OUR TABLE · NO. 01

Our Table.

A recipe book of the meals my partner and I cook on quiet weeknights and unhurried Sundays — drawn from a multicultural New York City kitchen.

AUTHOR
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VOLUME
SIXTEEN RECIPES

PLACE
NEW YORK CITY



A NOTE FROM THE KITCHEN

"Food has always been a quiet anchor in my everyday life — something that brings comfort at the end of a long day, fills the apartment with familiar smells, and reminds me of the people and places that **shaped me***."*

— CRYSTAL CHEN, NEW YORK CITY

This book is more than instructions. It is a snapshot of the meals that have comforted us, energized us, and filled our kitchen with warmth.

I bring my Chinese-American background into the kitchen, while my partner carries flavors tied to Black, Hispanic, and European roots. Living in the cultural hub of New York City, we let the city's many kitchens find their way into ours — miso soup simmering beside pan-fried chicken, soy-glazed tofu following pasta tossed in olive oil and basil.

All sixteen are simple, flexible, and nourishing. We return to them again and again, not because they are perfect, but because they feel like ours.

Contents

SIXTEEN RECIPES · FOUR MEALS OF THE DAY

BREAKFAST

01 Yaki Onigiri & Miso Soup

02 Cold Chili Tofu

03 Berry Protein Smoothie

04 Frozen Berry Yogurt Bowl

LUNCH

01 Five-Spice Tofu Stir Fry

02 Korean Braised Tofu

03 Pomodoro Pasta

04 Italian Chickpea Salad

DINNER

01 Baked Chicken & Potatoes

02 Beef Bulgogi

03 Turkey Bolognese

04 Milli Fille Hot Pot

SNACKS

01 Rice Paper Chips

02 No-Cook Cucumber Salad

03 Vietnamese Spring Rolls

04 Olive Oil Popcorn

01

CHAPTER ONE

FOUR RECIPES

Breakfast.

Yaki Onigiri & Miso Soup

Cold Chili Tofu

Berry Protein Smoothie

Frozen Berry Yogurt Bowl



BREAKFAST · 01

1–2 SERVINGS

Yaki Onigiri
with miso soup

Sticky short-grain rice shaped into triangles, brushed with soy-mirin glaze, and pan-seared until the edges caramelize. Served with a warm cup of miso.

INGREDIENTS

ONIGIRI

- **1 cup** short-grain rice
- **4 tbsp** soy sauce
- **2 tbsp** mirin
- **2 tsp** sugar
- **1 tbsp** sesame oil & seeds

MISO SOUP

- **1 tbsp** miso paste
- **½ tsp** hondashi
- **160 ml** hot water
- tofu & scallion

METHOD

01 Cook rice until sticky. Mix soy, mirin, and sugar in a small bowl.

02 Toss hot rice with sesame oil, seeds, and salt. Shape into four triangular balls (cold water on the hands prevents sticking).

03 Sear in an oiled pan over medium heat until the bottom browns; flip and brush the seared side with sauce. Repeat on the second side.

04 For miso: combine miso, hondashi, tofu, and scallion in a mug. Pour over hot water just below boiling and stir.



BREAKFAST · 02

1–2 SERVINGS

Cold Chili *Tofu*.

A silky block of soft tofu draped in flash-heated chili oil, perfumed with garlic and scallion. Five minutes from fridge to table.

INGREDIENTS

- **1 box** soft tofu
- **2 tsp** minced garlic
- **1–2** scallions, thinly sliced
- **1** green or red chili, diced
- **2 tbsp** Korean chili flakes
- **1 tbsp** granulated sugar
- **2 tsp** soy sauce
- **1 tsp** Chinese black vinegar
- **2 tbsp** neutral oil for blooming
- black pepper, to taste

METHOD

01 Slide the soft tofu carefully onto a plate.

02 In a heat-safe bowl, combine garlic, scallion, chili flakes, sugar, and black pepper.

03 Heat the oil in a small saucepan until it shimmers (small bubbles form on a wooden chopstick).

04 Pour the hot oil over the aromatics in two passes, then stir in soy and vinegar.

05 Spoon the chili oil over the tofu. Eat on its own or over warm rice.



NO. 03 · BREAKFAST

BREAKFAST · 03

1 SERVING

Berry Protein *Smoothie*.

Frozen blueberries, oats, and peanut butter for the morning lift — cacao and honey round out the edges. The fastest breakfast in the book.

