

Homemade Healthy Dog Food Cookbook

120+ Clean, Easy & Nutritious Vet-Approved, Anti-Inflammatory, Allergy-Friendly Recipes for a Joyous Pet with a 30-Day Plan to Reset Your Pup's Health

By Angelica Rhodes

The Joyful Bowl Series | 2025

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This book is not intended as a substitute for veterinary advice. Always consult your veterinarian before making major changes to your dog's diet, especially if your dog has a medical condition or takes prescription medication.

All recipes and nutritional information are based on research, home experience, and collaboration with veterinary professionals, but results may vary. Dogs are individuals, and their responses to ingredients may differ.

Written by Angelica Rhodes
The Joyful Bowl Series

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For every tail that wags at the sound of the bowl.
And for the dog lovers who believe real food can change everything.

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ABOUT THE JOYFUL BOWL SERIES

The Joyful Bowl Series is dedicated to helping dog parents feed their pets with confidence, clarity, and compassion. From a complete cookbook to practical planners, each title is designed to simplify the homemade journey and support lifelong canine wellness.

Discover the full series at [**joyfulbowlseries.com**](https://joyfulbowlseries.com).



WELCOME TO THE JOYFUL BOWL

If you're holding this book, chances are you're someone who loves their furry family member deeply and wants to give them the best life possible — not just longer, but healthier, happier, and more vibrant. That's exactly what *The Joyful Bowl* is all about.

Maybe your dog has been struggling with itching, upset stomach, chronic inflammation, or food sensitivities. Or maybe you're simply tired of wondering what's really in that bag of kibble and want to take control of your dog's nutrition. Either way, you're in the right place.

This book was created to make feeding your dog **clean, homemade meals** not just possible — but joyful, simple, and sustainable. You don't need to be a gourmet cook or have endless hours to prepare meals. What you *do* need is a little guidance, some practical tools, and the belief that real food really matters.

Inside, you'll find:

- 120+ easy, vet-approved recipes made with real, nourishing ingredients
- A 30-Day Reset Plan designed to soothe inflammation and support total-body health
- Clear feeding charts, meal planners, prep tips, and shopping lists
- Flexible, allergy-friendly recipes along with guidance for adapting meals to suit your dog's individual needs, sensitivities, and preferences

Whether you're brand new to homemade feeding or already dabbling in it, this book is your companion in building a life where your dog's food fuels their joy — not just their belly.

Because a joyful life starts with a joyful bowl.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Whether you're just beginning your homemade dog food journey or looking to refine your approach, this book is here to support you every step of the way. It's designed to be both inspirational and practical, so you can jump in with confidence, no matter your experience level.

Here's how to get the most out of this guide:

- **Start with the Foundations.** The first part of the book explains *why* homemade matters and gives you the nutrition knowledge you need to feed with confidence.
- **Gather Your Tools.** Before diving into recipes, Part 2 helps you set up your kitchen, understand portioning, and get comfortable with safe food handling and storage.
- **Follow the 30-Day Reset.** Part 3 is a complete program to help reduce inflammation, support digestion, and create a baseline of health for your dog. It includes week-by-week recipes, tips, and troubleshooting guidance.
- **Use the Recipes Flexibly.** Part 4 includes over 120 meals, treats, broths, and batch-friendly options. They're grouped by purpose and food sensitivity, so you can find exactly what your dog needs.
- **Use the Tools at the Back.** Part 5 is filled with feeding guides, planner templates, substitution guides, and helpful extras to make the journey easier.

Feel free to highlight, annotate, and return to this book again and again. It was built to work in real kitchens for real dogs. Let it evolve with you and your pup.



PART 1: FOUNDATIONS & FOOD PHILOSOPHY

1. The Philosophy Behind the Bowl

This book was born from a simple belief: our dogs deserve real food. Just as we've become more mindful about what we feed ourselves and our families, it's time to do the same for our four-legged family members.

For too long, commercial pet food has dominated the market, promising convenience and nutrition in a single scoop. But behind the glossy packaging and scientific claims, many dog owners have found themselves facing chronic issues in their pets: itchy skin, digestive trouble, unexplained lethargy, or behavioral changes. And more often than not, the solution isn't another supplement — it's a better bowl.

The Joyful Bowl isn't just a recipe collection — it's a shift in mindset. It's about coming back to common sense and basics that work: clean proteins, vibrant vegetables, whole grains, and functional ingredients that support health from the inside out. It's also about reconnecting with the idea that food is a form of love and care. And it's about finding joy in the process — whether you're prepping meals for a sensitive senior pup or a tail-wagging toddler who inhales everything you make.

When we say “clean,” we don't mean perfection or restriction. We mean:

- Ingredients you can pronounce and trust
- Recipes designed with veterinary insight
- Meals free of preservatives, synthetic fillers, or mystery meat

Whether you're here because of a health concern, a recommendation, or just your own curiosity, you're part of a growing community of dog lovers reclaiming the bowl — and redefining what healthy feeding looks like.

This is the first step of many. Let's start building the bowl your dog was born to eat.

2. Why Homemade? Why Now?

Feeding your dog should feel as intentional and nourishing as feeding yourself. And yet, for decades, the dominant message has been that a scoop of brown pellets is all your dog needs. While kibble has provided convenience, it has also left many pet parents questioning what's really in it — and why their dogs aren't thriving.

We're seeing a shift. Dog owners are looking beyond marketing claims and long ingredient lists. They're paying closer attention to how food affects their dog's skin, coat, energy, digestion, and behavior. They're starting to ask better questions — and homemade is often the answer.

Health Concerns with Commercial Food

Commercial dog food, especially ultra-processed kibble, is often made with low-quality byproducts, rendered meat meals, chemical preservatives, artificial colors, and highly processed fillers. Over time, these ingredients can burden the body — contributing to chronic inflammation, food sensitivities, itchy skin, poor digestion, and even behavioral shifts.

Dogs on commercial food may develop issues such as:

- Persistent paw licking or chewing
- Recurring ear infections

- Loose stools or constipation
- Low energy or restlessness
- Dull coat or shedding

While not all issues are food-related, a clean, whole-food diet can be a foundational tool for healing and prevention.

What Homemade Can Change

Feeding homemade allows you to:

- Choose every ingredient and avoid triggers
- Rotate proteins and vegetables to support diversity and prevent boredom
- Add functional foods (like turmeric, kelp, or bone broth) with specific health benefits
- Cook fresh and store safely, minimizing oxidation and contamination

It also allows for *adjustment*. If your dog reacts to a certain ingredient, you can pivot. You're no longer stuck with a 30-pound bag of guesswork.

The Emotional Value of Homemade Feeding

There's something powerful about preparing food for your dog with your own hands. It turns feeding time into a connection moment — something you've made just for them. For many dog parents, it's a ritual of love, care, and intention.

Homemade feeding may require more thought and intention, but the rewards — from vibrant health to a deeper emotional bond — far outweigh the effort. You don't need to be perfect. You just need to be present, observant, and curious.

And it begins not with a flawless formula, but with a simple act of care — a meal made by you, for them.

3. Understanding Your Dog's Nutritional Needs

Feeding your dog well begins with understanding what their body actually needs not just to survive, but to thrive. While dogs are resilient and can tolerate a wide variety of foods, optimal nutrition supports stronger immunity, healthier joints, shinier coats, better digestion, and even improved mood and behavior.

Let's break it down simply and clearly.

Macronutrients: The Big 3

1. Protein

The building block of every cell in your dog's body. Proteins support muscle repair, hormone production, immune response, and healthy skin.

- Good sources: Chicken, turkey, beef, lamb, fish, eggs
- Ideal intake: Typically 40–60% of a meal by volume for most adult dogs

2. Fats

Essential for energy, skin and coat health, brain function, and vitamin absorption. Dogs thrive on healthy fats when sourced correctly.

- Good sources: Salmon oil, sardines, flaxseed oil, chicken fat, egg yolks
- Balance matters: Too much fat can stress the pancreas; too little can lead to dry skin and dull fur

3. Carbohydrates

While not strictly essential, healthy carbs can be beneficial for energy and digestive support.

- Good sources: Sweet potatoes, oats, brown rice, quinoa, pumpkin
- Avoid: White flour, processed starches, sugary fillers

Micronutrients: The Small but Mighty

Vitamins and minerals play countless roles in maintaining your dog's health. They support nerve function, bone strength, red blood cell production, and more.

- Naturally occurring in real foods (especially organs, eggs, dark leafy greens, seaweed)
- Balanced recipes provide sufficient micronutrients over time, not necessarily in every single meal

Nutrient-Dense vs. Calorie-Dense

Not all calories are created equal. Homemade meals give you the power to feed **nutrient-dense foods** — meals that pack more vitamins, minerals, and bioavailable protein per bite.

Compare:

- 1 cup of processed kibble: High in fillers, low in hydration and real food nutrients
- 1 cup of chicken, sweet potato, and spinach: Hydrating, protein-rich, packed with antioxidants

Your Dog's Energy Needs

Just like humans, dogs have unique calorie and nutrient requirements based on:

- Age (puppies vs. seniors)
- Size and weight
- Activity level (couch potato vs. working dog)
- Metabolism and breed traits

Use the feeding chart in Part 5 to create a personalized starting point. From there, adjust based on weight changes, appetite, and overall health.

Remember: homemade isn't about perfection. It's about progress. Feed with intention, offer variety, and let your dog's vitality be your guide.

4. Facts, Fears & Vet-Supported Clarity

Switching to homemade dog food can feel empowering — and intimidating. You may find yourself torn between online opinions, outdated advice, and conflicting “expert” claims. This chapter is here to provide clarification and help you move forward with confidence.

Let’s look at some of the most common questions and myths that dog parents face when exploring homemade food.

Raw vs. Cooked: What’s Best?

One of the biggest debates in dog nutrition is raw vs. cooked food. Here’s what matters most: **quality, safety, and what works for your dog.**

- Raw diets can offer nutrient-dense, species-appropriate meals, but they also carry risks when not balanced or handled correctly.
- Cooked diets are easier to digest for many dogs, can be safer from a foodborne illness standpoint, and allow more flexibility in ingredients.

There’s no one-size-fits-all. Many dog owners find success with lightly cooked meals or a hybrid model. If raw works for your dog, great. If cooked works, that’s great too.

What About Bones?

Raw bones (especially soft, edible ones like chicken necks or wings) can provide calcium and dental benefits — **but cooked bones should always be avoided**, as they can splinter and cause serious harm.

If you're not comfortable feeding raw bones, you can meet your dog’s calcium needs through:

- Crushed eggshell powder
- Ground bone supplement
- A quality calcium supplement (as guided by your vet)

Are Grains Really Bad?

Not necessarily. While grain-free diets became trendy, **whole grains like oats, quinoa, and brown rice** can offer fiber, nutrients, and gentle energy for many dogs.

The key is to avoid:

- Over-processed grains
- Filler ingredients like corn, gluten meal, or wheat byproduct

If your dog has grain sensitivities, opt for grain-free recipes. If not, well-prepared whole grains are a safe and nourishing choice.

What About Legumes?

Legumes (like lentils, peas, and chickpeas) can be part of a healthy diet when used in moderation and cooked properly. The controversy around legumes and canine heart health is still being studied. For now:

- Don't rely on legumes as the primary protein source
- Rotate your ingredients
- Focus on variety and balance across meals

Are Supplements Necessary?

Sometimes, yes — but not nearly as many as some books would have you believe. Even with thoughtful, real-food recipes, certain nutrients are harder to keep perfectly consistent over time. That doesn't make homemade food "incomplete," and it certainly doesn't require a lineup of powders for every organ system. It simply means that a few strategic additions can help support your dog's long-term health.

Most dogs eating homemade food benefit from one or two targeted supports, not a dozen. Omega-3s may help balance modern ingredients, a touch of iodine or trace minerals can be useful if you rely on the same proteins often, and calcium becomes relevant if you're not feeding bones or dairy. These are modest gaps, not signs that your meals are lacking.

Whole foods already do most of the heavy lifting. Sardines, eggs, leafy greens, pumpkin, sweet potatoes, seaweed flakes, lean meats, and fresh produce provide more vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytonutrients than many people expect. Supplements simply help fill the occasional gap — quietly and without turning your kitchen into a laboratory.

Where Homemade Diets May Need a Boost

Even with varied, real-food meals, homemade diets tend to fluctuate naturally in a few areas. Omega-3s can drift low depending on the proteins you use, trace minerals can vary with produce and soil, and calcium matters if bones or dairy aren't part of your routine. None of these gaps are dramatic or dangerous — they're simply the places where real ingredients shift from week to week.

Smart, Low-Stress Additions (When Needed)

If your dog does need extra support, these are the most common, well-researched, low-risk additions used in homemade feeding:

- **Omega-3s (Fish Oil or Algae Oil)**
Homemade diets can run low in omega-3s unless fish is used regularly. These fats support skin, coat, joints, and the body's natural inflammatory response. Fish oil is the classic choice, while algae oil works well for dogs with fish sensitivities. It's one of the most common, low-risk additions for real-food diets.
- **Vitamin E**
When you add omega-3 oils, the body uses more vitamin E. Supplementing a small amount helps keep things balanced and supports antioxidant needs. Most dogs get some vitamin E from eggs and greens, but amounts can vary, so pairing it with omega-3s is often recommended.
- **Probiotics**
Probiotics help with gassy tummies, sensitive digestion, or diet transitions. They support a healthy gut microbiome, which affects immunity and digestion. Not every dog needs them daily, but they're helpful during stressful periods, travel, or when introducing new ingredients.
- **Joint Support (for Seniors)**
Joint-support ingredients like glucosamine, MSM, and green-lipped mussel can help older dogs, active breeds, or any dog with extra strain on their joints. Long-backed dogs, such as dachshunds,

often benefit as well since everyday activities like stairs or jumping can add stress over time. These supports are gentle and can be used as needed rather than given daily to every dog.

- **Trace Minerals / Iodine**

Levels of trace minerals can vary depending on proteins and produce. A tiny sprinkle of kelp or a dog-safe mineral blend helps keep things consistent, especially if you repeat the same proteins often or rarely include seafood. Small amounts are all that's needed.

- **Calcium**

Calcium becomes essential when meals don't include bones, dairy, or only very small amounts of either. It supports bone strength, muscle function, and overall balance. Options like eggshell powder, bone meal, or canine calcium supplements make it easy.

Notice what's *not* on this list: dozens of synthetic boosters, powders for every organ, and "miracle" add-ins.

Natural or Synthetic? Both Have Their Place

Some people swear by whole-food sources, others by lab-formulated precision. The practical truth is that both can be effective. Natural sources offer broad nutrition but vary by batch; synthetic products are consistent, easier to measure or travel with, and often more budget-friendly. Choose what fits your dog, your routine, and your comfort level best — you're not joining a team.

How to Add Supplements Safely

When trying something new, start with the lowest amount recommended on the product label and give it with food. Introduce one addition at a time so it's clear what's making a difference. Keep an eye on digestion, coat, appetite, and overall comfort — the same cues you already watch.

Most healthy dogs don't need elaborate supplementation plans. But puppies, seniors, dogs on prescription medications, or dogs managing chronic health conditions may benefit from personalized input from someone familiar with their history. No need to make it formal or complicated; it's simply about making sure anything new fits comfortably with the rest of your dog's care.

Homemade feeding is meant to nourish your dog, not overwhelm you. With steady meals, good ingredients, and a few well-chosen add-ons here and there, you're providing thoughtful, reliable support — without the clutter of unnecessary extras.

When to Talk to Your Vet or Nutritionist

- If your dog has a chronic health condition
- If you're formulating meals from scratch without recipes
- If you're using unconventional ingredients or cooking for multiple dogs with different needs

A trusted vet — especially one open to integrative or holistic care — can be an incredible ally. You don't have to go it alone.

Homemade feeding doesn't have to be perfect to be powerful. Your intentions matter. Your effort matters. And with the right support, you can confidently nourish your dog with the kind of food that truly supports their health and happiness.

5. Setting Expectations & Goals

Starting a homemade feeding journey is exciting, but it can also come with pressure. You want to do everything right. You want to see instant improvements. You want your dog to love every bite. This chapter is here to remind you that the goal is progress, not perfection.

What Success Really Looks Like

Success isn't defined by gourmet presentation or daily variety. It's defined by:

- Your dog's consistent health and happiness
- Your ability to maintain a nourishing routine
- Gradual, sustainable improvements in symptoms

Look for signs like:

- Firmer stools
- Brighter eyes
- Increased energy or calmer behavior
- Less itching or licking
- Improved coat texture

These changes may take a few days — or a few weeks — depending on your dog's health history.

How Long Before I See Results?

Every dog is different. Some may show signs of improvement quickly, while others need more time to adjust, detox, and heal. Be patient.

General timelines:

- **Week 1–2:** Changes in stool, appetite, energy
- **Week 2–4:** Coat condition, skin improvements, mood regulation
- **Week 4+:** Long-term stabilization, symptom reduction, food tolerance improvements

Keep a log or journal if it helps you track subtle progress. If you'd like a structured way to do this, our **Homemade Healthy Dog Food Journal: A 30-Day Reset Companion Guide** offers guided pages to note meals, symptoms, and milestones, making it easier to see just how far your pup has come. You'll find it through the QR code at the back of this book, where you can choose to download a free printable copy or grab the printed version on Amazon.

Tips for New Feeders

- **Start simple.** You don't need to make fancy meals. Focus on clean, balanced bowls.
- **Stick with the transition plan.** Let your dog's system adjust.
- **Don't stress every meal.** Balance happens over time, not necessarily every time.
- **Expect some bumps.** Loose stool, pickiness, or hesitation are normal in the early days.
- **Give yourself grace.** This is a learning curve — and your effort *already* puts you ahead.

By setting realistic expectations and celebrating the wins (even small ones), you'll build confidence in your homemade journey — and feel the joy of feeding from the heart.

Feeding Your Dog While Traveling

Whether it's a weekend getaway, a family vacation, or an unexpected trip, life on the go doesn't mean you have to abandon the fresh food mindset. In fact, many dog parents love bringing their pups along for the ride — after all, there only so many vacations we can take them on, and the memories we make together matter most.

You might not have access to a full kitchen, but you *can* still nourish your dog with options that are easy, realistic, and good enough for the short term. The key is flexibility — not perfection.

If you can't cook homemade meals on the go, here are a few good options:

- **Kibble or commercial wet food:** Choose the best quality you can find — ideally, grain-free, minimally processed, and free of artificial additives.
- **Shelf-stable toppers:** Bring along travel-friendly homemade snacks like dehydrated sweet potatoes, homemade jerky treats, or air-dried meat bites to boost nutrition and variety.
- **Pre-packaged freeze-dried raw meals:** These are lightweight, nutritious, and just need a little water to rehydrate.



