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Meal prep queen, 31, who cooks up a week's worth of food for \$40 reveals her simple formula for the cooler months - and how to avoid the dreaded 'winter waistline'

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* Katie Lolas, 31, is a teacher and Instagram influencer based in Sydney

* Here, she speaks to FEMAIL and reveals her top meal prepping tips for autumn

* These includes foods that are in season and her go-to fruits and vegetables

* Each shop for the week costs \$120 for both herself and her husband

* Of that shop, \$25 - \$40 is everything she needs for the meal prepping

While many feel inspired to prep a batch of light fresh salads and fruity snacks in the summer months, this motivation tends to fade away as the seasons change.

But this doesn't have to be the case.

Sydney teacher Katie Lolas, 31, has earned a following of more than 121,000 on Instagram for her impressive meal prepping skills and cooks up all her breakfasts, lunches and snacks for the week each Sunday - the prep costing her just \$40.

Here, Ms Lolas speaks to FEMAIL about her top tips for meal prepping in autumn and winter, her go-to fruits, vegetables and proteins and how to prevent the dreaded 'winter waistline'.

'During the cooler months, I try to design meals that can be warmed up in a microwave for convenience,' Ms Lolas told Daily Mail Australia.

'It's important to watch portion sizes to avoid a winter waistline. I try to reduce comfort eating by asking myself whether I'm actually hungry or just bored and or cold.

'Preparing healthy snacks is also important to avoid eating unnecessarily. I try to include a source of protein with every meal (including snacks) to keep me feeling satisfied for longer.'

What are Katie Lolas' top proteins, veggies, fats and fruits?

Top five proteins

White poultry (turkey/chicken breast)

Legumes (chickpeas and lentils)

Eggs

Greek yoghurt

Tofu

Top five fruits

Bananas

Green Apples

Grapes

Pomegranate

Oranges

Top five vegetables

Baby spinach

Carrots

Capsicum

Green beans

Tomatoes

Top five fats

Avocado

Olive oil

Nuts (such as almonds and walnuts)

Dark chocolate

Chia seeds

One of the biggest challenges for people in autumn and winter is figuring out what foods are in season.

'Vegetables that are in season include Asian greens like boy choy and Chinese broccoli, eggplant, kale, leeks, mushrooms and potatoes,' Ms Lolas said.

'Seasonal fruit includes grapes, apples, plums, avocados, pears, oranges, guava. These are plentiful and available at most local groceries for a competitive price.

'Unfortunately berries are out of season. They become quite expensive during the cooler months and the quality isn't the great, so it's best to swap them for a different fruit. Or if you're keen to keep using them, a cost effective alternative is to use frozen berries.'

When preparing the meals on the weekend, Ms Lolas suggests following a simple formula.

'Fill 50 per cent of your plate with colourful vegetables, 25 per cent of your plate with a lean protein; and 25 per cent Low GI Carbohydrate,' she said.

Ms Lolas, who preps breakfasts, lunches and snacks for the working week, said her meals do change with the seasons.

My three go to winter breakfasts are warm overnight oats, egg muffins and avocado on soy linseed toast with feta and lime.

'During the colder months I'll heat my oats for one or so minutes in the microwave before eating and egg Muffins are so quick and easy to make and taste delicious either hot or cold,' she said.

For lunches, meals range from chicken and prawn brown rice paella and green chicken curry and vegetables with brown rice to tandoori lamb and tzatziki whole grain wraps and tabouli, marinated BBQ chicken and Baba Ghanoush.

She also added that a pressure cooker is great to make casseroles and soup and that containers of all shapes and sizes to store food are worth the investment.

'Don't be afraid to try something new. There's no one perfect way to prep. It's all about finding out what works for you and your lifestyle,' she said.

Ms Lolas originally turned to meal prepping as a way to help manage her nutrition and digestive health and ever since, she has been sharing snaps of her colourful creations and impressively organised meals.

'I've been prepping my breakfast and lunches for a year and cook up my weekly batch of fresh food on a Sunday morning, to ensure I have everything ready for work on Monday,' Ms Lolas told FEMAIL previously.

'It takes between 1.5 to two hours depending on what I make. I always have my groceries ready though, so I can start cooking on Sunday morning.

'I prepare five breakfasts and between four and five lunches each week. To change things up, I usually have morning tea at work on Friday and I grab something different from the shops for lunch.

How to save money at the supermarket

Always keep your eyes peeled for what's on special.

I don't purchase all my groceries from the one store. My snacks are always influenced by what's on sale in either Woolworths or Coles.

I also tend to buy my staple items like fruit, veg and protein from Aldi because it can be substantially less expensive and tastes just as good.

'I still like to make healthy choices even on my days off prepping. Sometimes I'll have brown rice sushi for lunch or a brown bread egg and salad sandwich. It really just depends on what I feel like on that particular day.'

For those who are looking to get started, Ms Lolas recommends stocking up on containers.

'Containers, containers and more containers! Most people will have everything they need to cook their food, but I found that I needed to invest in some good containers to carry and store all my prep to and from work each day,' Ms Lolas said.

'For my breakfast I purchase mason jars from either K-mart or The Reject Store. They're inexpensive and they last for ages.

'For my lunch and snack containers I usually buy the Sistema brand from Woolworths and I like them because they come in so many different shapes and sizes. I've also started using containers from Meal Prep Australia.

'They're great because they're compartmentalised and I can keep my protein, carbohydrates and vegetable portions separate if I need to'

Ms Lolas also suggests making a detailed list of everything needed for a meal prep before stepping out of the house for a shop.

'Decide what you're going to make and figure out what you need before you go shopping,' she said.

'I've made the mistake too many times of not checking my cupboards before leaving home and then purchasing things I already had. Lists help me stay focused and organised when out shopping.'

By prepping breakfasts, lunches and snacks, Ms Lolas is spending a third of the money she would have spent if she was buying them each day.

'A weekly shop for my husband and I is approximately \$120 - \$175 for breakfast, lunch and dinner. The meal prepping component of this weekly shop is approximately \$25-\$40, including meat, vegetables and fruit,' she said.

'I also always shop around for the best prices and most of food I buy for my prep lasts for more than a week.'

Ms Lolas tends to stick with overnight oats for breakfasts but prefers to vary her lunches each week.

'I love making overnight oats for breakfast because they're highly nutritious, quick and easy to make and I can dramatically change the flavour by just switching the fruit or type of milk I use,' Ms Lolas explained.

'I make something different for lunch every single week to keep things interesting. Some of my favourite lunches include, low-carb eggplant lasagna, Singapore noodle stir-fry with chicken and veggies and lastly, marinated BBQ chicken with tabouli and hummus.'

For snacks, fruit and yoghurt are her favourite options as they are delicious and easy to prepare.

For dinners, Ms Lolas prepares them each night and usually has something different each time.

'Some of my go-to-dinners are dishes like grilled white fish, Asian greens and brown rice, pasta, made with lean protein and lots of vegetables and even things like rice paper rolls with either prawns or chicken,' she said.

'It really just depends what I feel like each night, but I always try to include a protein, low GI carbohydrate and vegetables.'

The prepping has also transformed her life both inside and out.

'It has helped me manage my IBS, which has made a world of difference in my life. My stomach cramps and bloating have markedly improved because I'm eating homemade food that is high in fibre and nutrition,' she said.

'I decided it was time to stop stressing about what to eat and wasting time each day looking for something and just have everything organised and ready.

'It makes me feel organised and ready to succeed, which is most certainly a positive.'

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