INGREDIENTS

- **1 cup** frozen blueberries
- **¼ cup** whey protein powder
- **½** apple, cubed
- **1 tbsp** cacao powder
- **2 tbsp** peanut butter
- **1 tbsp** honey
- **¼ cup** rolled oats
- **¼ cup** ice (4–6 cubes)
- **8 oz** oat milk

METHOD

01 Cube the apple and measure out the rest.

02 Add everything to the blender, oat milk last to help it spin.

03 Start low, ramp up to high, and blend 30–45 seconds until creamy.

04 Pour and drink immediately. Too thick? A splash more milk. Too thin? A spoon of oats.

NO. 04 · BREAKFAST



STOCK PHOTO · SOURCED ONLINE

BREAKFAST · 04

1–2 SERVINGS

Frozen Berry *Yogurt Bowl*.

Greek yogurt, still-frozen berries, a drizzle of honey, and whatever crunch the cupboard offers. Barely a recipe; mostly an assembly.

INGREDIENTS

- **1 cup** Greek yogurt
- **¾ cup** frozen mixed berries
- **2 tbsp** honey or maple syrup
- **1 tbsp** granola
- **½ tbsp** sliced almonds
- optional: peanut butter, coconut, acai

METHOD

01 Spoon yogurt into a bowl. Pile most of the berries on top.

02 Drizzle with honey or maple to taste.

03 Finish with granola, almonds, and any extras you like.

04 Eat now — the berries are best while they still hold their shape.

02

CHAPTER TWO
FOUR RECIPES

Lunch.

Five-Spice Tofu Stir Fry

Korean Braised Tofu

Pomodoro Pasta

Italian Chickpea Salad



LUNCH · 01

3–4 SERVINGS

Five-Spice *Tofu Stir Fry*.

Potato-starch-crusted cubes pan-fried until crackling, then tossed with onions, peppers, and a glossy five-spice glaze. Over rice, it's lunch for two days.

INGREDIENTS

- **1 block** firm tofu (14–16 oz), cubed
- **½ cup** potato starch
- **½ tsp** smoked paprika
- **½ cup** bell pepper, diced
- **½ cup** yellow onion, diced
- sesame seeds & scallions, garnish

SAUCE

- **3 tbsp** soy sauce
- **1 tbsp** vegetarian oyster sauce
- **1 tbsp** sugar
- **¾ tsp** five-spice powder

