

**Redbook, March 2006      BEAT THE CLOCK Section      “Saving Time Weeknight Dinners”**

Resist the urge to order pizza - again - with these four services that make weeknight cooking easier. We put ‘em to the test!

SERVICE AND COST	YOU SAVE	HOW IT WORKS	THE BEST PART	BOTTOM LINE
<b>Dream Dinners</b> (dreamdinners.com) \$200 for a 12-meal series, or about \$17 per meal for four to six.	Time spent shopping, chopping, and prepping.	Once a month, go to dreamdinners.com and select a six- or 12-meal plan; choose from 14 ever-changing entrees such as pork chops with ginger-baked apples or rosemary chicken with penne pasta. Then, book a visit to your local Dream Dinners storefront (there are 96 in 29 states - and growing), where you'll spend one to two hours assembling the pre-prepped ingredients for your meals. You'll head home with up to 12 meals that can be frozen and popped into the oven any day of the week.	“I had about a month’s worth of meals and didn’t have to clean up my kitchen once!” – Anna Quinton, 33 Portsmouth, NH	Great for anyone who lacks the weeknight time (or mental energy) to plan or prep-as long as you can carve out a chunk of weekend time to assemble the meals.
<b>Tastefully Simple</b> (tastefullysimple.com) \$4.50 to \$10 per prepackaged dish, or about \$12.50 per meal for four.	The effort of making meals from scratch.	There are two ways to get Tastefully Simple’s kits, which only require one or two added ingredients – such as water or eggs – to become tasty dinners. You can host an at-home party, where a consultant (there are over 19,000 nationwide) prepares Tastefully Simple food for you and your guests to try and buy. Or you can find a local representative online at tastefullysimple.com and order any time. You'll have a pantry full of options, such as creamy wild rice soup and savory been bread, to whip up in a pinch.	“I hardly spend any time prepping. And while my bread baked, I had 50 uninterrupted minutes to play with my son!” – Alyssa Yano, 28 Yonkers, NY	These aren't quite homemade meals, but they're fast, easy and a step above frozen dinners.
<b>The Six O’Clock Scramble</b> (thescramble.com) \$5 per month (you buy the food on your own).	The hassle of figuring out what to cook.	Sign up at thescramble.com and every Wednesday you'll get a new five-night main-meal menu, with recipes and a shopping list. Most meals require fewer than 10 ingredients, take 30 minutes or less to make, and are kid-friendly – such as tortellini with fresh mozzarella and Asian turkey burgers.	“The variety! I had easy access to new recipes without spending my time looking at cookbooks.” – Barb Belfie, 43, Seattle	You'll never again wonder, What's for dinner? But to satisfy a family of picky eaters, you might have to do some recipe tinkering.

<b>Relish!</b> (relishrelish.com) \$6 per month (you buy the food).	Hours planning the week's menus.	Sign up at <a href="http://relishrelish.com">relishrelish.com</a> and every Thursday you'll get five nights of entrée and side dish recipe suggestions with shopping lists, plus rotating dessert ideas with recipes online. The meals take 30 minutes or less to prepare and the ingredients usually cost \$80 or less for the week's work of dinners (such as soy-and-ginger flank steak with Asian spinach salad). Once a month, you also get five "freezer meal" suggestions, including recipes and shopping lists that you can prepare or save for another time.	"I loved not staring into my refrigerator deciding what to make for dinner!" – Rita Cookson, 35, River Edge, NJ	This service helps you break out of the if-it's-Tuesday-it-must-be-tacos rut with more adventurous menus.
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**Fact:** The average American family orders takeout or has food delivered 1.4 times per week.