Here’s the irony: I’m a health writer with 20 years of experience and a degree in nutritional science. I know full well that scratch cooking is the cheapest, heart-healthiest, and waistline-friendliest way to eat. People who cook most of their meals at home consume fewer calories and less sugar, fat, and carbs compared with those who have an ongoing love affair with their Seamless app. Studies have even found that people who regularly sit down to home-cooked meals are flat-out happier and may actually live longer.

Yet less than 60 percent of dinners are currently prepared at home, whereas 75 percent of ’80s suppers were. Part of the reason is fairly obvious: We don’t cook because we don’t have to anymore. Sweating over a hot stove has been replaced by dial-a-meal; to wit, nearly 7 million diners ordered from Grubhub in 2015, a 34 percent hike from 2014. And one in 10 at-home meals currently incorporate an item from a “grocerant”—supermarkets, convenience stores, and other retailers that stock ready-to-consume side dishes and prepared meals.

Still, for someone like me, who knows just how good cooking can be for a person,
you’d expect a little more lovin’ for the oven. The thing is, at the end of a long day, the last thing I want to do is devote my final spurt of energy to disemboweling a flaccid piece of raw chicken or attempting to re-create my husband’s favorite food-truck pho. I’m tired; I’d rather just open a box of soup and read a book or give myself a paper cut, dip it in lemon juice, and listen to it sizzle.

Another reason I secretly believe cereal is Latin for “pancakes take too long” is that cooking chafes my inner professional, a wife, a mother, that can feel imprisoning.”

Even hunting and gathering gets my apron in a bunch. Between the general supermarket, pit stops at Whole Foods for organic non-GMO essentials, and a run to Trader Joe’s for riced cauliflower, many of us are grocery shopping more often than we have sex—even as we actually cook less. After that, food prep takes forever, eating takes four minutes, and then…dishes.

Look, my family will never stand the kitchen, just get out of the heat—and erase the “I’m lame” feelings from your head. If meal prep pisses you off, Durvasula says, “that stress is probably going to negate the dietary benefits you get from cooking at home.” I’m not saying you need to eat gas-station sushi, but there are a zillion other actually healthy options for getting food in your belly. So bon appétit.

Rice and Beans
Place ½ cup cooked brown rice (such as Minute or Uncle Ben’s) in a bowl with ¼ cup rinsed canned black beans. Microwave 90 seconds, then stir in as much fresh salsa as desired. Top with a dollop each of guacamole and low-fat plain Greek yogurt, and chow.