METHOD

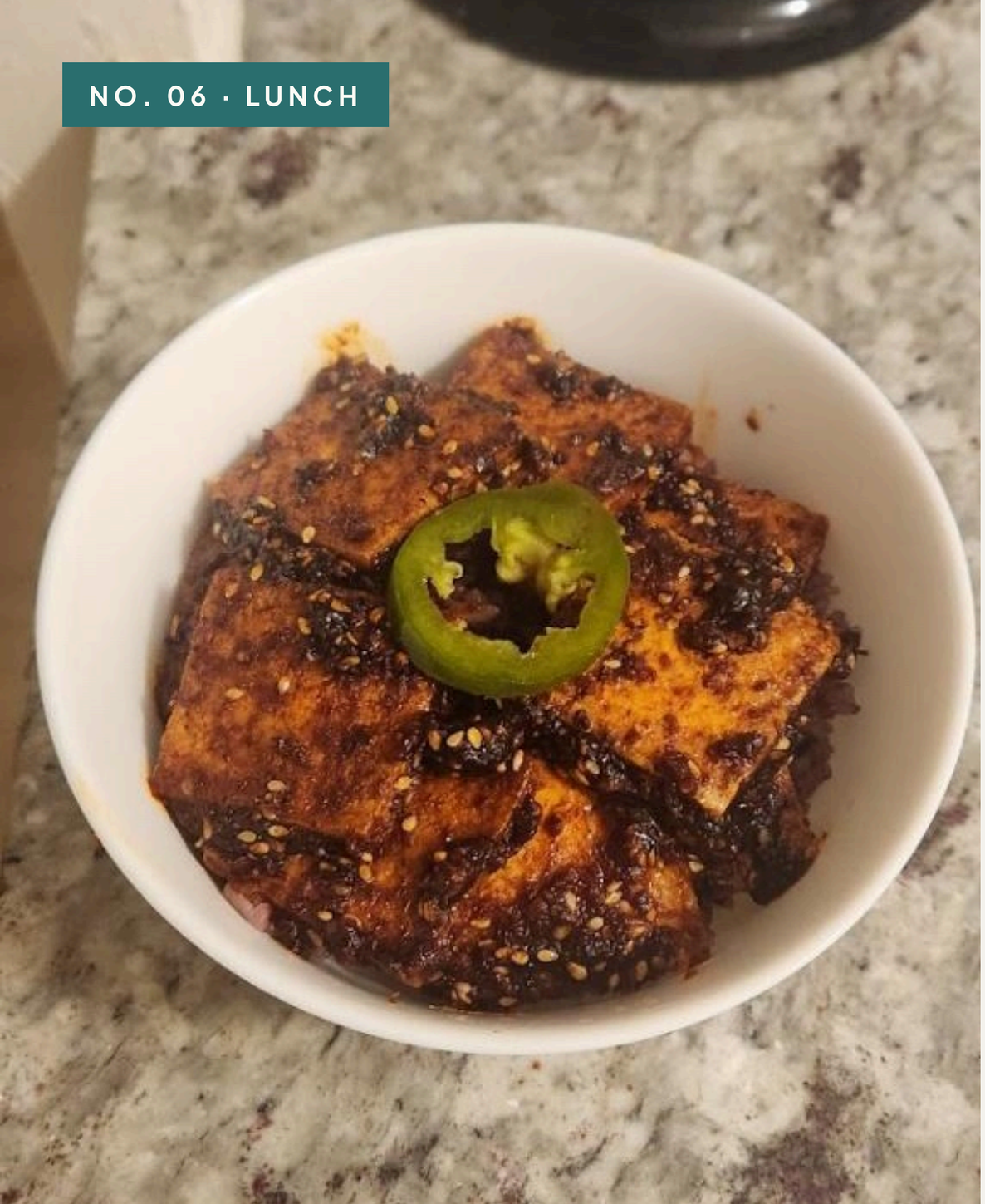
01 Whisk all the sauce ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.

02 Shake the potato starch with smoked paprika, salt, and white pepper in a zip-lock bag. Add the tofu and shake to coat.

03 Sear the tofu in shimmering oil until each side is golden. Drain on paper towels.

04 In a wok, sauté onion and bell pepper until translucent. Return the tofu.

05 Pour in the sauce and stir-fry until it thickens and clings. Finish with sesame seeds and scallion.



LUNCH · 02

1–2 SERVINGS

Korean Braised *Tofu*.

Slabs of firm tofu pan-fried until golden, then braised in a gochugaru-soy-mirin sauce that thickens and clings. Serve with rice.

INGREDIENTS

- **1 block** firm tofu, ½-inch slices
- **1** red or green chili, sliced
- **2–3** scallions, sliced
- **1 tbsp** yellow onion, diced

SAUCE

- **4 tbsp** soy sauce
- **2 tbsp** Korean chili flakes
- **1.5 tbsp** sugar
- **1 tbsp** mirin
- **2–4** garlic cloves, minced
- **1 tbsp** sesame oil

METHOD

01 Whisk all the sauce ingredients in a small bowl.

02 Pat the tofu slices dry and lightly salt both sides — this draws out moisture so they fry cleanly.

03 Pan-fry in neutral oil over medium heat until both sides are deep golden, 4–5 min each.

04 Set aside the tofu. In the same pan, soften the scallion, then add onion and chili until fragrant.

05 Return the tofu, pour over the sauce, and simmer on medium-high until it thickens around the slices.



LUNCH · 03

2 SERVINGS

Pomodoro *Pasta*.

San Marzanos, garlic-infused olive oil, torn basil, a knob of tomato paste, and a generous handful of Parmigiano. Twenty minutes, no shortcuts.

INGREDIENTS

- **10 oz** mini San Marzano tomatoes
- **7 oz** dried spaghetti
- **3–4** garlic cloves, crushed
- **8** basil leaves, divided
- **¼ cup** extra virgin olive oil
- **1 tbsp** tomato paste
- Parmigiano Reggiano, salt & pepper

METHOD

01 Halve the tomatoes; crush the garlic. Boil a large pot of salted water.

02 Warm olive oil in a skillet and infuse the garlic for 1–2 minutes — pull it before it browns.

03 Add the tomatoes and 4 torn basil leaves; season. After 5 min, stir in the tomato paste and simmer 5 more until a chunky sauce forms.

