry-light. Add chicken and cook, stirring regularly until cooked all the way through.

For a slightly more upmarket version, mix with lime or lemon juice and a single herb (tarragon works well with chicken).

You could do these with whole chicken breasts and cut them up, but I find you don't get the herb/spice mix on every side of the chicken and you get pieces with herb/spice mix on one side – coloured with cooking and almost white chicken on everything else.

Green Day Meals.

Quick and simple and needing no real discussion – jacket spud, baked beans and Quorn sausages. Or even mash instead of the jacket spud for an even quicker fix.

More time on your hand – try **roasted vegetables**. Take some potatoes (new or baking) and parboil for 5/10 minutes. In the meantime prepare other vegetables – I favour carrots, butternut squash, onions, mushrooms, fennel when I can find baby bulbs, even courgettes. All depends what you like and what you can find I guess. Put in roasting tin; add the potatoes and spray with fry-light add pepper, sea salt, herbs and/or spices (personal favourites are sage, rosemary, tarragon, thyme).

Chilli/Bolognese. This is a staple for Monday nights – I leave home about 7:30am on a Monday and if I'm lucky I'm home by 9pm, but more frequently 9:30pm. I do mine in the slow cooker and the base is relatively the same.

Quorn mince,
Passata
Onion
Chopped tomatoes (tinned)

For the chilli, I'll add ground coriander and cumin and a bit of chilli powder plus kidney beans (tinned) and haricot beans (tinned) and pieces of green pepper and maybe finely chopped chilli pieces. For Bolognese – mushrooms, carrots (tinned is preferable), dried basil and/or mixed herbs and Worcestershire sauce – maybe with one or two beef Oxo cubes added to add a bit of flavour (and now free – yipppeeeeeeeee).

The important bit though – is to vary the food we eat on a regular basis. Try the occasional new thing. Getting caught in a rut and eating same things each and every week is one way to cause the journey to falter.

But remember to also have fun. Find recipes that work for you – but don't be afraid to change things to suit your personal tastes. Change or add spices. Change from beef to pork mince for a slightly different taste and texture. But have fun.