

The Lifestyle Fitness Recipe Book



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Introduction

These Recipes are compiled from:

- a. My Own!
- b. Dr. Andrew Weil
- c. Weight Watchers
- d. Vegan Planet Recipe Book
- e. Annmarie's Family
- f. David Kirsch, Ultimate NY Body Plan

Let me tell you a little bit of how I cook, I think I get this from my mother. I take an idea from someone, someplace or from a recipe in a book and make it my own. I never remember how much of what I put in, or exactly what I put in the last time I made it. It always comes out great, but it never tastes quite the same. So bear with me!!

Here are a few guidelines that I'd like you to follow when you're preparing and shopping for these meals. I want you to be as healthy as you possibly can be and here's how to do it!

1. Buy Organic foods. There are too many poisons in our conventional foods and they are affecting the way we metabolize foods. The more organic foods you eat, the better off you are!
2. Don't use Teflon. This stuff is known to cause cancer. Buy glass or stainless steel pots and pans and your body will thank you!
3. Eat more raw than cooked. A diet rich in raw foods is a healthy diet. Cooking your foods can destroy the living enzymes that your body needs most for proper nutrition.
4. Enjoy your food! Eat with family and friends. Make sure you laugh. All these things will improve your health and well being!

Enjoy!

Annmarie

Appetizers

Annmarie's Black Bean and Avocado Salsa

The one you have all been waiting for, I'll have to say this is a hit at every party!! I originally got the idea from my sister, but she cheats and uses already bottled Italian Dressing. If anyone reads labels you all know that most dressings have high fructose corn syrup and hydrogenated oils. And she is the nutritionist, also very smart, and a wonderful mother of two great kids. So if you are time strapped you may use pre-made Italian dressing.

Ingredients:

1 can of black beans, rinsed
1/2 cup Frozen Corn
1/2 medium Orange Pepper, chopped
1/2 small Red Onion, chopped
1/2 cup Grape Tomatoes, halved
1 clove of garlic
1 small Jalapeño, chopped fine
1 Avocado, cubed (Do this right before you serve the salsa)

Dressing:

1/4 cup Olive Oil
Juice from 1 Lime
1 teaspoon Cumin
Salt & Black Pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Combined first 6 ingredients in to bowl. Saving the avocado for last.
2. In separate smaller bowl whisk together Olive Oil, Lime Juice, & Cumin, set aside.
3. Right before you are ready to serve, mix in dressing and avocados. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve with your favorite Corn Chips or you can even serve over fish, I suggest Tilapia. Enjoy ☺

Hummus (10 Servings)

This wonderful bean spread has gained in popularity over the past few years it is wonderful as a sandwich spread or as a dip with raw vegetables or pita triangles. Keep a batch in your refrigerator all the time and you'll never be without a nutritious snack or lunch.

Ingredients:

1-3/4 cups dried chickpeas (garbanzos)	1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon baking soda	1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 cup sesame tahini	3-4 cloves garlic, mashed
1/4 cup cold water	1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Instructions:

1. Soak the chickpeas for 8 hours with the baking soda in cold water to cover.
2. Bring the chickpeas to a boil over high heat, reduce heat, cover, and cook until soft, about 45 minutes. Drain, reserving a bit of the liquid.
3. Make the tahini sauce: Blend in a food processor or blender the tahini, cold water, lemon juice, cumin, and garlic. Measure out 1/2 cup of this sauce for the hummus, saving the rest.
4. Put the drained chickpeas in a food processor and process to a rough purée, adding a little of the cooking liquid if necessary. The mixture should not be totally smooth. Add the tahini sauce and process until just mixed.
5. Scrape the mixture into a bowl. Stir in the olive oil.
6. Serve with pita bread, whole-grain crackers, or carrot sticks.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 102 calories, 5 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 11 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 3 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Tobouleh:

This is a great Lebanese dish. Great on salads, fish, or served alone with pita.

Ingredients:

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup fine bulgur wheat
3 or 4 bunches of flat leaf parsley
1 bunch mint
Salt, pepper, allspice (about $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp each)
2 bunches scallions
2 lg. tomatoes
3 lemons (squeezed)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup olive oil

Instructions:

1. Soak wheat in water for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Then squeeze water out of wheat by hand. Place in bowl.
2. Dice all veggies very fine.
3. Add spices and lemon juice to bulgur wheat, mix in vegetables and add oil. Mix well and serve cold.

Eggplant-Walnut Pate (8 Servings)

Traditional pâtés are often made from high-fat meats and liver. They can be delicious and quite elegant, but less than nutritious. This vegetarian version is elegant, filled with flavor, and nutritious. Enjoy it on a special occasion or as an everyday spread with whole grain crackers.

Ingredients:

1 large eggplant	1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup walnut pieces	1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
2 teaspoons fresh gingerroot, peeled, grated, and finely chopped	Salt and hot pepper sauce to taste
2 cloves garlic, mashed	

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Pierce the eggplant with a fork in several places and bake until very soft, about 45 minutes.
2. While the eggplant is baking, grind the walnuts in a food processor until very fine, and set aside.
3. Remove the eggplant from oven, slash to let steam escape, drain off any liquid, and scrape the pulp into a food processor with the gingerroot, garlic, and olive oil. Process until smooth.
4. Add the ground walnuts and allspice, and process until smooth.
5. Season to taste with the salt and hot pepper sauce. Spoon into a small loaf dish and chill several hours or until firm.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 98 calories, 8 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 6 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 2 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Eggplant Dip (8 Servings)

Eggplant Dip has a great texture with a tangy, vinegary, seasoned taste that is mellowed with the pita. I also like to smear the dip inside warm crepes for a different kind of presentation.

Ingredients:

1 eggplant (1 1/2-pounds)	1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/2 medium onion, grated or finely chopped	3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons capers	1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice	4 pitas
1/4 cup olive oil	1 tomato, peeled, seeded, and diced
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano	1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Set the eggplant on a baking pan or dish and pierce it a few times with a knife. Bake it until it becomes soft, about 30 minutes; it should pierce easily with a fork. Remove it from the oven and let cool. When completely cooled, peel the skin off and put the flesh into a blender or food processor. Add the onions, capers, and lemon juice. Turn on the machine, and then gradually add the olive oil. Continue to blend until the eggplant is smooth and creamy. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the oregano, salt, pepper, and vinegar.
3. Warm the pitas briefly on a baking sheet then cut each of them into 8 wedges. Arrange them on a plate or platter. Just before serving, stir the tomato and parsley into the dip.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 169 calories, 7 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 23 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 3 g fiber, 175 mg sodium

Bean Dip with Horseradish

8 Servings

If you're using canned beans, be sure to drain and rinse them to get rid of excess salt.

Ingredients:

2 cups cooked beans (Cannelloni, pinto or Great Northern)
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 tbsp prepared horseradish
2 scallions, trimmed and minced
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Combine beans, olive oil, horseradish and scallions in a blender or food processor and blend until smooth, adding a little water if necessary.
2. Season with salt to taste.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 94 calories, 4 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 12 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 4 g fiber, 170 mg sodium

Soups and Salads

Annamarie's Lentil Soup (6 Servings)

Lentils are a staple in Middle Eastern and Indian cooking and make a thick, rich and delicious soup. They're also a good source of fiber and magnesium and the quickest legume to cook. With bread and a salad, this soup makes a whole meal. On a cold night, a filling soup like this is perfect nourishment for warming body and soul.

Ingredients:

1 pound lentils, 1 cup vegetable stock
3 large carrots, peeled and sliced
1 large onion, chopped, 2 cloves of
garlic, minced

2 tablespoons olive oil, 1 teaspoon of
ground cardamom seeds, 1 teaspoon
of fresh dried mint leaves
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Pick over lentils to remove any stones, dirt, and other foreign objects. Rinse them well in cold water and place in a large pot with enough cold water to cover lentils by 2 inches, soak for one hour.
2. Bring to a boil, skim off foam, lower heat, and add vegetable stock.
3. While lentils are coming to a boil; in large skillet heat olive oil and sauté onions, carrots, and garlic for 10-20 minutes.
4. Add onion mixture to lentils and spices, cook partially covered on low heat for 20-30 minutes. Stir occasionally and add more boiling water if lentils start sticking or if you prefer a more soup like dish.
5. Serve over quinoa.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 176 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 25 g carbohydrate, 8 g protein, 9 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Creamy Tomato Soup

3 servings

Ingredients:

1 large onion, chopped
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
3 pounds fresh, ripe Italian tomatoes, chopped (about 6 cups)
8 sun-dried tomatoes, soaked
1 cup soy milk
Salt and black and red pepper to taste
3 tablespoons fresh parsley, basil, or dill, chopped

Instructions:

1. In a large pot, sauté the onions in the olive oil until they are soft, then add the fresh tomatoes and stir until the mixture boils.
2. Remove the dried tomatoes from their soaking water and chop them coarsely. Add them and their soaking water to the pot and cook, stirring to prevent sticking.
3. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes. Add the soy milk and season to taste with salt and black and red pepper.
4. Serve in bowls with the chopped green herbs as garnish.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 196 calories, 8 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 30 g carbohydrate, 7 g protein, 8 g fiber, 250 mg sodium

Black Bean Soup (8 Servings)

Among the most inexpensive of foods, dried beans offer a bounty of fiber, iron, protein, folic acid and B vitamins. Do not salt dried beans until they are cooked, as the salt slows down the softening process. On another note, so-called "cooking" wines or Sherries contain lots of added salt. Do your palate and your body a favor and use a drinkable sherry in this recipe.

Ingredients:

1 pound black beans
1/3 bay leaf
1 large onion, sliced
Salt to taste

A few cloves of chopped garlic
1 tsp dry mustard powder
1 cup dry sherry (not cooking sherry)

Instructions:

1. Pick over beans to remove any dirt, stones or foreign objects. Wash well, and then soak for 8 hours in ample cold water.
2. Place beans and soaking liquid in a large saucepan with 1/3 bay leaf and bring to a boil over high heat. Skim off foam, lower heat, and simmer, partially covered, till beans are just tender, about 1 hour.
3. Add onion and continue to cook until onion melts into liquid, about 1 more hour.
4. Add salt to taste and garlic. Continue to cook, adding a little boiling water if necessary, until beans are very soft and start to melt into liquid, about 1-2 hours more.
5. Remove bay leaf and turn off heat. Ladle beans in batches into blender or food processor and puree or use an immersion blender and puree soup directly in the saucepan.
6. Add dry mustard powder and dry sherry. Correct seasoning. Reheat and serve, adding any garnishes you wish, such as slices of lemon or freshly chopped herbs.

Marinated Tomato and Sardine Salad

1 Serving

This low-carb salad is particularly good when plump, garden-fresh tomatoes are in season. Serve it at room temperature for best flavor. We're providing the nutritional information for the salad using 1/2 can of water-packed sardines. Feel free to use a whole can for one serving if you're less concerned with calories than with healthy eating. Sardines are rich in omega-3 fatty acids and are surprisingly low in sodium and saturated fat.

Ingredients:

- 1 large ripe tomato (preferably organic)
- 1/2 can sardines (water-packed)
- 1/4 cup basil leaves, finely chopped
- 1 tsp olive oil, extra virgin
- 1 tsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp garlic, finely chopped

Instructions:

You can use the tomato as is (unpeeled and with seeds) but the salad is better if you peel the tomato after plunging it briefly in boiling water, and then remove the seeds. This reduces the water in the finished salad. Cut the tomato pulp into large chunks.

Mix together the dressing ingredients (olive oil, balsamic vinegar, fresh garlic) and stir in the chopped basil leaves. Add the drained sardines and the tomato chunks.

Serve at room temperature, on a bed of salad greens or spinach.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 219 calories, 12 g total fat (3 g sat), 28 mg cholesterol, 21 g carbohydrate, 13 g protein, 9 g fiber, 94 mg sodium

Red Pepper Vinaigrette

8 Servings

This salad dressing is nothing like your basic vinaigrette formula - but you'll soon want to use it nearly every day. The classic vinaigrette is made with 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar. As you can see, this version has no oil in it at all, making it extremely low in calories. But don't worry - it's very high in flavor. Once you've tried this I'm sure it'll become your basic everyday staple for salad. And you can never eat too much salad!

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup apple juice
- 1/4 cup cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon dried whole oregano
- pinches of rosemary and thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard powder
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 of a roasted red bell pepper

Instructions:

Combine all ingredients in a blender container. Blend to mix thoroughly.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 8 calories, 0 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 2 g carbohydrate, 0 g protein, 0 g fiber, 50 mg sodium

Artichoke Heart and Soybean Soup

2 Servings

This is an easy soup based on canned soybeans and canned or bottled artichoke hearts. Excellent varieties of organic canned soybeans are now available at health food stores. These soybeans are generally low in sodium and the slightly gelatinous broth in the can be added right in with your soups and stews. You can, of course, substitute chicken stock for the vegetable stock in this soup if you prefer the flavor of chicken stock-based soups.

Ingredients:

- 1 14 oz can or bottle of artichoke hearts
- 1 15 oz can of organic, cooked soybeans
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 tsp grated ginger root
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 cups vegetable stock

Instructions:

Drain the artichoke hearts. Combine in a blender or food processor with the canned soybeans and process until smooth. Sauté the garlic and ginger in the olive oil then stir in the artichoke heart/soybean puree and add the vegetable stock. Stir well and heat through.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 178 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 21 g carbohydrate, 14 g protein, 8 g fiber, 282 mg sodium

White Bean Salad

3 Serving

This is a very easy bean salad you can make the night before and take to work, or serve as a side dish.

Ingredients:

- 1 can white beans, like cannelloni
- 1 tbsp red pepper, chopped fine
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped fine
- 1/4 cup tomato, diced
- 1 tbsp red onion, chopped fine
- 1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp herb and spice blend

Instructions:

Drain the canned beans and rinse well in a strainer. Make sure you've drained all the rinse water. Combine the remaining ingredients in a bowl, whisking the oil and vinegar together first. Add the beans. Experiment with different types of canned beans and different chopped vegetables to add.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 240 calories, 4 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 39 g carbohydrate, 15 g protein, 10 g fiber, 100 mg sodium

Miso Soup (4 Servings)

Miso soup is the Japanese version of chicken soup - a combination soul food and comfort food. It is traditionally eaten at breakfast in Japan as a daily staple. Miso is a paste made from fermented soybeans, and is full of antioxidants like vitamin E, as well as protective fatty acids. It's healthful and delicious, and the Japanese say that the linoleic acid in miso promotes soft skin. The soybeans miso is made from also contain isoflavones and other elements that provide protection against some forms of cancer. To preserve these properties, miso should not be boiled. Add it to a soup after it has been removed from direct heat.

Ingredients:

2 teaspoons canola oil
3 slices fresh ginger root
1 large onion
2 carrots, peeled and thinly sliced
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced

4 cups coarsely chopped cabbage

5 cups water
4 tablespoons miso (dark or light,
available at natural-food stores)
Scallions
Sesame oil (optional)

Instructions:

1. Heat canola oil in large pot. Add ginger and onion, thinly sliced. Sauté over medium heat for 5 minutes and add carrots, celery, and cabbage. Stir well.
2. Add water, bring rapidly to a boil, then lower heat and simmer covered till carrots are tender, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat.
3. Place miso in a bowl, add a little of the vegetable broth, and stir well into a smooth paste. Add more broth to thin the mixture, and then add to the pot of soup. Let rest for a few minutes.
4. Serve in bowls with chopped raw scallions. You may wish to remove the sliced ginger before serving, and you can add a few drops of roasted (dark) sesame oil to each bowl, if desired, for a smoother nutty flavor.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 108 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 13 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 3 g fiber, 675 mg sodium

Citrus Salad Dressing (4 Servings)

This tart, sweet salad dressing is wonderful on dark, leafy salad greens like romaine or leaf lettuce tossed with orange segments, black olives and red onion slivers.

