

# Balance365 Episode 242 Transcript

## ANNIE BREES (INTRO)

Welcome to Balance365 Life Radio, a podcast that delivers honest conversations about food, fitness, weight, and wellness. I'm your host Annie Brees along with co-founder Jennifer Campbell. Together we have a team of personal trainers and nutritionists who coach 1000s of women daily and are on a mission to help women feel happy, healthy, and confident in their bodies on their own terms. Join us here every week as we discuss hot topics pertaining to our physical, mental, and emotional well-being with amazing guests. Enjoy.

## ANNIE

Friends, I don't cook. I have tried. I've tried really hard. I've tried a number of times. My mom bought me all of the cookbooks and the gadgets to make it super simple. I have subscribed to those companies, you know, the ones that send you all the ingredients, they literally drop it on your doorstep and hold your hand the whole way through the instructions. All you have to do is cook it. I have bought new pots and pans, hoping that it would increase my enthusiasm for cooking, but I just don't love it. I'm not good at it. And I'm not really sure if I don't love it because I'm not good at it, so I don't do it, or because I don't do it, so I'm not good at it. And because I'm not good at it, I don't love it. I don't know where that circle starts and ends. But the bottom line is, I don't love to cook, but I do love to eat.

If you are new here, I'm Annie, co-founder of Balance365 and co-host of Balance365 Life Radio podcast. I am flying solo this episode, answering the question that I get all the time. What do you eat if you don't cook? Like how does that happen? How do you eat? And today, I am sharing all of my secrets.

But first, if you are loving the idea of reaching your health and weight loss goals like I have without needing to cook every single meal or stick to a list of good foods, or count calories and carbs, you've got to get on our waitlist. The doors to our coaching program only open a few times a year, and those on our waitlist are the first to know, so head over to [balance365.com/waitlist](https://balance365.com/waitlist) while you listen or click the link in our show notes.

Now, before I tell you how I eat without cooking, I have to note that I wholeheartedly believe that I couldn't eat the way I do without addressing my mindset around food. If you have listened to any of our episodes before, this is not the first time you've heard us talk about mindset. You're probably like, "Mindset, mindset, mindset. I get it. Okay, I'm listening." But it's important to note because I think it's possible that you might hear how I eat, and you might hear restriction, repetition, boredom. And while I understand it might feel like that to someone who's still stuck

dieting, or in the process of healing the relationship with food, I promise, it doesn't feel boring or repetitive to me. Addressing my food scarcity thoughts and reevaluating my definitions of good foods, bad foods, or what was a healthy or unhealthy choice, were influential in how I eat today. It's also possible that you might try one of my strategies and still struggle with some internal tension because of your underlying beliefs about cooking. For a long time, I thought that a good mom, a loving wife, a high-value woman, she should cook. So I cooked. I cooked even though I didn't enjoy it, because I felt like I was failing if I didn't. It wasn't a love for cooking, passion, or even my values driving my behavior in the kitchen. It was shame. And only when I realized that I can love and care for my kids, I can be a good partner, I can be a great human even if I don't cook, I was able to let go of all the shoulds around cooking and the guilt.

Now, let's get into how I eat if I don't cook. I have five strategies that I use, and I often use a combination of all of these strategies on a given week. But feel free to pick out the ones that you find helpful and leave the rest. First of all, I don't cook, but I do prepare ingredients. Now I used to think of meal prep in terms of meals, like whole meals, like casseroles and lasagnas and chicken, with side dishes and all that jazz, and that felt completely overwhelming to me. Now I think of meal prep in terms of ingredients. So I batch cook some proteins, usually chicken on the grill or the stovetop, I chop up fruits and veggies, prepare them, ready to go. If you've been around, you already know about the famous veggie tray that Jen got everyone hooked on, she uses one of those old-school Tupperware containers. She fills it up every week, and it's become a go to snack or side option in her house for meals. But having some protein sources, fruits and veggies ready to go, make throwing together things like a power bowl, an omelet, yogurt parfaits, or even adding things, too, as a side to a sandwich or a snack super duper easy for me. It often sounds like a handful of this, a handful of that, mix it together, and eat.

Number two, I will pay a bit more for convenience foods. Now when it comes to making anything, the convenient choice or the easy choice, it usually boils down to investing more time, or more money. More time looks like what I mentioned earlier, that you can spend cutting up some ingredients or preparing some grab-and-go items, or more money. And I'm willing to spend a bit more money on items like microwavable rice or frozen veggies or cooked meats like a rotisserie chicken because I don't want to spend the time on it. I am privileged to have the room in my budget for this. But I only came to the realization that I do when I realized that when I don't have food at home that's ready-ish to eat, I would eat out, which I do do, and I will talk about in a minute. But when I eat out, I spend way more money on food than if I had paid for some convenience foods at the grocery store. My grocery store in particular, has a whole section called shortcuts where they have some pre-chopped veggies and fruits, grab-and-go items that I would encourage you to check out if yours has, but know that it will come down to more time or more money if you want to make items more convenient for you.

