

Cookbook Author Jenny Rosenstrach Shares Her Best Tips for Making Weeknight Dinner Work

 marthastewart.com/8192407/jenny-rosenstrach-weeknight-dinner-tips

As the creator of the award-winning blog *Dinner: A Love Story*, it should come as no surprise that Rosenstrach has plenty of sage advice for taking some of the emotional labor out of dinner prep.

what's —
for dinner



By [Bridget Shirvell](#) December 17, 2021



Credit: Courtesy of Jenny Rosenstrach / Christine Han

Anyone else constantly asking themselves, "Where did the time go?" at the end of each weekday? Maybe it's the fact that it gets dark earlier, or perhaps it's all the work we're trying to cram in before the end of the year while also trying to make our homes feel extra jolly? Whatever it is, preparing weeknight dinners feels like more of a struggle this month than most. To take some of the pressure off, we spoke with Jenny Rosenstrach, creator of the award-winning blog *Dinner: A Love Story* and the bestselling cookbook of the name (\$29.99, [barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com)), to get her best advice. Here, Rosenstrach shares tips for making dinner work on these tight December weeknights; plus, she shares a look inside her own pantry and offers suggestions for taking some of the emotional labor out of dinner prep.

Healthy Comfort Food Reigns Supreme

We crave the warm, nostalgic flavors of comfort food this time of year, so why not plan to enjoy easy, healthy renditions of your favorite dishes during weeknights in December and January? In Rosenstrach's weeknight dinner rotation you'll find recipes such as [braised beans](#), vegetable galettes, and socca pancakes. If you like braised beans, too, Rosenstrach has some tips: "The key is to start with very good beans such as [Rancho Gordo](#)." She'll place the beans in a pot in the morning and let them soak all day, adding in some herbs and spices and starting to cook them about an hour before dinner. Once they're done, she tops them with pesto or romesco sauce and serves with crusty bread.

[Socca](#) is a savory pancake that originated in the South of France, and it's another of Rosenstrach's go-to dishes. You make by using a one-to-one ratio of chickpea flour to water. Rosenstrach serves socca with any leftover vegetables in the fridge, and often with a yogurt-based sauce. Similarly, she makes the savory galette to use up any vegetables on hand, but her favorite is mushrooms.

What's In Her Pantry?

Stocking your pantry with basics guarantees an easy, delicious, and healthy dinner is possible even on those days when getting to the store is a struggle. "[Canned] chickpeas are essential," says Rosenstrach. "You can fry them in olive oil and then throw them into a caesar salad or a grain or yogurt bowl." Speaking of grains, Rosenstrach also always has a variety of rice on hand. "It's a good base for any type of vegetable meal." A few other things you'll always find in her pantry are beans and [cans of good Italian tuna](#).

Though she doesn't keep them in her pantry, Rosenstrach also always has eggs on hand. "For my new book I was determined to come up with recipes that aren't scrambled eggs on toast," she says. One of her current favorites, which you'll find in *The Weekday Vegetarians: 100 Recipes and a Real-Life Plan for Eating Less Meat: A Cookbook* (\$26, [barnesandnoble.com](#)), uses eggs for tacos.

Expert Advice

To take some of the mental load off of the family chef, Rosenstrach suggests asking others to come up with the dinner menu. "It saves a lot of energy on the cook's end," she says. To avoid last-minute requests—especially if you don't have time to go to the store—give everyone in your household a day or two that they are responsible for coming up with the dinner plan and then ask for that idea before heading to the store.

Finally, while not everyone is capable of cooking or even likes to cook, there are plenty of ways to get your family involved in the dinner prep that doesn't include using a stove or oven. Rosenstrach recommends giving your family members tasks to help prepare for dinner time.

"Set the table, put the condiments out, fill the drinking glasses with water, clean up," are all little jobs that she says others can do. "You don't need to know how to cook to do any of that."