Ingredients:

1/3 cup fresh orange juice
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions:

Whisk all the ingredients together or combine in a small jar and shake well.
Keeps in the refrigerator for 2 days.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 43 calories, 3 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 3 g carbohydrate, 0 g protein, 0 g fiber

Salmon and Edamame Salad (1 Serving)

This pretty pink and green salad can be made from leftover cooked salmon or canned salmon. Serve it on a bed of dark, leafy greens or in a whole wheat pita. Edamame are whole green soybeans that are a favorite snack in Japan. Organic edamame are now readily available in the freezer section of health food stores. They're often available both in the pod and already shelled; you'll need the shelled version for this recipe.

Ingredients:

4 oz cooked or canned salmon
1/4 cup cooked, shelled edamame
2 tbsp sliced scallions (green onions)
2 tbsp chopped red bell pepper (optional)
2 tbsp Tofu Mayonnaise

Instructions:

Cook the edamame according to package directions until they're barely done.
Cut the salmon into chunks and mix all the ingredients with 2 tablespoons of the Tofu Mayonnaise.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 269 calories, 11 g total fat (1 g sat), 59 mg cholesterol, 10 g carbohydrate, 33 g protein, 3 g fiber, 99 mg sodium

Escarole Soup

2 servings

This is the simplest soup you can make. Use vegetable broth if you want a vegetarian version. You can add leftover pasta, rice, cooked vegetables, or tofu. Use the rest of the escarole for a salad another day.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 5minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 head escarole

2 cups reduced sodium chicken broth or vegetable stock

Freshly ground pepper to taste

2 tsp grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Instructions:

1. In a medium saucepan, bring the chicken broth to a boil.
2. Meanwhile, wash the escarole and shake dry. Coarsely chop the escarole and stir it into the chicken broth.
3. Remove from the heat. Season with freshly ground black pepper. Serve in soup bowls garnished with grated Parmesan cheese, if you like.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 52 calories, 0 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 4 g carbohydrate, 8 g protein, 4 g fiber, 198 mg sodium

Robust Beet Salad (8 servings)

Beets are a colorful source of anthocyanins, the purple pigments also found in blueberries, red grapes and red cabbage. They are powerful antioxidants and may help protect against cancer and heart disease. This dish brings to mind pickled beets with a grown-up slant. It keeps well in the refrigerator.

Ingredients:

3 pounds beets
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup rice or cider vinegar
1/4 cup water
1 teaspoon wasabi powder (Japanese horseradish)
1 teaspoon dry mustard powder
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 large onion, sliced thin
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Cut off the beet tops about an inch above the beet. In a large pot cover the beets with three inches of cold water and bring to a boil. Cover and boil over medium heat until tender, about 45 minutes.
2. Drain the beets under cool running water. Slip off their skins. Trim off stems and root ends and slice the beets thinly.
3. Combine the sliced beets in a bowl with the other ingredients, add salt to taste, and chill. Stir several times. This salad will keep for a week in the refrigerator.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 122 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 25 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 5 g fiber, 250 mg sodium

Salad Nicoise

2 servings

This is an elegant but simple whole meal salad. The addition of greens is our own touch. This is a "composed" salad - one in which the components are arranged artfully on the plate. If you don't want to take the time, it tastes just as good if all the ingredients are tossed together.

Prep time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 4 cups loose leaf lettuce, torn into pieces
- 1 cup string beans, steamed until just tender
- 1 ripe red tomato, cut into wedges
- 1 hard cooked egg, cut in 4 wedges
- 1 7-oz can albacore tuna, drained

Instructions:

Mix together the olive oil, vinegar and garlic in a small bowl. In a medium bowl, add half the dressing to the lettuce and toss to coat. Divide between two salad plates. Arrange the green beans, tomato, egg and tuna on the greens. Drizzle with the remaining dressing.

Nutritional Information: Per serving: 271 calories, 12 g total fat (2 g sat), 144 mg cholesterol, 16 g carbohydrate, 29 g protein, 5 g fiber, 514 mg sodium

Turkish Spinach Salad

4 Servings

This garlicky salad is a nice way to eat spinach and a great way to get a nutritional boost. Use the best extra-virgin olive oil you can afford. Serve it with lentil soup for a simple, delicious supper.

Ingredients:

1 pound fresh spinach, washed, stems removed
2 fresh tomatoes, sliced
6 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced
5 tablespoons plain nonfat yogurt
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Dry the spinach, tear it into large pieces, and combine it with the tomatoes and scallions in a bowl.
2. Combine the yogurt, olive oil, minced garlic, and thyme, adding salt and pepper to taste.
3. Add the yogurt mixture to the vegetables and mix well. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 118 calories, 8 g total fat (1 g sat), 1 mg cholesterol, 10 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein, 4 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Barley and Vegetable Soup (6 Servings)

Like other cereal grains -- wheat, millet, oats, corn and rye -- barley is a great source of fiber and carbohydrates, and can also be used to make cereal, bread and soup. Folk medicine uses barley in barley water, made by simply soaking barley in water, which is reputed to be a great tonic during convalescence.

"Pearl" barley is the name of the grain when it's been polished, after the husk and bran have been removed. It's the form most commonly used in soups. Grains like barley keep well. Their bulk and comparative cheapness make them a useful staple, especially at this soup-worthy time of the year, so be sure to keep some in your cupboard.

Ingredients:

3/4 cup medium pearl barley
11 cups vegetable stock
2 tbs vegetable oil
1 1/2 cups chopped onion
1 cup chopped carrots

1/2 cup chopped celery
1 cup thinly sliced mushrooms
salt to taste
1/2 bunch parsley

Instructions:

1. In a saucepan, combine the barley and 3 cups of vegetable stock. Bring to a boil over medium heat, cover, and simmer for 1 hour, or until the liquid is absorbed.

2. Meanwhile, heat the vegetable oil in a large pot and add the onion, carrots, celery and mushrooms. Cover and sweat the vegetables for about 5 minutes, until they begin to soften.

3. Add the remaining vegetable stock and simmer 30 minutes, covered.

4. Add the barley and simmer 5 minutes more. Add salt to taste and ladle into bowls. Serve garnished with some chopped fresh parsley.

Tuna, Asparagus and Feta Salad

1 Serving

This delicious salad provides about 3 portions of vegetables - a generous start on the daily recommendation of 5-7.

Ingredients:

2 cups romaine lettuce torn into pieces
1 Roma tomato, cut into 8 pieces
1/2 cup steamed asparagus pieces
1/2 can (3 ounces) white albacore tuna, drained
1 oz. feta cheese, crumbled
1/2 Tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 Tablespoon balsamic vinegar

Instructions:

Mix the romaine, tomato and asparagus. Add the tuna and feta cheese. Sprinkle with the olive oil and toss to coat. Add the balsamic vinegar and toss again.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 307 calories, 16 g total fat (6 g sat), 62 mg cholesterol, 16 g carbohydrate, 32 g protein, 4 g fiber, 807 mg sodium

Broccoli Soup

2 Servings

This is a simple broccoli soup that can be prepared quickly.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup vegetable stock
- 3 cups chopped broccoli (about 1/2 large bunch)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tsp grated ginger root
- 1 cup soy milk or skim milk
- 1 tsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 cup finely chopped red onion

Instructions:

1. In a large saucepan, bring the vegetable broth to a boil.
2. Add the chopped broccoli, garlic and ginger. Reduce the heat to low and cover. Steam for about 5 minutes or until the broccoli is tender. Remove from the heat.
3. After the broccoli has cooled slightly, puree it in a food processor or blender. Return it to the sauce pan.
4. Add the soy milk or skim milk and soy sauce. Warm over low heat.
5. Serve sprinkled with chopped red onion.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 99 calories, 3 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 13 g carbohydrate, 9 g protein, 6 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Vegetable Stock

20 Cups

This is an excellent vegetable stock - freeze what you don't use for next time.

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 leeks, white and light green parts only, well washed and chopped
- 4 medium onions, chopped
- 6 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 small bunch parsley stems
- 2 teaspoons dried whole marjoram
- 1/2 teaspoon dried whole thyme
- 3 Turkish bay leaves or 1/2 California bay leaf
- 1 1/2 gallons cold purified water

Instructions:

Heat the olive oil over medium heat in a large pot. Add the vegetables and stir-fry to brown lightly. Add the marjoram, thyme, bay leaves, and cold water. Bring the pot to a boil, reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for one hour.

Strain the stock through a fine sieve or a cheesecloth-lined colander. Press or squeeze the vegetables to extract their liquid. Discard the vegetables.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 36 calories, 0 g sugar, 0 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 7 g carbohydrate, 0 g protein, 2 g fiber, 0 mg sodium

Taco Salad

2 Servings

Fast food taco salads are considered one of the highest fat, highest calorie choices at Mexican fast food restaurants. Ours is a wonderful alternative. Grate the cheese and add to the salad. Warm the beans if you like and add a little ground chicken, turkey or crumbled tempeh. Even though the carbohydrate content of this salad seems high, it has a very low glycemic index. The beans are also a rich source of folic acid and contribute to the high fiber content.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups lettuce, torn into pieces
- 1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped green onions
- 1 small cucumber, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup pinto beans, drained of juice
- 2 oz baked tortilla chips, broken into pieces
- 1/4 cup salsa

Instructions:

In a salad bowl, mix together the vegetables, pinto beans and tortilla chips. Add the salsa and stir gently to blend.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 203 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 40 g carbohydrate, 11 g protein, 11 g fiber, 213 mg sodium

Garlic Broth

4 Servings

Garlic is one of my favorite foods. It's an herb with remarkable medicinal properties, and it tastes great too. Garlic is a cardiovascular tonic, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels and inhibiting blood clotting. It's also a powerful germicide and may protect against some carcinogens. The smell of garlic cooking has extremely positive associations for me -- it's comforting and homey. Nor do I have any problem smelling it on other people. If you eat garlic regularly (and with a good attitude), you won't smell of it. It's better for you in its natural state, raw or lightly cooked rather than dried as powder or in capsules. Enjoy the smell, taste and healthful effects of the whole, fresh herb.

Ingredients:

6 cups vegetable stock
1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
1 head garlic, peeled and coarsely chopped
1/2 Turkish bay leaf
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
Pinch dried sage
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. To the vegetable stock, add the olive oil, bay leaf, garlic, thyme and sage.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Add salt to taste.
3. Strain. Good as is, or use as a base for soups.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 110 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 11 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein, 0 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Roasted Vegetable Soup (4 Servings)

This delicious, vegetable-filled broth can be served by itself or used as a base for other soups. The vegetables used in this soup are often just added to soup liquids for cooking. This recipe oven-roasts them first, enhancing their flavor. Your kitchen will fill with the aromas of the roasting vegetables evoking old-fashioned, home-style meals. Comfort food at its finest.

Ingredients:

3 large carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped
3 stalks celery, coarsely chopped
1 large onion, coarsely chopped
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
8 cloves garlic, chopped

4 cups water
1/4 cup dried mushroom pieces (Italian porcini, if possible)
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
Salt and black or red pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 500 degrees F. Place the carrots, celery, and onion in a small (8 x 8 inch) nonstick pan or dish with the olive oil. Toss to coat the vegetables. Bake for 10 minutes.
2. Remove pan from oven, add the garlic, and toss again. Bake for another 10-15 minutes until the vegetables are browned.
3. Remove pan from oven, add 1 cup of water and stir to loosen any vegetables that may be stuck. Pour this into a pot with the remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Season to taste with salt and black or red pepper, and serve or use as the base for other soups, stews, or pasta dishes.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 92 calories, 5 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 12 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 3 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Cucumber, Tomato and Mozzarella Salad

1 Serving

This simple salad is a version of an Italian standard. You'll find fresh, white mozzarella cheese in most delis or supermarkets - it's very different from the pale yellow, packaged mozzarella.

Start to finish: 10minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1/2 cucumber, peeled and seeded
- 1 large Roma tomato, sliced
- 1 oz fresh mozzarella cheese
- 3 leaves fresh basil, chopped

Instructions:

Mix the balsamic vinegar, olive oil and garlic in a small bowl. On a salad plate, layer slices of the cucumber, tomato and cheese. Drizzle with the dressing. Sprinkle with the chopped fresh basil.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 137 calories, 10 g total fat (1 g sat), 20 mg cholesterol, 7 g carbohydrate, 6 g protein, 1 g fiber, 27 mg sodium

Red Potato Salad (6 Servings)

Potato salad isn't just for picnics - this sophisticated version can be used as a side dish for even the fanciest meal. Instead of mayonnaise, we use mustard and wine combined with vinegar and a moderate amount of olive oil. The result is a sharply flavored mix for the potatoes. Small red potatoes, or new potatoes, are better suited for this dish because they have a firmer texture after boiling than the commonly used russets or baking potatoes. They also have a lower glycemic index than russets.

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds red potatoes, organic if possible
1/4 cup Dijon or Düsseldorf mustard
1/4 cup dry white vermouth
1/4 cup white wine vinegar
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 yellow onion

2 stalks celery
2 tsp capers
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
Chopped fresh dill to taste
1/2 lb. steamed green beans, cut in 1-inch pieces (optional)

Instructions:

1. Boil potatoes in their skins, covered, just until they can be easily pierced with a sharp knife.
2. Meanwhile, prepare dressing in a jar, combining mustard, vermouth, vinegar, olive oil, salt and pepper to taste; shake well.
3. Drain potatoes, let cool enough to handle, then peel and cut into thick slices. Place in a large bowl.
4. Pour dressing over the potatoes while they are warm, tossing well.
5. Add chopped onion, sliced celery, capers, finely chopped parsley, dill and, if you like, other chopped vegetables or lightly cooked green beans.) Chill until severed.

Tofu Salad

4 Servings

Did you know that you can make a delicious vegan alternative to egg or tuna salad from tofu? One of the healthiest changes you can make in your diet is to incorporate soy foods on a regular basis. Soy is rich in protein, iron and compounds called isoflavones, which seem to protect against hormone-driven cancers such as prostate cancer in men and breast cancer in women. Soy also helps protect your heart. Tofu - made from curdled soy milk in a process similar to making cheese - is an extremely versatile source of soy, and varies in firmness relative to the amount of liquid that has been pressed out. Firm tofu works best in this recipe for an appetizing look and taste. I suggest you seek out the freshest possible tofu made from organic soy, and avoid buying the type sold in bulk in big vats, as it can easily be contaminated. Keep your tofu submerged in fresh water in the refrigerator, change the water daily and eat it within a week. This recipe is easy to whip up in a few minutes. Use it as a sandwich filling or as a snack on whole grain crackers. Be sure to choose crackers made without partially hydrogenated oil.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound firm tofu
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 tablespoon prepared mustard
- 1 tablespoon sweet pickle relish
- 3 tablespoons chopped celery
- 3 tablespoons chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- Dash paprika
- Salt to taste
- Hot-pepper sauce or salsa (optional)

Instructions:

1. Drain the tofu well and mash it roughly in a bowl.
2. Add the turmeric, mustard, sweet pickle relish, celery, onion, parsley, paprika, and salt to taste.
3. Mix and mash well. Correct seasoning. Add hot-pepper sauce or salsa to taste.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 97 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 4 g carbohydrate, 10 g protein, 2 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Ginger-Carrot Soup

4 Servings

Usually found in tropical gardens, gingerroot - which is actually an underground stem, or rhizome - sprouts large, conical pink and orange flowers that look as if they've been carved out of wax. Although they are a much more common sight in home gardens, carrots (a member of the parsley family) aren't given to such exotic blooms. Nevertheless, carrots pack a nutritional punch as impressive as any ginger blossom. Put the two roots together and you've got one of the most delicious flavor combinations I know of. Buy ginger with a smooth skin (wrinkled ones are old and dry). Peel away the skin to get at the tender flesh below. Ginger is a wonderful digestive aid that strengthens the lining of the upper gastrointestinal tract, protecting against ulcers and parasites. The carotenes from carrots fortify the immune system and help maintain healthy skin and hair. When buying carrots, avoid those with cracks and be sure to remove carrot greenery, as it leaches moisture and vitamins from the roots. This soup will fill your kitchen with a lovely fragrance and your body with needed nutrients.

