

M A V E R I C K A I

# ASK CHATGPT TO SCAN YOUR FRIDGE AND PLAN YOUR MEALS

**DINNER IDEAS, WEEKLY PLANS + GROCERIES**

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*Open the fridge. Take a photo. Turn what you already have into a dinner plan you can actually use.*

Turn a fridge photo into dinner you can make tonight

Plan seven days around food you already have

Find five more meals with a \$200 shopping budget

Set up Peristyle Grocery Cart for Kroger or Walmart

12 complete prompts, plus your one-page quick reference

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September 2026

# Start Here

## THE PLAN

1. Photograph your food and confirm what ChatGPT can see.
2. Pick tonight's dinner and build a realistic seven-day plan.
3. Find five more meals, review the grocery picks, and finish checkout yourself.

You don't need a grocery connection to get dinner ideas. Start with your photos in a regular ChatGPT conversation. Add the shopping plugin when you're ready to turn missing ingredients into products at your store.

## Take photos ChatGPT can actually use

1. Take one clear photo of the open fridge, then closer photos of crowded shelves and drawers. Keep labels facing the camera where practical.
2. Include the freezer and pantry if you want those ingredients used. Otherwise, type a short list of your staples, oils, spices, and canned food.
3. Add a separate close-up for a label or date that is hard to read. Explain what is inside unlabeled containers.
4. Open ChatGPT, choose + > Add photos & files, attach the images, and paste Prompt 1 on the next page. You can also drag or paste an image into the message area. [1]

## Add the details a picture can't show

| Detail              | Example to give ChatGPT                                              |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| People and portions | Two adults, dinner only, one lunch portion if possible               |
| Food needs          | No peanuts, no shellfish, avoid mushrooms                            |
| Time and equipment  | 30 minutes, stove and oven, no air fryer                             |
| Quantity            | Six eggs, half a bag of spinach, about a pound of chicken            |
| Storage history     | Chicken bought today, cooked rice made yesterday, milk opened Monday |

ChatGPT can misidentify an item, miss a container, or estimate a count incorrectly. Confirm the inventory before relying on it. Image uploads work across Free and paid plans, with account and usage limits. [1]

## TIP

Keep everything in the same chat so you can correct the inventory, choose meals, and update what you used. You still need to tell ChatGPT when the kitchen changes.

# Step 1: Make ChatGPT Your Personal Chef

This is the first prompt from the video, expanded so the answer includes useful meals instead of a list of ingredients that might be in the photo. Replace the brackets, attach the photos, and start here.

## Prompt 1: What can I make tonight?

### PROMPT 1 | COPY & PASTE

You're my personal chef now. Look at these fridge photos and help me find the real meals I could make tonight using only what I already have.

I'm feeding [people]. My allergies and dietary needs are [details or none]. I have [minutes] and [equipment]. Pantry/freezer items not pictured: [list]. Purchase, opening, and cooking dates I know: [details].

First make an inventory with the item, visible or estimated quantity, and anything you need me to confirm. Don't invent hidden ingredients or assume I have oil, salt, sauces, or spices. Don't decide whether food is safe from its appearance. Ask about unclear items and storage dates before using them.

After I confirm the inventory, suggest up to eight genuinely different dinners, or fewer if that's all the food supports. For each, give servings, time, ingredients and amounts, and a short cooking outline. Use only confirmed ingredients. Put any idea needing a purchase in a separate list. Recommend the best three for tonight and explain why.

## Correct it before you cook

If ChatGPT calls a container yogurt and it is sour cream, say so. If it sees chicken but doesn't know whether it is cooked or raw, clarify that too. Small corrections make the rest of the plan much more useful.

| If the answer does this        | Tell it this                                             |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Adds groceries you don't own   | Move those meals to the separate needs-a-purchase list.  |
| Suggests ten versions of pasta | Give me different meal formats, not small sauce changes. |
| Assumes a full container       | I only have about [amount]. Recalculate the servings.    |
| Ignores your schedule          | Keep tonight's options under [minutes], including prep.  |

### TIP

"Use only what I have" is a constraint. A useful answer may be three dinners instead of eight. You want something you can cook, not a longer list.

