

Rachel Winchester [00:01]:

If you're like me, you spend a lot of time gathering and preparing food for your family. It can feel a little overwhelming sometimes, especially when life is full or you're in the midst of a transition or just doing your best to homeschool a brood of children. One way to shortcut the food circuit is to make large quantities of food at a time. In this episode, we are talking about how to simplify food prep with batch cooking. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast with Carole Joy Seid. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. For over 40 years, Carole has been a student of nutrition, learning what leads to healthy living. She's joined by her friend, Laura Tabbut, who is a batch cooking genius. If you're looking to work smarter, not harder in your kitchen, listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:50]:

So, friends, I am sitting across a screen with my beloved friend and spiritual daughter, Laura Tabbut, and she's in Ohio. But we want to reminisce a little bit and give you some pointers of some things that we did in the dark ages before Laura was married and had 2 little baby girls. So welcome, miss Laura.

Laura Tabbut [01:12]:

Thank you, Carole. Thanks for, being willing to do this. I, reached out to you a couple months ago about this idea because there were so many friends in my community that were just needing a resource for this, and so I thought maybe we could put something together.

Carole Joy Seid [01:26]:

I love it. So tell the people what we're talking about today.

Laura Tabbut [01:30]:

Okay. So we're gonna reminisce a little bit back to the time when Carole and I were both working 2 to 3 jobs, and the year was 2017. I was working 40 hours a week as an ophthalmic assistant and teaching adjunct and just living this very busy life and and dating at the same time, my future husband. And Carole was doing the same thing, and we were actually together writing a curriculum at the time. And we were both needing a way to eat nutritionally dense meals that we could put together at a moment's notice. Oftentimes when other people were our guests or when we needed to share a meal with other people. So we developed, at the time, what worked for us, a method for batch cooking and freezing our meals so that we would have a month's worth of meals prepared for us.

Carole Joy Seid [02:21]:

Yeah. And what was fun, Laura, is you were young and high energy. I was old and low energy. And so so you would do the amazing task of, a, we would plan what we were gonna make, kinda brainstorm together with some amazing cookbooks back in those days, still have them. But I had a great resource of cookbooks, but then you would do the really tricky part of going from store to store knowing that we're gonna get lamb from the international market over here. We're gonna go Costco for this. We're gonna go to Whole Foods for that. We're gonna go to trade whatever we did.

I don't know. Aldi's, wherever. And you would arrive at my house with an entire big crates full of all the produce, the food. That was a big part of the job.

Laura Tabbut [03:10]:

Yeah. And it was it was a kind of a fun part of the job because I think one of the things now so just a little give people a little context. My husband and I are both professors, and we have 2 children. And we are on a tight budget in terms of, like, our food budget. And that was really something to think about. Even then, how we were doing what we were doing was actually impacting the bottom line of our food budget.

Carole Joy Seid [03:32]:

So it took some legwork, and it took some focus. But at the end of the day, we felt like millionaires.

Laura Tabbut [03:40]:

Oh, absolutely. Yeah. Because we had these amazing meals, and it didn't cost us that much when we priced it out per meal.

Carole Joy Seid [03:48]:

That's exactly right. So what are some of the tips and techniques that you felt were most useful for us as we jumped into this back then?

Laura Tabbut [03:58]:

So, actually, it's so funny you asked me that because I was trying to put my head together for this. And I went to my library to find one of my favorite cookbooks, and I found this other cookbook, cook once, eat all week. And it's our method for how we are doing things. So if you need a resource, I will link that.

Carole Joy Seid [04:15]:

Yeah. In the show notes.

Laura Tabbut [04:16]:

Yeah. It is a fabulous resource, but essentially I broke it down into 5 steps that we did in that period of time. So how it worked is we I would go to your house. We would cook all day. I would spend the night, and then I would take all my meals home with me the next day. So it was a community event in some ways because I was single at the time and you were too. And so it gave us an opportunity to have 2 people working on this massive project at the same time. So I love that about that.