04 Cook the spaghetti to al dente; transfer directly into the skillet with a splash of pasta water.

05 Off heat, tear in the remaining basil. Plate with a final drizzle of oil, a grating of Parm, and cracked pepper.



LUNCH · 04

4 SERVINGS

Italian Chickpea *Salad with croutons.*

Crisp sourdough croutons, chickpeas, and a creamy cubanelle-honey dressing over a tangle of spring mix. The kind of salad you make a double batch of.

INGREDIENTS

- spring mix medley
- **1 can** chickpeas (15.5 oz)
- ½ red onion, julienned
- ½ sourdough loaf, cubed

DRESSING

- ½ cubanelle, diced
- **2 tbsp** mayo
- **1 tbsp** honey
- **2 tbsp** olive oil
- **1 tbsp** champagne vinegar

METHOD

01 Toss the sourdough cubes with olive oil, Italian seasoning, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Bake at 375°F for 12–15 min, stirring once. Cool fully so they crisp.

02 Whisk mayo, honey, oil, vinegar, seasoning, and chili flakes; stir in the diced cubanelle. Chill 10 minutes.

03 In a large bowl, combine spring mix, chickpeas, and red onion. Drizzle with dressing and toss gently.

04 Top with the croutons last, just before serving, so they stay crisp.

03

CHAPTER THREE
FOUR RECIPES

Dinner.

Baked Chicken & Potatoes

Beef Bulgogi

Turkey Bolognese

Milli Fille Hot Pot



NO. 09 · DINNER

DINNER · 01

4 SERVINGS

Baked Chicken *& Potatoes*.

Lemon-garlic-oregano chicken thighs roasted alongside Yukon Golds until the skin crackles. Finished with a bed of arugula and the squeeze of a charred lemon.

INGREDIENTS

- **1–1.5 lb** chicken thighs
- **1–2 lb** Yukon Gold potatoes
- **3** lemons (1 juiced, 2 halved)
- **¼ cup** extra virgin olive oil
- **4–6** garlic cloves, minced
- **2 tbsp** dried oregano
- **1–2 oz** fresh parsley
- **2–4 cups** arugula, to serve

METHOD

01 Heat the oven to 475°F (450°F convection). Cut potatoes into uniform bite-size chunks.

02 In a large bowl, whisk olive oil, garlic, parsley, lemon juice, oregano, salt, and pepper. Reserve ¼ cup of marinade.

03 Toss the chicken and potatoes in the rest until thoroughly coated.

04 Spread on a parchment-lined sheet pan, chicken skin-side up. Tuck lemon halves cut-side up around the tray.

05 Roast 30–45 minutes, until the chicken reads 165°F and the potatoes are golden. Squeeze the roasted lemons over everything before serving on arugula.



NO. 10 · DINNER

DINNER · 02

4 SERVINGS

Beef *Bulgogi*.

Thinly sliced ribeye marinated in soy, sugar, mirin, and sesame, then stir-fried hot and fast with scallion, onion, and carrot. Served over rice with kimchi.

INGREDIENTS

- **1–1.5 lb** pre-sliced ribeye
- **5** scallions, in 2-inch pieces
- **1** yellow onion, thinly sliced
- **4 oz** carrot, julienned

MARINADE

- **2.5 tbsp** soy sauce
- **2.5 tbsp** sugar
- **2.5 tbsp** mirin
- **2.5 tbsp** oyster sauce
- **4–6** garlic, minced
- **2 tsp** sesame oil

METHOD

01 Whisk all the marinade ingredients in a large bowl or zip-lock bag.

02 Add the beef and massage until evenly coated. Chill at least 15 minutes — two hours is better.

03 Heat a large pan or wok over medium. Stir-fry scallion, onion, and carrot for 2–3 min until fragrant and just softened.

04 Crank the heat to medium-high. Add the beef and stir-fry 4–5 min until cooked through, working in batches if the pan crowds.

05 Plate with sesame seeds, rice, and kimchi. Rice cakes or sweet potato noodles welcome.



NO. 11 · DINNER

DINNER · 03

4 SERVINGS

Turkey *Bolognese*.

A long-simmered ragù of ground turkey, soffritto, red wine, and Marzanino tomatoes — finished with cream and a parm rind. Served over tagliatelle.