## Step 2: Turn One Idea Into Dinner

Choose one meal before asking for a full recipe. Give ChatGPT a chance to catch a missing ingredient or an unrealistic portion before you start chopping.

### Prompt 2: Give me the actual cooking plan

#### PROMPT 2 | COPY & PASTE

Let's make [meal] for [servings]. Use only our confirmed ingredients. Give me an exact ingredient list with quantities, equipment, prep steps, and a numbered cooking method. Include a realistic total time and tell me what can happen at the same time. Identify any missing ingredient before writing the recipe. For foods needing a safe internal temperature, include current USDA or FoodSafety.gov guidance and a source. Finish with how to portion, cool, store, and reheat any leftovers.

### Make the instructions fit your kitchen

Read the ingredient list once before starting. Check whether the recipe expects cooked rice, thawed meat, or an oven that is already hot. Those details can turn a supposedly quick dinner into a much longer job.

For a recipe sourced from a food creator, keep the creator link and read any important recipe notes. Ask for an adaptation when you need one, and have ChatGPT explain what changed.

### Check temperature with a thermometer

| Food                                    | Safe minimum internal temperature |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Chicken and other poultry               | 165°F / 74°C                      |
| Ground beef, pork, lamb, or veal        | 160°F / 71°C                      |
| Whole cuts of beef, pork, lamb, or veal | 145°F / 63°C, then rest 3 minutes |
| Fish                                    | 145°F / 63°C                      |
| Leftovers and casseroles                | 165°F / 74°C                      |

These are selected entries from the [FoodSafety.gov cooking chart](https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-chart). Check its entry for the food you're making. Cooking time or color alone does not replace a temperature check. [7]

#### TIP

Tell ChatGPT if you change the portion size or substitute equipment. A recipe for two in a skillet doesn't automatically become a recipe for six with the same timing.

## Step 3: Decide What to Use First

The photo gives you an inventory. Your dates and storage details make it possible to prioritize that inventory. Ask for a use-first plan, not an invented expiration date for every item.

### Prompt 3: Sort the food before planning the week

#### PROMPT 3 | COPY & PASTE

Sort our confirmed ingredients into: use first, suitable for later with proper storage, freeze now if appropriate, and needs more information. Use the purchase, opening, cooking, and thawing dates I provide. Ask about missing dates or storage conditions. Use current FoodSafety.gov or USDA storage guidance and link the source. Don't guess an exact expiry date from a photo or reassure me that an uncertain item is safe. Show the reason for each priority and the next action I should take.

### A few storage windows worth knowing

At 40°F / 4°C or below, FoodSafety.gov lists raw poultry and ground meat at 1-2 days, cooked meat/poultry and soups/stews at 3-4 days, and raw shell eggs at 3-5 weeks in the refrigerator. These are general storage guidelines, not a new countdown starting when you take the photo. The time already stored matters. [5]

### Make the plan match the food

| What you know                           | What to do with the plan                                |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| A perishable needs using soon           | Put it in an early meal if it is still safe.            |
| You won't get to it in time             | Freeze promptly if appropriate, while it is still safe. |
| You don't know when leftovers were made | Resolve that uncertainty before scheduling them.        |
| A label is unreadable                   | Read it yourself or send a clear close-up.              |

Food can be unsafe without looking or smelling spoiled. Keep the fridge at or below 40°F / 4°C and follow the food's storage directions. Refrigerate perishables within two hours, or one hour when the temperature is above 90°F / 32°C. [6]

#### TIP

Don't taste questionable food to test it. When its safety is uncertain, leave it out of the plan. Avoiding waste starts with planning earlier, not stretching unsafe storage.

# Step 4: Build Your Seven-Day Meal Plan

Stay in the same chat. Tell it which nights are busy, which meals you need, and whether you actually enjoy leftovers. Start with dinners if that is the decision you want off your plate.

