



Guide to Stocking Your Freezer with Postpartum Healing Foods

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Meet The Food Doula



I'm giving you a virtual high-five for grabbing this guide and thinking about your postpartum and how you can nourish yourself after birth (while saving time and stress in the process).

I'm Lindsay – The Food Doula – Cookbook author, certified culinary nutrition expert specializing in pregnancy and postpartum, certified doula, and researcher with a Masters degree in Health and 15 years of experience transforming science into real-world and real-life easy-to-implement ways to get healthier and feel better.

I put this free guide out into the world because If I am every pregnant again, there is one big thing that I would do differently (and I want you to do it too!):

I would take the time to plan for my postpartum. Oh how I wish I did this.

In my pregnancies, I spent loads of time reading all the apps and books about baby's development, created Pinterest boards with nursery inspiration, took classes and read lots about prepping for labour and delivery, and spent lots of time googling baby must-haves.

I did not, however, spend any time considering my own needs for healing and adjusting to motherhood with a newborn, perhaps the biggest transition in the whole pregnancy journey.

What I've learned since is that it's so important to plan for postpartum – it can help you thrive with a newborn, have supports in place to lean on when you need them, reduce stress and frustration, and give you more time to rest, nest, and bond with your baby.

One of the absolute best ways to prep for postpartum is to spend some time stocking your freezer with nutrient dense meals that take the pressure off when baby arrives. Having a freezer full of done-for-you meals means less grocery shopping, less food prep, and less cooking with a newborn – yes please!

So let's get to it!

How To Use This Guide

1. Read through the whole guide now – get excited about the benefits of having a stocked freezer, learn what foods are perfect for postpartum healing, and scan the step-by-step process for how to stock your freezer.
2. Take a look at the included postpartum healing recipes and make note of what you'll want to make.
3. When the time is right, schedule your baby-prep cooking days, follow the steps provided, and get that freezer stocked! I promise, future you will be SO happy you did!

Why Stock Your Freezer with Postpartum Healing Foods?

Pregnancy is a very nutritiously expensive task! It feels great knowing your body will provide nutrients to baby no matter what you eat during your pregnancy, but we also need to consider where those nutrients are coming from – you!

You have stores of nutrients throughout your body that your body relies upon to function (in addition to the nutrients absorbed from the food you eat). Because so many nutrients are needed to grow a human (who knew!?), a postpartum mother is often very depleted in key nutrients. Being nutritionally depleted can lead to low energy, fatigue, irritability, and low mood (which can exacerbate the new mom realities of sleep deprivation and exhaustion!).

The good news is, you can replete these lost nutrients by prioritizing nutrient dense meals, which will help you feel better and more ready to take on your days. Yes for more energy!

We also know from the scientific literature that eating enough nutrient dense food can support your healing and recovery as your body works to repair tissues that were damaged during birth and shift to postpartum mode (which includes changes to your body, your hormones, and a big one – making breastmilk!)

What you eat postpartum can also be beneficial for breastfeeding (both your supply of milk and the nutritional composition of the milk you make are impacted by what you eat). How wild is it that you can make your milk more nutrient-rich for baby!? Your body is amazing.

Flip back to me as a new mom with no stocked meals in the freezer. Most dinners were cereal, grilled cheese, and whatever we could get delivered from friends and restaurants. I don't feel guilty about this – you have to do what you have to do to get by in the early days – but I know now that having more prepared, nutritious meals would have saved me time, stress, and helped me feel more like myself in those early days.

What Are Postpartum Healing Foods?

Postpartum healing foods are foods that are excellent sources of key nutrients your body needs to support your healing, mood, energy, and breastfeeding requirements. Keep these foods in mind when you prep your freezer, grocery shop, order food, or whatever!

Getting in great nutrients is important, but what's most important is that you *eat*, no matter what it is. It is so common to forget to eat, not make the time to eat, and find it difficult to eat with a new baby. Getting calories in is the most important thing. That's why snacks take up lots of real estate in my postpartum recipes – individually portioned, energy-boosting snacks that you can eat with one hand with zero prep work are LIFESAVERS with a new baby!

40 Foods For 4th Trimester Healing and Support

Water	Kale	Collard Greens
Bone Broth	Carrots	Hemp seeds
Salmon	Bell Peppers	Oysters
Bone-in Chicken	Chia seeds	Sardines
Eggs	Berries	Full-Fat Coconut Milk
Beef	Chocolate	Cashews
Spinach	Almonds	Chickpeas
Quinoa	Olive Oil	Ginger
Nut/Seed Butter	Ghee/Grass-fed Butter	Turmeric
Lentils	Pulled Pork	Cinnamon
Oats	Brazil Nuts	Any veggie you have on hand
Flaxseed (ground!)	Pumpkin Seeds	Sauerkraut
Avocado	Fresh herbs	Kimchi

And #1 = your favourite food. Yes! Eating what you love is important – pleasure and enjoyment from food makes us feel good, comforted, and happy. Everyone, especially new moms, need that.