Ingredients:

2 teaspoons canola oil
1 medium onion, chopped
3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh gingerroot
3 cups carrots, chopped
1 medium potato, peeled and chopped
8 cups vegetable stock
Salt to taste
Dash of dry sherry
Dash of nutmeg
Chopped fresh parsley or cilantro (optional)

Instructions:

1. Heat the canola oil in a large pot, add the onion and ginger, and sauté, stirring just until the onion is translucent.
2. Add the carrots, potato and vegetable stock. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat and boil gently until the vegetables are tender, about 30-45 minutes.
3. Purée the soup in batches in a blender or food processor.
4. Add salt to taste and flavor with the sherry and nutmeg. Serve plain or garnished with chopped fresh parsley or cilantro.

Nutritional Information per serving: 141 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 25 g carbohydrate, 6 g protein, 5 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Chickpea and Pasta Salad with Tomato Red Pepper Dressing

1 Serving

Adding beans to pasta salad lowers the glycemic index and adds loads of nutrients including fiber. If you are using canned beans, rinse them to remove excess salt. Be sure to cook the macaroni just to the al dente stage.

3/4 cup cooked chickpeas
3/4 cup cooked small whole wheat pasta, al dente
1/2 cup chopped plum tomato
2 Tbsp chopped red or green bell pepper
1/4 cup chopped parsley
2 Tbsp black olives, slivered
2 Tbsp Tomato Red Pepper Salad Dressing (recipe below)

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl and toss to combine. Chill until served.

Tomato Red Pepper Salad Dressing

1 small (6 ounce) can of tomato paste
1 whole roasted red pepper or pimento from a jar
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons water
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 teaspoon dried basil

Combine all ingredients in a blender container. Blend until well mixed.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 478 calories, 8 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 85 g carbohydrate, 21 g protein, 16 g fiber, 290 mg sodium

Crudités with Creamy Salad Dressing

1 Serving

Crudités are nothing more than raw vegetables. A nice variety is fun; we've picked one old standby - carrot sticks - and one slightly different choice - red bell pepper strips.

1 medium carrot, cut into strips
1/2 small red bell pepper, cut into strips
2 tbsp Creamy Salad Dressing (recipe follows)

Serve the vegetables with the Creamy Dressing as a dip.

Creamy Salad Dressing

This delicious dressing is a soy-based delight that can stand head to head with everyone's favorite - ranch dressing. Silken tofu is usually sold in shelf-stable cardboard containers. It has a different texture than regular tofu and is good for dressings and desserts. This dressing is good on a tossed green salad (remember to pick dark green salad greens), but equally at home on a baked potato or as a dip for raw vegetables. Add a bit of fragrant bleu cheese if you like.

Ingredients:

6 ounces silken tofu (or soft tofu, drained)	1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice	1 tablespoon chopped fresh Italian parsley
1 tablespoon canola oil	1 clove garlic, chopped
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 1/2 tablespoons cider vinegar

Combine all ingredients in a blender container. Blend until well mixed.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 69 calories, 3 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 10 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 3 g fiber, 22 mg sodium

Low Fat Chicken Salad (1 Serving)

You may use leftover chicken for this simple recipe.

Ingredients:

4 oz poached chicken breast, cut into cube
¼ cup coarsely chopped celery
1 teaspoon finely chopped parsley
1 tablespoon sliced almonds, coarsely chopped
2teaspoon chicken stock
1 or 2 dashes hot pepper sauce
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

In medium-sized bowl, mix chicken, celery, parsley, and almonds.

In another bowl, whisk Dijon mustard, chicken stock, and hot pepper sauce together until well blended. Add mustard mixture to chicken, mix well.

Confetti Bean Salad (4 Servings)

This is a colorful, healthy version of a classic favorite. It keeps well in the refrigerator. We used beans cooked at home with no salt, then added seasonings to taste. If you are using canned beans, rinse them well to remove excess salt.

Ingredients:

1 cup cooked kidney beans	1/4 cup finely chopped sweet white onion
1 cup cooked chickpeas	2 tbsp canola oil
1 cup cooked string beans, cut in 1" pieces	4 tbsp cider vinegar
1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper	1 tsp sugar or honey
1/2 cup finely chopped firm tofu	2 tbsp chopped parsley
	Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

Combine the beans, red bell pepper, tofu and onion in a medium bowl. In a small bowl or custard cup, whisk together the oil, vinegar and sugar or honey. Pour over the bean mixture and stir to combine. Season to taste. Sprinkle with the chopped parsley and stir gently. Cover and refrigerate until serving.

Broccoli, Walnut and Bulgur Salad

1 Serving

This very healthy salad is our own version of tabbouleh (or tabbouli), a Middle Eastern dish made of bulgur and fresh herbs. Good, all-natural versions of fresh tabbouleh are available in the refrigerated sections of most supermarkets. (Look for it next to the hummus.) We've added some finely chopped broccoli to replace some of the traditional parsley, which many Americans find a little overpowering, and chopped walnuts for extra crunch and nutrition.

Ingredients:

1 cup bulgur (preferably fine grind)	1 cup broccoli, cooked and finely chopped
2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice	1/4 cup walnuts, chopped
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil	2 firm tomatoes, preferably organic, chopped
2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped	1/4 tsp salt
2 tbsp fresh mint, chopped (optional)	1/4 tsp black pepper
1 green onion (scallion) finely chopped	

Instructions:

Cover the bulgur with cold water and soak for 20 minutes. Drain well and squeeze out all the moisture you can with your hands. Put the bulgur in a clean, dry bowl and add in all the other ingredients. Mix well, cover and chill for at least for a few hours and preferably overnight to allow the flavors to develop.

The salad keeps well in the fridge for three or four days.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 198 calories, 10 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 26 g carbohydrate, 6 g protein, 7 g fiber, 121 mg sodium

Barley Salad

This salad combines barley, a great-tasting grain, with fresh vegetables. Flavored with mint, parsley, garlic and lemon, it might remind you of tabbouleh, a Middle Eastern dish traditionally made with bulgur wheat. Barley is a low glycemic-index grain and has a wonderful texture. Parsley has carminative (intestinal gas-relieving) and diuretic properties, making it an excellent tonic ingredient. Look for the flat-leaf (Italian) parsley, which has a more pronounced flavor than the curly-leaf variety. This dish makes a healthy alternative to the usual picnic or potluck potato salad. Try it as a light meal all on its own, or as a wonderful accompaniment to other dishes.

Ingredients:

3 cups vegetable stock or water
1 cup pearl barley
Salt to taste
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
1 bunch scallions, sliced thin
1 bunch radishes, sliced
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced
1 red bell pepper, seeded and sliced
1/2 cup chopped fresh mint (or 1/4 cup dried mint)

Dressing:

3 tbsp olive oil
3 tbsp fresh lemon juice
3-4 cloves garlic, mashed
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Bring to a boil the vegetable stock (or water). Add barley and salt. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed, about 45 minutes. Drain well and place in a medium bowl.
2. Mix the dressing ingredients together and pour over barley.
3. Allow barley to cool, then add the parsley, scallions, radishes, cucumber, red pepper and mint.
4. Mix well and chill for several hours before serving.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 178 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 30 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 5 g fiber, 100 mg sodium

Chicken and Walnut Salad with Honey Yogurt Dressing

1 serving

This salad is a much better way of using leftover cooked chicken than a traditional salad or sandwich made of mayonnaise. The dish offers healthy omega-3s from the walnuts as well as fiber from the greens. You may want to increase the nutritional value even more by sprinkling in some ground flax seed.

Ingredients:

1 cup cooked chicken breast (about 5 ounces)
1/2 cup low-fat yogurt
2 tsp honey
2 tbsp salsa
1/2 cup cherry tomatoes
1 tbsp walnuts, chopped
2 cups mixed salad greens
1 tsp olive oil
1 tsp balsamic vinegar

Instructions:

1. Cut the chicken in pieces and set aside.
2. In a small bowl, mix the yogurt, honey and salsa. Add the chicken pieces and stir gently.
3. Cut the cherry tomatoes in half and set aside. Put the mixed greens in a medium bowl and sprinkle with the olive oil. Toss gently to coat the leaves with the oil. Sprinkle with the balsamic vinegar and toss again.
4. Top the greens with the chicken and cherry tomatoes and add the walnuts.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 387 calories, 12 g total fat (2 g sat), 71 mg cholesterol, 33 g carbohydrate, 38 g protein, 5 g fiber, 330 mg sodium

Pasta Fagiole (8 Servings)

This traditional pasta and white bean soup is an Italian classic. Be sure to cook the pasta until just al dente. Keeping it a bit chewy or "toothsome" insures it maintains a low glycemic index. It makes a wonderful supper when served with a large tossed salad of romaine lettuce with red peppers, olives and sliced cucumbers and a dessert of plump dried fruit and roasted almonds.

Ingredients:

1 cup dried small white beans	1 cup small pasta, such as orzo or small shells
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil	Salt and black pepper to taste
1 large onion, chopped	2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
6 cloves garlic, minced	1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
10 cups water or vegetable stock	Additional extra-virgin olive oil (optional)
1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary, crushed	

Instructions:

1. Wash the beans. In a large pot, cover them with cold water. Soak for 8 hours. Drain into a colander.
2. In the same pot, heat 1 tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat, add the onion and garlic, and sauté until soft.
3. Add the beans and water or stock. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to low, add the rosemary, and simmer 2 hours or until the beans are tender.
4. Raise heat to high, add the pasta, and cook until al dente. Season the soup to taste with salt and pepper, garnish with the chopped parsley. Serve accompanied by grated Parmesan cheese and the optional extra-virgin olive oil.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 315 calories, 6 g total fat (3 g sat), 10 mg cholesterol, 44 g carbohydrate, 22 g protein, 10 g fiber, 450 mg sodium

Green Gazpacho

6 servings

Gazpacho is a cold vegetable soup that originated in Spain. The classic gazpacho contains tomatoes, but this green version is equally refreshing. Substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth if you like.

Ingredients:

- 4 slices firm-textured white bread, crusts removed
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley leaves
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped scallions (4 scallions)
- 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 green pepper, cored, seeded and chopped
- 1/2 lb. seedless green grapes, cut in half (1 cup)
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/2 tsp. ground coriander
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp. white-wine vinegar
- 3/4 cup nonfat plain yogurt
- 1 cup defatted reduced-sodium chicken stock
- salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/4 ripe avocado, peeled and cut into cubes for garnish

Instructions:

In a small bowl, cover bread with water and let stand for 5 minutes. Remove bread and squeeze out excess moisture.

In a food processor or blender, combine the moistened bread, garlic, parsley and cilantro; puree until smooth. Set aside about one-third of the scallions, cucumbers, green peppers and grapes. Add the remaining scallions, cucumbers, green peppers and grapes to the food processor, along with celery, cumin, coriander, cayenne, lemon juice and vinegar; process until smooth. Transfer the mixture to a large bowl and stir in yogurt, stock and the reserved scallions, cucumbers, green peppers and grapes. Season with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour. (The soup can be stored, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.) Garnish each portion with avocado cubes.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 116 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g sat), 1 mg cholesterol, 21 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein, 2 g fiber, 134 mg sodium

Ginger-Melon Soup

Makes about 5 cups, serves 6

Instead of cantaloupe, you may also use Persian, Crenshaw or casaba melons.

Ingredients:

1 large ripe cantaloupe, peeled, seeded and cut into cubes (4 1/2 cups)
4 Tbsp. slivered crystallized ginger 1 1/2 tsp. grated orange zest
1 tsp. honey
1 cup low-fat plain yogurt
2/3 cup fresh orange juice
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

Place cantaloupe, 3 Tbsp. ginger, orange zest and honey in a food processor or blender and puree. Add yogurt and blend until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and stir in the orange and lemon juice. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour. (The soup can be stored, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.) Garnish each portion with some of the remaining ginger.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 95 calories, 1 g total fat (0 g sat), 2 mg cholesterol, 20 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 1 g fiber, 38 mg sodium

Sides

Green Cabbage and Mushrooms

6 Servings

Ingredients:

1 small green cabbage, cored and diced, about 6 cups
1 cup vegetable stock
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, diced
1/2 pound mushrooms (shiitake or oyster, if possible)
1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch mixed into 1/4 cup cold water
1 tablespoon fresh dill weed, chopped, or 1 teaspoon dried
1/2 teaspoon paprika
Salt and black pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. In a covered pot over high heat, steam the cabbage in the stock for 5 minutes until it is just wilted and still bright green. Remove from heat and remove cover.
2. While the cabbage cooks, heat the olive oil in a large skillet or wok, and sauté the onion and mushrooms until they brown. Add the cabbage and heat through, mixing well. Stir the cornstarch mixture well and add it to skillet. Bring mixture to boil, stirring, until liquid thickens. Reduce heat and season to taste with dill, paprika, salt, and pepper.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 74 calories, 3 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 10 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 1 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Stuffed Mushroom Caps with Couscous (6 servings)

Couscous is a mildly nutty-tasting grain that comes from North Africa. It makes a great stuffing, especially for a small cavity like a mushroom, because it's so moist. When the stuffed mushrooms are baked, the full flavor of the couscous and the mushrooms really come through. These will go fast!

Ingredients:

1/4 cup chopped walnuts
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 shallots, chopped
1-1/2 tablespoons natural soy sauce
(such as tamari)
1 cup white wine
12 medium small-capped mushrooms,
washed and stems removed

1/2 cup chicken or vegetable stock or
purified water
1/4 cup couscous
Salt
Freshly ground pepper
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
1 bunch fresh parsley, chopped
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan
cheese

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Spread the walnuts on a baking sheet and roast for 5 minutes, just until they turn slightly browner. Pour them into a small bowl.

Set a large sauce pan with the olive oil over low heat for less than 1 minute. Drop in the garlic and the shallots. Add the soy sauce, wine, and mushrooms and simmer covered until the mushrooms are tender, about 10 minutes. Use a slotted spoon to shake the mushrooms so that the cooking liquid falls back into the pan, then transfer the drained mushrooms to a baking dish, arranging them hollow side up. Reserve the liquid in the pan.