## Prompt 4: Plan the week around what I have

### PROMPT 4 | COPY & PASTE

Now build my meal plan for the next seven days from our confirmed inventory. Start date: [date]. Plan [dinners only / breakfast, lunch, and dinner] for [people]. Busy days and time limits: [details]. Leftover preference: [details].

Use our use-first priorities and storage information. Give a table with the date, meal, servings, ingredients and quantities, prep time, and any advance thawing or freezing step. Keep a running ingredient balance so you don't use the same chicken, eggs, or vegetables twice.

Schedule leftovers within appropriate storage guidance or plan timely freezing. Don't imply all cooked food can stay refrigerated for seven days. If I don't have enough food, leave a clearly labeled gap and list the smallest additions that would complete it. Keep shopping separate for now. End with a short prep plan and a list of what will remain.

## Read the plan like a calendar

| Check              | Why it matters                                              |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Actual dates       | "Day 3" is less useful if you start two days later.         |
| Real servings      | Two portions won't feed four people and leave lunch.        |
| Ingredient balance | A plan can accidentally spend one ingredient several times. |
| Busy nights        | Put easy meals on the nights you have little time.          |
| Prep and thawing   | A freezer ingredient may need attention before dinner.      |

## The five extra meals are a separate option

The video also asks for five more meals with a grocery budget. Treat those as replacements or additions, depending on your schedule. You don't have to buy ingredients for twelve dinners when you only need seven.

### TIP

Pick the dinners you actually want before generating the cart. It is easier to edit a meal plan than remove a pile of unnecessary grocery items later.

## Step 5: Set Up Peristyle Grocery Cart

Search for Peristyle Grocery Cart, spelled exactly that way. The live ChatGPT listing identifies the developer as Peristyle Labs LLC and shows Install plugin. [2]

### Install and select it

1. Open Plugins in ChatGPT and search for Peristyle Grocery Cart, or use the [direct plugin listing](#).
2. Open the listing and choose Install plugin if shown. Complete the setup and any required authorization. Some accounts show Apps instead of Plugins. [2, 3]
3. Return to your meal-planning chat. Type @ and select the installed app, or find it through +, sometimes under More. [3]
4. Give it your preferred store, ZIP code, and pickup or delivery preference. Confirm the location before matching products.

### Choose the store route

| Store   | How the documented connection works                                                                                                                 |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Kroger  | Follow the provider sign-in link to connect your account. Approved items can be added to that cart.                                                 |
| Walmart | Product matching doesn't require connecting a Walmart account to Peristyle. It provides a Walmart cart link to review and finish on Walmart's site. |

Peristyle documents these two retailers. Check current support instead of assuming any local supermarket works. Checkout happens with the retailer, not inside Peristyle. [4]

### Prompt 5: Check the connection first

#### PROMPT 5 | COPY & PASTE

Using Peristyle Grocery Cart, check what shopping tools are available in this chat. I want to shop at [retailer and location/ZIP] for [pickup or delivery]. Tell me whether I need to connect an account and whether you can find products and prepare a cart for this location. Don't add anything yet. If this store isn't supported, say so and keep our plan as a shopping list.

#### TIP

Sign in on the provider's own page. Don't paste your grocery password or payment details into the chat. A missing plugin may reflect account, region, or workspace availability. [3]

# Step 6: Find Five More Meals Under \$200

Make the budget specific. Five dinners for one person is very different from five dinners for a family. Also decide whether \$200 means groceries alone or the amount you can spend after tax, delivery charges, and tips.

## Prompt 6: Better dinners, with a real budget

### PROMPT 6 | COPY & PASTE

Using our confirmed inventory and Peristyle Grocery Cart, suggest five additional dinners for [people] with restaurant-style flavor that I can cook in [minutes] using [equipment]. These will [replace these planned meals / cover these additional dates]. Follow these allergies and dietary requirements: [details].