And I even implement that a little bit in my own daily life too, trying to get a community around me to help me cook.

Carole Joy Seid [04:55]:

And and children could be very much a part of this. Neither of us had young children at that moment, but children can do a lot of what we did, and husbands can do a lot as well.

Laura Tabbut [05:06]:

Yes. As well. I have a kitchen learning tower, and this morning, I was batch cooking a batch of something. And my 1 year old was in the learning tower with me browning hamburger. So I I broke this down into 5 steps for this podcast. First thing that we did was had a stocked pantry of everyday essentials. And that those were things that we would always use, like coconut oil, olive oil, bone broth, just our everyday spices, essentials that you would need anyways in your kitchen. But just making sure that those were always on hand was a really important point of this process.

Carole Joy Seid [05:41]:

Oils and vinegars.

Laura Tabbut [05:42]:

Yeah. Coconut aminos comes to mind as well. Yep. Then in the planning process, when we were batch cooking, we would oftentimes cook 3 to 5 recipes in a session, and we would work Saturday afternoons from, like, 1 o'clock in the afternoon to, like, 6 o'clock at night, eat a meal, and then clean up and go to bed. But when you're planning your recipes, I think one of the things that's super important is to look at the recipes and see if there are recipes that have crossover ingredients, like Exactly. Onions, your meats. So if there are a varieties of recipes where you're chopping you may be chopping £10 of carrots at a time depending on your family size, but you're you're getting it all done, and then there's 0 waste. And that's the thing I love about this way of cooking.

So I would buy 10 pounds of carrots at a time, 5 pounds of celery, and then a massive quantity of onions. And first thing that we ever did was just chop all of that up, no matter what we were making.

Carole Joy Seid [06:41]:

Yes. But I love doing that, and we had we had a butcher block that we used, and we had good French chef's knives, and we knew what we were doing. We just were focused.

Laura Tabbut [06:52]:

Yes. And Carole is super organized because she would have one cutting block that is just for onions and peppers and then another cutting block. So there was never a cross contamination of tastes in the dishes that we're making as well.

*\*AD\* Rachel Winchester [07:05]:*

*If you find yourself wanting to get in on what Laura and Carole are talking about, I have good news for you. We've put together a bundle of goodies to help you take a next step in batch cooking and simplifying nutrition for your family. Carole has a video for making a simple weekday lunch, plus a couple of our favorite recipes from her nutrition made simple cookbook. There's also a few resources to simplify your 1st batch cooking venture. Visit our website, [homeschoolmadesimple.net/nutrition](https://homeschoolmadesimple.net/nutrition) to access access the free bundle today. Now back to the show.*

Laura Tabbut [07:40]:

So then the trick was to plan the recipes, make a shopping list, and then to go shopping. And this is where I did a lot of leg work even before I arrived at your house. And I would go to 3 places. I would go to Aldi, Costco, and then I oftentimes would go to an international market that had phenomenal produce, and I could get quality produce at a reasonable rate.

Carole Joy Seid [08:01]:

Yes.

Laura Tabbut [08:02]:

And I should say back that up just a bit. When we were cooking, we were quadrupling our recipes. Even though we were 2 single women and that would give us enough meals that we could share and still have the abundance that we needed for our everyday life. So the prep day, do you wanna talk a little bit about that?

Carole Joy Seid [08:21]:

Yeah. You would sometimes bring a hot pot. Is that what it's called?

Laura Tabbut [08:25]:

Yeah. I had my Instapot, and then I have a 12 quart stock pot.

Carole Joy Seid [08:29]:

Yes. So having ways to cook for large quantities. One thing I wanna mention is that we bought glass snap.