Quick Tip:

If you're driving, bring a small cooler with ice packs and a few pre-portioned meals or toppers from home. Even one or two fresh items a day can make a difference!

Remember: a few days or even a couple of weeks of commercial food won't undo all the wonderful health benefits your dog has gained from fresh, homemade meals. Just like us, they can enjoy the occasional detour — it's the overall journey that counts. Be kind to yourself, and focus on doing your best with what you have!

Next, let's look at the ingredients, tools, and strategies that will set you up for success in the kitchen.



PART 2: THE HOMEMADE KITCHEN

6. Core Ingredients & Substitutions

You already know the nutritional building blocks — protein, fat, and carbohydrates — and how they help your dog thrive. Now it's time to get hands-on. This section covers the everyday ingredients that make up real, nourishing homemade meals, what each one contributes, and how to substitute them when needed.

Proteins

Protein is the foundation of your dog's meals. It fuels everything from muscle repair to immune function, and it's the part most dogs get excited about first.

Common Proteins:

- Chicken (boneless, skinless)
- Turkey
- Beef
- Lamb
- Pork (lean, well-cooked)
- Eggs
- Sardines or salmon (in water, no salt)

Optional Alternatives:

- Duck, venison, rabbit (great for allergies or variety)
- Plant-based proteins like lentils or chickpeas (use sparingly and in balance)

Carbohydrates

While not essential, complex carbohydrates provide energy, fiber, and help keep meals filling.

Dog-Friendly Carbs:

- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Oats
- Sweet potatoes
- Pumpkin (plain)
- Butternut squash
- Peas and lentils (moderation)

Avoid: white rice as the main staple (okay in small amounts), cornmeal, and anything overly processed.

Vegetables

Veggies bring vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They're not just "filler" — they help with digestion, immunity, and long-term health.

Go-To Veggies:

- Spinach, kale, and other dark leafy greens
- Zucchini
- Carrots
- Green beans

- Broccoli (lightly steamed)
- Cauliflower

Chop or lightly cook most vegetables to make them more digestible. Cruciferous veggies like broccoli or cabbage should be steamed to reduce gas.

Healthy Fats

Fats help absorb fat-soluble vitamins and support skin, coat, and brain health.

Great Fat Sources:

- Salmon or sardine oil (omega-3 boost)
- Flaxseed oil (plant-based omega-3)
- Coconut oil (start small)
- Olive oil
- Chicken fat (from cooked meat)

You can get these in pet stores. Use in moderation — too much can upset digestion.

Pantry & Freezer Staples

Keeping a small supply of versatile, freezer- and pantry-friendly ingredients makes meal prep much easier.

Pantry Essentials:

- Canned pumpkin (100% pure and unsweetened)
- Rolled oats
- Dried seaweed (like dulse flakes or kelp powder for iodine and trace minerals)
- Sardines in water
- Shelf-stable bone broth (low sodium)

Freezer Staples:

- Ground meats (pre-portioned)
- Chopped veggies (steamed and frozen pre-portioned)
- Cooked rice, quinoa, or sweet potatoes
- Homemade broths or bone broth cubes

Substitutions

When life (or your grocery store) throws you a curveball, don't stress — substitutions are part of the process. If you're out of chicken, try turkey or lean beef. No sweet potato? Unsweetened canned pumpkin or butternut squash will do just fine. Brown rice can be swapped with oats or quinoa, and if you're missing leafy greens, cooked zucchini or green beans are easy stand-ins. Even supplements like salmon oil can be swapped for sardine or flaxseed oil in a pinch.

Homemade feeding works best when it's adaptable. Trust your ingredients, trust your prep, and remember — a little flexibility can go a long way.



Quick Tip:

For a full list of substitutions, see the **Ingredient Substitution Guide** in the **TOOLS, CHARTS AND REFERENCES** section at the back of the book.

Ready to tailor meals to your dog's unique sensitivities? Let's dive into food reactions and allergy-friendly strategies next.

7. Food Sensitivities & Allergy-Friendly Choices

Every dog is different — and sometimes, the key to helping them thrive is figuring out what *doesn't* belong in their bowl. This chapter is about learning how to spot food reactions, navigate sensitivities, and build allergy-friendly meals with confidence.

Recognizing Reactions

Food sensitivities and allergies can show up in a lot of sneaky ways. Symptoms aren't always dramatic, but they often build over time. Here are common signs to look for:

Digestive symptoms:

- Loose stools or constipation
- Gassiness or bloating
- Mucus in stool

Skin & coat symptoms:

- Itchy skin or constant scratching
- Paw licking or chewing
- Red ears or recurrent ear infections
- Dull coat or hair loss

Behavioral changes:

- Restlessness
- Irritability or anxiety
- Excessive licking

If you notice these symptoms and your vet has ruled out other causes, food sensitivity could be at play.

Rotation & Elimination Diets

Rotating proteins and veggies can reduce the risk of sensitivities and help prevent nutritional gaps. If your dog eats the same food every day, their immune system may start to react over time.

How to Rotate:

- Change the main protein every 1–2 weeks
- Introduce new ingredients slowly
- Keep a food journal if needed

Elimination Diets are more structured and designed to isolate problematic ingredients.

How to Do an Elimination Diet:

- Choose one novel protein (like duck or rabbit) and one carb (like sweet potato)
- Feed these alone for 2–4 weeks
- Slowly introduce one new ingredient at a time (every 3–5 days)
- Watch for reactions — if they return, you've found a trigger

This process requires patience, but it's incredibly effective for pinpointing what works for your dog.

Building Allergy-Friendly Bowls

Once you know your dog's safe ingredients, you can build meals with confidence. Keep things simple, especially during flare-ups.

Allergy-Friendly Tips:

- Use limited-ingredient recipes
- Stick to 3–5 whole food components per meal
- Avoid commercial broths or sauces with additives
- Use cooling, anti-inflammatory foods (like zucchini, leafy greens, and wild-caught fish)

You'll find a full section of *Limited Ingredient* and *Functional Recipes* in Part 4 to support this approach.

Remember: your dog doesn't need dozens of ingredients to thrive — just clean, safe foods prepared with love and awareness.

8. Tools of the Trade

One of the most reassuring things about feeding your dog homemade meals? You don't need to remodel your kitchen. In fact, if you can boil water and stir a spoon, you're more than qualified.

This chapter covers the basic tools that make prepping, cooking, and storing meals easier — without cluttering your counters or overwhelming your budget.

No Fancy Gadgets Required

You don't need a dehydrator, sous-vide machine, or countertop meat grinder (unless you really want one). Most recipes in this book were developed with the everyday kitchen in mind, and you probably already have most of these tools.

Here's what you really need:

- **Large pot or stockpot** — for stews, rice, broths, and one-pot meals
- **Baking sheet** — for roasting proteins or veggies
- **Nonstick skillet** — for sautéing or quick protein prep
- **Mixing bowls** — for assembling meals or portioning
- **Sharp knife and cutting board** — basics for chopping ingredients safely
- **Measuring cups and spoons** — for consistency and portioning
- **Optional: Kitchen scale** — if you prefer to portion by weight, or for dogs with precise dietary needs

Tools That Help With Batch Cooking

If you're cooking in larger quantities (which we recommend!), a few extra tools will save you time and energy.

Optional, but super handy:

- **Slow cooker or Instant Pot** — ideal for set-it-and-forget-it stews, especially for busy weeks
- **Freezer-safe containers** — for storing portions in advance
- **Silicone molds or ice cube trays** — perfect for freezing small servings of broth, toppers, or supplements

Meal Prep Tips

- **Double or triple batches** when you cook to save time later
- **Label freezer containers** with the date and recipe title to avoid mystery meals
- **Pre-chop veggies** or freeze steamed portions in advance to cut down weekday prep

Start simple and build up only if you need to. The best tools are the ones that make feeding feel easier, not fancier.

9. Storage, Prep & Safety Basics

Once you've prepped your ingredients and cooked your dog's food, it's time to make sure it stays safe and fresh until mealtime. Proper storage and safe kitchen habits are just as important as the recipes themselves. After all, no one wants a spoiled stew or a stomach upset because the chicken sat out too long.

Storing Cooked Food

Homemade dog food should always be treated like any freshly cooked meal. That means proper refrigeration, freezing when needed, and minimizing the time food sits out at room temperature.

General Guidelines:

- Store meals in airtight containers
- Keep in the fridge for up to **3-4 days**
- Freeze portions you won't use within that timeframe

Use glass, BPA-free plastic, or silicone containers. Avoid storing food in metal tins unless they're specifically food-safe and coated.

Freezing Tips

Freezing is your best friend when it comes to meal prep. Cook in large batches, cool food quickly, and portion it out before freezing.

- Use freezer-safe bags, containers, or silicone molds
- Label each with the contents and date
- Flatten bags to save space and speed up thawing

When ready to serve, thaw overnight in the fridge or use a warm water bath (never the microwave if the food contains bones).

Handling Raw Ingredients

If you're feeding raw or prepping raw ingredients before cooking:

- Wash hands and surfaces thoroughly
- Keep raw meats separate from produce
- Sanitize cutting boards and utensils

Treat your dog's food with the same care you'd give a family meal — after all, it is one.

Cross-Contamination Basics

Dogs may be able to handle a bit more bacteria than humans, but it's not worth the risk. Safe prep habits protect your pup — and your household.

Clean-as-you-go best practices:

- Wash bowls daily with hot, soapy water
- Sanitize prep surfaces before and after use
- Rinse fruits and veggies, even if you plan to cook them

Final Tips for Safety

- Don't leave food out for more than 2 hours (especially meat-based meals)
- Toss leftovers that smell off or have sat out too long
- When in doubt, throw it out — your dog's gut will thank you

With safe prep and smart storage, your homemade meals will stay fresh, clean, and delicious — from pot to paw.

10. Feeding Basics

Once you've prepped your dog's meals, the next big question is: how much should they actually eat? Portioning is both a science and an art — and the right amount varies depending on your dog's size, age, activity level, and individual metabolism.

This chapter walks you through the basics of feeding frequency, portion sizing, and smart adjustments for life's changes.

Portioning by Weight

A general rule of thumb for adult dogs eating homemade food is to feed **2% to 3% of their body weight per day**, divided into meals. For example, a 50-pound dog would typically eat between **1 to 1.5 pounds of food daily**.

Use this as a starting point, not a prescription. Watch your dog's weight, energy, and appetite — and adjust as needed.

Quick Tip:



*For a detailed portion chart by weight, see the **Feeding Chart by Weight & Life Stage** in the **TOOLS, CHARTS AND REFERENCES** section at the back of the book. Use these numbers as a starting point and observe your dog's body condition and energy levels to fine-tune.*

Feeding Frequency

- **Puppies (under 6 months):** 3–4 meals a day
- **Adults (6 months to 7 years):** 2 meals a day
- **Seniors (7+ years):** 2 smaller meals can be easier to digest

Stick to consistent mealtimes to support digestion and appetite regulation.

Adjusting for Age, Activity & Health

No two dogs are the same, and their food needs will also shift with life stages, health status, and seasons.

Puppies need more calories per pound and higher protein to fuel growth.

High-energy dogs (like working breeds) burn more and often need closer to 3% or more of their body weight in food per day.

Seniors may require fewer calories but more digestible, nutrient-dense meals to maintain weight and vitality.

Dogs with medical conditions (diabetes, kidney issues, pancreatitis, etc.) need customized diets — consult your vet or a veterinary nutritionist for guidance.

How to Tell If You're Feeding the Right Amount

Rather than obsessing over the scale, use visual and physical cues:

- **Healthy weight:** You can feel ribs easily but not see them clearly
- **Waist:** Noticeable tuck behind the ribs when viewed from above
- **Energy:** Steady, consistent energy throughout the day
- **Poop:** Formed, easy-to-pick-up stools (not too hard, not too soft)

If your dog is gaining or losing too much weight, adjust meals up or down by 10% and reassess every couple of weeks.

With practice and observation, you'll become a confident feeder, able to spot your dog's signals and support them through every stage of life.

And now, with your foundation fully in place, it's time for the heart of this book: The 30-Day Joyful Reset Plan.

PART 3: THE 30-DAY JOYFUL RESET PLAN

11. Reset Overview & Purpose

The Joyful Reset is a 30-day whole food plan designed to support your dog's digestion, reduce inflammation, and provide a clean, nourishing foundation for long-term health.

Note: It's structured across four weeks — we call it “30 days” for simplicity (and because “28-Day Reset” just doesn't have the same ring to it). Think of the extra couple of days as a built-in buffer — a chance to revisit a favorite meal or ease into your long-term routine.

Whether your dog is switching from commercial food or already eating some homemade meals, this gentle, progressive approach helps ease the transition and address common issues like itchiness, gas, inconsistent poop, or food boredom.

This isn't a detox in the trendy human sense — it's a way to simplify your dog's diet while introducing targeted foods that soothe the gut, balance nutrients, and build a strong foundation.

You'll use everyday ingredients, nothing fancy. You'll build on what works week by week. And at the end of 30 days, you'll have a thriving dog and a sustainable, homemade routine you can adapt long term.

This reset is especially helpful for dogs who:

- Are transitioning from commercial kibble or canned food
- Struggle with itchy skin, loose stool, or chronic paw licking
- Seem bored with their current meals
- Have a sensitive stomach or suspected food triggers.

Goals of the Reset:

- Calm chronic inflammation
- Improve digestion and stool quality
- Identify and reduce potential food triggers
- Introduce nourishing, anti-inflammatory whole foods
- Create consistency, routine, and joy around meals

Let's walk through how it works and what to expect each week.

12. How It Works

The 30-Day Joyful Reset is broken into four weekly phases — each one building on the last. The idea is to start simple, reduce common food triggers, support gut healing, and gradually reintroduce variety and nutrient density.

Each week comes with recipe guidance, transition tips, and key goals so you can feel supported — and your dog can feel their best.

Weekly Progression Overview

Week 1: Simplicity & Soothing

- Meals are kept minimalistic, using gentle ingredients like turkey, sweet potato, bone broth
- The goal is to reduce digestive stress and “quiet the gut”

Week 2: Variety & Balance

- Add in additional proteins, safe veggies, and healthy fats
- Slowly increase nutrient diversity while watching for any reactions

Week 3: Functional Support

- Begin incorporating functional ingredients: turmeric, kelp, sardines, chia seeds, etc.
- Focus is on reducing inflammation and boosting immunity

Week 4: Stabilize & Sustain

- Settle into a steady rhythm of balanced, home-cooked meals
- Rotate ingredients with confidence and continue watching your dog's signals

What to Expect During the Reset

Most dogs adjust beautifully to real food — but changes can trigger temporary reactions. That's why the reset is designed to ease the transition.

What might happen in **Week 1–2**:

- Looser or more frequent stools
- Increased thirst or peeing (normal as the body adjusts to more moisture in food)
- Pickiness or hesitation if your dog is used to kibble flavor enhancers

These are temporary. They're signs of adjustment, not failure.

By **Week 3 and 4**, most dogs experience:

- More consistent, healthy bowel movements
- Reduced itching, licking, or paw chewing
- Brighter eyes, smoother coat, and steadier energy

Tips for a Smooth Reset

- Be consistent — routines help both digestion and behavior
- Stick to recipes and avoid “extras” that could cause setbacks
- Keep a journal to track meals, poop quality, energy, and symptoms
- Adjust portions if your dog gains or loses weight too quickly

This is a flexible plan, not a rigid protocol. Follow it with presence and attention, and let your dog's response guide the way.

13. Week-by-Week Plan

Let's break the 30-Day Joyful Reset into actionable steps you can start using right away. Each week focuses on building digestive resilience, calming inflammation, and gently expanding variety.

You can follow this plan exactly, or use it as inspiration to craft your own version based on your dog's preferences and needs.

Week 1: Simple & Soothing

Goal: Give the digestive system a break with gentle, anti-inflammatory meals that are easy to digest and nourishing without overwhelming the gut.

This first phase of the reset is all about calming things down. Meals should be soft, simple, and made with ingredients known to soothe rather than stimulate. Avoid introducing anything new, raw, or difficult to digest – now is not the time for experimentation.

What to Feed:

- Lightly cooked lean meats: turkey, chicken, or white fish
- Easy-to-digest carbs: sweet potatoes, pumpkin, or oats
- Bone broth or homemade stock
- A touch of healthy fat: olive oil or fish oil

Avoid:

- Raw foods
- New or unfamiliar proteins
- Hard-to-digest vegetables like kale, broccoli, or cauliflower

Start with 2 or 3 batch-cooked meals for the week and rotate them to reduce stress and prep time. There's no need to cook from scratch twice a day – your dog will thrive on repetition and consistency.

Sample 3-Day Meal Plan – Week 1

Day 1

- **Breakfast:** Chicken & Pumpkin Soother (Functional – Digestive Ease)
- **Dinner:** Whitefish & Rice Reset Bowl (Functional – Digestive Ease)
- **Optional Add-In:** Drizzle of fish oil (1–2x per week for omega-3 support)

Day 2

- **Breakfast:** Repeat Chicken & Pumpkin Soother
- **Dinner:** Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée (Limited Ingredient Meals)
- **Optional Treat:** Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies (Toppers, Treats & Extras)

Day 3

- **Breakfast:** Repeat Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée
- **Dinner:** Repeat Whitefish & Rice Reset Bowl
- **Optional Add-In:** Spoonful of warm bone broth for hydration and gut support



Quick Tip:

If your dog is adjusting from kibble, it's common to see looser stools or hesitation around new textures. These signs are temporary and typically resolve within a few days.

Week 2: Adding Variety & Balancing

Goal: Gently expand meals while introducing more nutrients and variety, without overwhelming your dog's digestive system.

By now, your dog should be adjusting well to real food. Week 2 introduces new proteins, vegetables, and nutrient-dense carbs to begin broadening the nutritional profile — but the pace should still be slow and steady.

What to Add:

- Additional proteins: beef, lamb, or eggs
- New carbs: quinoa, butternut squash
- Cooked veggies: green beans, zucchini, spinach
- Continue broth and healthy fats (like olive oil or sardines)

Introduce only one new item at a time, and keep a familiar base in the bowl — like using pumpkin while rotating in a new protein, or add green beans to a familiar dish and wait a few days before adding the next ingredient. This helps you quickly identify any sensitivities without having to backtrack too far.

Sample 3-Day Meal Plan — Week 2

Day 1

- **Breakfast:** Egg & Potato Mash (Limited Ingredient Meals)
- **Dinner:** Beef & Pumpkin Mix (Grain-Free)
- **Optional Add-In:** Fish oil or Sardine Sprinkle Topper (if not used in Week 1)

If meals are repeated for more than a few days, add a calcium source.

Day 2

- **Breakfast:** Chicken & Pumpkin Comfort Bowl (Slow Cooker Meals)
- **Dinner:** Repeat Beef & Pumpkin Mix
- **Optional Treat:** Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies (Toppers, Treats & Extras)

Add cooked green beans to either meal to test tolerance.