5 Steps To Filling Your Freezer For Postpartum

Step 1:

Schedule the time to fill your freezer

I always say, schedule it like you would schedule your prenatal class. Plan to spend 2 full days (or break this down however you want – maybe 2 hours each weekend for a month) prepping, cooking, and getting that freezer stocked for future you. Mark it in your calendar!

When picking your fill-the-freezer days, consider doing it in your 7th month or early in your 8th – you're not too close to your due date (in case baby comes early!), and you're not too far away either (because we still want your meals to taste as fresh and delicious as possible for the first couple of months postpartum!)

Step 2:

Get reinforcements

I get it – spending time on your feet, expending extra energy – sometimes it feels like a lot! So why not enlist helpers? Here are some ideas:

- Have friends expecting around the same time as you? Do it together (to cut the time in half) or divide and conquer: You each do a few meals at your own homes, make double of everything, and share! (again, to cut time in half!)
- Invite your parent, sibling, friend, or co-worker over. Trust me when I say you have people in your life who genuinely want to be there for you right now, and who would be over the moon to be asked to support you in prepping for baby. Ask them and make a day of it!
- Ask your partner or older children to help! They can take care of some of the prep (like chopping veggies, grocery shopping, or corralling ingredients) while you focus on getting the meals done.

Step 3:

Make your plan

A postpartum freezer-prep plan includes the following: What meals are you going to make? (write them down!) How many servings of each? (write it down!) What groceries do you need for each dish (write those down, too!).

Once you have your plan and full grocery list, decide what meals you're going to make on which day (if you're doing it in 2 days, consider tackling 4-5 dishes a day. If you're spreading it out, aim for 1-2 dishes each time).

To make your cooking days easier and faster (win win!), look over the recipes and see where you can do some advance prep: Chopping veggies, prepping sauces, making a spice rub, or cutting up your meat can all be done in advance. Schedule your prep in advance of your cooking days, then grocery shop (or order online) for all of your ingredients, so that you've got everything you need when you start your prep.

Step 4:

Do an inventory of your storage tools

Before you cook, make sure you have enough storage containers, bags, and labels to get you through your cooking days. Here's what I look for:

- Glass Storage Containers in multiple sizes. You'll need enough to fit your meals, either in family-sized large portions or individual containers, depending on the meal and your needs. You might want to stock up on some extras if you'll miss them in your every-day life while they're in the freezer.
- Large Freezer bags. For some recipes, it just makes more sense to use freezer bags instead of glass containers. Individually wrapped snacks, meatballs, and anything that needs to be frozen flat is easier in a bag.
- Labels and permanent markers. It's on the top of your mind now, but the hazy newborn days have a way of making you forget what exactly you have in your freezer and how to get it ready for the table. Here's what I do:
 - Before freezing anything, affix a label to it that notes what it is (name of recipe or dish), and what needs to be done to get it on the table (any defrosting or re-heating / finishing instructions). Bonus – with this done, anyone can make it for you!

- As you complete each dish, record the name of the meal and the number of servings on a Postpartum Freezer Meals Master List. Hang this list somewhere anyone can see it (you, your partner, family and friends, doula, etc.) so you can easily see what can be pulled out for dinner, what's been finished, and what's left.

Step 5:

Prep your space, and yourself!

Before you begin, it's so much nicer to have a clean kitchen so that all of your tools are clean and you've got all the counter space to use for a stress-free food prep session (pssst., here's another one that can be outsourced!)

Get out your comfy slippers and jogging pants and get ready to cook! Get in the mood by turning on your favourite tunes and make plans to relax and unwind when you're done to celebrate a job well done!

Postpartum Healing Recipes

RECIPE 1:

Bone Broth For Birthing Bodies

Bone Broth is my very favourite postpartum healing food – it's full of all of the nutrients needed to nourish a body that just gave birth, and it can be used so many ways (drink straight, use to make soups, stews, congee, and porridge, or cook grains and veggies in it!).

What you need:

- Bones from chicken, beef, pork or fish (enough to fill a slow cooker)
- 1 onion, skin removed and roughly chopped
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) apple cider vinegar
- Pinch of peppercorns
- Water



How to make it:

1. Add the bones to a slow cooker or large pot, then cover with water and add remaining ingredients.
2. Simmer gently for about 24 hours, then strain and pour into glass jars or storage containers (being sure to leave an inch of room at the top!).
3. Let broth cool on the counter, then move to refrigerator. When cold, transfer to the freezer.

RECIPE 2

Postpartum Pumpkin Curry with Lentils

This curry recipe is perfect for postpartum – it has a base of bone broth and coconut milk (which is a great source of the essential fat we need for nutrient repletion!), its warming for the body and easy to digest (important for a body that just gave birth!) and is easy to eat.