Laura Tabbut [08:38]:

Yep. So I got them at Costco, and I got each of us, like, 2 sets of them, and they are called snapware. And they allowed for individually portioning out soups and stews. And the benefit of those glass containers is that you can reheat them in the oven. You can just take them from your freezer, pull the lid off and put them in your oven, and they're sealed tight. I always took soup to work. So when you're taking soup to work, you don't want it to spill in your bag, and it was just a nominal way to bring.

Carole Joy Seid [09:07]:

Yes. Exactly. And, of course, there's no plastic leak, especially if your food isn't touching the lid, and they come in all different sizes. So like you said, if you're making a whole thing of soup for, like, a family, there's large sizes. But if you're just taking something with you for lunch at work or to a friend's house or something, there's individual sized portions as well. That's a big piece of having the right containers. And then they also stack so they're flat and you can stack them in your freezer and really pack it out. I used to take on I think it was Tuesdays, we had staff meeting at the church that I worked at, as you know, and I would bring lunch for my boss and I because we would have our weekly meeting together.

And her husband would say, I wonder what you guys are gonna have for lunch this week. And one week it would be lamb tagine and another we would make these great things. I loved, you know, being able to eat well even at work, which is so important because very often if you're away from home, you're compromising. And with this method, it's as easy as could be. Talk about some of the breakfast options because those particularly for people who are eating a gluten free, casein free, sugar free diet, breakfast is always really challenging. So we made a couple things that were wonderful.

Laura Tabbut [10:22]:

Carole actually had a recipe for a nutritionally dense protein packed muffin recipe. And so we would make those in a muffin parchment paper that was folded into quarters that

then could be folded on top of the muffin, and then those would stack in a container. So they were already prepackaged and ready to go. And then we also made egg bites, and you can freeze them. Some people might not like the texture of a frozen egg, but, you know, for us at that time, we loved it. You can pack them full of vegetables, and that is a great way, especially if you have small children, to get vegetables into their diet on a daily basis. It's just to give them one of those.

Carole Joy Seid [10:59]:

So I think it was made with coconut flour.

Laura Tabbut [11:02]:

Oh, it was made with almond flour. Almond flour and coconut oil, and it is in one of those recipe books that we had. But we did make a crust on that, and that crust, the almond flour crust, holds you for hours.

Carole Joy Seid [11:15]:

It does. We're gonna find these recipes, and we'll put links in the show notes. So we'll send them a couple. Okay. But I gotta add something else. You took it to a whole another level. I was just the sous chef. You had us make homemade sausage.

Laura Tabbut [11:29]:

Oh, yeah. We did that because at the time, I was really struggling with nutritionally with some things, and so we did make our own homemade sausage. We did a ground turkey, and we did a a beef. And both of those recipes are in one of our favorite cookbooks, which we will link in show show notes.

Carole Joy Seid [11:46]:

I mean, yeah, we were we were taking this to a whole another level here, girl. It was so satisfying because you're not just eating, you know, cucumbers, but you're eating, like, really satisfying dense foods as you say. And when you're at work, that's what you need. You need those power foods that are gonna stay with you all day.

Laura Tabbut [12:06]:

And when you're at home making these things, I think making them in mass quantities just takes the pressure off of everything.

Carole Joy Seid [12:14]:

So true. Well, talk about the salad that we used to make.

Laura Tabbut [12:17]:

Yes. So a lot of people don't necessarily love to pull things out of their freezer and might rather pull something out of the refrigerator during the week. And so we would every time we would make a batch of things to go in the freezer, we would also make some things that would go in the refrigerator for that week. And one of the things that we made was a vegetable tabbouleh, and it had carrots and radishes and onions and maybe cilantro, some other things like that. And that was a really beautiful salad. And it had jicama,

Carole Joy Seid [12:47]:

which is one of my favorite foods in the whole world. And then talk about some of our main courses. I remember lamb tagine, which I mentioned. We also had some great chicken recipes.