Day 3

- **Breakfast:** Repeat Chicken & Pumpkin Comfort Bowl
- **Dinner:** Sardine & Quinoa Flex Bowl (Functional – Anti-Inflammatory)
- **Optional Add-In:** Sprinkle of kelp (1–2x per week, very small amount)

Watch for signs of improved coat, energy, or mild detox reactions.

Quick Tip:



Gradual rotation doesn't mean starting over every day. Stick with a couple of familiar meals while testing one new ingredient at a time. If your dog tolerates it well, you can confidently add it into your regular rotation. Batch cook, keep notes, and let your dog's signals guide the pace.

Week 3: Functional Foods & Healing Boosts

Goal: Begin layering in targeted ingredients that support immunity, reduce inflammation, and strengthen overall health.

At this stage, your dog is likely adjusting well to whole foods and a bit of rotation. Now it's time to introduce functional foods in small, thoughtful amounts — ingredients with therapeutic value that help the body heal and thrive. Because these foods are nutrient-dense and potent, less is more. A sprinkle or spoonful is often all it takes.

What to Add:

- Anti-inflammatory spices: turmeric, ginger (small amounts)
- Superfoods: sardines, kelp, dulse, chia seeds, organ meats (liver, heart)
- Continue rotating proteins and cooked veggies from Weeks 1–2

Introduce functional ingredients slowly — one at a time and in moderation. Monitor your dog's energy, coat, digestion, and any preexisting symptoms. This is the week when many pet parents begin to see visible improvements.

Sample 3-Day Meal Plan — Week 3

Day 1

- **Breakfast:** Chicken & Oat Joint Booster (Functional – Anti-Inflammatory)
- **Dinner:** Sardine & Quinoa Flex Bowl (Functional – Anti-Inflammatory)
- **Optional Add-In:** Small pinch of turmeric mixed with broth or oil

Sardines naturally provide omega-3s — no additional fish oil needed today.

Day 2

- **Breakfast:** Repeat Chicken & Oat Joint Booster
- **Dinner:** Beef & Zucchini Skillet (Grain-Free) with chopped spinach
- **Optional Add-In:** Sprinkle of ground chia seeds (start with 1/4 tsp)

Add a calcium source if this combo is served regularly.

Day 3

- **Breakfast:** Egg & Potato Mash (Limited Ingredient Meals)
- **Dinner:** Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée with added organ meat (e.g., 1 tbsp chicken liver)
- **Optional Treat:** Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies (Toppers, Treats & Extras)

Start liver once or twice per week at most. Too much can cause imbalance.



Quick Tip:

Functional foods are powerful, but don't rush them. Introduce one new ingredient every few days, use small amounts, and rotate in and out rather than piling everything into one bowl. Watch how your dog responds — the benefits often show up as brighter eyes, better stool, and steadier energy.

Week 4: Stabilize & Sustain

Goal: Settle into a steady, balanced routine with flexible rotation and continued variety — all grounded in what works best for your dog.

By now, your dog's digestion should be stable, energy steadier, and mealtimes more joyful. This week is about reinforcing what's working, continuing variety in a manageable way, and keeping things sustainable. A few trusted recipes, some batch cooking, and simple ingredient swaps are all you need to maintain balance.

What to Focus On:

- Mix and match proteins, carbs, and veggies introduced in previous weeks
- Continue functional add-ins like sardines, turmeric, or kelp (on rotation) weekly
- Adjust portions based on weight, energy and seasonal changes
- Prep in batches to reduce daily cooking and create a workable rhythm

Sample 3-Day Meal Plan — Week 4

Day 1

- **Breakfast:** Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée (Limited Ingredient Meals)
- **Dinner:** Sardine & Quinoa Flex Bowl (Functional – Anti-Inflammatory)
- **Optional Add-In:** Sprinkle of kelp (1x/week max unless advised by vet)

Consider rotating in zucchini or green beans for fiber and hydration.

Day 2

- **Breakfast:** Chicken & Pumpkin Comfort Bowl (Slow Cooker Meals)
- **Dinner:** Beef & Zucchini Skillet with added spinach or butternut squash
- **Optional Treat:** Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies (Toppers, Treats & Extras)

If sticking to familiar recipes, continue calcium supplementation as needed.

Day 3

- **Breakfast:** Egg & Oat Bedtime Bowl (Functional – Calming)
- **Dinner:** Chicken & Oat Joint Booster with a drizzle of olive oil
- **Optional Add-In:** Ground chia or sardine oil for omega-3 boost

Adjust portions based on weight changes, appetite, or energy needs.

Quick Tip:



You'll find a full **Sample Meal Plan** for **Week 1** — complete with treats and toppers — in the **TOOLS, CHARTS & REFERENCES** section at the back of the book. It's a great starting point, but the weekly planner right after it is the one to lean on: it shows how just 3–4 meals and a couple of toppers can carry you through the week: batch a few favorites, mix and match, and you're set.

14. Common Hiccups & How to Handle Them

Even with a great plan, bumps in the road are normal. Dogs are individuals — what works for one may not work for another, and that's okay. This chapter is all about troubleshooting the most common challenges and offering practical solutions to keep your progress on track.

Poop Changes

Loose stools, more frequent pooping, or even temporary constipation can all occur as your dog adjusts to new foods.

What to do:

- Stick with gentle, familiar meals for a few days
- Add plain canned pumpkin or steamed sweet potato
- Avoid raw veggies or new proteins during a flare-up

If loose stool persists for more than 3–4 days, consult your vet.

Pickiness or Food Refusal

Some dogs are wary of change — especially if they're used to strong flavors or additives in commercial food.

What to do:

- Start by mixing homemade food with a small amount of their usual food
- Warm meals slightly to release aroma
- Add a small spoon of bone broth or sardine oil to enhance taste

Keep portions small and consistent. Most dogs adjust within a few meals.

Excessive Hunger or Weight Changes

Fresh food can be less calorie-dense than kibble, so your dog may seem hungrier — or may lose weight if portions are too small.

What to do:

- Double-check portions (see feeding guide in Part 5)
- Add bulk with low-calorie, fiber-rich veggies like green beans or zucchini
- If your dog is losing weight, increase portion size slightly and consider boosting calorie-dense ingredients (like egg yolk or fattier protein cuts) — but go slowly with added fats to avoid digestive upset

It's a good idea to weigh your dog weekly during the transition. If you notice continued weight loss or gain, adjust meals gradually and consult your vet if needed.

Fatigue, Detox, or “Blahs”

During the first couple of weeks, especially in dogs transitioning from highly processed food, you might notice:

- Extra sleepiness
- Mild skin flares
- More shedding

These are common and usually temporary. What’s happening? As your dog’s body starts adjusting to real food, it’s no longer spending energy fighting off preservatives, fillers, and synthetic additives. That freed-up energy gets rerouted — often toward long-overdue internal cleanup and repair.

In other words, your dog’s system is starting to *heal*, and that healing process can look a little messy at first. Skin may flare as toxins exit. Stool may shift as the gut rebalances. Extra naps? Totally normal.

This isn’t a sign that fresh food “isn’t working” — it’s a sign that the body is doing its job. Support your dog with hydration, rest, and consistency. Most dogs move through this phase quickly and come out the other side healthier and more balanced.

However, if symptoms worsen or persist beyond a couple of weeks, it’s always smart to check in with your vet.

Ingredient Sensitivities

If a new symptom (like itching, red ears, or loose stool) appears after a new food:

What to do:

- Go back to the last safe meal
- Remove the suspected ingredient
- Wait a few days, then reintroduce in small amounts to confirm

If symptoms return, it’s best to avoid that ingredient long-term. Keep a log if you need help tracking reactions — it can be a useful tool.

When You Miss a Meal (or a Day)

Even the best plans hit a speed bump. If you forget to prep or run out of ingredients:

Quick Fix Ideas:

- Scrambled eggs with steamed veggies and oats
- Canned sardines (in water) with pumpkin and rice
- Plain turkey or chicken with frozen (steamed) green beans and olive oil drizzle

These simple combos keep your pup well-fed while you catch up on meal prep.

Life Beyond the Reset: From structured plan to everyday homemade feeding

You’ve made it through 30 days — and now, you’re not starting over. You’re simply continuing.

What comes next:

- Keep rotating proteins, carbs, and veggies every 1–2 weeks
- Maintain some of your dog's favorite reset recipes
- Use the feeding charts and planner to stay organized
- Watch for signs your dog is thriving — bright eyes, healthy stools, a shiny coat, steady energy, and a happy appetite

Most importantly, stay flexible. Some weeks will go perfectly. Others might be a little messy. But your dog will feel the love — and the difference — in every bowl.

Next up: how to get the most out of the wealth of the recipes ahead.

15. How to Use These Recipes

These recipes are designed to be flexible, approachable, and above all nourishing. Whether you're prepping a week's worth of meals for one dog or feeding a house full of paws, this section gives you the tools to make homemade food work for your lifestyle.

Start by checking what you already have — many of these recipes rely on staple ingredients like chicken, oats, canned pumpkin, and zucchini. If your pantry is stocked with a few basics, you'll be able to mix and match meals with ease.

Once you've completed the transition and figured out what works best for your dog — and what's better left out — don't be afraid to rotate recipes, double or halve batches, or swap ingredients based on what's fresh, affordable, or best tolerated (or most loved!) by your dog. These meals aren't meant to be followed rigidly, but to fit your rhythm and evolve alongside your dog's needs.



Quick Tip:

*Not sure what staples to keep on hand? Head to **Pantry Checklists** in Part 5 for a full list of versatile, budget-friendly ingredients that work across dozens of recipes.*

Customizing by Weight & Needs

Use the feeding guidelines from Chapter 10 and the Feeding Chart by Weight & Life Stage from Part 5 to portion meals based on your dog's weight. If a recipe yields 4 cups and your dog eats 2 cups a day, that's two days of food.

Adjust quantities based on:

- Age and life stage
- Activity level
- Weight gain or loss
- Health goals (e.g., joint support, digestive ease)

Most meals can be easily scaled up or down.

When to Supplement

Your dog's meals provide a nutrient-dense, real-food foundation. As noted in Part 1, homemade diets can vary slightly from batch to batch, simply because real ingredients aren't identical — and those shifts are even more noticeable if you rotate proteins or switch ingredients based on availability. Most dogs do well without a long supplement list, but a few small additions can help keep things consistent over time, depending on your routine and your dog's age or health history.

Here are the supports most commonly used alongside home-cooked diets:

- **Calcium** – Essential when meals don't include raw meaty bones, dairy, or only very small amounts of either. Eggshell powder, bone meal, or canine-formulated calcium supplements are easy, safe options.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids** – Useful when fish isn't included often. Fish oil, algae oil, or canned sardines (packed in water) support skin, coat, and normal inflammatory balance.
- **Vitamin E** – Commonly paired with omega-3 oils to help the body use those fats efficiently and maintain antioxidant balance.
- **Iodine and trace minerals** – A small amount of kelp powder or a dog-safe mineral blend can help keep micronutrient levels steady, especially if you rely heavily on the same proteins or don't include iodine-rich foods.

Supplement needs vary by dog and diet composition. If you're unsure whether your dog needs additional support, a quick conversation with your trusted professional can help. Wellness exams and occasional bloodwork, when recommended, offer reassurance that everything is working comfortably.

Now let's get to the fun part: 120+ homemade recipes your pup will love!

PART 4: THE COOKBOOK

Whether you're cooking every meal from scratch or just starting to dabble in home feeding, this section is your go-to toolkit. Each recipe is simple and flexible, tailored to real life — yours and your dog's.

Meals can be served warm or at room temperature — just make sure they're not piping hot to avoid overeager mouth burns. Let food cool slightly before serving, especially if you've just finished cooking or plan to add heat-sensitive ingredients like flaxseed oil or supplements.

Unless otherwise noted, most recipes take about 15 to 30 minutes of active prep and cooking time — perfect for fitting into a busy week.

Most meals can be stored in the fridge for up to 3 days or frozen in portions for future use. You'll find batch-prep and freezer-friendly ideas throughout.

Quick Tip:



Before you so much as chop a carrot, take a moment to skim through the Quick Tips sprinkled throughout the book. They're short, smart, and handy — ready to save a batch, simplify prep, or just make you feel a little smug (in the best way). Some are recipe-specific, but many work anytime, so go ahead and collect a few favorites before you dive in.

EVERYDAY BOWLS

These are your dog's everyday meals: balanced, tasty, and made with simple ingredients you can find in any grocery store — or your pantry. No special diets, no restrictions, no extra stress. Just real food for healthy dogs who've moved past sensitivities, or never had them in the first place — served in a consistent, nourishing routine.

These bowls are:

- Easy to rotate — switch up proteins, grains, and veggies without overthinking it
- Balanced with clean carbs, lean proteins, and nourishing extras
- Great for batch-cooking or quick weeknight prep

Whether you've got beef, turkey, or chicken in the fridge, this section helps you turn it into a bowl your dog will love. Think of it as their version of "what's for dinner?"

1. Chicken & Rice Everyday Bowl

Classic, balanced, and gentle on the tummy — a true staple



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken thighs
- 1/2 cup white rice
- 1/2 cup chopped green beans
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Boil chicken thighs for 15–18 minutes until cooked through (internal temp 165°F). Let cool and chop or shred.
- Cook rice in 1 cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Lightly steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until tender.
- In a bowl, mix chicken, rice, and green beans.
- Drizzle with olive oil once cooled to lukewarm.

Quick Tip:



White rice is easily digestible and great for sensitive stomachs, but you can substitute it with brown rice for added fiber and longer-lasting energy — just be sure to cook it thoroughly so it's soft and easy on digestion.

2. Beef & Barley Balanced Bowl

Hearty and satisfying with slow-digesting carbs for energy



Ingredients

- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1/2 cup pearl barley
- 1/2 cup grated carrots
- 1 tsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Cook ground beef in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until browned. Drain excess fat.
- In a pot, cook barley with 1.5 cups water for 25–30 minutes until tender. Let cool slightly.
- Lightly steam carrots for 3–4 minutes or serve raw if grated finely.
- In a bowl, mix beef, barley, and carrots. Stir in flaxseed oil once cooled.



Quick Tip:

Flaxseed oil delivers ALA omega-3s – great for inflammation and coat health – but they're heat-sensitive. Always stir it in after the food has cooled to keep those nutrients intact.

3. Turkey & Oats Dinner Bowl

A simple, warming meal with fiber and healthy fats



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup chopped zucchini
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until fully cooked. Drain excess fat if needed.
- Cook oats with 1 cup water for 4–7 minutes until thickened.
- Steam chopped zucchini for 3–4 minutes until tender.
- Combine turkey, oats, and zucchini in a bowl.
- Add coconut oil once cooled to lukewarm and stir.

4. Chicken & Quinoa Power Bowl

Protein-packed and loaded with anti-inflammatory goodness



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken breast
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- Boil chicken for 15–18 minutes until cooked through. Let cool and shred.
- Rinse quinoa in cold water, combine with 1 cup water, bring to boil, then simmer 15 minutes. Let cool.
- Steam spinach for 2–3 minutes until wilted.
- Mix chicken, quinoa, and spinach in a bowl.
- Stir in hempseed oil once cooled.

5. Pork & Brown Rice Dinner Bowl

Rich in protein and easy to digest with gentle grains



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground pork (lean)
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1/2 cup chopped broccoli
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Cook pork in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until fully browned. Drain any excess fat.
- Cook rice in 1½ cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Steam broccoli for 3–4 minutes until tender.
- Combine pork, rice, and broccoli in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once mixture is lukewarm.

6. Turkey & Sweet Potato Dinner Bowl

A cozy, nourishing bowl with beta-carotene and lean protein



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1 cup diced sweet potato
- 1/2 cup chopped kale
- 1 tsp fish oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until browned. Drain excess fat if needed.
- Boil or steam sweet potato 10–15 minutes until soft. Mash.
- Steam kale for 2–3 minutes until wilted and tender.
- Combine cooked turkey, sweet potato, and kale in a bowl.
- Stir in fish oil once cooled.

7. Chicken & Barley Supper Bowl

Simple, hearty, and easy on digestion



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken thighs or breasts
- 1/2 cup pearl barley
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Boil chicken for 15–18 minutes until fully cooked. Let cool and shred or chop.
- In a pot, cook barley with 1.5 cups water for 25–30 minutes until tender.
- Steam spinach for 2–3 minutes until wilted.
- Combine chicken, cooked barley, and spinach in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once cooled to lukewarm.



Quick Tip:

Barley is a great grain for dogs – it's gentle on digestion and helps maintain steady energy levels.

8. Ground Beef & Quinoa Bowl

A protein-rich bowl with a light, nutty grain



Ingredients

- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1/2 cup chopped zucchini
- 1 tsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Cook beef in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until browned. Drain any excess fat.
- Rinse quinoa in cold water, combine with 1 cup water, bring to boil, then simmer 15 minutes. Let cool.
- Steam zucchini for 3–4 minutes until tender.
- Mix beef, quinoa, and zucchini in a bowl.
- Stir in flaxseed oil once cooled.

9. Turkey & Brown Rice Everyday Bowl

A balanced bowl for energy, taste, and comfort



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1/2 cup grated carrot
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until browned. Drain excess fat if needed.
- Cook rice in 1¼ cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Steam or finely shred carrots if serving raw.
- Combine turkey, rice, and carrots in a bowl.
- Stir in coconut oil once cooled.

10. Pork & Millet Comfort Bowl

A gentle, slightly sweet meal with soft textures



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground pork (lean)
- 1/2 cup millet
- 1/2 cup diced butternut squash
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Cook pork in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until fully browned. Drain excess fat.
- Simmer millet in 1 cup water for 20–25 minutes.
- Steam squash for 10–12 minutes until tender. Mash lightly.
- Mix pork, millet, and squash in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once mixture has cooled.

11. Chicken, Sweet Potato & Peas Bowl

Colorful and tasty with just the right balance of carbs and protein



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken breasts
- 1 cup diced sweet potato
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1 tbsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- Boil chicken for 15–18 minutes until cooked through. Let cool and shred.
- Steam or boil sweet potato for 10–15 minutes and mash.
- Steam peas for 2–3 minutes if needed.
- Combine chicken, sweet potato, and peas in a bowl.
- Stir in hempseed oil once cooled.

12. Salmon & Rice Everyday Bowl

Mild, omega-rich, and easy on the digestive system



Ingredients

- 1 cup salmon (fresh or canned in water, no salt)
- 1/2 cup white or brown rice
- 1/2 cup chopped green beans
- 1 tsp fish oil



Instructions

- If using fresh salmon, bake at 350°F for 12–15 minutes until flaky. Let cool, flake and remove bones. If using canned, drain and mash.
- Cook rice in 1–1½ cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until just tender.
- Mix salmon, rice, and green beans in a bowl.
- Stir in fish oil once cooled.



