Food Choices to Meet Your Calorie Needs

Nutritious 100-, 200-, and 300-calorie additions to complement your Thrive meals.



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Simple Ways to Add More Calories

Everyone's calorie needs are different. Factors such as age, height, weight, activity level, and personal goals all influence how many calories your body needs.

Thrive's regular meals provide a balanced starting point, but you may need additional calories to meet your individual needs.

To estimate your daily calorie target, use our free *How Many Calories Do I Need?* guide, which walks you through the NIH Body Weight Planner.

Find both guides on our Thrive Calorie Calculator page, where you can calculate your additional calorie needs and choose foods to complement your Thrive meals.

Your Thrive Customization Shortcut

Step 1: Use the **NIH Body Weight Planner** to get your target daily calories.

Step 2: Use the table to find a combination of additions that matches your target.

Target	Your Plan	How to build your plate
1,300 kcal	The Baseline Plan	Follow the 8-Week Plan as written
1,500 kcal	Baseline + 200 kcal	Add one 200-calorie option or two 100-calorie options.
1,700 kcal	Baseline + 400 kcal	Add two 200-calorie options, such as one at lunch and one at dinner.
1,900 kcal	Baseline + 600 kcal	Add two 300-calorie options or create a fourth mini-meal.

How to Use These Additions

Add More of Your Thrive Recipes: Increase portions of the recipes you're already enjoying. The listed additions refer to the **recipe itself, not the entire meal**, unless specifically noted. For example, you might add another portion of a casserole, part of a sandwich, or more of a Protein Bowl.

Additions, Not Replacements: Add these portions to your regular Thrive meals rather than replacing planned foods.

Mix and Match: Choose from the Thrive recipe additions or individual food options in the 100-, 200-, and 300-calorie sections. Combine them to meet your needs.

Measure for Consistency: Use a food scale or measuring cup when helpful. Portions are designed to provide approximately 100, 200, or 300 additional calories, depending on the section. Actual calories may vary by product or brand.

Food Additions for Stabilizing & Maintenance

Stabilizing: Gradually increase calories following the instructions in *Start Here*. Use the food additions in this guide to help maintain your progress.

Maintenance: Continue enjoying Thrive meals, adjusting portions and adding foods as needed to maintain your weight.

The 3-Pound Rule: If your weight increases more than 3 pounds above your maintenance weight, follow the instructions in *Start Here* to get back on track.

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Thrive Breakfast Recipe Additions

- **Berry Breakfast Bread:** ¼-inch slice (approximately 55 g)
- **Breakfast Burrito:** Approximately ⅓ of a burrito
- **French Toast Bake:** Approximately 90 g
- **Protein Bowl:** Approximately ⅓ of a full bowl
- **Protein Oatmeal Bowl:** ¼ of a prepared bowl
- **Protein Pancakes:** Approximately ⅔ of one recipe serving
- **Veggie & Herb Frittata:** Approximately ⅖ of a recipe serving
- **Zucchini Bread:** One additional ½-inch slice

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Thrive Lunch Recipe Additions

- **Cheese Quesadilla:** ½ of a quesadilla
- **Chicken Salad with Berries & Walnuts:** Approximately ¼ of the prepared salad
- **Italian Protein Pizza Bowl:** Approximately ⅓ of a recipe serving
- **Open-Face Tuna Sandwich:** Approximately ⅓ of a sandwich
- **Open-Face Turkey & Cheese Sandwich:** ½ of a sandwich
- **Tuna Salad Sandwich:** Approximately ⅓ of a sandwich
- **Turkey Wrap:** ½ of a wrap

Thrive Dinner Recipe Additions

These portions refer only to the dinner recipe. Salad and vegetable sides are not included.

- **Chicken & Bean Enchiladas:** Approximately 60 g of an additional enchilada
- **Chicken Parmesan & Pasta:** Approximately ⅓ of an additional recipe serving, including its proportional pasta
- **Greek Chicken & Pasta:** Approximately 100 g
- **Honey Garlic Glazed Salmon:** Approximately 50 g of prepared salmon
- **Iowa-Style Beef Short Ribs:** Approximately ¼ of a recipe serving, including proportional sauce
- **Meatloaf:** Approximately 60 g
- **Parmesan Crusted White Fish:** Approximately 60 g
- **Roasted Chicken Sausage Veggie Bake:** Approximately ¼ of a recipe serving
- **Spaghetti Bake:** Approximately ⅖ cup
- **Stuffed Bell Peppers:** Approximately ⅓ of a stuffed pepper
- **Turkey Chili:** ¾ cup
- **Turkey Meatballs:** 1½ additional meatballs
- **Turkey Vegetable Soup:** Approximately ½ cup

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Other 100-Calorie Food Additions