My maximum is \$200 [all-in, including applicable tax, fees and tip / for the new grocery items only]. Shop at [store and location] for [pickup or delivery]. Build the meals around ingredients that work across several recipes and subtract what I already have in usable quantities.

Show the five dishes, servings, recipe sources where available, and one combined shopping list. Match missing ingredients to available store products. Show size, number of packages, current price if available, and line total. Budget for whole packages, not only the portion used in a recipe. Separate verified prices from estimates and unknown fees. Don't assume coupons or memberships I haven't confirmed. If the total cannot be verified or kept under \$200, tell me and revise. Show the picks before adding anything.

## A budget that survives checkout

| Include            | Common thing to catch                                           |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full packages      | A spoonful of spice may require buying a whole jar.             |
| Enough quantity    | One package may not cover all five recipes.                     |
| Existing food      | Subtract usable amounts, not just ingredient names.             |
| Fees and tax       | Unknown charges aren't zero. Leave room if using an all-in cap. |
| Cart already there | Existing items can push the complete order over budget.         |

## What "restaurant-style" should mean here

Ask for good browning, a sauce, contrasting texture, and a thoughtful finish using ingredients you will reuse. It doesn't need to mean five expensive proteins or a new specialty condiment for every dish.

### TIP

If the plan comes back over budget, simplify the dishes before cutting serving sizes. The goal is five dinners you want to eat and can afford.

## Step 7: Review the Picks, Then Build the Cart

Check the exact product, package size, count, price, and dietary label. The app's matching is a starting point. A substitution can change the ingredients even when the product name looks similar.

### Prompt 7: Add the approved items once

#### PROMPT 7 | COPY & PASTE

```
I approve these product picks: [identify the exact list or changes]. Using Peristyle Grocery Cart, add those items once or prepare the supported retailer cart link. Keep to the approved package sizes, quantities, store, and budget. Do not add substitutions or unrelated products without asking. Don't repeat an uncertain add operation. Report what was confirmed added, what failed or remains uncertain, and where I can review the result. Don't place an order or take payment.
```

### Check the retailer cart yourself

Open the returned cart or your connected retailer account. Confirm the location, all items, existing cart contents, substitutions, pickup/delivery details, and final payable total. Only then finish checkout yourself. Peristyle does not place the order or handle payment. [2, 4]

Kroger detail: Peristyle's documented cart writes are add-only. Remove items, change quantities, and apply digital coupons in Kroger's own app or website. Asking the assistant to add the corrected item can leave the original there too. [8]

### Prompt 8: Fix the list before trying again

#### PROMPT 8 | COPY & PASTE

```
These items are unavailable, unsuitable, duplicated, or over budget: [list]. Suggest replacements that preserve the meals, servings, allergies, and spending cap. Show the revised whole-package total. Tell me which changes I must make in the retailer cart myself. Don't add the replacements until I approve them, and don't claim old items were removed unless the tool actually confirmed that action.
```

#### TIP

If an add operation times out, inspect the actual cart before retrying. An uncertain response doesn't tell you whether the store received the first attempt.

# What a Useful Week Looks Like

This is an illustrative dinner schedule, not a meal plan extracted from your photo. The ingredients, quantities, allergies, and storage dates still need to fit your kitchen. It shows how different meal formats can share ingredients without feeling like the same dinner every night.

| Day       | Dinner direction                                  | Planning decision                                   |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Monday    | Chicken and vegetable rice bowls                  | Use a confirmed-safe, time-sensitive protein early. |
| Tuesday   | Spinach and bean skillet with toast               | Use delicate greens while they are still suitable.  |
| Wednesday | Tomato and white bean pasta                       | Lean on pantry food instead of another grocery run. |
| Thursday  | Vegetable frittata with a side                    | Use confirmed remaining vegetables and eggs.        |
| Friday    | Fish tacos with cabbage slaw                      | Plan safe thawing for a frozen protein.             |
| Saturday  | Chickpea curry with rice                          | Use a pantry-based meal for a flexible night.       |
| Sunday    | A properly stored leftover meal or freezer backup | Confirm dates and portions before choosing.         |

## Give every repeat ingredient a job

If you buy cabbage for tacos, ask where the remaining cabbage goes. If a recipe needs half a can of something, plan the rest and its storage. This is where a week becomes easier than seven unrelated recipes.