Quick Tip:

White rice is gentle and dependable, but brown rice brings extra nutrition to the bowl. Use either based on your dog's needs – both are clean, healthy options.

13. Chicken & Lentil Everyday Bowl

Hearty, high in fiber, and great for energy and digestion



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken thighs
- 1/2 cup lentils
- 1/2 cup chopped carrots
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Boil chicken for 15–18 minutes until fully cooked. Let cool and shred.
- Steam or boil carrots for 8–10 minutes until tender.
- Cook lentils in 1½ cup water for 17–25 minutes until tender.
- Combine chicken, lentils, and carrots in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once cooled to lukewarm.

14. Ground Beef & Couscous Bowl

Quick-cooking and satisfying — great for busy weeks



Ingredients

- 1 lb lean ground beef
- 1 cup cooked couscous
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1 tsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- Cook ground beef in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until browned. Drain excess fat.
- Steam peas for 2–3 minutes until bright green and tender.
- Combine beef, couscous, and peas in a bowl.
- Stir in hempseed oil after mixture has cooled slightly.

15. Turkey & Rice Bowl with Carrot & Parsley

A fresh, flavorful bowl with gentle ingredients



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 cup white rice
- 1/2 cup grated carrots
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until fully cooked. Drain fat if needed.
- Cook rice in 1 cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Combine turkey, cooked rice, grated carrot, and parsley in a bowl.
- Stir in flaxseed oil once the mixture has cooled to lukewarm.



Quick Tip:

Fresh parsley can help support digestion and freshen breath — a win-win!

16. Salmon & Oats Everyday Bowl

Soft and satisfying with omega-rich salmon and easy oats



Ingredients

- 1 cup cooked boneless salmon (fresh or canned, no salt)
- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tsp fish oil



Instructions

- If using fresh salmon, bake at 350°F for 12–15 minutes. Let cool and flake. If using canned, drain and mash.
- Cook oats with 1 cup water for 4–7 minutes until thickened.
- Steam spinach for 2–3 minutes until wilted.
- Mix salmon, oats, and spinach in a bowl.
- Stir in fish oil once cooled.



Quick Tip:

Canned salmon with soft bones is a great calcium booster and pantry-friendly option.

17. Chicken, Barley & Zucchini Bowl

Mild, filling, and easy to digest



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken breasts
- 1/2 cup pearl barley
- 1/2 cup chopped zucchini
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Boil chicken for 15–18 minutes until cooked through. Let cool and chop or shred.
- In a pot, cook barley with 1.5 cups water for 25–30 minutes until tender.
- Steam zucchini for 3–4 minutes until tender.
- Combine chicken, barley, and zucchini in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once the mixture is lukewarm.

18. Ground Turkey & Farro Bowl

High-protein and full of chewy, fiber-rich grain



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 cup farro
- 1/2 cup steamed green beans
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until browned. Drain excess fat.
- In a pot, cook farro with 1.5 cups water for 25–30 minutes until tender.
- Steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until tender.
- Mix turkey, farro, and green beans in a bowl.
- Stir in coconut oil once cooled to lukewarm.

19. Turkey, Rice & Broccoli Bowl

Mild and reliable with lean protein and gentle greens



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 cup white or brown rice
- 1/2 cup chopped broccoli
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until browned. Drain excess fat.
- Cook rice in 1–1½ cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Steam broccoli for 3–4 minutes until tender.
- Combine turkey, rice, and broccoli in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once mixture is lukewarm.



Quick Tip:

Brown rice contains more fiber and minerals than white rice — a simple switch that adds a nutritious boost.

20. Beef, Potato & Green Bean Bowl

A simple, savory meal great for picky eaters



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 cup peeled, cubed white potato
- 1/2 cup chopped green beans
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Cook beef in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until fully browned. Drain excess fat.
- Boil potatoes for 10–12 minutes until tender. Mash lightly.
- Steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until just tender.
- Combine beef, potato, and green beans in a bowl.
- Stir in flaxseed oil once cooled.

21. Chicken & Couscous Dinner Bowl

Soft, comforting, and fast to prep



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken thighs
- 1 cup cooked couscous
- 1/2 cup shredded carrots
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Boil chicken for 15–18 minutes until cooked through. Let cool and shred.
- Steam carrots for 2–3 minutes if needed.
- Mix chicken, couscous, and carrots in a bowl.
- Drizzle with olive oil once cooled to lukewarm.

22. Pork & Quinoa Veggic Bowl

Lean protein meets nutty quinoa and fresh veg



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground pork (lean)
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1/2 cup steamed zucchini
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Cook pork in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until browned. Drain excess fat.
- Rinse quinoa in cold water, combine with 1 cup water, bring to boil, then simmer 15 minutes. Let cool.
- Steam zucchini for 3–4 minutes until soft.
- Combine pork, quinoa, and zucchini in a bowl.
- Stir in coconut oil after cooling slightly.

23. Chicken Livers & Rice Bowl

Iron-rich and flavorful, perfect for a nutritious boost



Ingredients

- 1 lb chicken livers, rinsed and chopped
- 1/2 cup white or brown rice
- 1/2 cup steamed green beans
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- In a skillet over medium heat, cook chicken livers for 7–9 minutes until fully browned and no longer pink inside. Let cool slightly.
- Cook rice in 1–1½ cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until just tender.
- Mix cooked livers, rice, and green beans in a bowl.
- Stir in flaxseed oil once cooled to lukewarm.



Quick Tip:

Chicken livers are a great source of vitamin A, iron, and B vitamins – serve in moderation for a powerful nutrient boost.

24. Chicken Gizzards & Pumpkin Bowl

Mineral-rich and budget-friendly with a digestion boost



Ingredients

- 1 lb chicken gizzards, trimmed and chopped
- 1 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Boil gizzards for 25–30 minutes until tender. Let cool slightly and chop finely if needed.
- Cook rice in 1–1½ cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Combine gizzards, pumpkin, and rice in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once mixture is lukewarm.



Quick Tip:

Chicken gizzards are a great source of zinc, iron, and protein – plus they're super budget-friendly! Chop them well for even cooking.

SLOW COOKER, INSTANT POT, AND ONE-POT DOG MEALS

Homemade dog food doesn't have to be complicated! These cozy, practical recipes are perfect for tossing into a slow cooker or Instant Pot — with minimal prep, maximum flavor, and easy freezer-friendly portions to make busy days a breeze.

25. Beef & Pumpkin Stew

A hearty, fiber-rich meal that's great for digestion and energy



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1 cup chopped green beans or spinach
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 2 cups water or low-sodium broth
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place all ingredients except coconut oil into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–8 hours or high for 3–4 hours until vegetables are tender.
- Stir in coconut oil after cooking, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place all ingredients except coconut oil into the Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- Stir in coconut oil after cooking, cool, and portion.



Quick Tip:

Freeze portions in silicone molds for quick weekday meals.

26. Chicken, Quinoa & Spinach Bowl

Protein-packed and iron-rich, perfect for active pups



Ingredients

- 2 boneless chicken thighs
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1 cup chopped spinach
- 1/2 cup diced zucchini
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Combine chicken, quinoa, spinach, zucchini, and water in a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 5–6 hours or high for 2.5–3 hours.
- Shred chicken, stir in flaxseed oil, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Combine chicken, quinoa, spinach, zucchini, and water in an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- Shred chicken, stir in flaxseed oil, cool, and portion.



Quick Tip:

For maximum vitamins, stir in spinach after cooking — it wilts quickly in the warm food.

27. Turkey & Gizzard Blend

An affordable, nutrient-dense meal rich in iron and minerals



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 lb chicken gizzards, chopped
- 1 cup diced butternut squash
- 1/2 cup peas
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Add turkey, gizzards, squash, peas, and water to the slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–3.5 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, portion, and store.

Instant Pot:

- Add turkey, gizzards, squash, peas, and water to the Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 15 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, portion, and store.

Quick Tip:



Olive oil is rich in heart-healthy fats and antioxidants. Heating can reduce its beneficial polyphenols, so to preserve them it's best to add it after cooking and cooling slightly to keep those nutrients intact.

28. Pork & Apple Stew

A sweet and savory bowl, full of antioxidants and flavor



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground pork (lean)
- 1 apple, cored and diced (no seeds)
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp chia seeds (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place pork, apple, spinach, carrots, and water in a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–8 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- After cooking, sprinkle chia seeds, stir, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place pork, apple, spinach, carrots, and water in the Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, quick release.
- After cooking, sprinkle chia seeds, stir, cool, and portion.

Quick Tip:



Heat can degrade some of omega-3s and antioxidants in chia seeds. Stirring them into warm (not hot) food keeps their nutrients active and helps them absorb moisture properly.

29. Salmon & Sweet Potato Bowl

Omega-3 rich and great for shiny coats and healthy skin



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless salmon (skin on is fine)
- 1 cup cubed sweet potatoes
- 1/2 cup chopped broccoli
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place salmon, sweet potatoes, broccoli, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 2–3 hours until salmon is cooked through and flakes easily.
- Flake salmon carefully, stir in olive oil, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Combine salmon, sweet potatoes, broccoli, and water in an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 5 minutes, quick release.
- Flake salmon carefully, stir in olive oil, cool, and portion.

Quick Tip:



If using salmon with skin, leave it on during cooking – it softens and breaks down easily when flaked, adding extra collagen and omega-3s to the meal. While some omega-3s are sensitive to heat, salmon provides EPA and DHA, which are more stable than plant-based oils and hold up better during cooking.

30. Lamb & Green Bean Feast

A rich, iron-loaded meal that's perfect for building strength and energy



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground lamb
- 1 cup chopped green beans
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 1/2 cup peas
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place lamb, green beans, carrots, peas, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–8 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, portion, and store.

Instant Pot:

- Place lamb, green beans, carrots, peas, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, portion, and store.

31. Chicken & Pumpkin Comfort Bowl

A soothing, gut-friendly meal that's great for dogs with sensitive digestion



Ingredients

- 2 boneless chicken breasts
- 1 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1/2 cup diced zucchini
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Combine chicken, pumpkin, peas, zucchini, and water in a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Shred chicken, stir in flaxseed oil, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Combine chicken, pumpkin, peas, zucchini, and water in an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- Shred chicken, stir in flaxseed oil, cool, and portion.

32. Turkey, Broccoli & Rice Bowl

Balanced and full of fiber, perfect for everyday nutrition



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 cup chopped broccoli
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place turkey, rice, broccoli, carrots, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–3.5 hours until rice is tender.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, portion, and store.

Instant Pot:

- Place turkey, rice, broccoli, carrots, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, portion, and store.



Quick Tip:

Brown rice absorbs more liquid than white — check for doneness before serving.

33. Beef, Sweet Potato & Kale Stew

Full of antioxidants and iron, a nourishing bowl for active pups



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 cup cubed sweet potatoes
- 1 cup chopped kale
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp coconut oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place beef, sweet potatoes, kale, carrots, and water in a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–8 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in coconut oil, portion, and store.

Instant Pot:

- Place beef, sweet potatoes, kale, carrots, and water in an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in coconut oil, portion, and store.



Quick Tip:

Stir kale in at the very end of cooking or after pressure release to retain more of its antioxidants and color.

34. Sardine & Brown Rice Bowl

Packed with Omega-3s and easy on the budget, a skin and coat hero



Ingredients

- 2 cans sardines in water (no salt added)
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1/2 cup diced zucchini
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place rice, zucchini, spinach, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 5–6 hours or high for 2.5–3 hours until rice is tender.
- Stir in sardines and olive oil after cooking, mix gently, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place rice, zucchini, spinach, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- Stir in sardines and olive oil after cooking, mix gently, cool, and portion.



Quick Tip:

To reduce fridge odor, stir in a little chopped parsley or lemon juice after cooking – dogs won't mind, but your nose will thank you.

35. Chicken Liver & Veggie Medley

Rich in vitamins and iron, a nutrient powerhouse meal



Ingredients

- 1 lb chicken livers, rinsed and trimmed
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 cup chopped spinach
- 1/2 cup peas
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place chicken livers, carrots, spinach, peas, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 4–5 hours or high for 2–2.5 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, chop roughly if needed, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place chicken livers, carrots, spinach, peas, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 8 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, chop roughly if needed, and portion.



Quick Tip:

If your dog is new to organ meats, start by mixing with a bland base like rice or oats and introduce gradually – slow-cooked organs are gentler on digestion than seared or raw versions. Stir in spinach after cooking to keep its nutrients intact.

36. Ground Chicken & Sweet Pea Bowl

Light and easy, perfect for sensitive tummies and first-time home-cooked feeders



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground chicken
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1/2 cup chopped green beans
- 1 cup diced zucchini
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place chicken, peas, green beans, zucchini, and water in a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 5–6 hours or high for 2.5–3 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in flaxseed oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place chicken, peas, green beans, zucchini, and water in an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in flaxseed oil, and portion.



Quick Tip:

Always add flaxseed oil after cooking and once the food has cooled – the omega-3s in flax (ALA) are especially fragile and break down under heat. You'll preserve more of its anti-inflammatory benefits by keeping it raw.

37. Beef Heart & Brown Rice Feast

Full of taurine and minerals, a hearty choice for strong muscles and energy



Ingredients

- 1 lb beef heart, trimmed and cubed
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1/2 cup chopped kale
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place beef heart, rice, kale, carrots, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–8 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place beef heart, rice, kale, carrots, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 20 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

Quick Tip:



No beef heart? Try chicken hearts instead – they're smaller but just as rich in taurine and nutrients. Use about 3 to 4 cups to match the protein content, and enjoy a slightly quicker cook time with the same muscle-building benefits.

38. Pork, Apple & Oatmeal Bowl

Fiber-rich, soothing, and slightly sweet for picky eaters



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground pork (lean)
- 1 apple, cored and diced (no seeds)
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp chia seeds (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place pork, apple, oats, spinach, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 5–6 hours or high for 2.5–3 hours.
- After cooking, stir in chia seeds, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place pork, apple, oats, spinach, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- After cooking, stir in chia seeds, cool, and portion.

39. Turkey, Pumpkin & Blueberry Bowl

Antioxidant-loaded and anti-inflammatory, great for aging pups



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1/2 cup blueberries (fresh or frozen, unsweetened)
- 1/2 cup diced zucchini
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place turkey, pumpkin, blueberries, zucchini, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in flaxseed oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place turkey, pumpkin, blueberries, zucchini, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in flaxseed oil, and portion.



Quick Tip:

Add blueberries after cooking to preserve more antioxidants & vitamin C— they'll soften slightly but keep their nutrient punch.

40. Duck & Sweet Potato Delight

Rich and novel protein source, ideal for dogs with food sensitivities



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground duck
- 1 cup cubed sweet potatoes
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place duck, sweet potatoes, peas, spinach, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–8 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place duck, sweet potatoes, peas, spinach, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

41. Chicken, Apple & Green Bean Bowl

Light, fresh, and slightly sweet — a favorite even for picky eaters



Ingredients

- 2 boneless chicken thighs
- 1 apple, cored and diced (no seeds)
- 1 cup chopped green beans
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place chicken, apple, green beans, carrots, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Shred chicken, stir in flaxseed oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place chicken, apple, green beans, carrots, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- Shred chicken, stir in flaxseed oil, and portion.

42. Turkey, Kale & Carrot Medley

A nutrient-dense bowl that supports eye health and immunity



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1 cup chopped kale
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place turkey, kale, carrots, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place turkey, kale, carrots, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion



Quick Tip:

Stir kale in after cooking to help preserve more of its vitamins and color.

43. Pork, Quinoa & Pca Bowl

High in protein and easy to digest, perfect for building lean muscle



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground pork (lean)
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp chia seeds (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place pork, quinoa, peas, spinach, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- After cooking, stir in chia seeds, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place pork, quinoa, peas, spinach, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- After cooking, stir in chia seeds, cool, and portion.



Quick Tip:

Quinoa cooks quickly and can get mushy – avoid overcooking by sticking to recommended times and skipping the “Keep Warm” mode after cooking.

44. Sardine, Brown Rice & Zucchini Bowl

Omega-3 fatty acids galore, promoting healthy skin and shiny coats



Ingredients

- 1 can sardines in water (no salt added)
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 cup diced zucchini
- 1.5 cups water
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place rice, zucchini, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 5–6 hours or high for 1.5–2.5 hours until rice is tender.
- Stir in sardines and olive oil after cooking, mix gently, cool, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place rice, zucchini, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- Stir in sardines and olive oil after cooking, mix gently, cool, and portion.

45. Chicken Gizzards & Rice Power Bowl

A mineral-rich, budget-friendly meal that supports strong muscles and energy



Ingredients

- 1 lb chicken gizzards, cleaned and chopped
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 2 cups water or broth
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place chicken gizzards, rice, carrots, spinach, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–4 hours until rice is tender.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place chicken gizzards, rice, carrots, spinach, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 15 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

46. Chicken, Broccoli & Rice Bowl

A gentle, balanced meal ideal for sensitive stomachs and recovery days



Ingredients

- 2 boneless chicken thighs
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 cup chopped broccoli
- 1/2 cup peas
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place chicken, rice, broccoli, peas, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Remove chicken with tongs, shred, then return to pot, stir in flaxseed oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place chicken, rice, broccoli, peas, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- Remove chicken with tongs, shred, then return to pot, stir in flaxseed oil, and portion.

47. Turkey, Apple & Spinach Bowl

Light, slightly sweet, and loaded with iron and antioxidants



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1 apple, cored and diced (no seeds)
- 1 cup chopped spinach
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place turkey, apple, spinach, carrots, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 6–7 hours or high for 3–4 hours.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place turkey, apple, spinach, carrots, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 10 minutes, natural release.
- Cool slightly, stir in olive oil, and portion.

48. Salmon, Rice & Zucchini Bowl

Omega-3-rich meal that supports brain health, joints, and a shiny coat



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless salmon (skin on is fine)
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 cup diced zucchini
- 2 cups water
- 1 tbsp olive oil (add after cooking)



Instructions

Slow Cooker:

- Place salmon rice, zucchini, and water into a slow cooker.
- Cook on low for 5–6 hours or high for 2.5–3 hours until rice is tender.
- Gently flake salmon and stir to mix.
- Cool, stir in olive oil, and portion.

Instant Pot:

- Place salmon, rice, zucchini, and water into an Instant Pot.
- Cook on high pressure for 12 minutes, natural release.
- Gently flake salmon and stir to mix.
- Cool, stir in olive oil, and portion.

FUNCTIONAL RECIPES FOR TARGETED SUPPORT

Sometimes, food is more than just fuel — it's powerful support for your dog's everyday needs. These functional meals are designed to help with common challenges like joint health, skin and coat issues, digestive upset, and even calming anxious pups — all using simple, wholesome ingredients.