I also utilize prepared meal services. Now, this option might not be available to everyone listening, depending on where you are in the world. But where I live, we have multiple

companies and businesses that offer prepared meal services. This can look a couple of different ways. You can have someone shop for you and cook for you and then bring you the food, or you can use a company like I do that makes the whole meal in advance, I stop by when it's convenient for me throughout the week, I pick the meals out that I enjoy, and all I have to do is heat them up and eat. A little secret that I want to share with you if you are interested in this, but maybe don't have access to one of those businesses or services, or you just want something that they don't offer, I have found that multiple restaurants will cook, even bulk cook, various ingredients for you if you call ahead and order them in advance. For example, I've had multiple restaurants cook up grilled meats, cooked veggies, even salads. They don't keep that long, but they will do it. If this interests you, it doesn't hurt to call your favorite restaurant that you enjoy and ask what they have to offer. Again, this option does cost more, but I have declared that it is in my budget and worth it to me.

Now speaking of restaurants, another way that I eat without cooking is I eat out. Yeah, you heard that right. This was life-changing for me, my friends, because I have always enjoyed eating out, probably because I'm not a great cook, right? But in my dieting days, I was always led to believe that I couldn't eat out or I shouldn't eat out if I wanted to reach my weight loss goals. And while I have made adjustments to how I eat when I do eat out, I still enjoy eating out at a restaurant multiple times a week. How do I do this? Well, first of all, I prioritize listening to my internal cues. Again, if you've been around here a while, you know exactly what I'm talking about. We were talking about hunger and satiety. I come to my meal hungry, I stop when I'm full, and I can do this at any restaurant in the globe. I love this skill because, as we say in Balance365, it travels well. So whether or not you love cooking, you hate cooking, you're somewhere in between, this is such a good option. If and when you find yourself away from home or out of control of what is being served, I also prioritize protein and veggies. I do this because getting adequate carbs and fats comes pretty easily to me especially when eating out, so if possible, I scan the menu ahead of time and utilize any nutritional data that the restaurant has available to make sure I'm getting enough protein and then just do my best. The bonus I have found with eating out and utilizing both the balance and internal cues skills is that I often finish meals with more than enough to make a second meal. So yes, eating out does cost more money than eating at home. But I can often get two meals out of one restaurant experience, which leaves me pretty excited for leftovers the next day or later that day.

And finally, prepare to be underwhelmed. I keep my meals super simple. And I think outside the box. I often scan my kitchen for a protein, a carb, I add a lot of veggies, I often eat the same or similar things every day, and then I swap them out when I'm bored. I do this in particular, for example, for breakfast. I have the same breakfast almost every day of the week. And I do this because I don't want my time and energy to go towards preparing food and deciding what to eat. Some people do and that's totally fine. I support that. That is not the choice for me. And having a go to routine for breakfast makes it super simple, where I can spend my time getting ready for the day, getting my kids to school, getting myself dressed and to work on time - by the way to work on time, includes just to commute down the hall, but it still is a struggle some days.

But that's where I want to spend my time and energy, not on making an amazing gourmet omelet.

I have accepted that not every meal is going to be gourmet. It's not always going to taste amazing or paired nicely together. I tolerate meals that check the box once in a while that just kind of get the job done, quote unquote. And again, I do this as I mentioned at the beginning of this episode, because that's not how I want to spend my time and energy. But I'm able to do this because I have addressed food scarcity thoughts that I used to have, I used to think that my experience of good food was limited to when I wasn't dieting, or was only available to me certain times or certain days of the week, like the weekends, I had to eat all of the foods on the weekend. Because come Monday, my food was gonna be self-imposed, taken away, or restricted again. And that perpetuated a cycle of restriction and then overeating on the weekends. Now that I don't have the scarcity thoughts that food is going to be taken away from me come Monday morning, or that ice cream is a food that I shouldn't eat or a bad choice, and I can only have it on special occasions...I can have ice cream anytime, I can eat out anytime, I can eat whatever I want on any day of the week, now that I have unpacked all of these beliefs, my interest in food has decreased dramatically. And with that has come the ability to have some boring meals once in a while. And I'm okay with that. That's exactly the kind of eating experience that works for me. Some of my meals are really boring. They're not exciting, they're not the most flavorful. And also, I eat out, and some of my meals are amazing and so exciting. And so enriching with food and connection and atmosphere, I have all of it, the whole spectrum, and that's what works for me. And that's how I enjoy eating.

So this is how I eat. If I don't cook, I really don't cook a whole lot, if at all. Most weeks, again, it's a combination of those strategies. It's certainly not an exhaustive list. If you, too, don't cook and still manage to eat, which I hope you do, I would love to hear what that looks like for you, and we can continue to share these strategies, so you aren't stuck in the kitchen if you don't want to be there. Thanks for tuning in, friends. We'll talk to you soon.

ANNIE (OUTRO)

Hey everyone, if your mind has been blown while listening to this podcast, just wait until you work with us. Let us help you level up your health and wellness habits and your life inside Balance365 coaching, head on over to [balance365.co](https://balance365.co) to join coaching.