What you need:

- 1 heaping tbsp (15 mL) coconut oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 onion, diced
- 1.5 tsp (7 mL) curry powder (red or yellow)
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) ground ginger
- ¼ tsp (1 mL) turmeric
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) tomato paste
- 2 cups (500 mL) bone broth
- 1 can coconut milk (full fat)
- 1 cup (250 mL) pumpkin puree
- 1 cup (250 mL) red lentils
- ½ tsp (2 mL) sea salt



How to make it:

1. Heat coconut oil in large pot over medium heat. When melted, add the garlic and onion and sauté, 3 minutes until onion is translucent.
2. Add spices and tomato paste, and cook, 1 minute, stirring frequently.
3. Add remaining ingredients, bring to a simmer, and let cook, 15-20 minutes or until lentils are soft.
4. Transfer to glass jars or storage containers, then move to freezer once cool.

RECIPE 3

Meatballs for Mama

Animal proteins are excellent postpartum healing foods since they are full of the iron, proteins, and fats our tissues need to heal post-birth. Once defrosted, these meatballs can be simmered in a sauce for pasta, or eaten as is, in a pita, or on a salad.

What you need:

- 2 lb ground beef
- 1 cup (250 mL) spinach
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- 2 garlic cloves
- ¼ cup (60 mL) non-dairy milk
- ¼ cup (60 mL) flour (I like oat flour)
- 1 egg
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) parmesan cheese or nutritional yeast
- 1 tsp (5 mL) salt
- ½ tsp (2 mL) pepper



How to make it:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (205°C) and line a large 13"x 9" baking dish with parchment paper.
2. In food processor, pulse together the spinach, onion, and garlic.
3. In a large bowl, mix together all ingredients using your hands until just combined. Gently portion into meatballs, then add to prepared dish.
4. Transfer to oven and bake for about 30 minutes or until cooked through.
5. Once cool, arrange in a single layer in freezer-safe bags and transfer to the freezer, lying flat.

RECIPE 4

Midnight Mini Muffins

If there's something I know for sure, it's that homemade baked goods with real-food ingredients are lifesavers in the postpartum stage, when you're hungry around the clock but don't have time to cook. These mini muffins are perfect any time you need a little snack – just grab a couple out of the freezer whenever you need a sweet treat.

What you need:

Dry Ingredients

- 1 cup oat flour (or use whatever you have)
- 1/3 cup ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp sea salt

Wet Ingredients

- 2 very ripe bananas
- ½ cup apple sauce
- ¼ cup coconut oil, melted



Fold-ins:

- 1/3 cup chocolate chips (optional)

How to make it:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C) and grease a mini (or regular) muffin pan
2. Whisk dry ingredients together in a large bowl
3. In a medium bowl or blender, combine wet ingredients, then pour into dry bowl and stir to combine. Fold in chocolate chips, if using, then scoop into pan.
4. Bake for 14-16 minutes for mini muffins, and 15-18 minutes for regular-sized muffins. When cool, freeze in freezer bag in single layer, lying flat.

RECIPE 5

Spiced Apple Oat Bars for Breastfeeding

Or bottle-feeding! Around the clock feedings makes for hunger that just doesn't quit. One-handed snacks you can eat while baby feeds or sleeps on you are so key! These bars are packed with culinary galactagogues like oats and flax and freeze beautifully.

What you need:

Dry Ingredients

- 1 cup (250 mL) flour (oat flour, whole wheat, or gluten-free blend)
- 1 cup (250 mL) rolled oats
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp (5 mL) cinnamon
- ½ tsp (2 mL) nutmeg
- ½ tsp (2 mL) sea salt

Wet Ingredients

- 3 tbsp (45 mL) coconut oil, melted
- 1 cup (250 mL) applesauce
- 3 tbsp (45 mL) honey
- ½ tsp (2 mL) vanilla extract



How to make it:

1. Heat oven to 350°F (175°C) and line an 8 x 8-inch pan with parchment paper.
2. Whisk dry ingredients together in a large bowl.
3. In a medium bowl, combine wet ingredients, then pour over dry ingredients and stir to combine.
4. Transfer mixture to prepared pan, smoothing it out with a spatula. Move pan to oven and bake, about 25 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and score into bars with a serrated knife. Once cool, transfer to freezer bag, separating layers or individual bars with parchment paper.

How to have a happy, healthy pregnancy + postpartum (without the guilt!)

For more healing postpartum recipes and easy-to-do tips for how to add nutrients to your meals (for you and baby!), use food to fight nausea, and what food you should eat on labour day, follow me on Instagram [@the.food.doula](https://www.instagram.com/the.food.doula).

Wishing you a prepared, nourished, and happy postpartum.

Lindsay