Cook the couscous by bringing the vegetable stock or water to a boil in a separate pot. Pour in the couscous, lower the heat, and simmer covered for 2 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand, covered, for 10 minutes. All the liquid should be absorbed. Now, dump the couscous into the sauce pan with the reserved liquid, cover, and cook over low heat until all the liquid is absorbed.

Lightly salt and pepper the mushroom caps. Finish the stuffing by mixing the nuts, herbs, Parmesan cheese into the cooked couscous. Using a tablespoon, pile a small mound of filling inside the cap of each mushroom. Bake for 10 minutes or until the stuffing is lightly browned on top.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 107 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 1 mg cholesterol, 10 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 1 g fiber, 350 mg sodium

Stir Fried Bean Sprouts

4 servings

Mung beans are small dried green beans with yellow flesh. Like all beans, they're rich in protein, calcium, phosphorus and iron, but they're mainly grown for sprouting. Mung bean sprouts have long been a familiar ingredient in many Asian dishes. Traditional Chinese medicine maintains that mung beans have a "heat-clearing, toxin-resolving" effect that eases conditions such as diarrhea and painful swelling.

Ingredients:

1 pound fresh mung bean sprouts
1 tablespoon canola oil
3 scallions, split lengthwise and cut into 1-inch strips
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh gingerroot
1/2 teaspoon light brown sugar
Salt to taste
Red pepper flakes, natural soy sauce or rice vinegar

Instructions:

1. Wash, drain and dry the bean sprouts in a kitchen towel or paper towels.
2. Heat the canola oil in a wok or skillet; add the scallions and ginger, and stir-fry over high heat for a few seconds. Then add the bean sprouts and stir-fry for 1 minute. Do not overcook; sprouts should remain crunchy but lose their raw bean taste.
3. Add the brown sugar and salt to taste. Mix well and serve. Add pinches of red pepper flakes or dashes of natural soy sauce and rice vinegar for additional flavor.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 70 calories, 4 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 8 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 2 g fiber, 250 mg sodium

Kasha with Vegetables

4 servings

Kasha boasts a wonderfully nutty flavor when toasted. You can buy it already toasted. If you buy the untoasted variety, toss it lightly in a dry skillet over medium heat until it colors. Hearty, but not too heavy, kasha is a staple of Northern Europe and Russia traditionally served as an accompaniment to meats, in pilafs or as the essential ingredient in many traditional Jewish dishes like kasha varnishkes. Exotic though it may sound, kasha is just basic buckwheat groats, used like a grain, but botanically just a cousin of true grains. Once only available through specialty grocers, you'll find kasha in many health food stores and supermarkets now as well. So, by all means, go nuts with kasha!

Ingredients:

2 ounces dried mushrooms
1 cup toasted buckwheat groats (kasha)
1 large carrot, sliced
1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
Salt or natural soy sauce to taste

Instructions:

1. Soak the dried mushrooms (shiitake or porcini are very flavorful) in water until soft.
2. Drain, saving the soaking water, and slice, discarding any tough portions.
3. Add the groats to 3 cups boiling water (including the mushroom-soaking liquid), lower heat, and add the carrot, the onion and the mushrooms.
4. Cover and simmer until water is absorbed. Add salt or natural soy sauce to taste.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 147 calories, 1 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 32 g carbohydrate, 6 g protein, 5 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Stuffed Potatoes (6 Servings)

As it can be difficult to coax your loved ones into eating five helpings a day of vegetables (as nutritionists recommend), this recipe cleverly incorporates broccoli into a baked potato, without using a lot of fat. Broccoli is an excellent source of fiber and cancer-fighting antioxidants. Potatoes are a universally loved vegetable loaded with vitamins C and B-6, potassium, and fiber. You can make the stuffed potatoes ahead and reheat them when everyone is ready to eat.

Ingredients:

3 large baking potatoes
3 stalks broccoli
1/2 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon olive oil
1-2 tablespoons rice milk or soy milk
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

Instructions:

1. Scrub the potatoes and make shallow cuts around their middles to make it easier to cut them in half after baking. Bake the potatoes at 400 degrees until soft, usually 1 hour, depending on size of potatoes.
2. Meanwhile, cut the ends from the stalks of broccoli and peel some of the outer skin off to make the stems more edible. Steam the broccoli until crunchy-tender and bright green. Drain and chop fine.
3. Cut potatoes in half and scoop out the insides into a bowl. Add the salt, olive oil and just enough rice or soy milk to allow you to mash the potatoes into a smooth paste. Add the Parmesan cheese and the chopped broccoli and mix well.
4. Pile the mixture back into the potato shells, arrange on a baking dish and heat them to desired temperature.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 136 calories, 4 g total fat (1 g sat), 2 mg cholesterol, 24 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein, 4 g fiber, 250 mg sodium

Escarole and Chickpeas

2 Servings

Greens and beans is an Italian classic. If you are using canned chickpeas or garbanzos, rinse them well to remove most of the salt. Try sprinkling this with a bit of balsamic vinegar.

Ingredients:

1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil

1 small head escarole

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 cup chickpeas

Balsamic vinegar, lemon juice or salt and pepper to taste (optional)

2 tsp grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

Instructions:

Wash the escarole and pat dry. Tear into pieces and set aside. Heat the olive oil in a medium skillet. Add the garlic and chickpeas. Cook, stirring constantly for about 2 minutes or until garlic just begins to turn golden. Add the escarole and continue to cook until the escarole is limp but still bright green. Season to taste and sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese, if using.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 272 calories, 14 g total fat (2 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 29 g carbohydrate, 9 g protein, 8 g fiber, 231 mg sodium

Steamed Kale

4 Servings

Kale is often just used as a garnish on salad bars. It is, however, delicious when cooked and a rich source of calcium and antioxidants.

Ingredients:

1 lb kale
1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup water
1 tsp cider vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

Wash the kale well by submerging it in clean water a couple of times. Use a sharp knife to cut out the ribs of the kale and coarsely chop the leaves. In a large skillet with a lid, heat the oil. Sauté the garlic until it just begins to turn golden.

Add the kale and the water. Stir briefly and cover. Cook on medium until the kale is tender but still bright green. Sprinkle with vinegar, season to taste and serve.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 69 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 12 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 2 g fiber, 49 mg sodium

Salsa Rice

1 Serving

This is a very easy way to season basmati or brown rice. You can use it for already cooked rice, or cook the rice from scratch. Pick your favorite all-natural salsa and experiment with different types of salsa. There are lots of new and interesting ones on the market.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup cooked rice (basmati or brown) 2 tbsp salsa

Instructions:

Just mix the salsa into the rice.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 129 calories, 0 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 28 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 1 g fiber, 142 mg sodium

Curried Greens (6 Servings)

When people hear the word "greens," I think they immediately conjure up childhood memories of overcooked lumps of vegetation they were forced to eat and hated. But the vegetable section of the grocery is a different world today, brimming with a variety of greens such as spinach, chard, kale, mustard, collards, and bok choy that are tasty as well as excellent sources of vitamins and minerals. Iron, calcium, and folic acid (an important B vitamin that helps prevent birth defects and offers protection from heart disease) are abundant in these leafy veggies. Greens can have strong tastes, but I encourage you to experiment with varieties you've never tried or haven't had in a while.

Ingredients:

1 pound spinach, kale, collards, or beet greens (or mixture of all)	1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 cloves garlic, pressed or minced	1 tablespoon dark-brown sugar
2-3 tablespoons curry powder	1 tablespoon canola oil
1 cup finely chopped tomatoes (fresh or canned)	1 cup onion, finely diced
	3/4 pound brown potatoes, peeled and cubed
	1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro (optional)

Instructions:

1. Wash and drain greens, removing any coarse stems and midribs. Cut into half-inch strips.
2. In a small bowl, mix together garlic, curry powder, tomatoes, tomato paste, and sugar.
3. Heat the canola oil in a skillet and sauté onion over medium-high heat until it begins to brown. Add the spice-and-tomato mixture, mix well, and cook for a few minutes.
4. Add the potatoes and 2 cups water. Mix well, bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and cook for 10 minutes.
6. Add greens and cook for 10 minute more, or until potatoes are done. Correct seasoning to taste. Garnish with the chopped fresh cilantro if desired.

Mushroom and Spinach Side Dish

4 Servings

This side dish makes four servings; it's perfect to keep in your fridge to add to stir-fries or pasta dishes. Use as many different mushrooms as you can find, especially the healthier varieties like shiitake, enoki and oyster mushrooms. The dried porcini or ceps really add a lot of flavor. You'll find them in little packages near the produce stands.

Ingredients:

1/2 oz dried porcini or ceps mushrooms (optional)
2 tbsp olive oil, preferably extra virgin
1 lb mixed, fresh mushrooms
4 cloves of garlic, minced
1 tsp herb and spice blend
2 cups organic baby spinach leaves

Instructions:

If you're using porcini mushrooms or ceps, put them in a dish with enough hot water to barely cover and let them soak for about 20 minutes. Wash and slice the fresh mushrooms and remove any tough stems. In a large pan with a cover, heat the oil and sauté the mushrooms, including the soaked porcini and the soaking liquid. Stir well, cover and cook gently for 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic and herb blend, cover and cook for another 5 minutes, until the mushrooms are tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed.

Add the baby spinach leaves to the mushroom mix. Stir to wilt them briefly, and the dish is ready to serve, or to store in the fridge for later use. You may want to add salt and pepper to taste but most people find it's not necessary.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 110 calories, 7 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 10 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 2 g fiber, 18 mg sodium

Braised Red Cabbage

8 Servings

The acid from the vinegar in this dish helps the red cabbage keep its color. Without it, the cabbage turns blue!

Ingredients:

2 teaspoons vegetable oil, preferably canola oil
2 onions, cut in half lengthwise and thinly sliced
1 red cabbage (about 3 pounds), halved, cored and sliced
2/3 cup defatted reduced-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
1 teaspoon caraway seeds
1 teaspoon sugar
1/4 cup white vinegar
Salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste

Instructions:

Heat oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions and cook, stirring, until the onions start to turn golden, about 8 minutes. Add cabbage and cook, stirring occasionally, until the cabbage wilts, about 5 minutes. Stir in broth, caraway seeds and sugar; bring to a simmer. Cover and cook over low heat until very tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Uncover and stir in vinegar. Increase heat to high, and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the liquid has evaporated, 8 to 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. (The recipe can be made ahead and stored, covered, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Reheat gently over low heat or in the microwave.)

Nutritional Information Per serving: 74 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol
15 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 4 g fiber, 25 mg sodium

Wild Rice and Mushrooms (6 Servings)

Whole grains, such as brown rice, quinoa, and oats, are a far better source of energy than the hunks of meat most Americans expect in the center of their plates. Grains supply complex carbohydrates, protein, vitamins, minerals, and fiber all wrapped up in tasty packages. Wild rice is a delicious grain that isn't really rice at all. It's actually a long-grain marsh grass that grows wild in the Great Lakes area and is cultivated commercially in California and the Midwest. I love this grain's chewy texture and nutty flavor. When you use wild rice, be sure to wash it thoroughly first. Set it in a bowl, cover it with water and let the debris float to the surface so you can pour it off. Don't cook it too long or you'll get starchy, wimpy grains that have lost much of their flavor.

Ingredients:

1 cup dried porcini or shiitake mushrooms
2 1/2 cups water, approximately
1 cup wild rice
1/2 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
1/4 cup dry sherry

1/2 cup sliced carrots
2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
Salt or natural soy sauce to taste
1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts or pecans

Instructions:

1. Soak the dried mushrooms in water to cover until they are soft. Squeeze them out, reserving liquid, and slice.
2. Wash the wild rice in cold water and place in pot with the mushroom-soaking liquid (minus any sediment) and enough additional cold water to total 2 cups.
3. Add the orange juice, sherry and carrots. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 30 minutes.
4. Add mushrooms and continue cooking until rice is tender and all the liquid is absorbed.
5. Add the chopped parsley and salt or soy sauce to taste. Stir in the finely chopped nuts.

Mexican Coleslaw

2 Servings

This tart, non-creamy coleslaw is widely served in southern New Mexico with Mexican food. It keeps well in the refrigerator and is loaded with healthy antioxidants and fiber. Cabbage is a cruciferous vegetable providing indoles which may be related to a reduced risk of breast cancer. Try mixing several different types of cabbage for added color and taste.

Ingredients:

2 tbsp cider vinegar
1 tbsp canola oil
1 clover garlic, minced
1 tsp sugar
4 cups shredded cabbage (about one head)

Instructions:

In a small bowl, mix together the vinegar, oil, garlic and sugar until the sugar dissolves. Pour over the cabbage, stir well and refrigerate.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 107 calories, 7 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 14 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 3 g fiber, 26 mg sodium

Baked Sweet Potato with Honey Yogurt and Walnuts

1 serving

Tip: Bake several sweet potatoes at once and keep them for quick meals. Pick small ones or cut them in 4-ounce pieces to cook.

Prep time: 5 minutes

Start to finish: 45minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 small sweet potato (4 oz)
- 1/4 cup plain yogurt
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tbsp walnuts, coarsely chopped

Instructions:

1. Scrub the sweet potato well under running water. Dry and wrap in foil. Bake in a 400-degree oven for 40-45 minutes or until soft.
2. In the meantime, mix the yogurt, honey and mustard together. Set aside.
3. Put the walnuts on a small baking sheet or pie plate. Toast them in the oven for 5-7 minutes toward the end of the sweet potato cooking time. Shake them occasionally and watch them so they don't burn.
4. To serve, cut the sweet potato in half, spoon with the yogurt sauce and sprinkle with the toasted walnuts.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 362 calories, 12 g total fat (2 g sat), 10 mg cholesterol, 56 g carbohydrate, 11 g protein, 5 g fiber, 139 mg sodium

Mélange of Roasted Baby Vegetables (4 servings)

Maple syrup (or Vermont gold) glazes this attractive mixture of tiny root vegetables.

Ingredients:

1-1/2 cups pearl onions
2 cups baby carrots (1/4 inch of greens left on) or mini carrots
3/4 pound baby turnips, peeled (1/4 inch of greens left on) and halved, if large, or regular turnips cut into 1/2-inch wedges
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons pure maple syrup, divided
1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste
Freshly ground pepper to taste
10-12 sprigs fresh thyme or lemon thyme
2 teaspoons cider vinegar
2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, divided

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Bring a medium saucepan of water to a boil. Add onions and boil for 1 minute. Drain and rinse under cold running water. Using a sharp paring knife, trim root ends and peel.
2. Combine onions, carrots, turnips, oil, 1 teaspoon maple syrup, salt, pepper and thyme sprigs in a large bowl; toss to coat well. Spread vegetable mixture in a single layer on a large baking sheet with sides. Roast, turning vegetables twice, until tender and lightly browned in spots, about 30 minutes.
3. Transfer vegetables to a large bowl; remove thyme stems. Drizzle with the remaining 1 teaspoon syrup, vinegar and 1 tablespoon parsley; toss to coat. Sprinkle with the remaining 1 tablespoon parsley and serve.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 143 calories, 4 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 25 g carbohydrate, 3 g protein, 5 g fiber, 383 mg sodium

Broccoli with Caramelized Shallots

4 servings

Shallots are in the onion family and now available as a specialty item in many supermarkets. They have a sweet, mild flavor. Use sweet onion if you can't find shallots.

Ingredients:

2 Tbsp. walnut pieces

1 1/2 tsp. olive oil

1 cup sliced shallots, thinly sliced (4-5 large shallots)

salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 bunch broccoli (1 1/2 lbs.), cut into florets (5 cups)

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Place walnuts in a pie plate and toast in the oven 5 minutes, or until fragrant. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside.