Laura Tabbut [00:12:57]:

So we lamped au jean. I know we made chicken soup. I know we made probably made a paleo chile, and I would try to group the ingredients. So maybe there were some other chicken recipes, and they were all from these two books, the *Paleo Foodie Cookbook* and the *Autoimmune Paleo Cookbook*.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:12]:

And I think we had different nationalities of foods, like so tagine would be Greek, but then I think we had Indian food at times. So we were eating like fresh turmeric and fresh like, you would you would gather these great fresh whole spices at the international store, and we weren't just using stuff out of bottles.

Laura Tabbut [00:13:33]:

Yes. And that's where I was looking really for those crossover of ingredients. Also, trying to get as wide of a variety of of different things that we could eat because when you put everything in the freezer and you make it all, then you get tired of the one thing. So trying to have that that wide variety, things that froze well.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:53]:

Yeah. And so at the end of the day, your kitchen looks like a bomb went off, but it is so oh my word. When we go to bed that night, wow.

Laura Tabbut [00:14:03]:

Yes. It does look like a bomb went off, but one of the things that I like to do, and I even do it now, is try to stagger things. So if I have to, you know, like, brown a whole whole bunch of meat, I'll do one batch, and then I'll do another batch in the same pot. Or if

I'm cutting up carrots for 3 different recipes, I put them all in the same bowl. So you're the thing that's wonderful about batch cooking and doing multiple recipes at the same time is that you're only using the same utensils. So you're only cleaning up one set of utensils. Your kitchen might look like a bomb went off, but a lot of times it's from the food that you have made, not from the the tools that you have used.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:41]:

I would say the thing that gets messiest is just your kitchen floor. And it it's just such a fulfilling, satisfying feeling. And you don't necessarily eat everything in 1 month. And so the next month, as you cook, you may have some leftover things. So now you've even got more diversity, more variety of shapes and flavors, and it it's just a beautiful, beautiful way to live.

Laura Tabbut [00:15:05]:

For people who, like, might be in my position where I was single, I would encourage you and even if you're married and you have children, a friend of mine from down the street was like, I really need help cooking. And if you're in that situation, I would definitely recommend bringing somebody alongside you in this process and creating a community event than splitting it out. Grocery shop, split the bill, and then split out the meals that you made.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:30]:

Yeah. Which I just loved that. I mean, I just did Pilates this morning with a friend, and I said to her, I would never be faithful with this if I didn't know that you were gonna be doing it with me because that team spirit just gives you that adult peer pressure that keeps you going. And with cooking like this, when one of you gets like, oh, this is too much work. I don't feel like doing it. The other one's like, oh, no. You're gonna love this. You're gonna thank me later. Like, we keep each other afloat.

Laura Tabbut [00:15:58]:

Totally agree.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:00]:

Yeah. So any recommendations for troubleshooting with this? Any warnings? Any advice that we haven't mentioned?

Laura Tabbut [00:16:09]:

I'm probably blind to the process because it's so familiar to me. I would say, if you're new to the idea of batch cooking, I would pick up this *Cook Once, Eat All Week* book and read through it. It might not be where you're at nutritionally, and you may use a



little bit different recipes or but she uses a very similar process of the idea of you don't have to be slaving over your stove every night.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:34]:

What's your name, Laura? I don't know that book.

Laura Tabbut [00:16:36]:

Yeah. It's called *Cook Once, Eat All Week* by Cassie Joy Garcia. I just found it at my library because I was looking for some recipes. That is another tip. I encourage everybody to go to their library and look where where they're at nutritionally. So if you're paleo or keto or you're on a different, you know, nutritional wavelength, go and get a cookbook with simple ingredients of recipes that you might like. These do not need to be complicated recipes. And I would encourage people, if you don't like to cook, keep it simple.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:09]:

Yeah. This is really, really great because a lot of families just feel overwhelmed. And cooking is the thing that falls through the cracks when they're under stress. To be able to reach into your freezer or your refrigerator and say, I've got this. What a wonderful feeling that is for a mom or for a single person even as you say.