The example isn't asking you to keep Monday's dinner in the fridge until Sunday. Any later leftover meal needs its own suitable preparation date or timely freezing plan.

## Ask for a balance, not a guess

The weekly plan should finish with what is left after all meals are allocated. If it starts with six eggs and uses four on Thursday, it should have two left, not six available for breakfast every day.

### TIP

Leave one flexible night. Plans change, and a pantry or freezer meal is easier to move than a fresh ingredient you needed to cook yesterday.

# Three Prompts to Keep the Week Working

## Prompt 9: Use leftovers without repeating dinner

### PROMPT 9 | COPY & PASTE

I have these leftovers: [foods, quantities, cooking dates, storage details]. Suggest three different meal ideas for [people] using only those and our remaining inventory. Check the storage information first, exclude anything whose safety is uncertain, and tell me what needs using or freezing promptly. For the option I choose, give exact quantities and safe reheating guidance with a source.

## Prompt 10: Make the prep session manageable

### PROMPT 10 | COPY & PASTE

Turn our approved week into a [30/45/60]-minute prep session. Order the tasks so I can use downtime, list containers and equipment, and separate raw-food work from ready-to-eat preparation. Tell me what to prep now, what to leave until cooking day, and what to label or freeze. Don't recommend refrigerating the entire week's cooked meals when their safe storage window is shorter.

## Prompt 11: Replan when life changes

### PROMPT 11 | COPY & PASTE

Update the rest of the week. We actually ate [meals], skipped [meals], and bought [items]. Remaining amounts and storage dates: [details]. Recalculate the inventory and prioritize food that needs attention. Keep the new plan within [time and budget]. Show only the changed meals and shopping-list differences. Don't add anything to a cart.

### TIP

An updated plan is better than following an old one perfectly. Tell ChatGPT what actually happened, especially if you ate out, froze something, or skipped a grocery item.

# If the Plugin or Your Store Isn't Available

You can still use the photo inventory, tonight's recipe, weekly plan, and combined grocery list. The connection adds shopping actions. It isn't required for the rest of the workflow.

## Prompt 12: Give me the store-ready list

### PROMPT 12 | COPY & PASTE

Keep our approved meals and make a shopping list I can use in my store's app or in person. Group it by department. Show the total recipe quantity needed, what I already have, and the remaining amount to buy. Suggest package sizes only as estimates until checked at the store. Keep essential purchases separate from optional extras. Include acceptable substitutions that respect my dietary requirements. Don't claim you've checked live stock, prices, or a cart unless you actually have access.

## Solve the specific problem

| Problem                                  | Next useful step                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Peristyle isn't listed                   | Check the direct listing, account availability, and workspace restrictions. Use the manual list if unavailable. |
| The plugin is installed but not selected | Select it in the chat and run Prompt 5.                                                                         |
| Kroger authorization is incomplete       | Complete the provider's sign-in flow before asking for a cart action.                                           |
| Your retailer isn't supported            | Use Prompt 12 with that retailer's app or an in-person shop.                                                    |
| Live prices can't be retrieved           | Treat the budget as unverified until you check actual products.                                                 |

The current directory route is the setup used in this guide. Peristyle also has an older manual MCP setup page. You don't need to recreate that custom connection just to use an available directory plugin. [2, 8]

### TIP

A well-organized grocery list is still useful. Don't let one unavailable connection stop you from using the food you already have.