In a large nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-low heat. Add shallots and cook, stirring often, to a deep golden brown, about 10 minutes. (Add a tablespoon or two of water if the mixture gets too dry.) Season with salt and pepper; set aside in the skillet.

Meanwhile, cook broccoli in boiling salted water until just tender, 3 to 5 minutes. Drain the broccoli and add it to the shallots in the skillet and toss to combine. Taste and adjust seasonings. Transfer to a serving bowl and sprinkle with the toasted walnuts.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 113 calories, 4 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 16 g carbohydrate, 7 g protein, 5 g fiber, 51 mg sodium

Butternut Squash Gratin with Gremolata and Golden Raisins

Gremolata isn't an ingredient; the word refers to the simple mixture of bread crumbs, parsley, lemon zest and garlic that's used in the recipe.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup golden raisins	1 teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped fresh parsley	1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon grated lemon zest	1 small butternut squash (about 1 pound), peeled, seeded and sliced 1/4 inch thick
2 cloves garlic, very finely chopped	1 1/2 cups fresh breadcrumbs (see Test Kitchen Tip)
3 teaspoons olive oil	
2 large leeks, cleaned and sliced (about 3 cups)	

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly oil an 11/2-quart gratin dish or other shallow baking dish, or coat it with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Plump raisins in hot water for 10 minutes. Drain and put in a food processor fitted with steel blade. Add parsley, lemon zest, and garlic and pulse 3 to 4 times, until the mixture begins to form a rough paste; set aside.
3. In a nonstick skillet, heat 2 teaspoons of the oil over medium-high heat. Add leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, until the leeks are limp, about 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.
4. Arrange half of the squash slices in the prepared dish. Cover with the leeks and half of the raisin/parsley mixture. Layer the remaining squash over the top. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake for about 1 hour, or until the squash is very tender.
5. Combine breadcrumbs with the remaining raisin/parsley mixture and sprinkle over the squash. Drizzle with the remaining 1 teaspoon olive oil and bake, uncovered, for 10 to 15 minutes longer, or until the top is golden.

Test Kitchen Tip:

Do not confuse fresh breadcrumbs with commercially prepared dry crumbs. If dry breadcrumbs are substituted for fresh ones, they may absorb too much liquid and the final dish will be unappealing and dry. To make fresh breadcrumbs: Tear fresh or day-old bread into pieces (it is not necessary to remove crust) and whirl in a food processor or blender until coarse, even-sized crumbs form. Three ounces (about 3 slices) of bread makes about 1 cup crumbs. Store fresh breadcrumbs in a plastic bag in the freezer.

Entrées

Shrimp and Vegetable Creole

Inspired by the seasoned bounty at the market, Contessa put together this colorful shrimp and vegetable all-in-one dish. Having almost reached her goal weight, she says, "With recipes like this, anyone can do it."

Ingredients:

1 tbsp vegetable oil
2 onions, chopped
1 celery stalk, chopped
½ green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
½ red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
One 14½ oz can diced tomatoes (no salt added)
One 8 oz can tomato sauce (no salt added)
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon dried oregano
½ teaspoon dried thyme leaves
1/8 – ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
3 medium zucchini, sliced
6 cups hot cooked brown rice

Instructions:

1. In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, heat the oil. Add the onions, celery bell peppers and the garlic; cook, stirring as needed, until softened, 6-8 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes, tomato sauce, Worcestershire sauce, oregano, thyme and cayenne; bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and cook, stirring as needed, until the sauce is slightly thickened, about 10 minutes.
3. Add the shrimp and zucchini; return to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, stirring as needed, until the shrimp turn pink, 5-7 minutes. Serve the rice, topped with the shrimp mixture.

Nutritional Information: 423 Calories, 5g Total Fat (1g saturated), 108mg Cholesterol, 154mg Sodium, 72g Total Carbohydrates, 3g Fiber, 23g Protein 111mg Calcium

Smoked Fish with Horseradish Sauce

4 servings

If you have never dealt with a fresh horseradish root, be prepared for an experience. In the days before food processors, grating the root by hand was just like being exposed to teargas. Freshly ground horseradish with vinegar and a little salt completely outclasses the prepared varieties sold in stores, and mixed with low-fat sour cream, it becomes a wonderful condiment for fish, boiled or baked potatoes, and other cooked vegetables.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup low-fat sour cream

Smoked fish, such as salmon, trout, or whitefish, 2-4 ounces per person

2 tablespoons Horseradish sauce or more to taste

1 medium sweet onion, finely chopped

HORSERADISH SAUCE:

1 cup fresh horseradish root, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes

1/4 cup white vinegar, or more if necessary

1/2 teaspoon salt

Instructions:

Mix the sour cream with the prepared horseradish. Serve individual portions of smoked fish, accompanied by the chopped onion and additional Horseradish Sauce.

Put the horseradish root cubes in a food processor and grind them to fine particles. This will take 3-4 minutes. Be careful not to inhale the very irritating fumes. Pour the white vinegar onto the ground horseradish until it is thoroughly moist. Season with salt and mix well.

Store the prepared horseradish in the refrigerator in a tightly covered container and use it as a condiment.

Nutritional Information: 170 calories, 3 g total fat (2 g sat), 47 mg cholesterol
5 g carbohydrate, 30 g protein, 0 g fiber, 950 mg sodium

Salmon in Parchment (4 servings)

Regular readers know that I'm a big fan of salmon. In fact, I gave up being a vegetarian because I didn't want to miss out on this fish, with its great flavor and health benefits. Salmon, like other oily fish (herring, sardines, mackerel), is rich in omega-3 fatty acids which reduce inflammation, protect against heart attacks, and possibly reduce your chances of developing cancer. I recommend eating two to three servings a week of salmon or other oily fish rich in omega-3. When you want something out of the ordinary, this is an easy and elegant recipe to try. It requires cooking parchment, which you will find in rolls or sheets at kitchen-supply stores and even many supermarkets. Parchment-wrapped food turns into taut packages as steam inflates the sealed pouches. (Be careful when slitting them open to avoid being burned.) The results are a delicate mix of textures and aromas that's sure to please.

Ingredients:

8 oz. thin spaghetti	
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil	1 cup asparagus tips
1/4 teaspoon salt	1 cup red bell pepper, julienned
2 tablespoons fresh dill or parsley, chopped	24 oz salmon fillet, cut into four 6-ounce pieces
1 cup carrots julienned	2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1 cup zucchini, julienned	4 large sheets of parchment paper

Instructions:

1. Heat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Cook thin spaghetti in rapidly boiling water until al dente, drain, toss with a bit of olive oil, salt and chopped fresh dill or parsley.
3. Rinse salmon fillets and pat dry. Spread Dijon mustard evenly over the top of each one.
4. Prepare the parchment: fold each piece of parchment in half. With scissors, cut the shape of half a heart from the folded side. (Remember Valentine's you made in grade school?) Open the heart shape and place 1/4 of the pasta on the center of the paper, top with a salmon fillet, and add the vegetables. Bring the sides of the heart over the fish and fold the edges together starting at the top of the heart, overlapping the folded edge as you go. Fold the tip several times to secure it.
5. Place the pouches in the middle of the hot oven and bake for 10 minutes. Serve immediately in the sealed pouches, opening them just before eating.

Salmon, Tofu and Broccoli Patties

2 servings (2 patties each)

This is a light and easy dish for people who want to eat salmon, broccoli and tofu on principle but may not like cooking these items. The patties are actually baked in muffin pans, using pureed raw salmon, combined with silken tofu. French cuisine has a long history of pureeing raw salmon and using it in a variety of steamed and baked mousses and quiches. This dish substitutes tofu for the traditional eggs and cream and adds finely chopped broccoli.

Start to finish: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

6 ounces salmon fillet
1/2 cup organic silken tofu
1 teaspoon grated ginger root
1 teaspoon salt-free herb blend
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 cup broccoli, cooked and finely chopped

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Chop the cooked broccoli finely in the food processor. Remove and set aside. Cut the raw salmon into chunks and put it in the food processor with the tofu and seasonings. Puree until smooth. Fold the chopped broccoli into the salmon mixture and divide between four lightly oiled muffin pan sections. Cover the muffin pan with tinfoil, pressing it down around the edges of the pan. Put in the middle rack of the oven and bake at 350 for 12 minutes. Remove the pan and let the patties sit for a few minutes. Tip the pan over carefully, or guide the patties out with a knife. There will be a little liquid depending on the type of tofu used, but the patties should hold together.

Serve as a lunch or brunch dish with a side salad, or add a crisp stir fry of mushrooms and green vegetables to make it a dinner. These patties hold very well in the fridge for a few days and can be re-heated in the microwave at work. They also freeze very well, so if you like them, multiply the recipe by three, using about a pound of salmon and a full head of broccoli, and make a muffin pan full.

Nutritional Information: 158 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 44 mg cholesterol, 28 g carbohydrate, 23 g protein, 5 g fiber, 246 mg sodium

Salmon with Green Apples

1 Serving

You can get any easier then this!! The crisp tartness of the apple complements the freshness of the salmon fillet for a tasty and satisfying meal.

Ingredients:

4 oz wild salmon

6 green apples, sliced 1/8 inch thick

1/2 teaspoon ground coriander

Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees
2. Season the salmon with the herbs.
3. Place the salmon on an 8 inch square of aluminum foil on a baking tray and arrange apple slices on top of salmon, close the packet. Bake for 8-10 minutes. You can always grill the salmon on the barbeque!

Grilled Chicken, Gingered Sweet Potato Cakes and Broccoli

These gingered sweet potato cakes make a great lunch dish on their own with a green salad, so think about making an extra serving. Sweet potatoes are a terrific source of vitamin A as beta carotene. They're also a rich source of vitamin C, fiber and lutein. This dish is very low in sodium, so feel free to add a little salt and pepper to the patties if you like.

Ingredients:

6 oz sweet potato (one large), 1 tbsp fresh grated ginger root, 1 tsp Italian or other seasoning, 1 each barbecued or grilled chicken breast (skinless & preferably hormone free), 6 oz broccoli

Instructions:

Peel sweet potato and cut into pieces. Put in boiling water and cook for 20 minutes or until done. Drain well. (Or cook the sweet potatoes, washed but unpeeled, on a paper towel in the microwave for 12 minutes, turning half way through. Peel before using.) Mash cooked sweet potatoes with the fresh grated ginger root and mixed herbs. You could also add some fresh chopped parsley or basil for color and flavor.

Form the mashed potato mixture into two patties, and heat on a non-stick frying pan. You can sauté them in a little olive oil or roasted sesame oil if calories aren't a major concern for you, or with a cooking spray if they are. It only takes a few minutes to brown the cakes lightly and they're ready to go.

Meanwhile, heat up the chicken breast and steam the broccoli. Peel the broccoli stems, cut them into bite size pieces, put stems and florets in a saucepan with ¼ cup water. Cover the saucepan, bring to a boil and steam for 5 minutes.

Ingredient Notes:

Ginger: It's worth taking the time to master the art of grating fresh ginger root. You'll use it in often on this program. Fresh ginger root is available in most supermarkets alongside the garlic and onions. Just cut off a piece, peel it, and grate it with a regular hand held grater. (The "washboard" type of grater works better than the four-sided square.) If you're doing a lot of ginger at one time, you can use a food processor and chop it finely using the pulse setting.

Italian or other seasoning: Depending on how spicy or highly seasoned you like your food, it's useful to keep a good salt-free herb and spice mix on hand. There are many on the market including Italian and Creole blends; Mrs. Dash is one of the major brands. Just make sure you choose an all-natural one and use it wherever you would use salt.

Roasted Salmon with Stir-Fry Vegetables

2 Servings

This low-calorie and low-carbohydrate recipe because doesn't contain a traditional "starch" item. Stir fries generally use rice, but water chestnuts make a great stand-in for rice, when you want a lower calorie meal. Water chestnuts are readily available in the Chinese food section of most supermarkets. You can also try canned bamboo shoots.

Ingredients:

- 12 ounces of salmon, cut into two fillets
- 1 teaspoon of herb blend
- Half lemon
- 1 tbsp dark sesame oil (or canola oil)
- 2 cloves garlic (chopped)
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger (grated)
- 1/4 cup onions (chopped)
- 2 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 5 oz can of water chestnuts, drained
- 3 cups baby spinach leaves, steamed (see Ingredient Tip)

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Rinse the salmon well and rub with lemon juice. Place the fillets on a cake rack, laid on a cookie sheet, on the middle rack of the oven. You can place the fillets directly on the cookie sheet, but raising them keeps the fish a little firmer. Bake for 20 minutes.

While the salmon is cooking, heat the oil in a non-stick frying pan and add the garlic, onion and ginger. Stir fry for 2 minutes, then add the mushrooms and fry for 2 to 4 minutes more. Finally add the tomatoes and water chestnuts, fry until heated through and fold in the steamed spinach. Serve alongside the salmon.

If you feel this dish needs additional flavoring, make a quick sauce by mixing 2 tbsp of low-sodium soy sauce with 2 tbsp of rice vinegar. Add to the stir-fry near the end of cooking.

Nutritional Information: 332 calories, 13 g total fat (2 g sat), 88 mg cholesterol, 17 g carbohydrate, 37 g protein, 2 g fiber, 160 mg sodium

Potato-Rosemary-Crusted Fish Fillets

2 Servings

This simple fish dish is quite elegant with its subtle flavor of rosemary. Don't worry about a few shreds of potato that remain in the skillet. Serve them over the fish. Pair this entrée with steamed asparagus and a large green salad with tomatoes.

Ingredients:

12 ounces thick fish fillet, such as cod or halibut, cut in half
1 small potato, about 5 ounces
Salt and black pepper to taste
1/4 teaspoon dried rosemary leaves, crushed
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Instructions:

1. Rinse the fish under cold running water and pat dry. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.
2. Peel the potato and grate on the large holes of a grater. Squeeze excess water out of potato by pressing between sheets of paper towel.
3. Season the potato with salt, pepper and rosemary and press it around the fish.
4. Heat a nonstick frying pan over medium-high heat and add olive oil. Gently slide the fish into the pan. Cook for 3 to 5 minutes. Turn fish over, using two spatulas, and cook for 3 to 5 minutes more or until potatoes are golden and fish is done.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 307 calories, 12 g total fat (2 g sat), 13 mg cholesterol, 13 g carbohydrate, 34 g protein, 1 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Mediterranean Tuna Steaks

2 Servings

The Mediterranean flavors of the colorful topping in this recipe are a perfect complement to the flavor and firm texture of the fish. A cast-iron grill pan is best for this dish. Be sure to season a new cast iron pan well before using it for the first time and preheat it each time you use it. Spinach sautéed with garlic is an excellent side dish for this recipe.

Ingredients:

2 tuna steaks, 6 ounces each, about 1 inch thick
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
1 medium ripe tomato, diced fine
6 green olives, pitted and chopped
1 tablespoon scallions, chopped
2 teaspoons capers
1 clove garlic, mashed
Pinch of dried whole oregano

Instructions:

1. Rinse the tuna steaks under cold water and pat dry. Brush them with 1 teaspoon olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
2. Preheat grill or broiler. Meanwhile, mix the remaining ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.
3. Grill or broil the steaks on high heat, about 2-3 minutes per side or until desired doneness.
4. Top the tuna steaks with the tomato-olive mixture.