JOINT SUPPORT

These recipes are designed to help support healthy joints, flexibility, and mobility. They include ingredients rich in natural anti-inflammatories like omega-3 fatty acids, turmeric, and antioxidant-packed vegetables, giving your pup a little extra spring in their step — naturally.

49. Chicken & Oat Joint Booster

Rich in omega-3s and anti-inflammatory turmeric



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground chicken or boneless chicken meat
- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 cup shredded carrots
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tbsp fish oil



Instructions

- Cook the chicken:
 - If using ground chicken, cook in a skillet over medium heat until fully browned (7–10 minutes).
 - If using boneless chicken, boil in water for 12–15 minutes until cooked through (165°F), then shred.
- Cook oats with 1 cup water for 4–7 minutes until thickened.
- Lightly steam carrots for 2–3 minutes.
- Mix chicken, oats, and carrots. Stir in turmeric and fish oil after cooling slightly.

50. Sardine & Quinoa Flex Bowl

Great for mobility and joint flexibility



Ingredients

- 1 can sardines in water, mashed
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1/2 cup kale
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Rinse quinoa in cold water, combine with 1 cup water, bring to boil, then simmer 15 minutes. Let cool.
- Lightly steam chopped kale for 2–3 minutes until wilted.
- Combine sardines, quinoa, and kale. Stir in flaxseed oil after cooling slightly.



Quick Tip:

Sardines are rich in EPA and DHA — omega-3s that reduce joint inflammation and support brain health, too.

51. Beef & Barley Joint Comfort Bowl

Rich in collagen and joint-supporting nutrients



Ingredients

- 1 lb lean ground beef or stewing beef
- 1/2 cup pearl barley
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tbsp fish oil



Instructions

- In a skillet over medium heat, cook ground beef until browned (7–10 minutes). Drain fat.
- If using stewing beef, boil or slow simmer until tender, then shred or chop.
- Combine 1/2 cup barley with 1.5 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 25–30 minutes. Let cool slightly.
- Lightly steam chopped spinach for 2–3 minutes until tender.
- Combine beef, barley, and spinach. Stir in fish oil after mixture cools.



Quick Tip:

Barley is a gentle, high-fiber grain that supports digestion – reducing inflammation that can aggravate joint issues.

SKIN & COAT HEALTH

A healthy coat starts from within! These recipes are full of essential fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals that nourish your dog's skin, reduce irritation, and promote a soft, shiny coat. Perfect for dogs who deal with dry skin, itchiness, or dull fur.

52. Salmon & Sweet Potato Glow Bowl

Fatty acids and antioxidants support a shiny coat



Ingredients

- 1 cup salmon (boneless)
- 1 sweet potato
- 1/2 cup spinach
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Bake salmon at 350°F for 12–15 minutes — or cook in a non-stick pan in a splash of water or broth 3–5 minutes per side until it flakes easily with fork. Remove bones.
- Peel and chop sweet potato, boil or steam until very tender (10–12 minutes), then mash.
- Lightly steam spinach for 1–2 minutes until wilted.
- Combine salmon, mashed sweet potato, and spinach. Stir in coconut oil after cooling slightly.

53. Turkey & Hempseed Shine Mix

Rich in skin-soothing fats and gentle grains



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey or boneless turkey meat
- 1/2 cup brown rice
- 1 tbsp hempseed oil
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet until browned (7–10 minutes), or boil/bake whole turkey until 165°F, then shred.
- Cook rice in 1–1¼ cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Mix turkey and rice. Stir in hempseed oil and parsley after cooling slightly.

Quick Tip:



Chop and freeze fresh parsley in ice cube trays with water or low-sodium broth — it's a time-saver and a great way to keep this nutrient-rich herb on hand. Parsley isn't just a garnish; it's packed with antioxidants, supports kidney function, and can help freshen your dog's breath naturally. Just a little goes a long way!

54. Duck & Quinoa Glow Bowl

Loaded with fatty acids for healthy skin and a glossy coat



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground duck or boneless duck thighs/breasts
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Cook ground duck until browned (7–10 minutes) or bake whole duck at 375°F for 20–25 minutes, then shred.
- Rinse quinoa in cold water, combine with 1 cup water, bring to boil, then simmer 15 minutes. Let cool.
- Lightly steam carrots for 3–4 minutes.
- Combine duck, quinoa, and carrots. Stir in flaxseed oil after cooling slightly.

DIGESTIVE EASE

Gentle on the tummy, these meals use simple, soothing ingredients to help with common digestive issues like gas, bloating, and loose stools. Perfect for sensitive stomachs, recovery days, or simply supporting everyday gut health naturally.

55. Chicken & Pumpkin Soother

Great for gassy tummies and loose stools



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground chicken or boneless chicken meat
- 1 cup plain pumpkin purée
- 1 tbsp plain yogurt (no sweeteners)
- 1 tsp ground ginger



Instructions

- Cook chicken in a skillet over medium heat until fully done (7–10 minutes). If using whole chicken, boil and shred.
- In a large bowl, mix cooked chicken, pumpkin, and ginger.
- Cool slightly before adding yogurt: Stir in once mixture has cooled to lukewarm.



Quick Tip:

Pumpkin is rich in soluble fiber, which helps soothe upset stomachs and firm up stools. Just make sure it's pure, unsweetened purée — not pie filling.

56. Whitefish & Rice Resct Bowl

Helps ease bloating, gas, and mild constipation



Ingredients

- 1 cup whitefish
- 1/2 cup white rice
- 1/2 cup grated zucchini
- 1 tsp slippery elm powder (optional)



Instructions

- Bake whitefish at 350°F for 12–15 minutes — or cook in a non-stick pan in a splash of water or broth 3–4 minutes per side until it flakes easily with fork. Remove bones.
- Cook rice in 1 cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Lightly steam grated zucchini for 2–3 minutes.
- Combine fish, rice, and zucchini. Stir in slippery elm powder once cooled (if using).



Quick Tip:

Whitefish is low-fat and easy on the digestive system, making it ideal for recovery days or dogs with food sensitivities.

57. Whitefish & Pumpkin Digestive Aid

Mild, easy-to-digest, and gut-soothing



Ingredients

- 1 cup whitefish (e.g., cod or haddock)
- 1 cup plain pumpkin purée
- 1/2 cup millet
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Bake whitefish at 350°F for 12–15 minutes. — or cook in a non-stick pan in a splash of water or broth 3–4 minutes per side until it flakes easily with fork. Remove bones.
- Simmer millet in 1 cup water for 20–25 minutes.
- Combine fish, pumpkin, and millet. Stir in olive oil once cooled.



Quick Tip:

Pumpkin and millet are both rich in soluble fiber — a combo that helps soothe inflammation and support healthy stool formation.

CALMING MEALS

These recipes feature ingredients known to promote calmness and relaxation, like chamomile, banana, and oats. They're great for anxious pups, stressful days, or simply winding down after an exciting day of play.

58. Turkey & Chamomile Comfort Bowl

Soothing for anxious or restless pups



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey or boneless thighs/breasts
- 1 cup millet
- 1 chamomile tea bag (steeped in broth or water)
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet (7–10 minutes) or boil and shred.
- Simmer millet in 2 cups water for 20–25 minutes.
- Brew chamomile in 1/4 cup warm water or broth. Let cool.
- Mix turkey and millet. Stir in chamomile infusion and oil once cooled.



Quick Tip:

Chamomile has natural calming effects — steeping it in warm broth helps dogs accept the flavor while supporting relaxation.

59. Egg & Oat Bedtime Bowl

Naturally calming and easy to digest — great for an evening meal



Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup oats
- 1/2 banana, mashed
- 1 tsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Scramble the eggs in a nonstick pan, no butter or oil, can add a splash of water.
- Cook oats with 1 cup water for 4–7 minutes until thickened.
- Mash the banana until smooth.
- Combine eggs, oats, and banana. Stir in flaxseed oil after cooling.

60. Turkey & Chamomile Rest Bowl

Naturally soothing and great for anxious pups



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey or boneless turkey meat
- 1/2 cup oats
- 1 chamomile tea bag (steeped in water or broth)
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Brown turkey in skillet or bake/boil until cooked through (165°F).
- Cook oats with 1 cup water for 4–7 minutes until thickened.
- Brew chamomile in 1/4 cup warm water or broth. Let cool.
- Combine turkey, oats, and tea. Stir in coconut oil after cooling.

HYPOALLERGENIC SUPPORT

Some dogs develop food sensitivities over time, often to ingredients they've eaten every day for years — like chicken or beef. This can happen when the immune system begins to misidentify certain proteins as threats, especially if the gut lining is inflamed or compromised. Kibble-based diets, which tend to rely on the same protein source day after day, can contribute to this kind of overexposure.

These recipes are designed to give your dog's system a break. They feature super low-allergen proteins (like duck, rabbit, fish, or sometimes turkey), simple carbs like sweet potato or quinoa, and no common triggers like dairy, wheat, corn, chicken, or beef. This gentler approach can help reduce inflammation, ease itching or digestive issues, and support a fresh start for dogs with food sensitivities.

61. Duck & Sweet Potato Relief Bowl

Rich in novel protein, beta-carotene and easy-to-digest fiber for sensitive pups



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground duck or boneless duck meat
- 1 sweet potato
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Brown duck in skillet or bake at 375°F for 20–25 minutes.
- Boil or steam sweet potato for 10–12 minutes, then mash.
- Steam spinach for 1–2 minutes.
- Combine duck, sweet potato, and spinach. Add flaxseed oil after cooling.

62. Whitefish & Quinoa Soother

Light and easy on the stomach, perfect for itchy, allergic dogs



Ingredients

- 1 cup whitefish (cod, haddock, or similar)
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1/2 cup diced zucchini
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Bake fish at 350°F for 12–15 minutes. Remove bones.
- Rinse quinoa in cold water, combine with 1 cup water, bring to boil, then simmer 15 minutes. Let cool.
- Steam zucchini for 2–3 minutes.
- Combine flaked fish, quinoa, and zucchini. Add oil after cooling.

63. Turkey & Parsnip Gentle Bowl

Simple, single-protein recipe that's unlikely to trigger reactions



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey or boneless thighs/breasts
- 1 cup diced parsnips
- 1/2 cup chopped green beans
- 1 tbsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- Brown turkey in a skillet or boil until fully cooked.
- Steam diced parsnips for 10–12 minutes until very tender.
- Steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until bright green.
- Mix cooked turkey, parsnips, and green beans. Add oil after cooling.

64. Rabbit & Squash Allergy-Aid Stew

Novel protein and anti-inflammatory veggies for sensitive skin



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground or finely diced rabbit meat
- 1 cup butternut squash
- 1/2 cup chopped kale
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Brown ground or diced rabbit in skillet.
- Steam or boil butternut squash for 10–12 minutes and mash.
- Steam kale for 1–2 minutes until wilted.
- Combine rabbit, squash, and kale. Stir in coconut oil after cooling.



Quick Tip:

Rabbit is a novel protein rarely used in commercial food — a great option for dogs with complex allergies.

LIMITED INGREDIENT MEALS

Perfect for dogs with food sensitivities, allergies, or sensitive stomachs, these simple meals feature just a few clean ingredients — one protein, one carb, and a gentle veggie.

They work well for elimination trials, flare-ups, or whenever your dog needs something soothing, easy to digest, and safe to rotate or batch prep.

Every meal below contains 5 ingredients or fewer, avoids common triggers, and can be scaled, rotated, or batch-prepped depending on your dog's individual needs.

65. Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée

Gentle on the belly, perfect for first-stage resets



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey or boneless turkey thighs/breasts
- 1 cup pure pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1/2 cup millet
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- If using ground turkey, cook in a skillet over medium heat until browned and cooked through (7–10 minutes). If using boneless turkey thighs or breasts, boil in water for 12–15 minutes until cooked, then shred.
- Simmer millet in 1 cup water for 20–25 minutes.
- Combine turkey, pumpkin, and millet in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil after mixture has cooled slightly.

66. Lamb & Sweet Potato Bowl

Minimalist and nutrient-dense, good for novel protein trials



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground lamb
- 1 cup sweet potato, peeled and mashed
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- In a skillet over medium heat, cook ground lamb until browned (7–10 minutes). Drain fat.
- Peel and dice sweet potato, then boil or steam for 10–12 minutes until tender. Mash.
- Combine lamb and sweet potato in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding coconut oil.



Quick Tip:

Lamb is considered a novel protein and may be better tolerated by dogs with beef or chicken sensitivities.

67. Chicken & Zucchini Medley

Simple and hydrating with easy prep



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground chicken or boneless chicken thighs/breasts
- 1 cup grated zucchini (lightly steamed)
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Cook ground chicken in a skillet over medium heat (7–10 minutes). If using thighs or breasts, boil until internal temp reaches 165°F, then shred.
- Lightly steam grated zucchini for 2–3 minutes.
- Combine chicken and zucchini in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding olive oil.



Quick Tip:

Zucchini is low-calorie, hydrating, and easy to digest – a gentle veggie for sensitive dogs.

68. Egg & Potato Mash

Soft and easy to digest – ideal for low-protein days



Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1 white potato
- 1 tsp ground flaxseed
- 1 tbsp sunflower oil



Instructions

- Scramble eggs in a nonstick skillet over medium-low heat without butter or oil, can add a splash of water.
- Peel, dice, and boil potato for 10–12 minutes. Mash until smooth.
- Combine scrambled eggs, mashed potato, and flaxseed in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding sunflower oil.

69. Salmon & Millet Bowl

Mild, soft, and packed with omega-3s



Ingredients

- 1 cup salmon
- 1/2 cup millet
- 1 tbsp fish oil



Instructions

- Bake salmon at 350°F for 12–15 minutes — or cook in a non-stick pan in a splash of water or broth 3–5 minutes per side until it flakes easily with fork. Remove bones.
- Simmer millet in 1 cup water for 20–25 minutes.
- Combine salmon and millet in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding fish oil.



Quick Tip:

Salmon provides heat-stable omega-3s (DHA & EPA), which support coat, joints, and brain health – even after cooking.

70. Rabbit & Parsnip Stew

A low-reactivity stew perfect for dogs with multiple sensitivities



Ingredients

- 1 cup rabbit meat
- 1 cup parsnip, peeled and diced
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Boil rabbit meat in water for 20–25 minutes until tender, then shred.
- Steam diced parsnips for 10–12 minutes, then mash.
- Combine shredded rabbit and mashed parsnip in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding olive oil.

Quick Tip:



Rabbit is a novel, lean protein often used in elimination diets because most dogs haven't been exposed to it. That makes it ideal for identifying food sensitivities or managing multiple protein allergies. It's also highly digestible and low in fat, which can benefit dogs with sensitive stomachs or skin issues.

71. Pork & Apple Mash

Sweet, savory, and simple



Ingredients

- 1 lb lean ground pork
- 1 apple, peeled and grated
- 1/2 cup white rice
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- In a skillet over medium heat, cook pork until browned (7–10 minutes). Drain fat.
- Cook rice in 1 cup water for 15–18 minutes until the water is absorbed.
- Combine cooked pork, grated apple, and rice in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding coconut oil.



Quick Tip:

Grate and freeze peeled apples in ice cube trays to quickly add without browning.

72. Tilapia & Green Bean Bowl

Packed with protein and fiber for sensitive stomachs



Ingredients

- 1 cup tilapia
- 1/2 cup chopped green beans
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Bake tilapia at 350°F for 12–15 minutes until it flakes easily — or cook in a non-stick pan in a splash of water or broth 2–3 minutes per side until it flakes easily with fork. Remove bones.
- Steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until just tender.
- Rinse quinoa, then simmer with 1 cup water for 15 minutes.
- Combine tilapia, green beans, and quinoa in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding olive oil.



Quick Tip:

Tilapia is low-fat and high-protein — a gentle fish option for dogs with digestive sensitivities.

73. Beef & Pumpkin Mix

Great for dogs who don't do well with poultry or grains



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 cup pure pumpkin purée
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- In a skillet over medium heat, cook beef until browned (7–10 minutes). Drain fat.
- Combine cooked beef and pumpkin purée in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding flaxseed oil.



Quick Tip:

Keep canned pure pumpkin on hand for fast, soothing meals during flare-ups.

74. Turkey & Butternut Squash Stew

Simple, sweet, rich in fiber and vitamin A, and a good fallback recipe for flare-ups



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1 cup butternut squash, steamed and mashed
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- In a skillet over medium heat, cook turkey until browned (7–10 minutes).
- Peel, dice, and steam squash for 10–12 minutes. Mash until smooth.
- Combine cooked turkey and mashed squash in a bowl.
- Cool slightly before adding coconut oil.

GRAIN-FREE MEALS

Some dogs do better without grains — especially those prone to inflammation, yeast overgrowth, itchy skin, or sensitive digestion. This section features **simple, balanced meals made entirely without grains**, using wholesome alternatives like root vegetables, lentils, or chickpeas for energy and fiber.

These are *not carb-free* but **grain-free**, keeping energy levels stable without triggering grain-related intolerances. They are:

- 100% free of rice, oats, barley, and wheat
- Designed to be anti-inflammatory and allergy-friendly
- Ideal for grain-sensitive dogs or those on rotational diets

Whether you're testing for food triggers or just want to keep things clean and species-appropriate, these **grain-free bowls** offer a nutritious, dog-approved way to mix things up.

75. Beef & Butternut Hash

Hearty and fiber-rich, great for energy and digestion



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 cup cubed butternut squash
- 1/2 cup chopped kale
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Cook the beef in a skillet over medium heat until browned. Drain excess fat.
- Steam butternut squash until fork-tender (about 10–12 minutes).
- Lightly steam kale and peas for 2–3 minutes.
- In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Stir in olive oil once cooled.

76. Turkey & Lentil Power Bowl

Protein-packed and great for blood sugar stability



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 cup green lentils
- 1/2 cup shredded zucchini
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat until no longer pink. Drain any excess fat.
- Cook lentils in 1½ cup water for 17–25 minutes until tender.
- Lightly steam zucchini for 2–3 minutes.
- Mix all ingredients in a large bowl, adding flaxseed oil once cooled.

77. Chicken & Chickpea Mash

A satisfying, hypoallergenic alternative to grain-based meals



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken thighs or breasts
- 1 cup canned chickpeas (rinsed and drained)
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Boil (8–16 minutes) or bake (15–25 minutes at 400°F) chicken until fully cooked, let rest for 15–25 minutes for easier shredding, then shred (easiest with a hand mixer).
- Steam carrots until soft (10 minutes). Mash lightly with chickpeas.
- Combine shredded chicken with chickpea-carrot mash.
- Stir in coconut oil once slightly cooled.



Quick Tip:

Mash the chickpeas coarsely for texture, or blend smoother for dogs with chewing issues.