INGREDIENTS

- **20 oz** ground turkey (93/7)
- **¾ cup** each onion, celery, carrot
- **3–4** garlic cloves, minced
- **1 can** Marzanino tomatoes
- **1½ cups** red wine
- **32 oz** low-sodium chicken stock
- **¼ cup** half & half
- rosemary, thyme, sage; parm rind
- **12 oz** tagliatelle

METHOD

01 Sweat the soffritto (onion, celery, carrot) in olive oil ~10 min. Add garlic; cook 2 min more.

02 Brown the turkey separately with Italian seasoning. Crumble well; add to the Dutch oven.

03 Deglaze with red wine; reduce 5 min. Add tomatoes and cook until a fond develops.

04 Pour in stock; drop in a bouquet of thyme, rosemary, sage, plus the parm rind.

05 Simmer 45–60 min, adding cream halfway. Toss with tagliatelle and finish with parm and parsley.



DINNER · 04

4 SERVINGS

Milli Fille *Hot Pot Nabe*.

Napa cabbage and pork belly layered into the pot like petals, simmered in dashi until everything turns silken. Eat straight from the pot with ponzu.

INGREDIENTS

- **1 lb** thinly sliced pork belly
- **1 head** napa cabbage
- **1 bundle** enoki or shimeji
- **3–4** scallions, **1 tbsp** ginger

DASHI BASE

- **1.5 tbsp** hondashi
- **2 tbsp** soy sauce
- **1.5 tbsp** mirin
- **1 cup** beef bone broth
- **2 cups** water

METHOD

01 Whisk water, dashi, soy, and mirin into a base broth.

02 Halve the cabbage lengthwise without separating the core. Wash gently and pat dry.

03 Slip 1–2 slices of pork belly between every cabbage leaf, then cut off the core and slice into 2–3 sections, keeping each tight.

04 Pack the sections into the pot in a tight pinwheel; tuck mushrooms into the centre.

05 Pour the dashi over, cover, and simmer until the pork is fully cooked. Dip in ponzu. Add udon to the broth at the halfway point.

04

CHAPTER FOUR
FOUR RECIPES

Snacks.

Rice Paper Chips

No-Cook Cucumber Salad

Vietnamese Spring Rolls

Olive Oil Popcorn



SNACKS · 01

4 SERVINGS

Rice Paper *Chips*.

Rice paper hits hot oil and puffs in two seconds. Salt, togarashi, old bay — the seasoning is the only real decision.

INGREDIENTS

- **6** rice paper sheets, 6-inch
- **½ cup** vegetable oil, for frying
- salt, to taste
- **1 tbsp** seasoning of choice

SEASONING IDEAS

- nutritional yeast
- togarashi
- smoked paprika + garlic powder
- old bay · ramen powder

METHOD

01 Heat enough oil for a shallow fry to about 350°F. A wooden chopstick should fizz when dipped in.

02 Cut the rice paper into triangles or squares with kitchen scissors.

03 Drop 1–2 pieces into the hot oil — they puff up almost instantly. Lift onto a paper towel.

04 Season while still warm so it sticks. Repeat with the rest.



SNACKS · 02

4 SERVINGS

No-Cook *Cucumber Salad*.

Thinly sliced cucumbers salted, drained, and tossed in a garlicky rice-vinegar dressing with chili oil. Better after ten minutes in the fridge.

INGREDIENTS

- **4 cups** cucumber, thinly sliced
- **2 tsp** salt
- scallions & sesame seeds, garnish

SAUCE

- **1 tbsp** minced garlic
- **3 tbsp** rice vinegar
- **1 tbsp** soy sauce
- **1 tbsp** toasted sesame oil
- **1 tbsp** brown sugar
- **1 tsp** chili oil

METHOD

01 Toss the sliced cucumber with salt; bruise lightly and rest 5–10 min.

02 Whisk the sauce in a small bowl. If the sugar is stubborn, microwave 10 seconds.

03 Squeeze the cucumbers dry and pat with a paper towel.

04 Pour over the sauce, toss to coat, and finish with sesame and scallions. Best ice-cold.



NO. 15 · SNACKS

SNACKS · 03

4 SERVINGS

Vietnamese *Spring Rolls*.

Cool, crunchy bundles of julienned vegetables, mint, and cilantro wrapped in softened rice paper. Eat them as fast as you make them, dipped in peanut sauce.