# Mistakes and Fixes

| What goes wrong                                 | What to change                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The photo misses half the fridge                | Add shelf close-ups and identify closed containers.                |
| ChatGPT invents ingredients                     | Confirm inventory and separate meals needing purchases.            |
| It assumes a food is fresh from its appearance  | Supply dates and storage facts, and exclude unresolved items.      |
| The week uses the same ingredient twice         | Request a running balance with amounts and servings.               |
| Every dinner needs an hour                      | Give a time limit for each day.                                    |
| You get seven versions of the same meal         | Ask for different meal formats and flavor directions.              |
| Five extra meals turn into unnecessary shopping | Decide which meals they replace before making the list.            |
| A \$200 plan costs more at checkout             | Count full packages, existing cart items, and applicable extras.   |
| A substitution breaks an allergy constraint     | Check the actual package label and reject unsuitable replacements. |
| The cart gets duplicate items                   | Inspect the retailer cart before repeating an uncertain add.       |
| Kroger quantities need correcting               | Change them in Kroger's own app or website.                        |
| The plan is out of date by Wednesday            | Tell ChatGPT what you ate, bought, froze, or skipped.              |

## Keep the promises realistic

ChatGPT can help identify food and organize decisions. It can't see behind every container, certify food safety from a photo, guarantee no waste, or promise a checkout total it hasn't verified.

Use the prompts as a repeatable process: confirm the food, choose meals, check the products, then review the actual cart. That is what makes the result useful beyond the first impressive answer.

# Sources and Setup Links

Product instructions and food-safety references checked September 25, 2026. The Peristyle listing was inspected live in a browser. These prompts were written for this workflow. No personal fridge was analyzed, retailer account connected, cart changed, or order placed while preparing the guide.

- [1] [ChatGPT image inputs FAQ](#): photo uploads, availability, and image interpretation limits.
- [2] [Peristyle Grocery Cart in ChatGPT](#): exact name, developer, install button, supported store workflow, and approval before cart additions.
- [3] [Plugins in ChatGPT and Codex](#) and [connected apps help](#): installation, account authorization, chat selection, and availability.
- [4] [Peristyle Grocery Cart overview](#): documented Kroger/Walmart support, product matching, and retailer checkout.
- [5] [FoodSafety.gov cold storage chart](#): food-specific refrigerated storage guidance.
- [6] [FDA: Are You Storing Food Safely?](#): refrigeration temperatures, time outside refrigeration, and the limits of appearance and smell.
- [7] [FoodSafety.gov safe cooking temperatures](#): thermometer checks, temperatures, and rest times.
- [8] [Peristyle setup and capabilities](#): retailer connection details and Kroger's add-only cart limitation. Its older manual ChatGPT setup differs from the current directory route above.

## What the examples mean

The sample week is illustrative. The \$200 amount comes from the video and is a spending constraint for the prompt, not a verified quote. Your household, store, location, product availability, and checkout charges determine what fits.

# Quick Reference

## The whole workflow on one page

| Step                | What to use                                                        |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Photograph          | Fridge, labels, pantry, freezer, plus dates and quantities.        |
| Find dinner         | Prompt 1: confirm inventory, then suggest meals.                   |
| Cook one meal       | Prompt 2: amounts, method, timing, and storage.                    |
| Prioritize          | Prompt 3: use first, freeze if appropriate, or investigate.        |
| Plan the week       | Prompt 4: dated meals with a running ingredient balance.           |
| Connect shopping    | Install Peristyle Grocery Cart and run Prompt 5.                   |
| Add five meal ideas | Prompt 6: servings, whole-package prices, and a \$200 cap.         |
| Prepare the cart    | Review picks, then use Prompt 7. Prompt 8 handles changes.         |
| Keep it current     | Prompts 9-11: leftovers, prep, and schedule changes.               |
| Shop manually       | Prompt 12: a store-ready list when the connection isn't available. |

## Before you check out

Confirm the correct retailer location, quantities, dietary labels, substitutions, existing cart items, and final total. Finish payment in the retailer's app or website.

### DO THIS TODAY

Take two or three clear fridge photos, add your pantry staples and known storage dates, and paste Prompt 1. Correct the inventory, choose one dinner, and cook it. Build the week once that first list is accurate.

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*Less time deciding what's for dinner. More use from what's already in your fridge.*