78. Salmon & Pumpkin Glow-Up

Omega-3-rich and gut-soothing



Ingredients

- 1 cup salmon fillet
- 1 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tbsp fish oil



Instructions

- Bake salmon at 350°F for 12–15 minutes — or cook in a non-stick pan in a splash of water or broth 3–5 minutes per side until it flakes easily with fork. Remove bones.
- Lightly steam spinach for 2–3 minutes.
- In a bowl, combine salmon, pumpkin, and spinach.
- Once cooled to lukewarm add fish oil.



Quick Tip:

No fresh salmon? No problem. You can swap in canned salmon (in water, no salt added) — it's fully cooked, budget-friendly, and packed with soft, edible bones that provide a natural calcium boost. Just drain and flake it straight from the can.

79. Pork & Parsnip Bowl

A hearty, low-allergen option that supports skin and immune health



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground pork (lean)
- 1 cup diced parsnips
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tbsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- Cook pork in a skillet over medium heat until browned and fully cooked. Drain any excess fat.
- Steam parsnips until soft (about 10 minutes).
- Lightly steam spinach for 2–3 minutes until wilted.
- Combine all ingredients in a bowl, stir in hempseed oil once cooled.



Quick Tip:

For an extra gut-friendly twist, stir in a spoonful of puréed pumpkin — it's grain-free, rich in fiber, and helps support healthy digestion without altering the flavor too much.

80. Duck & Cauliflower Medley

Great for dogs with multiple protein or grain sensitivities



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground duck or duck breast/thighs
- 1 cup cauliflower florets, chopped
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Cook duck in a skillet (or bake breasts at 375°F until done, 14–20 minutes), then chop or shred.
- Steam cauliflower and carrots until very soft (8–10 minutes).
- Mash lightly or chop smaller if needed.
- Combine all ingredients, stir in olive oil once cooled.

Quick Tip:



Alternatively, boneless duck thighs or breasts can be gently boiled for 15–18 minutes until fully cooked and tender. The leftover cooking water makes a light, nutrient-rich broth — let it cool, skim any fat if needed, and freeze in silicone trays or small containers. Use a cube or two to moisten meals, boost hydration, or tempt picky eaters.

81. Chicken & Green Bean Sauté

A light, crunchy bowl perfect for rotation with heavier meals



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground chicken or diced boneless chicken meat
- 1 cup chopped green beans
- 1/2 cup shredded zucchini
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Cook chicken in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until fully cooked and no longer pink inside (or boil and shred boneless cuts).
- Steam green beans and zucchini for 3–5 minutes until tender.
- Combine all ingredients, stir in coconut oil once lukewarm.

82. Whitefish & Carrot Mash

Simple, hypoallergenic, and gentle on digestion thanks to fiber and light protein



Ingredients

- 1 cup whitefish (like cod or haddock)
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1/4 cup lentils
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Bake whitefish at 350°F for 12–15 minutes, or steam for 8–10 minutes, until it's fully opaque and flakes easily with a fork. Remove bones.
- Cook lentils in ¾ cup water for 17–25 minutes until tender.
- Steam carrots for 10–12 minutes until fork-tender, then mash lightly.
- Combine fish, carrots, and cooked lentils.
- Stir in olive oil after cooling.



Quick Tip:

Red lentils cook faster and break down more smoothly for sensitive tummies.

83. Beef & Zucchini Skillet

Simple, low-starch, and ideal for inflamed or itchy pups



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 cup shredded zucchini
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1 tbsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Cook beef in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until fully browned and no longer pink. Drain any excess fat.
- Lightly steam zucchini and spinach for 2–3 minutes.
- Combine all ingredients, stir in flaxseed oil after cooling.

84. Chicken & Broccoli Bowl

Great for digestion, low on carbs but rich in nutrients



Ingredients

- 1 lb boneless chicken thighs or ground chicken
- 1 cup chopped broccoli
- 1/2 cup grated carrots
- 1 tbsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Cook chicken in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until fully cooked and no longer pink inside (or boil and shred boneless cuts).
- Steam broccoli and carrots until soft (about 5–7 minutes).
- Mix all ingredients together, add coconut oil once slightly cooled.

85. Pork & Pumpkin Purée

Soothing and anti-inflammatory – perfect for upset stomachs



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground or diced pork (lean)
- 1 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1/2 cup diced zucchini
- 1 tbsp chia seeds (optional, for fiber, antioxidants and omega-3s)



Instructions

- Cook pork in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until browned and fully cooked. Drain any excess fat.
- Steam zucchini until soft, about 5 minutes.
- Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Add chia seeds and stir once mixture is slightly cooled.



Quick Tip:

Chia seeds expand and thicken when mixed into warm food – perfect for digestion and hydration. Just make sure to add them after cooking to protect their omega-3s.

86. Sardine & Veggie Medley

Packed with omega-3s and gentle greens, takes less than 10 minutes to make



Ingredients

- 1 can sardines in water (no salt)
- 1/2 cup green beans
- 1/2 cup grated raw carrot
- 1 tbsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- Mash sardines in a bowl.
- Lightly steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until just tender and bright green, and grate carrots raw.
- Combine all ingredients and stir in hempseed oil after cooling.



Quick Tip:

This recipe works great as a topper – just add a spoonful to a bland base for picky eaters.

RAW & RAW-INSPIRED MEALS

Curious about raw feeding, but not looking to go full caveman? This section makes it easy to tap into the benefits of raw – like better digestion, shinier coats, and healthier teeth – without overcomplicating mealtime.

Here, you'll find a mix of fully raw and lightly cooked recipes that follow the same smart structure: muscle meat, organ meat, fiber, and fat – no grains, no fillers, no guesswork.

These meals are:

- Clean, simple, and species-appropriate
- Rich in bioavailable nutrients from fresh, real food
- Designed for flexibility – great for full raw feeders or part-time dabblers

Whether you're just starting out or looking to upgrade your raw game with safe, well-balanced recipes, this section has you covered. Raw doesn't have to be all-or-nothing, so let's get wild – in the healthiest way possible.

87. Raw Beef & Spinach Bowl

A protein-rich raw meal loaded with iron and antioxidants



Ingredients

- 1 cup ground beef (preferably grass-fed)
- 1/2 cup chopped raw spinach
- 1/4 cup finely shredded carrots
- 1 tsp ground flaxseed
- 1 tsp fish oil



Instructions

- In a large bowl, combine raw ground beef, spinach, carrots, and flaxseed.
- Stir in fish oil and mix until fully combined.
- Serve immediately or refrigerate in airtight containers for up to 2 days.

88. Lightly Cooked Chicken & Zucchini Mix

A gently cooked meal inspired by raw ratios – perfect for beginners



Ingredients

- 1 cup boneless chicken thighs, lightly seared and chopped
- 1/2 cup grated raw zucchini
- 1 tbsp plain pumpkin purée
- 1 tsp ground chia seeds
- 1 tsp olive oil



Instructions

- Lightly sear chicken in a skillet (2–3 minutes per side) until just cooked on the outside but still pink inside. Let rest and chop finely.
- In a bowl, mix chicken with zucchini, pumpkin, and chia seeds.
- Stir in olive oil once the mixture is cool.

89. Raw Turkey and Carrot Bowl

A simple, budget-friendly raw meal with just three ingredients



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey
- 1/2 cup carrot finely shredded
- 1 tsp fish oil
- Optional: ½ tsp ground eggshell for calcium



Instructions

- Combine turkey and carrot in a large bowl.
- Mix well, then stir in oil and ground eggshell if using.
- If left over, store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 2 days, or freeze in portions for longer storage.

90. Raw Rabbit & Kale Medley

Novel protein with natural iron and a digestive boost



Ingredients

- 1 cup finely chopped raw rabbit meat (boneless)
- 1/2 cup chopped raw kale (massaged or pulsed)
- 1 tbsp pumpkin purée
- 1 tsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- In a large bowl, combine rabbit, kale, and pumpkin.
- Add flaxseed oil and mix until well combined.
- Serve immediately or refrigerate up to 2 days.
- Freeze extra portions for freshness.



Quick Tip:

You can substitute rabbit with turkey thigh meat or lean pork – both are milder proteins and easier to source while offering similar texture and digestibility.

91. Raw Turkey & Blueberry Bowl

A cool, antioxidant-packed meal with lean protein and anti-inflammatory perks



Ingredients

- 1 cup raw ground turkey
- 1/4 cup mashed blueberries (fresh or frozen, unsweetened)
- 2 tbsp chopped spinach
- 1 tsp coconut oil



Instructions

- In a bowl, combine ground turkey, mashed blueberries, and chopped spinach.
- Add coconut oil and mix thoroughly.
- Serve immediately or portion and freeze for up to 1 month.
- Thaw in fridge before serving.

92. Raw Egg & Yogurt Blend

A probiotic-rich topper or light meal



Ingredients

- 1 fresh egg (organic if possible)
- 2 tbsp plain, unsweetened yogurt
- 1 tbsp grated raw carrot
- 1/2 tsp ground flaxseed (optional)



Instructions

- Crack the raw egg into a bowl and beat lightly.
- Stir in yogurt, carrot, and flaxseed.
- Serve immediately as a light meal or use as a topper.
- Best served fresh — do not store leftovers.

93. Lightly Cooked Lamb & Carrot Bowl

Warm and comforting, but still simple and close to raw



Ingredients

- 1 cup ground lamb
- 1/2 cup steamed and mashed carrots
- 1/4 cup grated zucchini
- 1 tsp ground chia seeds
- 1 tsp olive oil



Instructions

- Lightly cook lamb in a skillet until just browned (about 5–6 minutes). Let cool.
- Mix with carrots, zucchini, and chia seeds.
- Stir in olive oil once the mixture is lukewarm.
- Serve or refrigerate for up to 3 days. Freeze if batching.

94. Raw Whitefish & Spinach Mix

Lean, hypoallergenic, and rich in nutrients



Ingredients

- 1 cup raw whitefish fillet (cod or haddock), chopped finely
- 1/4 cup finely chopped raw spinach
- 1 tbsp plain kefir or yogurt
- 1 tsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- In a mixing bowl, combine chopped raw fish and spinach.
- Stir in kefir and hempseed oil.
- Serve fresh or portion into silicone trays and freeze.
- Thaw in fridge before serving.



Quick Tip:

If using raw fish in homemade dog food, always use frozen (then fully defrosted) fish instead of fresh to reduce the risk of parasites. Freezing fish at -4°F for at least 7 days is considered a safe standard.

95. Raw Pork & Parsnip Bowl

Hearty and cooling – great for dogs who do better on “cooling” proteins



Ingredients

- 1 cup raw ground pork (lean)
- 1/2 cup cooked, mashed parsnip (cooled)
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tsp fish oil



Instructions

- In a bowl, combine raw pork with mashed parsnip and parsley.
- Stir in fish oil until evenly mixed.
- Serve immediately, store leftovers in fridge for up to 2 days, or freeze individual portions.



Quick Tip:

Parsnips are naturally sweet and fibrous – if your dog's not a fan at first, try blending the mash with a splash of bone broth for a smoother texture and more enticing aroma.

96. Lightly Cooked Duck & Pumpkin Medley

Gently warmed and easy to digest, great for raw-curious pups



Ingredients

- 1 cup ground duck or boneless duck breast, seared
- 1/2 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1/4 cup chopped kale, lightly steamed
- 1 tsp coconut oil



Instructions

- Sear duck in a skillet until just cooked on the outside (2–3 min per side). Let cool and chop finely.
- Mix with pumpkin and kale.
- Add coconut oil and stir once the mixture has cooled to lukewarm.
- Serve immediately, store leftovers in fridge for up to 2 days, or freeze individual portions.



Quick Tip:

Duck not in your local store? Chicken thighs or dark turkey meat are good substitutes – they have similar fat content and rich flavor. If using chicken, opt for thighs rather than breasts for better nutrient balance and moisture.

97. Raw Chicken Gizzard & Pumpkin Mix

A mineral-rich, budget-friendly meal full of taurine and gut-friendly fiber



Ingredients

- 1 cup raw chicken gizzards, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley or spinach
- 1 tsp ground flaxseed



Instructions

- Rinse and trim gizzards, then chop very finely or pulse in a food processor.
- In a bowl, mix gizzards with pumpkin, greens, and flaxseed.
- Serve immediately, store leftovers in fridge for up to 2 days, or freeze individual portions.



Quick Tip:

If your dog isn't used to raw gizzards, try searing them lightly first (1–2 minutes per side), then chopping – this keeps the texture while easing the transition.

98. Lightly Cooked Gizzard & Veggic Bowl

High in protein and texture, with gentle veggies for balance



Ingredients

- 1 cup chicken gizzards, seared and chopped
- 1/2 cup steamed zucchini
- 1/4 cup grated raw carrot
- 1 tsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- Sear whole gizzards in a skillet for 4–5 minutes per side until firm but still tender. Let cool, then chop finely.
- Steam zucchini for 3–4 minutes until soft.
- In a bowl, combine gizzards, zucchini, and carrot.
- Stir in hempseed oil once mixture is lukewarm.
- Serve immediately, store leftovers in fridge for up to 2 days, or freeze individual portions.



Quick Tip:

If your dog isn't used to raw gizzards, try searing them lightly first (1–2 minutes per side), then chopping – this keeps the texture while easing the transition.

LOW-CALORIE MEALS

Got a pudgy pup or a senior dog who prefers naps to fetch? These lighter meals are here to help. Designed for dogs who need to drop a few pounds or simply maintain a healthy weight, these recipes trim the calories without trimming the joy.

Each bowl is:

- Lower in calories but still full of flavor and nutrition
- Made with lean proteins, fibrous veggies, and healthy fats in just the right amount
- Ideal for overweight pups, less active seniors, or snack-loving couch potatoes

Feeding lighter doesn't mean feeding less — it just means feeding smarter. Let's cut the calories, but keep the wiggle!

99. Turkey & Green Bean Trim Bowl

Lean and fiber-rich for dogs watching their waistlines



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey (lean)
- 1 cup chopped green beans
- 1/2 cup grated carrots
- 1 tbsp olive oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until fully cooked. Drain excess fat if any.
- Lightly steam green beans for 3–5 minutes until just tender.
- Mix cooked turkey, green beans, and carrots in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once cooled to lukewarm.

100. Whitefish & Zucchini Slim Mix

Low-fat, gentle on the tummy, and loaded with lean protein



Ingredients

- 1 cup whitefish fillet (cod or haddock), baked or steamed
- 1/2 cup grated zucchini
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Bake whitefish at 350°F for 12–15 minutes or steam for 8–10 minutes until fully opaque and flakes easily. Let cool and flake.
- Lightly steam zucchini for 2–3 minutes until just tender.
- Combine flaked fish, zucchini, and parsley in a bowl.
- Stir in flaxseed oil once cooled to lukewarm.

101. Egg & Broccoli Light Bowl

A satisfying, protein-rich option with minimal calories



Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup finely chopped broccoli
- 1/4 cup grated carrot
- 1 tsp olive oil



Instructions

- Lightly steam broccoli for 3–4 minutes until just tender.
- In a nonstick skillet, scramble eggs over medium-low heat without adding oil or butter (you can add a little splash of water or broth if needed). Stir constantly to prevent sticking. Let cool slightly.
- Mix scrambled eggs, broccoli, and carrot in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once cooled.

102. Chicken & Cauliflower Fit Bowl

Low-cal and packed with fiber, perfect for a filling meal



Ingredients

- 1 cup boneless chicken breast, boiled and shredded
- 1 cup riced cauliflower (lightly steamed)
- 1 tbsp plain pumpkin purée
- 1 tsp hempseed oil



Instructions

- Bake or boil chicken for 15–18 minutes until cooked through. Let cool and shred (easiest with a hand mixer).
- Lightly steam riced cauliflower for 3–4 minutes until just tender.
- In a large bowl, combine shredded chicken, cauliflower, and pumpkin.
- Stir in hempseed oil once cooled to lukewarm.

103. Sardine & Cucumber Lean Bowl

Crunchy, cooling, and omega-rich with very few calories, done in under 10 minutes



Ingredients

- 1 can sardines in water (no salt), drained and mashed
- 1/4 cup finely chopped cucumber (peeled, seeds removed)
- 1 tbsp grated carrot
- 1 tsp fish oil



Instructions

- In a bowl, mash sardines and mix with cucumber and carrot.
- Stir in fish oil until evenly combined.
- Serve fresh or refrigerate up to 2 days. Do not freeze due to cucumber texture.



Quick Tip:

Sardines can be substituted with canned mackerel in water (no salt) for similar omega-3 benefits.

104. Tilapia & Spinach Slim Bowl

Light, lean, and packed with protein for weight-conscious pups



Ingredients

- 1 cup boneless tilapia fillet, baked or steamed
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach
- 1/4 cup grated zucchini
- 1 tsp olive oil



Instructions

- Bake tilapia at 350°F for 12–15 minutes or steam until it flakes easily. Let cool and flake.
- Lightly steam spinach and zucchini for 2–3 minutes.
- Mix fish, spinach, and zucchini in a bowl.
- Stir in olive oil once cooled.

105. Ground Turkey & Cabbage Fit Bowl

High fiber and low fat to support healthy weight goals



Ingredients

- 1 lb ground turkey (lean)
- 1 cup shredded cabbage
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 1 tsp flaxseed oil



Instructions

- Cook turkey in a skillet over medium heat for 7–10 minutes until fully cooked. Drain excess fat if any.
- Lightly steam cabbage and carrots for 4–5 minutes until just tender.
- Mix turkey, cabbage, and carrots in a bowl.
- Stir in flaxseed oil once cooled.

106. Egg & Veggic Lean Bowl

Protein-rich and satisfying, with fiber to support digestion and fullness



Ingredients

- 2 whole eggs
- 1/2 cup chopped steamed broccoli
- 1/4 cup mashed steamed pumpkin (or unsweetened from a can)
- 1 tsp chia seeds



Instructions

- Lightly steam broccoli until tender (about 3–4 minutes).
- In a nonstick skillet, scramble eggs over medium-low heat without adding oil or butter (you can add a little splash of water or broth if needed). Stir constantly to prevent sticking. Let cool slightly.
- Combine scrambled eggs with broccoli, pumpkin, and chia seeds in a bowl.

107. Chicken & Carrot Crunch Bowl

Low in fat but high in crunch and flavor



Ingredients

- 1 cup boneless chicken breast, boiled and chopped
- 1/2 cup shredded raw carrots
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 1 tsp olive oil



Instructions

- Boil chicken for 15–18 minutes until cooked through. Let cool and chop.
- In a bowl, combine chicken, carrots, and celery.
- Stir in olive oil once mixture is cool.



Quick Tip:

No celery? Swap it with chopped green beans for the same crunch and calories.

