

## 16 Great, Healthy Dinners in 10-minutes or Less

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Everyone knows that cooking for yourself is a great way to eat good food while being frugal, and to eat healthier at the same time.

But not many of us have time to cook up a fancy meal each night — which is why many people eat out instead. Just not enough time and energy in the day.

Enter the New York Times' article, [Summer Express: 101 Simple Meals Ready in 10 Minutes or Less](#). Now, there are other lists of simple and quick meals, and I always love them, but this one is especially good.

**To save you time, I decided to share with you some of the healthier meals from the list** — meaning the vegetarian ones. The others sound tasty, but just too much saturated fat to be healthy. The ones that follow sound delicious, and while they're not all the healthiest in the world, they're not bad at all.

1. **Gazpacho:** Combine one pound tomatoes cut into chunks, a cucumber peeled and cut into chunks, two or three slices stale bread torn into pieces, a quarter-cup olive oil, two tablespoons sherry vinegar and a clove of garlic in a blender with one cup water and a couple of ice cubes. Process until smooth, adding water if necessary. Season with salt and pepper, then serve or refrigerate, and a little more olive oil.
2. **Herb pasta:** Toss a cup of chopped mixed herbs with a few tablespoons of olive oil in a hot pan. Serve over angel-hair pasta, diluting the sauce if necessary with pasta cooking water.
3. **Eggplant & feta:** Cut eggplant into half-inch slices. Broil with lots of olive oil, turning once, until tender and browned. Top with crumbled goat or feta cheese and broil another 20 seconds.
4. **Rustic tomato pasta:** While pasta cooks, combine a couple cups chopped tomatoes, a teaspoon or more minced garlic, olive oil and 20 to 30 basil leaves. Toss with pasta, salt, pepper and Parmesan.
5. **Quesadilla:** Use a combination of cheeses, like Fontina mixed with grated pecorino. Put on half of a large flour tortilla with pickled jalapenos, chopped onion, shallot or scallion, chopped tomatoes and grated radish. Fold tortilla over and brown on both sides in butter or oil, until cheese is melted.
6. **Spicy garlic pasta:** Sauté 10 whole peeled garlic cloves in olive oil. Meanwhile, grate Pecorino, grind lots of black pepper, chop parsley and cook pasta. Toss all together, along with crushed dried chili flakes and salt.
7. **Taco salad:** Toss together greens, chopped tomato, chopped red onion, sliced avocado, a small can of black beans and kernels from a couple of ears of corn. Toss with crumbled tortilla chips and grated cheese. Dress with olive oil, lime and chopped cilantro leaves.
8. **Zucchini pasta:** Sauté shredded zucchini in olive oil, adding garlic and chopped herbs. Serve over pasta.
9. **Not takeout:** Stir-fry onions with cut-up broccoli. Add cubed tofu, chicken or shrimp, or sliced beef or pork, along with a tablespoon each minced garlic and ginger. When almost done, add half cup of water, two tablespoons soy sauce and plenty of black pepper. Heat through and serve over fresh Chinese noodles.
10. **Pine nuts pasta:** Put a stick of butter and a handful of pine nuts in a skillet. Cook over medium heat until both are brown. Toss with cooked pasta, grated Parmesan and black pepper.
11. **Pasta with fresh tomatoes:** Cook chopped fresh tomatoes in butter or oil with garlic until tender, while pasta cooks. Combine and serve with grated Parmesan.
12. **Rich vegetable soup:** Cook asparagus tips and peeled stalks or most any other green vegetable in vegetable stock with a little tarragon until tender; reserve a few tips and purée the rest with a little butter (cream or yogurt, too, if you like) adding enough stock to thin the purée. Garnish with the reserved tips. Serve hot or cold.
13. **Near instant mezze:** Combine hummus on a plate with yogurt laced with chopped cucumbers and a bit of garlic, plus tomato, feta, white beans with olive oil and pita bread.
14. **Olive pasta:** Pit and chop a cup or more of mixed olives. Combine with olive oil, a little minced garlic, red pepper flakes and chopped basil or parsley. Serve over pasta.
15. **Stuffed tomatoes:** Cut the top off four big tomatoes; scoop out the interiors and mix them with toasted stale baguette or pita, olive oil, salt, pepper and herbs (basil, tarragon, and/or parsley). Stuff into tomatoes and serve with salad.

16. **Ketchup-braised tofu:** Dredge large tofu cubes in flour. Brown in oil; remove from skillet and wipe skillet clean. Add a little more oil, then a tablespoon minced garlic; 30 seconds later, add one and a half cups ketchup and the tofu. Cook until sauce bubbles and tofu is hot.

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