Blue Apron has realized that we don’t really want to do any work

Struggling meal kit company Blue Apron has launched a new line of ready-to-make meals, addressing the complaint that its home-delivered, pre-portioned recipes still require too much work to make and too much cleanup afterward.

The new ready-to-cook meals do require some assembly but, crucially, no chopping or cleaning up, as its signature ingredient meal kits famously do. Just unpack the pre-portioned proteins, veggies, etc., throw it all into a provided (recyclable) aluminum tray, and pop it into the oven. It’s cooking, Jim, but not as we know it.

With increased competition and a growing aversion to subscription services among customers, Blue Apron’s annual revenue hasn’t kept up with its early successes. Valued at $2 billion in 2015, the company’s worth has plummeted. Its current market cap is $99.33 million.

Despite a small probably pandemic-related boost, Blue Apron has struggled to compete in the category it essentially created. As grocery giants like Kroger, Walmart, and Amazon latch onto the idea of meal kits and fresh, ready-to-cook meals, the appeal of managing a monthly subscription when you could just have a meal kit delivered along with your regular groceries has clearly waned.

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Still, Blue Apron is touting its high-quality ingredients as a

big selling point. The new Ready to Cook meals join a Heat & Eat option (microwave meals) and Fast & Easy recipes (sheet pan and one-pot recipes) as easier to make, delivered to your door meals that don’t taste as though they came out of a cardboard box. Although they do, in fact, come out of a cardboard box — or ten. The amount of packaging used is another often-heard complaint about this service and those similar to it.

The new dishes are based on Blue Apron’s most popular recipes and include cheesy tomato gnocchi with Calabrian chile and spinach; sweet chili udon and vegetables with coconut chips and sesame seeds; and pesto chicken and orzo with spinach, tomatoes, and ricotta. Subscribers can choose to add Ready to Cook meals alongside or instead of the company’s meals that you have to chop. They’ll start showing up on July 29th as an option to order with your meal box on the two- and four-serving menus.

Now, excuse me while I go heat up a frozen enchilada.

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