



## Profile

Budget Dinner Battle



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## Submission Details

**Budget Dinner Battle**

Submitted on May 09, 2023, 04:36PM

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Food Blogger & Creator

Write a mini bio about yourself. This is a chance for us to get to know you! Please include where you are originally from, who is in your life, what you do, and what is important to you.

I'm an east coast girl at heart, living on the west coast. Born and raised just outside DC in Maryland, I now live in Los Angeles, California with my husband Zach, two daughters Zoe (11) and Ava (9) and my dog Lou. We are lucky to have huge extended families on both coasts who love to eat!

I'm 100% self taught in the kitchen and was lucky enough to grow up around amazing home cooks like my mom, aunts and grandmothers. I am extremely passionate about teaching people foundational, basic skills in the kitchen that will set them up for success in the kitchen for life. I love being a safe space for people to ask all the "stupid" cooking questions that they're too embarrassed to ask anywhere else.

I went to the University of Michigan where I played on the Women's Soccer team. Go Blue! My husband and I met on the soccer field in a co-ed league here in LA, started dating in 2006, got married on New Year's Eve 2008 and have now been married 14 years. Woah.

I'm in sweats or workout clothes every. single. day. If I wear anything else I feel dressed up. My hair is in an extremely high messy bun 99.9% of the time. When I wake up in the morning the first thing I think is 'what's for dinner?'

- 12 I love bread, chocolate, and cheese. Who doesn't? I hate olives, but I really want to like them. I've never had a cup of coffee. My lifelong dream is to spend the day cooking with Ina Garten at her house in the Hamptons.

Rainy days are my absolute FAVORITE, thunder, lightening and all (I know, I'm living in the wrong state). If you invite me over to your house, I'll probably make you a banana bread and it will be your favorite.

Before I ventured into the blogging world I was a first grade teacher for 6 years. I was born to teach. It's my first passion and I feel so lucky to be able to combine my two favorite things. TEACHING and FOOD.

I started a food blog in 2014 called Life is but a Dish where I create easy, approachable recipes for the everyday home cook. Through my blog and social media I've made connections with people around the world that I never could have dreamed of.

During Covid, I created a course called Cook with Confidence to teach other home cooks how to create simple and delicious meals with confidence and ease. The skills and knowledge gained in this course help students build confidence, creativity, and independence in the kitchen, leading to a lifetime of delicious meals and happy memories.

**Please tell us about your current living situation. (ie. - do you live with a roommate(s), family members, etc?)**

- 13 I live with my husband Zach, 2 daughters (Zoe 11, Ava 9), and puppy Lou.

**How would you rate your cooking skills (on a scale of 1-10 / 10 being the best!) Explain your answer.**

- 14 Maybe an 8 or 9? I often think the flavor is a 10 but I make super simple meals using simple, everyday ingredients. Nothing fancy or complicated which is why I chose 8 or 9. My superpower is making food taste delicious with minimal ingredients.

**How often do you cook for other people? Explain. (How often, how many people, who is it that you usually cook for?)**

- 15 I cook 5 days a week for my family of four and we host large family meals and holidays 2-3 times a year where I cook for 20-30 people. I cook for friends occasionally when I have them over for dinner maybe once a month. We're big eaters in this family so there's not many leftovers! I often count people as two so I make more than enough food!

**Tell us about a meal you are particularly proud of making. Why does this one stand out for you?**

- 16 I make what I call a No-Fuss Lasagna which is lasagna without all of the steps. It's quick, easy, delicious and I love it the most because it can be adapted to whatever flavors you like and people LOVE it when you make it for them. It's true comfort food and feels like a big hug.

**This show is all about cooks who have a talent for cooking on a budget. Tell us about your ability to create food on a budget. How did you learn?**

- 17 Living in LA we are so lucky to have a variety of grocery stores to choose from. Many of these stores have less expensive options, so shopping at a Trader Joe's or Ralph's vs. Whole Foods or Gelsons can help save money. Meal prepping a few items can help turn dishes into lunch for the next day. I learned through experience in cooking for my growing family. More tips on this below.

**Was there a specific event in your life that led you to acquire this skill?**

- 18 Becoming a mom and having a large family who needs to eat every day and night!

**What are the top tips or tricks that you have picked up along the way that you routinely use when cooking on a budget? Please explain. \***

- 19 1. BUY IN BULK: I love keeping a handful of go-to spices on hand that I can use in a variety of dishes. I always tell people you can make TONS of meals with different flavor profiles with just salt, pepper, garlic powder, cumin, chili powder, paprika and oregano. You don't need 20 spices and you can buy in bulk the ones you love! Same goes for ingredients. You don't need fancy or expensive ingredients to make delicious food. Also buying your animal proteins in bulk and freezing them can help keep your costs down.
2. WELL STOCKED PANTRY: Use pantry staples to help bulk up your meals and make them stretch further, such as using rice, quinoa, beans, or other add ins. Having a well stocked pantry that you can easily "shop" from is extremely helpful.
3. HOMEMADE: Making homemade dressings, marinades, taco seasonings, rubs, croutons, etc can help cut costs because those pre-made items are expensive! They taste better at home and cost less!


**What dish are you known for? Tell us about it!**

- 20 I'm known in my family for my brisket!! I make it every jewish holiday and everyone looks forward to it. I'm also known for my salads and I think it's because I make homemade dressing and people don't realize how much that can elevate a dish!

21 Have you ever appeared in television programs, films, webisodes, commercials or advertisements of any kind? If so, please provide the project name, where it aired, and the approximate date(s) of airing.  
No

22 Do you have any food allergies we should be aware of?  
No

Please upload a non-professional photo of yourself where we can see you clearly. (no sunglasses or hats)

23 

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24 Are you currently vaccinated for Covid-19?  
Yes

25 **Applicant Release**  
Agreed on 05-09-2023

I have read, understand, and agree to be bound by all of the terms and conditions of this Agreement. This Agreement cannot be terminated, rescinded or amended except by an agreement signed by both me and Producer. I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM GIVING UP CERTAIN LEGAL RIGHTS UNDER THIS AGREEMENT, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, MY RIGHT TO FILE A LAWSUIT IN COURT WITH RESPECT TO ANY CLAIM ARISING IN CONNECTION WITH THIS AGREEMENT.

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Laney Schwartz  
Signed on 05-09-2023

## Notes

Notes added here will not show up on deck comments