Breads, Waffles & Sandwich

- **Whole-grain bread:** 1 standard slice
- **Sourdough bread:** 1 standard slice
- **Frozen Waffle:** 1 standard toasted frozen waffle (Eggo style, plain) **OR** 1 plain or blueberry Kodiak frozen waffle for extra protein boost
- **Half Sandwich:** 1 slice of thin whole-grain bread with 2 slices of lean deli turkey and a smear of mustard

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Protein & Dairy

- **Plain nonfat Greek yogurt:** ¾ cup (170 g)
- **Eggs:** 1 large whole egg plus 1 egg white
- **Reduced-fat Cheese:** 2 slices of Swiss or Mozzarella
- **Deli Turkey Breast:** 5 slices (e.g. Natural Choice)
- **Chicken Breast:** 2 oz (cooked, skinless breast)
- **Breakfast Sausages:** 3 links (e.g. Applegate)

Healthy Fats, Nuts & Fruits

- **Avocado:** ⅓ of a medium avocado
- **Nuts:** 14 whole almonds OR 7 walnut halves
- **Dried Fruit:** 3 tablespoons of raisins (33 g)

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Milk Options

- **Milk — Choose one option:** 1 cup 1% milk **OR** ¾ cup 2% milk
- **Oat Milk**: 1 cup unsweetened plain or vanilla (check labels, varies by brand)

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Thrive Breakfast Recipe Additions

- **Berry Breakfast Bread:** ½-inch slice (approximately 110 g)
- **Breakfast Burrito:** Approximately ⅔ of a burrito
- **French Toast Bake:** Approximately 180 g
- **Protein Bowl:** Approximately ⅔ of a full bowl
- **Protein Oatmeal Bowl:** ½ of a prepared bowl
- **Protein Pancakes:** 1¼ recipe servings (approximately 150 g)
- **Veggie & Herb Frittata:** Approximately ⅞ of a recipe serving
- **Zucchini Bread:** One additional 1-inch slice

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Thrive Lunch Recipe Additions

- **Cheese Quesadilla:** 1 additional quesadilla
- **Chicken Salad with Berries & Walnuts:** Approximately ½ of a recipe serving
- **Italian Protein Pizza Bowl:** Approximately ⅔ of a recipe serving
- **Open-Face Tuna Sandwich:** Approximately ⅔ of a sandwich
- **Open-Face Turkey & Cheese Sandwich:** 1 additional sandwich
- **Tuna Salad Sandwich:** Approximately ⅔ of a sandwich
- **Turkey Wrap:** 1 additional wrap

Thrive Dinner Recipe Additions

These additions include only the dinner recipe, not the accompanying salad or vegetables.

- **Chicken & Bean Enchiladas:** Approximately 120 g of an additional enchilada
- **Chicken Parmesan & Pasta:** Approximately ⅔ of an additional recipe serving, including proportional pasta
- **Greek Chicken & Pasta:** Approximately 195 g
- **Honey Garlic Glazed Salmon:** Approximately 100 g of prepared salmon
- **Iowa-Style Beef Short Ribs:** Approximately 55 g, including proportional sauce
- **Meatloaf:** Approximately 120 g
- **Parmesan Crusted White Fish:** Approximately 120 g
- **Roasted Chicken Sausage Veggie Bake:** Approximately ½ of a recipe serving
- **Spaghetti Bake:** Approximately ¾ cup (165 g)
- **Stuffed Bell Peppers:** Approximately ⅔ of a stuffed pepper (200 g)
- **Turkey Chili:** 1½ cups
- **Turkey Meatballs:** 3 additional meatballs
- **Turkey Vegetable Soup:** Approximately 1⅛ cups

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Other 200-Calorie Food Additions

Breads

- **Frozen Waffles: Choose one option:** 2 standard toasted frozen waffles (Eggo style, plain) **OR** 2 plain or blueberry Kodiak frozen waffles for extra protein boost
- **Whole Sandwich**: 2 slices thin whole-grain bread with 3 slices of lean deli turkey and a smear of mustard
- **Sourdough bread:** 1 large slice OR 2 small slices (approx. 55 g)

Proteins & Dairy

- **Plain nonfat Greek yogurt:** 1 ½ cups (340 g)
- **Eggs:** 2 large whole eggs + 2 large egg whites
- **Chicken Breast:** 4 oz (cooked, skinless breast)

Vegetables & Starches

- **Sweet Potato:** 1 large sweet potato (5” or 180 g) mashed with a splash of milk + 1 tsp butter
- **Russet Potato:** 1 medium russet potato topped with 2 Tbsp light sour cream **OR** 3 Tbsp nonfat Greek yogurt
- **Corn:** 1 ½ cups (or 2 ears)
- **Peas**: 1 ½ cups

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Healthy Fats, Nuts & Fruits

- **Avocado Toast:** 1 slice whole-grain bread topped with ⅓ of a medium Haas avocado
- **Avocado**: ¾ of a medium Haas avocado
- **Nuts:** 28 individual almonds **OR** 15 walnut halves
- **Fresh Fruit Pairings**: 1 large mango **OR** 1 large banana paired with 1 slice of low-fat Swiss cheese and a few nuts
- **Dried Fruit:** 3 small Medjool dried dates **OR** ⅓ cup of raisins (about a small handful)