108. Whitefish & Parsnip Slim Bowl

Mild, light, and fiber-filled for weight control support



Ingredients

- 1 cup boneless whitefish (cod, haddock, or pollock), baked or steamed
- 1/2 cup steamed mashed parsnip
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tsp fish oil



Instructions

- Bake whitefish at 350°F for 12–15 minutes — or cook in a non-stick pan in a splash of water or broth 3–4 minutes per side until it flakes easily with fork. Remove bones.
- Steam parsnips for 10–12 minutes until soft, then mash.
- In a bowl, mix flaked fish, mashed parsnip, and parsley.
- Stir in fish oil once cooled to lukewarm.

TREATS, TOPPERS & EXTRAS

This chapter is all about the little things that make tails wag harder — healthy homemade treats, nutrient-rich toppers, and simple broths that add flavor, hydration, or a boost of nutrition to any meal.

These recipes are:

- Free from artificial additives and fillers
- Made with easy-to-source ingredients
- Quick to prepare and freezer-friendly

109. Peanut Butter Banana Bites

Healthy, freezer-friendly treats packed with flavor



Ingredients

- 1 ripe banana, mashed
- 1/4 cup natural peanut butter (xylitol-free)
- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1 tbsp coconut flour (optional, for texture)



Instructions

- Mash the banana thoroughly in a bowl.
- Add the peanut butter, rolled oats, and coconut flour (if using), and mix until combined.
- Roll the mixture into small balls, about 1 inch in diameter.
- Place the bites on a parchment-lined tray and freeze for at least 30 minutes until firm.
- Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.

110. Almond Butter Bliss Balls

Nutty treats for an energy boost



Ingredients

- 1/2 cup almond butter (unsweetened, no xylitol)
- 1/4 cup coconut flour
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 tbsp honey (optional)



Instructions

- Stir together the almond butter, coconut flour, chia seeds, and honey (if using) until a soft dough forms.
- Roll into small balls about 1 inch in size.
- Place on a tray and refrigerate until firm (about 30 minutes).
- Store in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 5 days.



Quick Tip:

Swap almond butter for peanut butter if needed — just ensure it is xylitol-free!

111. Sweet Potato Chews

Naturally sweet and chewy snacks



Ingredients

- 1 large sweet potato, sliced into thin rounds or strips



Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 250°F.
- Wash and dry the sweet potato, then slice into 1/4-inch rounds or strips.
- Arrange the slices on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
- Bake for 2.5–3 hours, flipping halfway through, until chewy and slightly dried.
- Let cool completely and store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Quick Tip:



Thinner slices will bake faster and become crispier, while thicker slices stay chewier. Make extra (as many slices as you can fit on your baking sheets) and bake them longer for a crispier finish — they'll store longer, and yes, you can totally steal a few for yourself. They're just sweet potatoes, after all. Same applies to the apple chips below!

112. Apple Crunch Chips

Light, sweet, and crunchy snacks with anti-inflammatory, antibacterial and antioxidant effect



Ingredients

- 1 large apple (cored, thinly sliced)
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon (optional)



Instructions

- Preheat oven to 225°F.
- Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
- Arrange apple slices in a single layer and sprinkle lightly with cinnamon if desired.
- Bake for 2–3 hours, flipping halfway, until dry and crisp.
- Let cool completely before storing in an airtight container.

113. Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies

Tasty treats that freshen breath



Ingredients

- 1/2 cup pumpkin purée (unsweetened)
- 1 egg
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 cup whole wheat or oat flour



Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- In a bowl, mix together the pumpkin, egg, parsley, and flour to form a dough.
- Roll out the dough and cut into small cookie shapes.
- Place the cookies on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 15–18 minutes until firm.
- Let cool completely before storing in an airtight container.



Quick Tip:

Bake an extra 5 minutes for crunchier cookies.

114. Veggie Chips

Crispy, colorful veggie snacks



Ingredients

- Thin slices of carrots, zucchini, or beets
- 1 tsp olive oil (optional)



Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 225°F.
- Slice the veggies thinly and toss lightly with olive oil if using.
- Arrange the slices on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
- Bake for 2–3 hours, flipping once, until crisp.
- Cool completely before storing in an airtight container.



Quick Tip:

Using a dehydrator if available instead of the oven makes them even crispier and longer-lasting.

115. Hydration Boost Ice Cubes

Simple flavor cubes to encourage hydration



Ingredients

- 1 cup low-sodium bone broth
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley



Instructions

- Whisk together the bone broth, turmeric, and parsley in a small bowl.
- Pour the mixture into ice cube molds.
- Freeze until solid, then pop cubes into a freezer bag for easy access.

Quick Tip:



To boost turmeric absorption, add a teeny tiny pinch of black pepper. Add a cube to meals or offer solo on hot days. In warm weather or for multi-dog households, double or triple the batch and freeze in advance – you'll thank yourself later when hydration is just a cube away.

116. Quick Rehydration Gravy

Simple and delicious hydration boost



Ingredients

- 1/2 cup low-sodium broth
- 1 tbsp unsweetened pumpkin
- 1 tsp nutritional yeast



Instructions

- In a bowl, whisk together the broth, pumpkin, and nutritional yeast until smooth.
- Drizzle 2–3 tablespoons over meals to moisten and entice picky eaters.
- Store refrigerated for up to 3 days or double or triple the recipe and freeze in silicone trays.

117. Homemade Bone Broth for Dogs

Gut-soothing and highly nutritious



Ingredients

- 2–3 beef marrow bones or chicken backs
- 10 cups water
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar



Instructions

- Place the bones in a large pot or slow cooker and add the water and apple cider vinegar.
- Simmer on low for 12–24 hours, topping up with water if needed to keep bones covered.
- Strain the broth into jars and let cool completely.
- Refrigerate for up to 5 days, or freeze in small portions for longer storage.



Quick Tip:

Remove the hardened fat layer after chilling if your dog needs a low-fat diet. Use bone broth as a nourishing topper over your dog's regular meals, or serve on its own as a gentle, hydrating snack – especially helpful for picky eaters or dogs recovering from illness. You can also mix it into dry food to boost moisture or freeze it into ice cube trays for cool treats on hot days.

118. Egg & Herb Meal Booster

Protein and flavor enhancer for any meal



Ingredients

- 2 large eggs
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- 1 tbsp chopped dill or basil (optional)



Instructions

- Scramble the eggs in a nonstick skillet over medium-low heat until fully cooked but still moist.
- Stir in the chopped herbs while eggs are still warm.
- Cool to serve or store refrigerated for up to 3 days.



Quick Tip:

Portion small amounts into silicone molds and freeze for grab-and-go meal toppers.

119. Sardine Sprinkle Topper

Omega-rich meal booster



Ingredients

- 1 can sardines in water (no salt), mashed
- 1 tbsp ground flaxseed
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley



Instructions

- Mash the sardines in a small bowl.
- Stir in the flaxseed and chopped parsley until evenly combined.
- Store refrigerated in a sealed container for up to 3 days, or freeze portions for later.
- Spoon 1–2 teaspoons over meals as needed.

120. Crunchy Parsley & Coconut Dental Bites

Freshens breath and helps reduce tartar with every chew



Ingredients

- 1/2 cup coconut flour
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp water
- Optional: 1 tbsp finely grated carrot (for texture and mild sweetness)



Instructions

- Preheat oven to 325°F.
- In a bowl, mix coconut flour, parsley, and grated carrot (if using).
- Add the egg and water, stirring to form a firm dough.
- Roll dough into small balls and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet.
- Bake for 20–25 minutes, until dry and slightly golden.
- Let cool completely before storing in an airtight container for up to 1 week, or freeze for longer.



Quick Tip:

Coconut flour is naturally antimicrobial, and parsley helps freshen breath — a winning combo for dental health.

121. Green Boost Topper

Antioxidant and fiber booster



Ingredients

- 1 cup spinach
- 1/2 cup zucchini
- 2 tbsp hemp seeds



Instructions

- Steam zucchini 5–7 minutes until tender, at the end add spinach to steam lightly.
- Combine the spinach, zucchini, and hemp seeds in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth.
- Refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 3 days.
- Add 1 tablespoon to meals for a green nutrition boost.

122. Golden Gut Dust

Anti-inflammatory sprinkle for digestion, anti-inflammatory, and joint support benefits



Ingredients

- 2 tbsp ground turmeric
- 1 tbsp ground ginger
- 1 tbsp unsweetened coconut flakes, finely shredded
- 1/2 tsp black pepper



Instructions

- Mix all ingredients in a small jar or container.
- Store in a cool, dry place.
- Sprinkle 1/4 teaspoon over meals no more than once daily.



Quick Tip:

Use sparingly and introduce slowly over a few days to avoid overwhelming your dog's system with strong spices. Coconut flakes can be substituted with ground flaxseed, oat flower, or ground chia seeds.

PART 5: TOOLS, CHARTS AND REFERENCES

This section is all about providing clarity and making your life easier. Whether you're planning meals, tracking symptoms, or figuring out how much to feed, these pages are designed to support you with clear, printable tools and quick-reference charts.

Feel free to jot directly in the book, copy pages at your local print shop, or scan and print them at home if you'd rather keep your original clean. And if you fall in love with these tools (we hope you do!), keep an eye out for our companion meal planners and resources designed to go hand-in-paw with this cookbook.

Looking for more? At the very end of the book, you'll find **QR codes that link to downloadable versions** of these tools, along with access to our **free companion printables** and the full **Joyful Bowl Series** — including dedicated meal planners and trackers to help you stay organized week after week.

We hope these resources make your homemade journey smoother, simpler, and even more rewarding.



Feeding Chart by Weight & Life Stage

Use this chart to estimate your dog's **daily food needs** based on weight and life stage — specifically for **homemade, whole-food meals**. Just like babies, **puppies thrive on smaller, more frequent meals** (3–4 times daily) to fuel their rapid growth. **Adults usually eat twice a day**, and **seniors may do better with two lighter meals**, especially if digestion and/or mobility slows with age.

These recommendations are tailored for **fresh, home-cooked meals** made with whole ingredients — not dry kibble or commercial wet foods. They assume a typical moisture level and average caloric density of **300–400 kcal per cup**, which reflects a mix of lean proteins, vegetables, and healthy fats. Keep in mind that your dog's needs may vary based on activity level, body condition, breed, and health status.

No need to stress about perfection — **balance happens over time**, not in every single bowl. Let this chart be your starting point, and adjust as you observe what works best for your dog.

Dog's Weight	Puppy (2–12 months)	Adult (1–7 years)	Senior (7+ years)
5–10 lbs	1–1.5 cups	0.5–1 cup	0.4–0.75 cup
11–20 lbs	1.5–2.5 cups	1–1.5 cups	0.75–1.25 cups
21–40 lbs	2.5–4 cups	1.5–2.5 cups	1.25–2 cups
41–60 lbs	4–5.5 cups	2.5–3.5 cups	2–3 cups
61–80 lbs	5.5–7 cups	3.5–4.5 cups	2.75–3.75 cups
81–100 lbs	7–8.5 cups	4.5–5.5 cups	3.5–4.5 cups
100+ lbs	Add 1/2 cup per 10 lbs	Add 1/3 cup per 10 lbs	Add 1/4 cup per 10 lbs



Sample Weekly Meal Plan

To help you (and your dog) ease into the swing of home-cooked meals, I figured it made way more sense to start with a sample plan for **Week 1 of the Reset** — not some random week when you’ve already hit your stride. This is the “training wheels” phase: simple recipes, gentle ingredients, and a little structure to help you get going without stress.

You do not need to cook something new every day. Pick 3 or 4 meals out of the table below and make a batch of each. Choose 1 or 2 treats or toppers for the week. For example, you can follow the plan on the next page. Then just rotate, refrigerate, freeze, and reheat as needed. Your dog won’t mind the repetition — they’ll just be thrilled it’s real food.

Each recipe listed under **Main Meal** also notes the **chapter of the book** it comes from (like Limited Ingredient, Functional, or Slow Cooker Recipes), so you can easily find the full version when you’re ready to cook.

No need to start a new life on Monday either — although it might help with keeping structure.

No gourmet skills required, no fussy schedules — just a doable, flexible plan using recipes straight from this book. Adjust portions based on your dog’s weight and appetite, and remember: **balance happens over time, not in every bowl.**

Week 1 of the Joyful Bowl Reset — Sample Meals

Day	Main Meal	Topper or Treat
Monday	Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée (<i>Limited Ingredient Meals</i>)	Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies (<i>Toppers, Treats & Extras</i>)
Tuesday	Chicken & Pumpkin Soother (<i>Functional – Digestive Ease</i>)	Quick Rehydration Gravy (<i>Toppers, Treats & Extras</i>)
Wednesday	Beef & Zucchini Skillet (<i>Grain-Free</i>)	Hydration Boost Ice Cubes (<i>Toppers, Treats & Extras</i>)
Thursday	Whitefish & Rice Reset Bowl (<i>Functional – Digestive Ease</i>)	Green Boost Topper (<i>Toppers, Treats & Extras</i>)
Friday	Ground Turkey & Cabbage Fit Bowl (<i>Low-Calorie</i>)	Peanut Butter Banana Bites (<i>Toppers, Treats & Extras</i>)
Saturday	Chicken & Pumpkin Comfort Bowl (<i>Slow Cooker & Instant Pot</i>)	Sardine Sprinkle Topper (<i>Toppers, Treats & Extras</i>)
Sunday	Egg & Oat Bedtime Bowl (<i>Functional – Calming</i>)	Golden Gut Dust (<i>Toppers, Treats & Extras</i>)

Weekly Meal Planner

Use this planner to map out your dog's meals, treats, and notes for the week. On this page, you'll find a filled-in sample to show how easy it is to rotate meals and keep track of what's working. On the next page, you'll find a **blank version** — perfect for photocopying or printing so you can reuse it as often as you like.

And if you love having everything neatly laid out, keep an eye out for our **Meal Planners and Grocery Lists** from the **Joyful Bowl Series** — available separately — with shopping lists, space for notes, and a few bonus tips to keep you (and your pup) on track.

Day	Main Meal 1	Main Meal 2	Topper or Treat	Notes
Monday	Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée	Chicken & Pumpkin Soother	Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies	<i>Prepped Monday meals in one batch</i>
Tuesday	Chicken & Pumpkin Soother	Whitefish & Rice Reset Bowl	Quick Rehydration Gravy	<i>Used our own leftover rice from Indian yesterday</i>
Wednesday	Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée (leftovers)	Chicken & Pumpkin Soother (leftovers)	Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies	<i>Need to buy more canned pumpkin</i>
Thursday	Whitefish & Rice Reset Bowl	Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée	Peanut Butter Banana Bites	<i>Unfroze Monday leftovers. Rex loved the Bites treat. will repeat.</i>
Friday	Chicken & Pumpkin Soother (batch-cooked)	Whitefish & Rice Reset Bowl	Quick Rehydration Gravy	<i>Rehydration gravy added for hydration</i>
Saturday	Whitefish & Rice Reset Bowl	Egg & Oat Bedtime Bowl	Pumpkin & Parsley Breath Cookies	<i>Calming meal before bedtime works!</i>
Sunday	Turkey, Pumpkin & Millet Purée	Egg & Oat Bedtime Bowl	None (light day)	<i>Easy day, only unfroze previous meals</i>

WEEKLY MEAL PLANNER

Day	Main Meal 1	Main Meal 2	Topper or Treat	Notes
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				



Pantry Checklists & Shopping List Template

Your Low-Stress Start Line

You don't need a pet food lab to start cooking for your dog — just a few basics and a game plan. Most of the recipes in this book call for everyday ingredients you can find at a regular grocery store, or may already have at home.

To make stocking up easier, we've included two versions of the pantry checklist:

- **By Storage Type** — perfect for organizing what's in your fridge, freezer, or pantry shelves.
- **By Food Category** — ideal if you like to think in terms of proteins, veggies, and grains.

Each list includes notes on frozen, canned, or pet-store-only items, so you know exactly what to grab and where to find it. Use whichever checklist fits your planning style best — or both, if you're feeling fancy.

You'll also find a **Shopping List Template** next — a blank, categorized list you can fill in with ingredients for your weekly meals, treats, or batch-cooking sessions. It's printer-friendly, reusable, and designed to make your grocery run as smooth as possible.

And again, if you love having all your planning tools in one place, keep an eye out for our full **Meal Planners and Shopping Lists** from the **Joyful Bowl Series**, available separately. Designed for ease and organization, they make weekly dog-food prep more streamlined and stress-free.

Start with a quick pantry sweep and a light shopping trip if needed. A handful of proteins, a few good veggies, and some pantry staples are all it takes to get rolling.