Nutritional Information Per serving: 262 calories, 9 g total fat (1 g sat), 76 mg cholesterol, 4 g carbohydrate, 40 g protein, 1 g fiber, 450 mg sodium

Citrus Ginger Striped Bass

Citrus and ginger will definitely make this a light, refreshing, crowd-pleaser.

Ingredients:

1/4 tbsp finely shredded orange peel
1/8 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
1/8 cup lime juice
3/4 teaspoon shredded ginger
1 tbsp white wine vinegar
3/4 teaspoon chopped cilantro
6 oz striped bass

Instructions:

1. In a medium sized bowl, combine all the ingredients and blend well.
2. Place the bass in a baking dish, cover and marinate for 30 minutes to 1 hour.
3. Place on grill and cook for 2-3 minutes per side or until cooked through.

Southwest Barbecued Chicken with Tomato Red Pepper Dressing

2 Servings

This is a spicy, healthy version of the classic favorite. You can cook the chicken in the oven or on the grill.

Ingredients:

4 tbsp Tomato Red Pepper Salad Dressing (recipe follows)
1 tsp red chile powder
1 tsp canola oil
1/2 tsp honey (optional)
2 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 8 ounces)

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees (or, fire up the grill). Mix together the salad dressing, red chile powder, canola oil and honey, if using. Pour half the dressing over the chicken breasts in a lightly oiled or nonstick baking dish. Bake for 10 minutes. Baste with remaining sauce and cook about another 10-15 minutes or until done. Be careful not to overcook.

Tomato Red Pepper Salad Dressing

1 small (6 ounce) can of tomato paste
1 whole roasted red pepper or pimento from a jar
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
2 tablespoons water
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 teaspoon dried basil

Combine all ingredients in a blender container. Blend until well mixed.

Nutritional Information per serving: 180 calories, 5 g total fat (1 g sat), 69 mg cholesterol, 7 g carbohydrate, 26 g protein, 1 g fiber, 228 mg sodium

Santa Fe Chicken (4 Servings)

The marinade in this dish is what gives the chicken such a smooth flavor. Although it is ideal if the meat can soak in the marinade for at least 1 hour before cooking to absorb the intricate flavors of the marinade, if you don't have time, don't be discouraged, because the chicken will still be flavorful. If you are really planning ahead, you can soak the meat in the marinade for up to two days. Serve this dish with a side of Spanish Rice and Jicama and Carrot Salad. The flavors together are very complementary.

Ingredients:

Marinade:

Juice from 3 limes
1/4 cup low-sodium soy sauce
1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil
1 1/2 teaspoons chili powder
1 1/2 teaspoons cumin seed
1 1/2 teaspoons ground coriander
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 1/2 teaspoons honey
2 whole breasts boneless, skinless chicken
1/4 cup white wine
3 tablespoons chopped cilantro leaves

Garnish:

Mock Sour Cream or low-fat sour cream
1 lime, sliced into 6 thin slices
6 scallion firecrackers
1/4 cup fresh salsa or Papaya Salsa

Instructions:

Mix together marinade ingredients in a bowl, stirring thoroughly. Pour into a shallow baking pan and lay the chicken breasts in. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.

Preheat the broiler.

After 1 hour, when the chicken has absorbed all the flavors of the marinade, pour in the white wine. Broil the chicken under a medium flame for 8-10 minutes, basting it with the juices to keep it moist.

Transfer the chicken to a platter and slice it at an angle. Garnish each piece with a little of the pan juices, a dollop of Mock Sour Cream or low-fat sour cream, slices of lime, and a scallion firecracker, as well as a dollop of salsa.

Poached Salmon

2 Servings

Those of you who are familiar with My Optimum Health Plan will know that one of the initial dietary changes I ask you to make is to start eating fish -- particularly oily, cold-water fish. Of the varieties that fall into this category (mackerel, kippers, sardines and wild Alaskan salmon) my favorite is salmon. It's a leading source of omega-3 fatty acids, essential fatty acids that contribute to brain growth and development and may help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and cancer. Salmon is often available fresh, and it also scores points as a food that's easy to cook but looks and tastes like the elegant work of a gourmet chef. Try this and my other salmon recipes; they're easy enough for everyday dining, fine enough for a special occasion, and guaranteed to set you on the road to good health. Enjoy.

Ingredients:

Salmon filets (allow 6 ounces per person)
1 carrot, sliced
1 small onion, sliced
1 stalk celery, sliced
2 slices lemon
Several sprigs of parsley
6 bay leaves (Turkish, or 1/2 of a California bay leaf)
Salt to taste
1 cup dry white wine
Juice of half a lemon

Instructions:

1. Cut the salmon filets into individual portions if necessary.
2. Place in a large skillet the carrot, onion, sliced celery, lemon, parsley and bay leaves.
3. Add the fish, cold water to cover, salt to taste, the wine and the lemon juice. Bring the water to a boil, uncovered.
4. Adjust heat to simmer and let fish cook for 5 minutes.
5. Turn off the heat and leave fish undisturbed for 10 minutes. Then remove it carefully to a serving platter; the salmon will be perfectly done. It is delicious served either hot or cold.

Nutritional Information per serving: 245 calories, 10 g total fat (2 g sat), 76 mg cholesterol, 0 g carbohydrate, 22 g protein, 0 g fiber, 50 mg sodium

Curried Chicken with Sweet Potatoes and Cauliflower (4 servings)

Boneless and skinless chicken thighs, with a little help from the well-seasoned yogurt marinade, remain moist and tender when oven-roasted. Hint: Soaking the prepared vegetables in ice water for 15 minutes before roasting will hydrate them, making them more moist and tender when cooked.

Ingredients:

3/4 cup nonfat plain yogurt	1 sweet potato (about 1 pound), peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1 teaspoon Madras-style curry powder (hotter than standard curry)	3 cups cauliflower florets (1 small head)
1 teaspoon ground coriander	1 tablespoon olive oil
1 teaspoon ground ginger	Freshly ground pepper to taste
1 clove garlic, minced	1/4 cup chopped unsalted dry-roasted peanuts or cashews
3/4 teaspoon salt, divided	1/4 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves, washed, dried and torn
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper	
8 boneless, skinless chicken thighs (about 1 1/2 pounds), trimmed of fat (see Tip)	

Instructions:

1. Combine yogurt, curry powder, coriander, ginger, garlic, 1/2 teaspoon salt and cayenne in a shallow glass dish; mix to blend. Reserve 1/4 cup of this mixture; cover and refrigerate. Add chicken to the remaining yogurt mixture and turn to coat. Cover and marinate in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours or overnight.
2. Preheat oven to 450°F. Use a large baking sheet with sides and lightly coat it with cooking spray.
3. Remove the chicken from the marinade and place on the prepared baking sheet. Toss sweet potato with the reserved yogurt mixture in a medium bowl and place on the baking sheet. Toss cauliflower with oil in a medium bowl and add to the baking sheet. Season vegetables with the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Roast chicken and vegetables, uncovered, for 15 minutes.
4. Carefully turn the chicken over and stir vegetables. Roast until the vegetables are tender and chicken is cooked through, 10 to 15 minutes more. (An instant-read thermometer inserted in the center of chicken pieces should register 180°F.)
5. Arrange chicken and vegetables on a platter or individual plates and garnish with peanuts (or cashews) and cilantro.

Variation: Try this dish with broccoli instead of cauliflower.

Vegetarian Entrees :

Annmarie's Stuffed Acorn Squash

4 Servings

When I first made this for my parents my father was very skeptical. "Squash that's all we are having" he whispered to my mother. "Make sure you fill up on Chips and Hummus." I Promise this is very filling, you can serve it with quinoa or couscous. My father didn't even finish his half!

Ingredients:

2 Large Organic Acorn Squash split in half
1 Large Organic Gala Apple, cubed
½ cup Fresh Organic Cranberries, quartered
½ Walnuts, Chopped
Juice from 2 Clementine's
Melted Butter
Brown Sugar
Cinnamon

Instructions:

1. Pre heat oven to 350.
2. Split the Acorn Squash in half and remove all seeds. Set squash aside.
3. In small bowl mix together apples, cranberries, walnuts, Clementine juice, and sprinkle with cinnamon and butter.
4. Brush the Squash evenly with butter and brown sugar. Spoon into squash apple mixture, evenly distribute.
5. Place stuffed squash (meat side up) in glass baking dish, with ¼ inch of water in dish. Cover with Foil.
6. Cook for about 45 mins. Test with fork, squash should be tender. Let cool then serve with a salad and some quinoa.

Porcini Risotto

4 Servings

This classic Italian dish is rich with the flavor of dried porcini mushrooms. Adding truffle-flavored olive oil at the end of cooking adds a depth that is unbelievable. Always remember when making risotto to cook the rice until it is creamy but still has a bit of a bite. With a large green salad, this dish is elegant enough for guests.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup dried porcini mushrooms
3-4 cups warm vegetable stock
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 small onion, minced
1 cup Arborio rice
Salt and pepper to taste
2 teaspoons truffle-flavored olive oil (optional) or extra-virgin olive oil
1/4 cup grated fresh Parmesan cheese (optional)

Instructions:

1. Rinse the dried mushrooms in cold water, drain, and add to warm vegetable stock to soften.
2. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil over medium heat and sauté the onion until soft. Add the rice and stir to combine. Add the mushrooms, cut into smaller pieces if necessary. Reduce heat to medium-low.
3. Add the stock, one ladleful at a time, as you stir the rice. As the rice absorbs the liquid, add more. After 15 minutes, test the rice for doneness.
4. When the rice is tender but not mushy, remove from heat, season to taste with salt and pepper, and add truffle-flavored olive oil and grated Parmesan cheese, if desired.

Nutritional Information per serving: 219 calories, 4 g total fat (2 g sat), 5 mg cholesterol, 36 g carbohydrate, 8 g protein, 2 g fiber, 350 mg sodium

Squash Pie (8 Servings)

The glowing colors and the smooth texture of cooked winter squash are evocative of winter feasts, home and the holidays. These sturdy gourds have been around since long before the Pilgrims shared their first Thanksgiving with Native Americans. Squash is believed to have been eaten as long ago as 5,500 BC. The winter squash family boasts a bewildering number of varieties, from acorn to Hubbard, the most recognizable of which is probably the pumpkin. But despite great differences in shape, size and the external color of their hard skins, most can be treated the same in the kitchen -- baked, pureed, or as a component of soups and stews. Perhaps best of all is the rich nutritional value they have in common. Beta carotene, potassium and fiber are just some of their most notable assets. With a nutty and often sweet taste and a smooth texture, winter squash is good and good for you.

Ingredients:

1 recipe for Easy Pie Crust (two 9" crusts, available on My Optimum Health Plan)
1/2 cup raw cashew pieces
1 cup water
4 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch or arrowroot
6 cups cooked puréed winter squash (buttercup, banana, or Hubbard)
1/2 cup white sugar
1/2 cup light brown sugar, packed
4 tablespoons brandy
1 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon
3/4 teaspoon powdered ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
3/4 cup walnuts, chopped

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. In a blender, grind the cashew pieces until very fine. Add the water and blend on high speed for 2 minutes. Add the cornstarch or arrowroot powder and blend on low speed for 30 seconds.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the squash purée, sugars, brandy, and spices.
4. Add the cashew mixture to the squash and mix well.
5. Divide the pie filling equally between the two pie crusts. Top with the chopped walnuts. Bake the pies for 50-60 minutes until lightly browned, cracked, and well-set.
6. Remove the pies from the oven, cool, then refrigerate overnight to allow filling to firm up. Serve cool or at room temperature.

Winter Vegetable Pot Pie

Potpies are old-fashioned comfort food at its best, and the version, made with chewy seitan and a variety of veggies, is as comforting as they come. Feel free to vary the filling, ingredients according to your preference or what you have on hand. For example, you could use corn instead of peas, or tofu, or chicken in place of the seitan.

Filling:	Crust:
1 large all-purpose potato, peeled and diced 1 large carrot, chopped 1 parsnip, peeled and chopped 2 tbsp tamari or other soy sauce 1 tbsp cornstarch dissolved in 2 tbsp water 1 tbsp olive oil 1 medium yellow onion, chopped 12 ounces seitan, coarsely chopped salt and freshly ground pepper ½ cup frozen green peas	1 ¼ cup unbleached all purpose flour ¼ teaspoon salt 1/3 cup chilled corn oil 2 tablespoon ice water

Instructions:

1. To make filling, cook the potato, carrot, and parsnip in a pot of boiling water until tender, about 10 mins. Drain, rinse, and set aside.
2. In a small saucepan, bring stock and tamari to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low and whisk in the cornstarch mixture. Simmer, stirring, until thickened, 2 to 3 mins. Remove from the heat and set aside.
3. Heat olive oil in a medium-sized skillet over medium heat. Add the onion, cover, and cook until softened, about 5 mins. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the onion to a lightly oiled 2 quart casserole dish.
4. Reheat the skillet and add the seitan. Season with salt and pepper to taste and cook, stirring, until browned, about 5 mins. Transfer to the casserole dish. Stir in the peas, potato mixture, and sauce and set aside.
5. Pre heat oven to 350 degrees
6. To make the crust, in a food processor, combine the flour and salt, pulsing to blend. Add the corn oil and process until the mixture is crumbly. With the machine running slowly add the water and process until the mixture forms a ball. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough until it is slightly larger than the casserole dish. Place the crust over the casserole and crimp the edges.
7. Bake until the filling is hot and bubbly and the crust is browned, about 45 minutes. Let rest for 5 mins before serving.

Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie (6 Servings)

Traditional Shepherd's Pie is usually made with ground meat and white potatoes. I like this one because it has sweet potatoes mixed in and omits the meat filling. The curried lentil filling is sandwiched between two layers of creamy potato filling sitting on a crouton crust baked on top of sweet zucchini. I serve this as an entree with a simple chopped tomato salad.

Ingredients:

2 medium or large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
6 medium or large white potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning

CURRIED LENTIL FILLING:

3 1/4 cups purified water	
1 bay leaf	1/2 cup yellow or red bell pepper
1 cup lentils	1 tablespoon olive oil
2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning	2/3 cup nutritional yeast
1 cup sliced onions	1 teaspoon curry powder
2 cloves garlic	1 teaspoon salt
1 cup sliced shiitake or button mushrooms	1 tablespoon cornstarch
1/2 cup broccoli florets	1 zucchini, cut in rounds (about 2 cups)
	1 cup bread crumbs or premade croutons

GARNISH:

1/2 cup thinly sliced scallions or green onion

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Drop the cubed sweet and white potatoes into the water and simmer for 45 minutes. They should be easily pierced with a fork. Strain the potatoes, reserving 2 cups of the water. Pour 1 cup of the water back into the pot and mash the potatoes using a potato masher or a large fork. Add the olive oil, Italian seasoning, and Cajun seasoning and mash again until seasonings are completely blended into the potatoes.
3. Meanwhile, cook the lentils: Bring 3 cups of the water to a boil. Add the bay leaf, lentils, and Cajun seasoning and cook for 45 minutes. Remove from heat when completely cooked and let cool briefly. Drain off any liquid.

Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie Cont. . .

4. Sauté the onions, garlic, mushrooms, broccoli, and bell peppers in the olive oil in a large sauce pan until the onions are transparent and limp, about 4 minutes.