Smoothies & Milks

Fruit Smoothie: ½ scoop protein powder blended with ¼ cup frozen berries (1 scoop of protein powder is approximately 110-120 calories; check label, brands vary); and your choice of liquid base:

- 1 ½ cups of 1% milk
- 1 ¼ cups of 2% milk
- 1 ½ cups unsweetened oat milk, plain or vanilla flavor
- Add cold water or ice to reach your preferred thickness

Plain Smoothie: ½ scoop of protein powder blended with your choice of liquid base (a full scoop of protein powder contains approximately 110–120 calories; check labels, brands vary):

- 1 ½ cups of 1% milk
- 1 ¼ cups of 2% milk
- 1 ½ cups unsweetened oat milk, plain or vanilla flavor
- Add cold water or ice to reach your preferred thickness

Milk: Choose one option: 1 ¾ cups 1% milk **OR** 1 ½ cups 2% milk

Oat Milk: 1 ¾ cup unsweetened plain or vanilla (check labels, varies by brand)

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Thrive Breakfast Recipe Additions

- **Berry Breakfast Bread:** ¾-inch slice (approximately 165 g)
- **Breakfast Burrito:** 1 additional burrito
- **French Toast Bake:** Approximately 275 g
- **Protein Bowl:** 1 additional full bowl
- **Protein Oatmeal Bowl:** ¾ of a prepared bowl
- **Protein Pancakes:** 2 recipe servings (approximately 240 g)
- **Veggie & Herb Frittata:** 1¼ recipe servings
- **Zucchini Bread:** 1½-inch slice

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Thrive Lunch Recipe Additions

- **Cheese Quesadilla:** 1½ additional quesadillas
- **Chicken Salad with Berries & Walnuts:** Approximately ¾ of a recipe serving
- **Italian Protein Pizza Bowl:** 1 additional recipe serving
- **Open-Face Tuna Sandwich:** 1 additional sandwich
- **Open-Face Turkey & Cheese Sandwich:** 1½ additional sandwiches
- **Tuna Salad Sandwich:** 1 additional sandwich
- **Turkey Wrap:** 1½ additional wraps

Thrive Dinner Recipe Additions

These additions include only the dinner recipe, not the accompanying salad or vegetables.

- **Chicken & Bean Enchiladas:** Approximately 180 g of an additional enchilada
- **Chicken Parmesan & Pasta:** 1 additional recipe serving, including pasta
- **Greek Chicken & Pasta:** Approximately 290 g

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- **Honey Garlic Glazed Salmon:** Approximately 150 g of prepared salmon
- **Iowa-Style Beef Short Ribs:** Approximately 80 g, including proportional sauce
- **Meatloaf:** Approximately 180 g

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- **Parmesan Crusted White Fish:** Approximately 180 g
- **Roasted Chicken Sausage Veggie Bake:** Approximately ¾ of a recipe serving
- **Spaghetti Bake:** Approximately 1⅛ cups (250 g)
- **Stuffed Bell Peppers:** 1 additional stuffed pepper (300 g)
- **Turkey Chili:** 2¼ cups
- **Turkey Meatballs:** 4½ additional meatballs
- **Turkey Vegetable Soup:** Approximately 1⅔ cups

Other 300-Calorie Food Additions

Mini-Meals & Snacks

- **The "Power Pair" (Option A):** 1 slice whole-grain or sourdough bread topped with ½ a medium avocado and 1 fried egg
- **The “Power Pair” (Option B):** 1 slice whole-grain or sourdough bread topped with ¾ of a medium avocado
- **The "Breakfast Boost":** 2 large whole eggs scrambled with 1 tsp butter and served with 2 slices of reduced-fat Swiss cheese
- **Nuts & Cheese:** 1 ¼ oz of mixed nuts (approximately ⅓ cup) paired with 1 slice reduced-fat Swiss cheese

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Protein Shakes & Smoothies

The Classic Protein Shake: Blend 1 scoop of protein powder (approximately 110–120 calories; check labels, brands vary), 1 medium banana, with your choice of liquid base:

- 1 cup of 1% milk
- ¾ cup of 2% milk
- 1 cup unsweetened oat milk, plain or vanilla flavor
- Add cold water or ice to reach your preferred thickness

The Berry Smoothie: Blend 1 scoop of protein powder (approx. 110–120 calories; check labels, brands vary) and ½ cup of fresh or frozen berries with your choice of liquid base:

- 1 ¼ cups of 1% milk
- 1 cup of 2% milk
- 1 ¼ cup unsweetened oat milk, plain or vanilla flavor
- Add cold water or ice to reach your preferred thickness

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