Pantry Checklist (by Storage Type)

Fridge & Freezer

- ☐ Ground turkey (can be frozen raw or cooked)
- ☐ Ground chicken or boneless thighs/breasts (freeze in portions)
- ☐ Chicken gizzards (freeze raw or lightly cooked; budget-friendly)
- ☐ Ground beef or stewing beef (lean cuts preferred)
- ☐ Ground lamb, pork, or duck (optional proteins; freeze in portions)
- ☐ Raw or cooked fish fillets – cod, tilapia, whitefish (freeze in portions)
- ☐ Boneless salmon fillets (skin-on fine; wild-caught preferred if possible)
- ☐ Chicken livers, beef heart, or rabbit meat (organ meats; freeze raw or cooked)
- ☐ Eggs (store in fridge, do not freeze raw in shells)
- ☐ Cooked grains (rice, millet, quinoa – freeze in portioned bags)
- ☐ Steamed veggies (carrots, green beans, etc. – cool before freezing)

Canned, Dried & Long Shelf Life

- ☐ Canned pumpkin purée (unsweetened, not pumpkin pie filling)
- ☐ Canned sardines in water (no salt added, with bones)
- ☐ Canned salmon or mackerel (no salt, in water; bones included)
- ☐ Rolled oats (plain; not instant)
- ☐ Brown rice, white rice, millet, quinoa, lentils (dry)
- ☐ Coconut flour, oat flour, or chickpea flour
- ☐ Ground flaxseed (store in fridge once opened)
- ☐ Chia seeds (long shelf life)
- ☐ Dried parsley or basil
- ☐ Bone broth (low sodium, or powdered/dried; check ingredients)
- ☐ Apple cider vinegar (for bone broth or digestion)
- ☐ Nutritional yeast (optional topper; high in B vitamins)
- ☐ Turmeric and ginger (ground; use in small amounts)
- ☐ Dehydrated seaweed (optional; for toppers)
- ☐ Coconut flakes (unsweetened; optional for texture)

Fresh Produce & Perishables

- ☐ Carrots (can be chopped, shredded, or steamed)
- ☐ Zucchini (grate raw or lightly steam; freeze raw if needed)
- ☐ Sweet potatoes (steam or roast; mash or cube)
- ☐ Butternut squash (can be bought cubed; steam and freeze portions)
- ☐ Green beans (fresh or frozen; steam before use)
- ☐ Broccoli (chop and lightly steam)
- ☐ Kale or spinach (fresh or frozen; lightly steam before adding)
- ☐ Apples (cored, no seeds; serve raw or grated)
- ☐ Bananas (use ripe; mash for treats or calming bowls)
- ☐ Parsnips (steam and mash; freeze if prepped)
- ☐ Blueberries (fresh or frozen; unsweetened)
- ☐ Fresh herbs like parsley, basil, dill (chop or freeze in broth cubes)

Oils & Fats

- ☐ Flaxseed oil (refrigerate; delicate ALA omega-3s)
- ☐ Fish oil (store in fridge; check for pet-safe labeling)
- ☐ Coconut oil (stable at room temp)
- ☐ Olive oil (extra virgin preferred)
- ☐ Hempseed oil (pet stores or online; refrigerate once opened)

Pantry Checklist (by Food Category)

Proteins

- ☐ Ground turkey (freeze raw or cooked)
- ☐ Ground chicken or boneless thighs/breasts
- ☐ Chicken gizzards (budget-friendly, freeze well)
- ☐ Ground beef or stewing beef (lean)
- ☐ Ground lamb, pork, or duck (optional proteins)
- ☐ Boneless salmon fillets (skin-on fine)
- ☐ Cod, haddock, or whitefish fillets (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ Chicken livers, beef heart, rabbit (organ meats; freeze)
- ☐ Eggs (refrigerate, do not freeze raw in shells)
- ☐ Canned sardines or salmon (in water, no salt, with bones)
- ☐ Canned mackerel (in water, no salt)

Vegetables & Fruits

- ☐ Carrots (raw, shredded, steamed, or frozen)
- ☐ Zucchini (grated raw or lightly steamed)
- ☐ Sweet potatoes (steam, mash, or cube)
- ☐ Butternut squash (cubed or mashed; freeze well)
- ☐ Green beans (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ Broccoli (lightly steamed)
- ☐ Spinach or kale (fresh or frozen; steam before using)
- ☐ Apples (no seeds; serve raw or grated)
- ☐ Bananas (ripe)
- ☐ Parsnips (steamed and mashed)
- ☐ Blueberries (fresh or frozen, unsweetened)
- ☐ Fresh herbs: parsley, basil, dill

Grains, Seeds & Legumes

- ☐ Brown rice, white rice, millet, quinoa (dry or cooked)
- ☐ Rolled oats (not instant)
- ☐ Chickpeas or lentils (dry or canned; no salt)
- ☐ Chia seeds (long shelf life)
- ☐ Ground flaxseed (refrigerate after opening)
- ☐ Coconut flour, oat flour, chickpea flour

Oils & Add-Ins

- ☐ Flaxseed oil (refrigerate)
- ☐ Fish oil (pet-safe; refrigerate)
- ☐ Coconut oil (room temp stable)
- ☐ Olive oil (extra virgin preferred)
- ☐ Hempseed oil (refrigerate after opening)
- ☐ Nutritional yeast (B-vitamin booster)
- ☐ Bone broth (low sodium, or dried; check label)
- ☐ Pumpkin purée (unsweetened, canned or fresh)
- ☐ Apple cider vinegar (used in broth or digestion support)
- ☐ Turmeric, ginger (ground spices; use sparingly)
- ☐ Unsweetened coconut flakes
- ☐ Dried seaweed (optional)

SHOPPING LIST TEMPLATE

Category	Items (check as you go)
Proteins	☐ ☐ ☐
Veggies & Fruits	☐ ☐ ☐
Carbs (Grains, Lentils, etc.)	☐ ☐ ☐
Fats & Oils	☐ ☐
Add-ins & Supplements	☐ ☐
Frozen/Canned Items	☐ ☐ ☐
Other	☐ ☐ ☐



Ingredient Substitution Guide

No butternut squash on hand? No worries. Your dog won't judge.

This guide is here to help you make smart, dog-safe swaps — whether you're dealing with allergies, rotating proteins, or just forgot to grab quinoa (again). Organized by food category, these substitutions work beautifully across most recipes in this book. Just remember to introduce new ingredients slowly and watch how your dog responds — even the best swap needs a test run.

Ingredient	Substitution(s)	When to Use / Notes
Proteins		
Ground beef	Ground turkey, lean pork, ground lamb	For lower fat, novel proteins, or flavor rotation
Chicken breast	Turkey thigh, lean pork, duck breast	Swap if avoiding poultry or needing higher fat content
Salmon	Canned mackerel, sardines (in water, no salt)	All rich in omega-3s — choose based on cost and availability
Whitefish (cod, haddock)	Tilapia, flounder, canned sardines	Gentle on digestion and easy to cook
Rabbit	Turkey thigh, pork loin	Lean alternatives if rabbit is hard to find
Duck	Turkey thigh, dark chicken meat	Similar fat profile and flavor
Liver (chicken or beef)	Heart meat, kidney, or gizzard	Nutrient-dense organs — feed in moderation
Vegetables & Fruits		
Pumpkin purée	Mashed sweet potato, butternut squash	Similar fiber and digestive benefits
Sweet potato	Butternut squash, pumpkin	Cooked and mashed — GI soothing
Zucchini	Cucumber (peeled), yellow squash	Fresh or lightly steamed
Spinach	Chopped kale, Swiss chard	Steam to reduce oxalates if feeding often
Carrots	Parsnips, sweet potatoes	Good source of fiber and beta-carotene
Apples (cored)	Pears, blueberries, banana	Make sure seeds are removed — offer raw or cooked
Blueberries	Strawberries, blackberries (unsweetened)	All offer antioxidant benefits

Grains & Grain-Free Carbs		
Brown rice	Quinoa, millet, oats	Gluten-free options for variety
Oats	Quinoa flakes, cooked rice	Good for gentle digestion and fiber
Quinoa	Millet, rice, oats	Protein-rich, gluten-free
Millet	Oats, quinoa	Cooked thoroughly for easy digestion
Oils & Fats		
Flaxseed oil	Hempseed oil, fish oil (if tolerated)	All are omega-3 rich — stir in after cooling
Coconut oil	Olive oil, hempseed oil	Flavor preference or availability
Fish oil	Flaxseed oil, sardine oil	Excellent for skin, coat, and joints — store refrigerated
Olive oil	Coconut oil, hempseed oil	Good neutral oil — use in moderation
Toppers & Add-ins		
Chia seeds	Ground flaxseed, hemp seeds	For fiber, healthy fats, and omega-3s
Parsley	Basil, cilantro (small amounts)	Fresh breath and antioxidant benefits
Pumpkin purée	Sweet potato, butternut squash	Fiber-rich and gentle on the gut
Broth (low-sodium)	Unsalted homemade broth, bone broth	Hydration and flavor boost
Yogurt (plain, unsweetened)	Kefir, goat milk	Probiotic-rich — avoid added sugars

Quick-Glance Symptoms & Food Reactions Chart

Is your dog itchy? Gassy? Glaring at the food bowl like it personally offended them?

Sometimes, symptoms like these can be linked to what's in their bowl. This chart is designed to help you spot potential food-related triggers behind common issues — and guide you toward simple, practical adjustments using meals from this book.

Of course, symptoms can have many causes, and this chart isn't a replacement for veterinary advice. If your dog shows signs of illness, pain, or persistent discomfort, please consult your veterinarian. This is just a helpful tool to get you thinking — and maybe nudge you toward that missing link your dog's been trying to communicate (with dramatic sighs and paw licks).

Symptom	Possible Dietary Cause(s)	Suggested Fix / Adjustment
Itchy skin	Chicken, beef, wheat, dairy	Try novel protein (duck, rabbit), eliminate common allergens, add omega-3s
Gas/bloating	Sudden diet change, legumes, dairy	Switch to gentle digestible meals, add pumpkin or slippery elm
Loose stools	High fat, dairy, too many new foods	Simplify diet, add white rice, reduce fat
Ear infections	Food sensitivities (esp. grains or poultry)	Elimination diet, try grain-free or novel protein
Excessive shedding, dull coat	Nutrient imbalance, low omega-3s, lack of healthy fats	Add fish oil, flaxseed oil, ensure balanced diet
Bad breath	Poor digestion, dental buildup, fish-heavy diet	Add parsley, brush teeth, rotate proteins
Red, goopy eyes	Inflammation, chicken sensitivity	Try turkey or fish, reduce inflammatory ingredients
Excessive licking of paws	Food sensitivities (esp. poultry, grains)	Try novel protein, eliminate common allergens
Frequent vomiting	Rich/fatty foods, sudden diet change	Feed smaller meals, lower fat content, use gentle recipes
Frequent scooting	Anal gland issues, low fiber	Add fiber (pumpkin, green beans), check with vet if persistent
Dry, flaky skin	Lack of omega-3s, dehydration	Add fish oil, increase water intake, consider hydration cubes
Low energy	Unbalanced meals, low protein or iron	Add iron-rich proteins (liver, beef heart), ensure calorie needs are met



Glossary of Terms

Add-Ins: Supplemental ingredients like oils, seeds, or herbs added to boost nutrition, flavor, or variety in your dog's bowl.

Allergen: An ingredient that can trigger an adverse immune response. Common dog allergens include chicken, beef, wheat, soy, and dairy.

Antioxidants: Compounds that help protect cells from damage. Found in colorful fruits and vegetables like blueberries, spinach, and carrots.

Batch Cooking: Preparing a large quantity of food at once to portion and store for later use — typically in the fridge or freezer. A time-saver for busy weeks.

Boneless: Meat that has had all bones removed before cooking or serving. Important for dog safety, as cooked bones can splinter.

Calcium Source: A required component in homemade dog food, especially when not using bone-in meat. Can include eggshell powder, ground bone, or calcium supplements.

Cooked vs. Raw Debate: A long-standing discussion in canine nutrition. Some owners prefer raw for nutrient preservation and natural feeding; others choose cooked for safety and convenience. This book includes both options, with safety and balance in mind.

Cooling (Before Adding Oils): Letting hot food drop to lukewarm or room temperature before mixing in oils like flaxseed or fish oil. This preserves delicate heat-sensitive nutrients.

Dehydrated Treats: Snacks made by removing moisture through low heat, either in an oven at low temperatures or in a dehydrator. They usually have longer shelf life and crunchy texture.

Elimination Diet: A short-term limited ingredient plan used to identify potential food sensitivities or allergies by reintroducing ingredients slowly.

Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs): Fats the body can't produce on its own — especially omega-3 and omega-6 — which support skin, coat, brain, and joint health.

Freezer-Friendly: A recipe or ingredient that stores well in the freezer without losing texture or nutrition. Often noted in meal plans and tips to support make-ahead prep.

Gizzards: A muscular organ found in poultry, rich in protein and essential nutrients. Affordable, nutrient-dense, and chewy.

Grain-Free: A feeding approach that avoids grains like rice, oats, and barley. Some dogs tolerate grains well; others may benefit from grain-free meals for allergy or digestive reasons.

Heat-Sensitive Nutrients: Nutrients like omega-3 fatty acids that degrade when exposed to high heat. These are best added after cooking.

Hypoallergenic: A term used for ingredients or recipes less likely to trigger food sensitivities. Often made with novel proteins and limited ingredients.

Ingredient Rotation: A strategy where proteins, vegetables, and grains are rotated every few days or weeks to help reduce allergy risk and support balanced nutrition.

Legumes Debate: A topic of ongoing study in dog nutrition. Some grain-free commercial foods using high levels of legumes have been linked to potential heart issues, but small amounts of lentils or chickpeas in home-cooked meals are generally considered safe when part of a balanced diet.

Limited Ingredient Recipe: A simplified meal made with just a few ingredients — helpful for elimination diets, allergy management, or digestive resets.

Meal Prep: The act of prepping ingredients or recipes ahead of time — includes chopping, cooking, portioning, and storing for later.

Novel Protein: A protein source your dog hasn't eaten before (like duck or rabbit), often used in hypoallergenic or elimination diets.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids: Essential fats found in ingredients like fish oil, flaxseed oil, and fatty fish. Support skin, coat, joints, and overall inflammation response.

Organ Meats: Nutrient-dense internal organs such as liver, heart, and gizzards. Rich in vitamins and minerals, but should be fed in moderation.

Pantry Staples: Shelf-stable essentials like oats, canned pumpkin, rice, and oils that form the backbone of many home-cooked dog meals.

Portioning: Dividing cooked food into individual servings, typically based on your dog's size and daily caloric needs. Can be done in bowls, containers, or silicone molds.

Raw-Inspired: Meals that are either fully raw or only lightly cooked, maintaining more natural textures and nutrients. Often used by those transitioning to or from raw diets or seeking minimally processed options.

Reset Plan: A short-term meal plan (like the 30-day Joyful Bowl Reset) designed to help soothe sensitivities, improve digestion, and transition dogs to a healthier homemade diet.

Single Protein Recipe: A meal that contains only one protein source — useful for managing allergies or simplifying digestion.

Toppers: Small additions like sauces, treats, or flavor-boosters added on top of a main meal. Useful for variety, extra nutrients, or encouraging picky eaters.

Transition Period: The gradual process of switching your dog from commercial food to homemade meals, often done over 5–7 days to avoid digestive upset. **Note:** In this book's Reset Plan, we recommend going all-in with gentle, balanced homemade recipes from Day 1. If your dog is extra sensitive, you can ease in over 2–3 days with half-and-half meals.

Variety Feeding: A non-restrictive approach that rotates meals and ingredients regularly for nutritional balance and enrichment.



Resources & Further Reading

Homemade Dog Food & Nutrition

American Kennel Club: Choosing Ingredients for Homemade Dog Food: <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/nutrition/choosing-ingredients-homemade-dog-food/>

PetMD: What's in a Balanced Dog Food?:

https://www.petmd.com/dog/nutrition/evr_dg_whats_in_a_balanced_dog_food

Top Dog Tips: Nutritional Guidelines for Safe Homemade Dog Food Cooking:

<https://topdogtips.com/nutritional-guidelines-for-homemade-dog-food/>

Vet-Approved Recipes & Tools

The Spruce Pets: Vet-Approved Homemade Dog Food Recipes:

<https://www.thesprucepets.com/homemade-dog-food-recipes-5200240>

ChefPaw: 50+ Nutritious Dog Recipes: <https://www.chefpaw.com/pages/chefpaw-suggested-recipes>

Allrecipes: Homemade Dog Food Recipe: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/140286/homemade-dog-food/>

Balance It: Custom Recipe Generator: <https://balance.it/>

Food Allergies & Elimination Diets

VCA Hospitals: Implementing an Elimination-Challenge Diet Trial: <https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/implementing-an-elimination-challenge-diet-trial-dog>

DVM360: Identifying Food Allergies – The Veterinary Elimination Diet Trial:

<https://www.dvm360.com/view/identifying-food-allergies-veterinary-elimination-diet-trial>

Tufts University: Eliminating Mistakes in Elimination Diet Trials:

<https://sites.tufts.edu/petfoodology/2022/04/04/think-your-pet-has-a-food-allergy-eliminating-mistakes-in-elimination-diet-trials/>

Perfectly Rawsome: Elimination Diet Raw Feeding Guide: <https://perfectlyrawsome.com/raw-feeding-knowledgebase/elimination-diet-raw-feeding-guide/>

Ingredient Debates & Feeding Approaches

The Guardian: Making a Dog's Dinner – Eco and Affordable Feeding:

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2025/apr/29/making-a-dogs-dinner-vets-and-canine-experts-on-the-most-eco-and-affordable-ways-to-feed-your-pooch>

The Farmer's Dog: Elimination Diet for Dogs: <https://www.thefarmersdog.com/digest/elimination-diet-for-dogs/>



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This book wouldn't exist without the dog who started it all — my little mutt, adopted with a bottomless appetite and zero standards. In those early days when we adopted him, he would've happily eaten an old shoe if I let him. Luckily, we've both come a long way — and now he gets real food, made with love, that still earns an enthusiastic tail wag every time.

A huge thank you to the friends, family, and fellow dog lovers who shared honest feedback, kitchen experiments, and more "how much pumpkin is too much?" conversations than anyone should endure. Your support made this project joyful from start to finish.

And finally, thank you to every dog parent out there who's chosen to ditch the mystery pellets and embrace real food. You're part of a quiet revolution in pet health — and your dog is lucky to have you.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Angelica Rhodes is a writer, lifelong food nerd, and proud dog mom to Charlie — a mixed-breed pup with shiny hair, soulful eyes, and strong opinions about broccoli. He's likely a mix of terrier, dachshund, and a dash of beagle. He's got the body of a hotdog, the curiosity of a hound, and the stubborn sass of a terrier. No one's entirely sure what went into the recipe, but it's a combo that turned out just right.

She adopted Charlie with a bottomless appetite and no standards whatsoever, but together they've learned how joyful (and doable) real food for dogs can be.

With a background in research and writing, Angelica has spent years studying holistic nutrition, functional medicine, and ancestral health — first out of personal necessity while navigating her own health challenges, and later out of passion. When she connected her own healing to what she was feeding her dog, everything clicked: real food is just as powerful for our pets as it is for us — as long as it's species-appropriate.

She's not a veterinarian or pet food manufacturer — just someone who's read every label, taken every course she could find, and tested every recipe in her own kitchen (with Charlie's enthusiastic approval). *The Joyful Bowl* is the book she wished she had at the beginning: honest, practical, and full of common sense.

Angelica lives with her family, Charlie, a suspicious number of glass storage containers, and a slow cooker that's always doing something.



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The Joyful Bowl isn't just a cookbook — it's a movement toward common-sense, real food feeding that fits your life and helps your dog thrive. To make the journey even easier, we're building a series of practical tools designed to support you long after the last page of this book. Look out for these helpful companions — coming soon:

Homemade Healthy Dog Food Journal: A 30-Day Reset Companion Guide

Track meals, symptoms, poop quality, energy, and more — perfect for dogs with allergies, sensitivities, or complex health histories. Includes space for vet notes, weight tracking, and monthly summaries.

Homemade Healthy Dog Food Meal Planner & Grocery List

Your kitchen sidekick for planning, shopping, and batching. Includes weekly templates, shopping lists, prep checklists, and freezer logs to keep you organized and reduce daily decision fatigue. Available in 12- and 24-week formats.

Homemade Healthy Dog Food Recipe Notebook

A blank cookbook for your own creations. Write down your dog's favorite meals, custom tweaks, and homemade treats — organized by protein, meal type, or occasion.

Puppy Health Records and Daily Care Log

The perfect companion for new puppy parents. Track potty breaks, meals, weight, vet visits, and early milestones, plus space for training goals and sweet "firsts." A practical and sentimental keepsake to support healthy routines from day one.

Whether you're just starting out or settling into a long-term homemade routine, these tools are here to help you stay on track, reduce overwhelm, and keep tails wagging.

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