Add the reserved cup of potato water, nutritional yeast, salt, and curry powder and stir until everything is blended in. Add to the cooked lentils. Dissolve the cornstarch in the remaining 1/4 cup water and stir it into the lentil and vegetable mixture. Continue to cook for 3 more minutes, until the sauce thickens. Remove from heat.

5. Line the bottom of a casserole dish with the zucchini rounds. Sprinkle half of the bread crumbs or croutons on top of the zucchini. Spoon out 4 cups of the mashed potatoes and spread across the zucchini rounds. Spoon out 2 cups of the curried lentils and spread on top of the potatoes. Spoon the remainder of the mashed potatoes and smooth them out on top. Sprinkle the rest of the bread crumbs and the scallions or green onion on top. Bake for 50 minutes. Let cool for 15 minutes before cutting and serving.

Nutritional Information per serving: 503 calories, 7 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 92 g carbohydrate, 23 g protein, 22 g fiber, 350 mg sodium

Vegetarian Chili

6 Servings

In the culture and cuisine of the Southwest, chili is serious business. But contrary to what many believe, good chili doesn't require "carne" or meat. The key to great chili is knowing how to harness the fiery flavor of a wide range of available Chile peppers to make the dish exciting yet edible. ("Chili" commonly refers to the dish made with "Chile" peppers.) My favorites are the red New Mexican Chile peppers traditionally tied in strings called ristras or available as ground powder, and chipotles which are ripe (red) jalapeños that have been dried and smoked. Experiment with different amounts until you find a level of intensity you're comfortable with. Be aware, however, that capsaicin, the active component in chile peppers that gives them their heat, is concentrated in the white tissue attached to the seeds. If you're using whole chiles, you may want to remove that white tissue if you don't want your chili too hot.

Vegetarian Chili cont. . .

Ingredients:

7 1/2 cups cooked beans, like pintos, anasazi, adzuki, or kidney (roughly four 15-oz cans or 1 pound dried beans, cooked)
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 large onions, diced
1 dried or canned chipotle pepper
1 tablespoon mild red New Mexican chile powder, or to taste
1 tablespoon dried whole oregano
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1 large can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes, undrained
5 cloves garlic, mashed
Salt and pepper, to taste

Garnishes:

Chopped raw onion
Chopped tomato
Shredded lettuce
Tortillas

Instructions:

1. Drain beans in a colander.
2. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven or saucepan. Add the onions and sauté over medium heat until onions are soft and golden.
3. Crush the chipotle pepper if using dried, or mince if using canned.
4. Add the chipotle pepper, red chile powder, oregano, cumin and allspice to the onions. Cook for 2 minutes.
5. Add the tomatoes and beans. Simmer for 45 minutes, adding liquid if the mixture gets too dry. 6. Add salt and pepper to taste, and more chili if you want a hotter dish.
7. Serve in bowls with warm tortillas. Garnish with chopped raw onion, chopped tomato, and shredded lettuce.

Nutritional Information per serving: 110 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 11 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein, 0 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Tempeh Chili

4 Servings

This is a high-protein chili with the benefits of soy. If you haven't tried tempeh (a fermented cake of soybeans and whole grains) it's a great substitute for ground meat. You can substitute any canned beans for the kidney beans.

Ingredients:

- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 8 oz cake of tempeh, crumbled
- 1 can organic crushed tomatoes
- 1 can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and diced
- 1/2 cup cilantro (fresh)chopped
- 1 tbsp cumin, ground
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 small can chipotle chili en adobo (optional)

Instructions:

Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan. Add the chopped onion, red and green peppers, jalapenos and the crumbled tempeh and stir fry for five to six minutes. Stir in the cumin and salt. Add the canned tomatoes, kidney beans, chopped cilantro and chipotle pepper if you're using it. Allow the mixture to simmer for about 40 minutes. Sprinkle with low-fat cheddar cheese if you like.

Nutritional Information per serving: 341 calories, 5 g total fat (1 g sat), 2 mg cholesterol, 41 g carbohydrate, 26 g protein, 16 g fiber, 460 mg sodium

Pink Lentil Curry

6 Servings

Lentils are a wonderful source of protein, calcium, and iron. They are a staple ingredient in Indian cooking, and combine well with many different seasonings. You may be most familiar with brown or green lentils, but there are lentils out there in black, yellow, red and pink. Look for these more exotic varieties in Indian and specialty food stores. Similarly, not all curry powders are the same, ranging from quite mild to very hot. In making this side dish, start with a small amount and taste it to be sure your dish meets the comfort and taste level of your guests!

Ingredients:

1 pound pink lentils
1 tablespoon canola oil
2-3 cups chopped vegetables (onions, carrots, celery, cabbage and whatever vegetables you like)
Curry powder to taste
2-4 cloves garlic, mashed
1 tablespoon chopped gingerroot
Salt or soy sauce to taste
Hot cooked rice

Instructions:

1. Pick over lentils, removing any stones or foreign matter. Place in a bowl or colander and rinse thoroughly. Place lentils in pot with enough cold water to cover well. Bring to a boil, lower heat, and cook, partially covered, until lentils become a thick mush (about one hour).
2. Meanwhile, heat canola oil in skillet, add vegetables and a little water, stir and cover. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are barely tender.
3. Add curry powder, garlic, ginger and salt or soy sauce. Stir, then replace cover and simmer until vegetables are tender.
4. Add vegetables to lentil mixture. Toss together, correct seasonings, and simmer for 10 minutes to blend flavors.
5. Serve with rice.

Nutritional Information per serving: 483 calories, 4 g total fat (0 g sat), 90 g carbohydrate, 24 g protein, 18 g fiber, 350 mg sodium

Vegetable and Tofu Stir Fry (4 Servings)

If tofu is prepared right, it's delicious. If not, it can taste like rubber. Tofu is curdled soy milk that's been pressed in a process similar to making cheese. You'll find tofu in natural food stores and many supermarkets these days. Several brands are available with varying texture from extra firm to soft (tofu's firmness depends on the amount of liquid that's been pressed out of it. In large cities with oriental markets you can often find tofu sold in bulk, usually stored in open barrels. Tofu sold this way has been found to occasionally be infected with E. coli bacteria, so be cautious. You might also try the delicious varieties of baked, pressed tofu you'll find in refrigerator cases at natural food stores.

These are already flavored and ready to eat without additional cooking. The idea behind stir-frying is to produce a mixture in which all the items are crunchy-tender and retain their colors and individual character.

Ingredients:

1 pound firm tofu
8 cups sliced vegetables (we suggest yellow onions, carrots, peppers, mushrooms, celery, broccoli, asparagus, mung-bean sprouts, bamboo shoots)
1 tablespoon canola oil
2 cups cooked rice

Sauce:

1/4 cup dry sherry
1/4 cup natural soy sauce (low sodium if you prefer)
2 cloves garlic, pressed
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
1 tablespoon finely chopped ginger root
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
1 teaspoon corn starch

Instructions:

1. Slice the tofu in 1/2 inch slices. Press between layered paper towels or clean kitchen towels to dry well. Cut slices into 1 inch cubes. Arrange on a plate with prepared vegetables, separated by variety.
2. Combine sauce ingredients except for cornstarch in a small bowl and stir until sugar is dissolved. Mix cornstarch with just enough cold water to dissolve in a custard cup or teacup (you'll use less than 2 tsp water.) Add to sauce, stir well and set aside.
3. Preheat a wok or large skillet. Add the canola oil and vegetables (add the sturdier vegetables first, adding the more tender ones like bean sprouts later) and cook over medium high heat until just crisp tender, stirring constantly.
4. Add the tofu and stir very carefully until the tofu is heated. Stir sauce and pour around edge of wok. Stir vegetables around in sauce as it thickens. Remove from heat as soon as sauce is thickened and serve over rice.

Crock-pot Beans

8 Serving

This is a trouble-free method of making beans from scratch that doesn't require soaking the beans overnight. You can, however, shorten the cooking time somewhat by boiling the beans in a generous amount of water in a separate pot for 2 minutes, turning off the heat and letting the beans soak for one hour. Drain the beans, add them to the crock-pot with fresh water and cook according to the recipe.

Ingredients:

1 lb dried beans, like pinto or navy
1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 bay leaf
salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

Pick through the beans to remove any stones. Rinse the beans in a colander under running water. Put the beans, onion, garlic and bay leaf in a crock-pot. Fill the crock-pot with water to within 1 inch of the top. Cook the beans on high heat for about 8 hours. Add salt and pepper to taste before serving.

Nutritional Information per serving: 200 calories, 1 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 38 g carbohydrate, 12 g protein, 14 g fiber, 6 mg sodium

Oriental Vegetable Stir-Fry

1 Serving

This recipe isn't as long as it looks, and it's a basic method for any type of Oriental stir-fry. The dish works best if you have rice already cooked and stored in your fridge. All stir-fried dishes really require cooked and cooled rice. Brown rice is much more nutritious and higher in fiber than regular white rice. If you don't like brown rice, try basmati rice in this dish; it's lower on the Glycemic Index than regular white rice and has a more interesting texture and taste. These canned oriental vegetables are great to have on hand for quick stir fries - they add fiber with very few calories.

Ingredients:

3/4 cups cooked rice (brown or basmati)
1 egg
1/4 cup cherry tomatoes
1/4 cup bamboo shoots (canned)
1/4 cup water chestnuts (canned)
1 cup mushrooms (preferably shiitake or oyster)
2 cups spinach leaves (preferably organic)
2 tsp sesame oil
1 tsp low-sodium tamari or soy sauce
1 tsp grated fresh ginger root
2 cloves garlic, minced

Instructions:

Assemble the ingredients. Drain the canned water chestnuts and bamboo shoots, cut the cherry tomatoes in two, and steam the torn spinach leaves for 3 minutes in 1/4 cup water in a small saucepan with a tight fitting lid.

Beat the egg well and make a flat omelet in a small frying pan. Cut the omelet into thin strips and then cut across into pieces. Set aside.

Put the sesame oil in a frying pan or wok and stir fry the minced garlic and grated ginger root for a few minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook for three minutes. Add the remaining ingredients, including the omelet, and stir fry until everything is heated through.

Nutritional Information per serving: 406 calories, 15 g total fat (3 g sat), 187 mg cholesterol, 55 g carbohydrate, 15 g protein, 5 g fiber, 453 mg sodium

Broccoli Tofu Burrito

1 serving

Ingredients:

1 large flour tortilla (preferably whole wheat) or 2 small ones
1 cup broccoli, cooked and chopped fine
1 tsp fresh grated ginger root
1 tsp salt-free herb blend
1/2 cup silken tofu, organic (about 4 ounces)
1/4 cup canned chickpeas (drained and rinsed)
1 tbsp Parmesan cheese
1 tbsp salsa

Instructions:

1. Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cook the broccoli until barely done and chop it in the food processor. 3. Mash the tofu with the seasonings and salsa, then add in the broccoli and chickpeas. (You can puree the chickpeas if you prefer a smoother texture.)
4. Place this mixture in the middle of the tortilla. Wrap the two sides over tightly and place the roll, seam side down, on a lightly oiled cookie sheet. Bake for about 8 minutes until the tortilla is crisp and the filling is heated through. Serve with a green salad and/or tomatoes tossed in a light vinaigrette.

Nutritional Information per serving: 320 calories, 10 g total fat (2 g sat), 2 mg cholesterol, 45 g carbohydrate, 16 g protein, 6 g fiber, 495 mg sodium

Desserts

Annmarie's Banana Wheat Bread

12 servings

Native to the Caribbean and Central America, bananas are one of America's favorite fruits. They are rich in potassium - one banana contains 450 mg, one-fifth of the adult daily requirement - and offer a fair share of magnesium (33 mg), too. In addition, bananas help to strengthen the stomach lining and are good for soothing indigestion. Most banana bread recipes are saturated with butter and sugar. This one uses applesauce instead - which is much better for your heart - and honey, which of course means lots of flavor. Don't use regular whole-wheat flour. It is too heavy for this recipe. Look for whole-wheat pastry flour instead.

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups mashed very ripe bananas

½ cup honey

½ cup Applesauce

2 eggs

1 tsp pure vanilla extract

2 cups whole-wheat pastry flour

½ cup wheat germ

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp salt

½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans

Instructions:

1. Heat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly oil a loaf pan.

2. Mash the bananas and mix with the honey, applesauce, eggs, and vanilla extract.

3. Stir together the whole wheat pastry flour, wheat Germ, baking soda and salt. Add the nuts.

4. Blend the two mixtures and spoon into a lightly oiled loaf pan. Bake for 55 minutes, or until center is set.

Carrot Cake

9 Servings

Carrot cake is a perennial favorite, but it is often loaded with vegetable oil and laden with a cream cheese frosting. Our version is healthier, using a small amount of olive oil, a full cup of honey for moistness and flavor, and a combination of whole wheat pastry and unbleached flours. The crunchy walnuts even add a bit of omega-3 fats to this sweet treat. With a cup of hot green tea, this cake will make you forget about cream cheese frosting. Enjoy!

Ingredients:

2 cups firmly packed finely grated carrots (3 large)
Juice of 1 large orange
2 tsp vanilla extract
1/4 cup light olive oil
1 cup honey, liquefied in microwave (30 seconds)
1/2 cup crushed or chopped pineapple, drained
1 cup unbleached white flour
1 1/2 cups whole-wheat pastry flour
2 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp ground allspice
3/4 cup walnuts, chopped

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a mixing bowl, stir together the carrots, orange juice, vanilla, olive oil, honey, and pineapple until well blended.
3. In another bowl, stir together the flours, baking soda, and spices. Mix in the walnuts.
4. Blend the dry ingredients into the carrot mixture, stirring until just mixed.
5. Pour the batter into a nonstick 8-inch-square baking pan and bake for 45-60 minutes until a knife inserted in the center comes out clean. Remove from oven, let cool slightly, and remove from pan.

Nutritional Information per serving: 334 calories, 9 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 62 g carbohydrate, 5 g protein, 4 g fiber, 25 mg sodium

Sesame-Almond Cookies

4 Dozen

Almost everyone loves cookies. Most store bought varieties, though, are filled with partially hydrogenated oils and other undesirable ingredients. These tasty little cookies are actually made with olive oil and a host of other wholesome additions like tofu and chopped almonds. Enjoy a cookie with a cup of hot green tea to make you feel that life is really worth living!

Ingredients:

3/4 cup whole-wheat pastry flour
3/4 cup unbleached white flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup sesame seeds, toasted
3/4 cup raw almonds, coarsely chopped
4 ounces silken tofu
1/2 cup light olive oil
3/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
1 tablespoon almond extract

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
2. In a bowl, stir together the flours, baking powder, and salt. Mix in the sesame seeds and chopped almonds.
3. In another bowl, mash the tofu and combine with the olive oil, sugar, and almond extract. Mix well.
4. Using a rubber spatula, fold the wet ingredients into the flour mixture. Roll the mixture into one-inch balls, flatten between your palms, and place them on ungreased baking sheets. Bake the cookies about 10 minutes, until the edges begin to brown. Remove from the cookie sheet and cool on a rack.

Nutritional Information per serving: 86 calories, 6 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 7 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 1 g fiber

Chocolate Ricotta

Two 1/4-cup servings

This high-calcium "pudding" has the benefits of cocoa and cinnamon - and the flavor of Mexico. Experiment with different brands of ricotta - they have different textures and flavors.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup low fat ricotta cheese
2 tbsp mild honey
2 tbsp cocoa powder
1/2 tsp vanilla
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

Instructions:

1. Combine all the ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth.
2. Scoop into small dessert dishes and serve.