INGREDIENTS

- **1 cup** julienned veg (carrot, cucumber, pepper)
- **½ bunch** fresh cilantro
- **½ bunch** fresh mint
- **4–5** spring roll rice papers

DIPPING SAUCE

- **2½ tbsp** creamy peanut butter
- **½ tbsp** soy sauce
- **½ tbsp** lime juice
- **½ tbsp** brown sugar
- **¼ tsp** chili garlic sauce

METHOD

01 Whisk the peanut sauce ingredients, thinning with hot water until pourable. Adjust to taste.

02 Pour hot water into a shallow dish. Submerge one rice paper 10–15 seconds.

03 Lay it on a damp board and spread the edges into a circle.

04 To the bottom third add veg and herbs. Fold once over the filling, tuck in the sides, then keep rolling tightly.

05 Place seam-side down and cover with a damp towel. Serve immediately with the peanut sauce.



SNACKS · 04

4 SERVINGS

Olive Oil *Popcorn with Salt*.

Three ingredients, one pot, a movie. Drizzle the finishing oil over warm popcorn for the kind of glossy salt-pull you can't get from a bag.

INGREDIENTS

- **½ cup** popcorn kernels
- **2–3 tbsp** olive oil
- flaky salt, to taste

METHOD

01 Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a medium pot with the kernels in a single layer.

02 Cover and cook over medium heat. Shake occasionally to prevent burning.

03 Listen — when the pops slow to one every 3–5 seconds, pull it off the heat.

04 Pour into a wide bowl. Drizzle with the rest of the oil and finish with flaky salt.

A day *at the table*.

One day's worth of meals from the book — designed to fit a balanced macro profile and a typical NYC grocery budget. Total: **1,730 kcal**.

07:30

BREAKFAST

Berry Protein Smoothie

456 kcal

Frozen blueberries, oats, peanut butter, oat milk. Fiber and protein to start the day.

12:30

LUNCH

Italian Chickpea Salad

487 kcal

Spring mix, chickpeas, sourdough croutons, cubanelle-honey dressing.

19:00

DINNER

Baked Chicken & Potatoes

654 kcal

Lemon-garlic chicken thighs over arugula with roasted Yukon Golds.

21:00

SNACK

Olive Oil Popcorn

133 kcal

Stovetop popcorn finished with good olive oil and flaky salt.

Grocery list *for the day*.

TOTAL · NYC AVERAGES

$22.39

Costs estimated proportionally — charging only for the amount actually used. Sourced from typical Manhattan grocery prices (Target & Walmart, 2025).

BREAKFAST · SMOOTHIE — $4.15

Frozen blueberries	1 cup	**$1.50**	Whey protein powder	¼ cup	**$0.75**
Apple	¼	**$0.25**	Cacao powder	1 tbsp	**$0.30**
Peanut butter	2 tbsp	**$0.25**	Honey	1 tbsp	**$0.20**
Rolled oats	¼ cup	**$0.10**	Oat milk	8 oz	**$0.80**

LUNCH · CHICKPEA SALAD — $7.54

Spring mix	2 cups	**$1.00**	Chickpeas	1 can	**$1.29**
Sourdough bread	½ loaf	**$2.50**	Red onion	½	**$0.50**
Cubanelle pepper	½	**$0.60**	Olive oil	5 tbsp	**$0.75**
Champagne vinegar	1 tbsp	**$0.15**	Pantry seasonings	—	**$0.75**

DINNER · BAKED CHICKEN — $9.85

Chicken thighs	1.5 lb	**$4.50**	Potatoes	1.5 lb	**$1.50**
Lemons	3	**$1.20**	Olive oil	¼ cup	**$0.60**
Garlic	4–6 cloves	**$0.30**	Dried oregano	2 tbsp	**$0.20**
Fresh parsley	1 oz	**$0.50**	Arugula	2 cups	**$1.00**

SNACK · POPCORN — $0.85

Popcorn kernels	½ cup	**$0.60**	Olive oil	2 tbsp	**$0.20**
Flaky salt	—	**$0.05**			

Until the next *meal*.

Nutrition is more than numbers — it is culture, accessibility, taste, and the everyday realities of time and budget. These recipes are the ones we'll keep returning to.

COMPILED BY

Crystal Chen

FROM A KITCHEN IN

New York City

VOLUME

Sixteen recipes · One day's plan · Grocery list

YEAR

MMXXVI