Laura Tabbut [00:17:28]:

Yeah. When I was pregnant with our first, it was in the middle of COVID, and I batch cooked 14 weeks of meals because I didn't know if meals would be coming to me. It was a time of extreme isolation, you know, in our society. And it got us through and I was still teaching. I taught through the semester that I was technically on maternity leave. So both my husband and I were teaching, and we lived for 14 weeks without cooking. Those 14 weeks, those first 14 weeks with our baby, we didn't do much, but teach and eat.

Laura Tabbut [00:18:00]:

So it was it was a good time.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:03]:

Yes. It's a wonderful time. And you weren't eating pre prepared microwave foods, which would be normally what people in that situation would have been doing.

Laura Tabbut [00:18:13]:

Right. If you wanna be doing this, the first step is obviously to make sure that you have a freezer and have freezer space. Yeah. And and making sure that you have the proper

store things for storage. The other thing we didn't mention yet, I don't believe, is making sure that you have things labeled in your freezer. Oftentimes in my freezer, there's always one section that who knows how long things have been in there. So that if you have them labeled with a date, then you're more likely to pull that out and say, oh, I made that in January. It is now February.

Laura Tabbut [00:18:41]:  
I need to be eating this.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:42]:  
That's such a good point. And I know we wrote on top of the snap things names, so we kept track. But then you can also buy just little tiny stickers and write on it with a waterproof permanent pen or marker because you're absolutely right. Sometimes it's mystery meat. You have no idea what it is. So that really helps. Some people hang a little clipboard on the outside of their freezer and they check off, wow, we have a ton of soup that we haven't gotten to yet. So that also can help you see what you've got.

Carole Joy Seid [00:19:15]:  
And I find that upright freezers are so much more realistic in keeping the rotation going than a chest freezer, which things just go to the bottom and die.

Laura Tabbut [00:19:26]:  
Yeah. When I was having my second, I batch cooked again, you know, knowing how well it went for the first time. And the second time, we were able to have family. So for them, I batch cooked everything in the quantity that they would need for 4 people, 4 adults. And then I created an inventory sheet that they could go down, and it had where it was located in the freezer, top, middle, bottom shelf, left and right. They could pick and choose. And so I never had to go down to the freezer in our basement for the entirety of the time I was recovering from baby. Wow.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:02]:  
That is genius right there.

Laura Tabbut [00:20:05]:  
So, again, it takes some time to get organized and to think through how you want to go about the process. But once you do, then you push play.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:14]:

This is so helpful, Laura. How about if you pray real briefly for the folks listening to this because they're probably going, oh, this sounds like too much for me or overwhelming. So how about let's pray some encouragement on them.

Laura Tabbut [00:20:28]:

Oh, Lord. We thank you so much for the gift of your creation and the gift of food that you have given us and just the gift of creativity, and I pray that you would infuse those gifts into our daily lives. I pray for people that they would, as they're listening to this podcast, come away with a few ideas that they might be able to implement in their own home. I just pray that you would encourage them. If they're feeling overwhelmed, I pray that you would speak peace into their lives. Lord, you gave Carole and I a way of cooking in a time when we did not have time to make our own food. And I just pray that you would, again, bless other people with this information, and thank you for the gift of Carole and who she is in so many people's lives. And we pray these things in your name.

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:11]:

Amen. Thank you, Laura. It's such a joy to be with you and all the things that you spurred me on to do when I was a children's director, I couldn't have done it without you. So we're a good team.

Laura Tabbut [00:21:24]:

That was a great time.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:26]:

You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast with Carole Joy Seid. I'm Rachel Winchester. We hope this episode helps you simplify your work in the kitchen. Be sure to visit our website, [homeschoolmadesimple.net/nutrition](https://homeschoolmadesimple.net/nutrition) to get our free bundle to help you start putting these ideas in action. Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Remember, Jesus' commandments are not burdensome. What He called you to do, He will enable you to do. Blessings.