Nutritional Information per serving: 145 calories, 3 g total fat (2 g sat), 11 mg cholesterol, 24 g carbohydrate, 10 g protein, 2 g fiber, 100 mg sodium

Blueberry Pie

8 servings

Blueberries have been touted as the food with the most antioxidant potential. Their power comes from their anthocyanins, which give them their color, and loads of vitamin C. This delightful pie is loaded with these dark-blue gems. The cooked and cooled filling is poured into a 9-inch baked pie crust.

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds fresh or frozen blueberries
1/2 cup light brown sugar
Juice of 1/2 fresh lemon
1 tsp cinnamon
2 tbsp cornstarch or arrowroot powder
2 tbsp cold water
1 baked Easy Pie Crust (see My Optimum Health Plan for recipe)

Instructions:

1. Heat the blueberries in a saucepan over medium heat until they begin to boil. Simmer gently for 10 minutes.
2. Add the sugar, lemon juice, and cinnamon, and cook for another 2 minutes.
3. Mix the cornstarch or arrowroot well with the water, and pour mixture into the simmering blueberries while stirring. Cook, stirring, until mixture becomes clear and thick. Continue to cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and cool.
4. Spoon mixture into pie crust and refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.

Nutritional Information per serving: 163 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 36 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 3 g fiber

Frozen Banana Cream

1 Serving

This is an old restaurant trick that has been around for years. Use this delightfully simple "sorbet" wherever you would use ice cream. Try it sprinkled with chopped nuts, or on a bed of pureed raspberries or strawberries.

Ingredients:

1 very ripe banana

Instructions:

Peel the banana and cut it into chunks. Put the chunks, uncovered, on a plate in the freezer, and freeze for at least an hour. (They can stay overnight.) When you're ready to serve, take out the banana and put the frozen pieces in a blender or food processor, and process until smooth, scraping down the sides of the container as needed. As the bananas thaw slightly, the texture will become smooth and creamy.

Nutritional Information per serving: 92 calories, 0 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 23 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 2 g fiber, 1 mg sodium

Mango Cream

1 Serving

If you haven't eaten mango, this is an easy way to introduce this delicious fruit into your diet. Pick a ripe mango that feels firm and smells good. Or you may be able to buy frozen mango which works fine for this recipe. For a festive touch, layer the mango cream with fresh berries in a parfait glass and top with chopped almonds.

Ingredients:

1 ripe mango

1/2 cup vanilla yogurt

Instructions:

Peel the mango and cut the ripe portion of the fruit into pieces. (The portion around the stone will be hard.) Put the mango in a blender or food processor with the yogurt. Blend until smooth.

Nutritional Information per serving: 121 calories, 4 g total fat (2 g sat), 14 mg cholesterol, 19 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 2 g fiber, 54 mg sodium

Ginger Almond Pears

1 Serving

Pears are one of the few fruits that actually improve in texture and flavor after being picked a little green. You can store them in a paper bag for a couple of days to speed up ripening. A little softness around the stems and a change in skin color means they're ready. Bartletts, red Bartletts, or Anjou varieties have the best flavor and are good for cooking. When the time comes for thickening the pear sauce, I prefer arrowroot over cornstarch, although it is a little harder to find. Arrowroot comes from a tropical tuber whose root stalks are dried and ground into a fine starchy powder that's very easy to digest. Sauces thickened with arrowroot are a little finer than those thickened with cornstarch but you can use either. This recipe is very easy to cut in half.

Ingredients:

5 firm ripe pears
3 cups apple cider
2 tsp finely chopped fresh gingerroot
3 Tbsp cornstarch or arrowroot
1/2 tsp pure almond extract
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Peel the pears, quarter them lengthwise, and core. Slice pears thinly and place in a saucepan with the apple cider and gingerroot. Add a pinch of salt.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer until pears are tender, about 15 minutes.
3. Dissolve cornstarch or arrowroot in 1/3 cup cold water and add to the simmering pears, stirring, until the sauce is thick and clear.
4. Remove from heat and stir in almond extract. Serve warm or cold.

Nutritional Information per serving: 185 calories, 1 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 47 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 5 g fiber, 150 mg sodium

Cocoa-Banana Frozen Dessert

6 Servings

The flavors in this simple dessert remind us of beach fare - frozen bananas on a stick coated with chocolate. This is a healthier version that you can whip up in no time at all. It contains no dairy and is very versatile. Improvise by adding different flavors. Make this a few hours before you plan to serve - its best when just frozen. Any leftovers will keep for a couple of weeks in the freezer, but (at my house) rarely last that long.

Ingredients:

4 very ripe bananas
2 tablespoons pure unsweetened cocoa powder
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 tablespoons real maple syrup

Instructions:

1. Peel the bananas and place in a blender or food processor along with the cocoa powder.
2. Add the vanilla extract and the maple syrup.
3. Blend till very smooth. Pour into individual custard cups or small bowls and freeze until just frozen.

Nutritional Information per serving: 118 calories, 1 g total fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 30 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 3 g fiber, 50 mg sodium

Gingered Peach Gratin (4 servings)

Look for gingersnaps free from partially hydrogenated oils in a natural food market. Look for organic peaches as well. This recipe also works well for frozen peach sections.

Ingredients:

1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
4 small ripe peaches (1 lb.), halved and pitted
4 gingersnaps, crushed

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. In a small saucepan, combine sugar, lemon juice, ginger and 2 Tbsp. water; bring to a simmer. Place the peaches, cut-side up, in a shallow 1-qt. baking dish. Pour the ginger syrup over the peaches and sprinkle with gingersnap crumbs. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the peaches are tender when pierced with a knife and the syrup is thickened. Serve warm or at room temperature, with the sauce spooned over.

Nutritional Information per serving: 147 calories, 2 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 35 g carbohydrate, 2 g protein, 2 g fiber, 20 mg sodium

Ginger Sorbet (5 cups)

If you don't have the time or equipment to make this gingery dessert, substitute your favorite flavor of all natural sorbet.

Ingredients:

2 cups sugar
2 Tbsp. peeled, minced gingerroot
2 tsp. finely grated lemon zest
1/3 cup fresh lemon juice

In a heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine sugar, ginger, lemon zest and 4 cups water. Bring to a boil, stirring often. Boil, uncovered, over medium heat for 10 minutes. Cool. Stir in lemon juice. Freeze the mixture in an ice-cream maker, following manufacturer's directions. Break into chunks and whirl in a food processor until smooth. Transfer to a chilled airtight container and return to the freezer for 30 minutes to 1 hour, or until firm. (The sorbet can be made ahead and stored in the freezer for up to 4 days. Thirty minutes before serving, transfer it to the refrigerator to soften lightly.)

Breakfast:

Quick Breakfast Quesadilla

1 Serving

This is a quick fix for mornings when you just can't face another bowl of porridge or whole grain cereal. These little quesadillas also make good lunches or afternoon snacks for children. As always, you can enhance the nutritional content by adding in any finely chopped vegetable or a handful of baby spinach leaves.

Ingredients:

- 1 egg
- 1 ounce grated low-fat cheese or Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon salsa
- 1 small flour tortilla (preferably whole wheat)

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Scramble the egg quickly in a small skillet. Fold in the salsa and cheese. Put the tortilla on a lightly oiled cookie sheet. Put the egg mixture on one half and fold over the other half to cover. Bake for 5 minutes or until the tortilla is crisp.

Nutritional Information per serving: 234 calories, 12 g total fat (5 g sat), 202 mg cholesterol, 18 g carbohydrate, 15 g protein, 1 g fiber, 460 mg sodium

Cottage Cheese Pancakes

1 Serving

These are high-protein pancakes and quite a treat!

Prep time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

1 egg
1/2 cup cottage cheese
1 tsp canola oil
3 tbsp whole wheat flour

Instructions:

1. In a small bowl, beat the egg with a whisk until creamy.
2. Push the cottage cheese through a wire strainer into the egg in the bowl. Mix well.
3. Add the oil and flour. Mix well.
4. Lightly oil a skillet and place over low heat. When the skillet is hot, spoon the batter into the skillet making four pancakes. Flatten slightly with the back of a spoon. Cook 2-3 minutes on each side, or until lightly browned.
5. Serve with applesauce, apple butter or your favorite whole fruit jam.

Nutritional Information per serving: 272 calories, 11 g total fat (3 g sat), 217 mg cholesterol, 20 g carbohydrate, 23 g protein, 3 g fiber, 523 mg sodium

Spinach and Ginger Frittata

1 Serving

This light, low-carbohydrate breakfast or lunch dish combines two of Dr Weil's favorite ingredients - greens and fresh ginger. Baby spinach or other baby greens work great in this recipe.

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 cup spinach leaves (or other greens) torn
- 1 egg
- 1 egg white
- 1 tsp fresh grated ginger root
- 1 tsp Italian or other seasoning mix
- 1 tbsp salsa

Instructions:

Tear up the spinach leaves and steam very briefly. (Put the torn leaves in a small saucepan with 1/4 cup of boiling water, cover the saucepan, turn off the heat and allow to steam for about 3-5 minutes. Baby spinach leaves take just 3 minutes.) Fold into the beaten eggs with the grated ginger, salsa and seasoning. Cook on a non-stick pan sprayed with cooking spray, turning as needed until the eggs are set.

Nutritional Information per serving: 105 calories, 5 g total fat (1 g sat), 187 mg cholesterol, 3 g carbohydrate, 10 g protein, 1 g fiber, 204 mg sodium

Salmon Frittata

1 Serving

This simple omelet or frittata is a great way to incorporate some healthy omega-3 into your breakfast or lunch. It's even better if you use omega-3 enriched eggs. This recipe also works with either two whole eggs or four egg whites. This is a perfect meal for a low carbohydrate diet.

Ingredients:

- 1 egg
- 1 egg white
- 1/2 cup (about 3 oz) cooked or canned salmon
- 1 tbsp Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp salsa

Instructions:

In a medium bowl, stir the egg and egg white together to blend. Chop or mash the salmon so and combine it with the eggs. Add the cheese and salsa and pour the mixture into a small, lightly oiled non-stick skillet. Cook over medium heat for 2 - 3 minutes until set. You can then turn the frittata over (don't worry if it breaks up) or put the skillet in a hot oven for 2 minutes to set the top.

Nutritional Information per serving: 208 calories, 9 g total fat (3 g sat), 235 mg cholesterol, 2 g carbohydrate, 28 g protein, 0 g fiber, 331 mg sodium

Banana Soy Smoothie

1 Serving

This very quick smoothie that is good for breakfast or as a snack. In addition to soy isoflavones, this drink provides a good dose of calcium and potassium, lots of vitamin C, plus four grams of fiber - more than many breakfast cereals.

Ingredients:

1 banana

1/2 cup soy milk (organic and calcium-enriched)

1/2 cup orange juice (calcium-enriched)

Instructions:

Peel the banana, break it into pieces and put it in the blender with the soy milk and orange juice. Blend until smooth and serve. If you like, use frozen banana chunks or add a couple of ice cubes.

Easy Huevos Rancheros

1 Serving

This is a good brunch or lunch dish. Look for a brand of canned, low fat and low sodium all natural refried beans. (Or, make your own.) Most of the fat in this dish is "good fat" from the avocado; if you're trying to lose weight, you might skip the avocado or substitute apple or pear.

Ingredients:

1 whole wheat flour tortilla
1/4 cup low fat, all natural refried beans
1 egg (preferably organic)
2 tbsp salsa
1/4 avocado

Instructions:

Heat the tortilla in the oven briefly until it is slightly crisp. In the meantime, fry the egg and heat up the refried beans in the microwave. Assemble the dish by putting the beans on the crisp tortilla and topping with the fried egg. Garnish with salsa and avocado slices.

Nutritional Information per serving: 297 calories, 15 g total fat (3 g sat), 187 mg cholesterol, 32 g carbohydrate, 13 g protein, 7 g fiber, 386 mg sodium

Breakfast Barley

3 Servings

This fragrant porridge cooks for about an hour unless you use quick barley. Make a whole batch and eat it over several days. The soluble fiber in barley has a very low glycemic index and has been shown to lower cholesterol. It is a delicious change from oatmeal.

Ingredients:

4 cups water
1/2 cup pearl barley, rinsed and drained
1 cinnamon stick
1 tbsp lemon juice
2 cups apple cider or unsweetened apple juice
1 cup raisins (optional)

Instructions:

1. Bring water to a boil in a large saucepan. Add the barley and the cinnamon stick. Cook slowly over low heat for about 45 minutes or until most of the water is absorbed, stirring occasionally.
2. Add the lemon juice, apple cider and raisins, if you are using them. Continue cooking over low heat, stirring frequently, until most of the liquid is absorbed and the barley is thick, about 30 more minutes.
3. Serve with milk or soy milk or eat plain.

Nutritional Information per serving: 198 calories, 0 g total fat (0 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 46 g carbohydrate, 4 g protein, 6 g fiber, 20 mg sodium

Oats with Cinnamon Pecan Flax Topping

4 servings

This topping is good for any type of hot cereal. You can triple the recipe and use it over three days if you keep it tightly covered in the refrigerator. Don't keep it any longer than that because the oils in ground flaxseed go rancid quickly when exposed to air.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Ingredients:

Oats

1 cup water

pinch salt (optional)

1/3 cup steel cut oats (or 1/2 cup rolled oats)

Topping

1 tbsp freshly ground flaxseed

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

1 tbsp chopped pecans

1 tsp grated orange peel (from an organic orange)

Instructions:

1. Bring the water to a boil in a small, heavy saucepan. Sprinkle in the oats and reduce the heat to low. Watch the pan so the oats don't boil over. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the oats are creamy, about 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, mix together the topping ingredients. Sprinkle over the oats and serve with low fat milk or soy milk, if you like.

Nutritional Information per serving: 313 calories, 13 g total fat (1 g sat), 0 mg cholesterol, 40 g carbohydrate, 12 g protein, 10 g fiber, 5 mg sodium

Pinto Bean Burrito

1 Serving

This high fiber and high protein egg dish has lots of nutritional bonuses, especially if you can find the new "designer eggs" that are organic and enriched with omega-3s. The dish works fine without the cheese, and you can substitute egg whites for the whole eggs.

Ingredients:

2 eggs
1/4 cup tomato, diced
1/4 cup pinto beans, canned, drained and rinsed
1 tbsp grated Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese
1 tbsp salsa
1 whole wheat tortilla

Instructions:

Beat the eggs in a dish. Add all the other ingredients except the tortilla. Stir fry the mixture until the egg is set and everything is heated through. Wrap the tortilla in foil and heat it briefly in a toaster oven, then pile the egg mixture into the warm tortilla and enjoy! Or, if you like your tortillas crisp, put the mixture in the tortilla first, roll it up, lay it on a cookie sheet and bake it for five minutes at 350 degrees F.

Nutritional Information per serving: 392 calories, 15 g total fat (5 g sat), 378 mg cholesterol, 43 g carbohydrate, 21 g protein, 6 g fiber, 493 mg sodium

We'd Like to Hear From You!

We always love to hear about your successes!

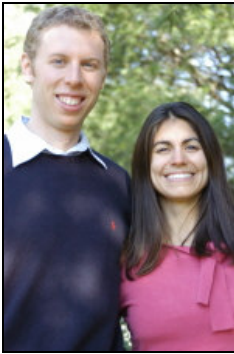
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Looking forward to hearing from you!

Kevin and Annmarie



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