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IDEA TASTE TEST

Try these nourishing,
healthy recipes—and share
them with clients.





SAVOR THIS SELECTION OF TRIED-AND-TRUE RECIPES.

Beloved cooking teacher, author and television personality Julia Child shared this “invariable advice”: “Learn how to cook—try new recipes, learn from your mistakes, be fearless and above all, have fun.”

Chances are, as a fitness professional, you don’t always interact with clients who are taking any of Child’s advice. According to Tufts University, 28% of Americans say they don’t know how to cook. The good news is, during the pandemic, 54% of Americans started to cook more, according to the Hunter: 2021 Food News Study. You can’t try new recipes, though, if you don’t pick up the whisk and read an ingredient list. Perhaps what clients need most when being educated about nutrition is to be encouraged to be fearless and have fun; after all, it sometimes takes a leap of faith to switch out Cheetos for carrot sticks.

Cooking is a connective, creative journey that also—coincidentally—burns calories, so although you may not be able to outrun a bad diet, you can cook for health and longevity, and this is why we’ve curated this creative collection of recipes from *IDEA Fitness Journal*. Instead of meatloaf one night, try the Salmon Oat Loaf. If you don’t have time for a hearty breakfast, give the Orange-Spinach Smoothie a whirl. If you like the results, feel free to share them with family, friends, clients, participants—anyone you think could benefit from healthy fare.

Bon appétit,
Your IDEA Editorial Team

[Contact us!](#)



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Masala Chickpea Stir-Fry

SPICE UP A TASTY DISH OF PLANT-BASED FIBER

It's true: A diet rich in roughage can lead to healthier bathroom habits. That's according to data obtained from more than 14,000 adult participants in the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2005–2010.

An investigation published in the *Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics* found strong evidence, based on a bowel-health questionnaire, that lower dietary-fiber intake was associated with greater risk of constipation among study volunteers. Surprisingly, inadequate water

consumption was not found to be a significant factor driving constipation, generally defined as having three or fewer bowel movements a week.

Beyond being uncomfortable, frequent constipation can raise the risk for conditions like hemorrhoids and rectal tears. Plus, the stool is a way to remove toxins from the body. That makes fiber-packed dishes like this quick plant-based stir-fry a great way to keep you more regular.



1 T canola or grapeseed oil

4 C cooked or canned chickpeas
(drained and rinsed)

3 garlic cloves, sliced

1 T minced fresh ginger

1 T garam masala

½ t turmeric

¼ t cayenne

¼ t salt

2 C cherry tomatoes, halved

6 C chopped kale

⅓ C chopped unsalted roasted almonds

juice of ½ lemon

¾ cup plain Greek-style dairy or nondairy yogurt

2 t lemon zest

2 scallions (green onions), chopped

Heat oil in a wok or large skillet over medium heat. Add chickpeas, garlic and ginger; cook 4 minutes, stirring often. Stir in garam masala, turmeric, cayenne and salt; cook 30 seconds. Add tomatoes and heat for 2 minutes, stirring often. Add kale to pan and cook until tender and slightly wilted. Stir in almonds and lemon juice. Mix together yogurt and lemon zest. Serve chickpea mixture topped with dollops of yogurt and a sprinkling of scallions. Makes four servings.

Ingredient Breakdown



> Chickpeas

Also called garbanzo beans, chickpeas are rich in protein, folate, fiber and iron.



> TOMATOES

Recent research has shown that eating tomatoes may help lower your risk of stroke, likely due to the lycopene they contain.



> GINGER

Ginger has been used for thousands of years for medicinal purposes, including relieving nausea, motion sickness and pain.



> KALE

With more nutritional value than spinach, kale may help improve blood glucose control, lower the risk of cancer and reduce blood pressure.

Sources: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health 2020; medical newstoday.com 2020.

Salmon Oat Loaf

THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT VITAMIN D

If you train older individuals, it's a good idea to urge them to stay on top of their vitamin D needs. Research discussed in *Clinical Interventions in Aging* showed that muscle function, including strength, was impaired in adults 60 and older who were deficient in vitamin D compared with those whose levels were adequate. Maintaining muscle function throughout life is critical for healthy aging: promoting independence and

mobility, reducing frailty and lowering the risk of fractures from falls.

More research is needed to determine what impact vitamin D has on muscle function in younger adults. Supplementation and sun exposure can boost levels, as can eating more fatty fish, including salmon, sardines and mackerel.

Serve up slices of this savory salmon loaf for some extra D-fence.

3 six-ounce cans salmon, drained

2 large eggs, lightly beaten

1 C rolled oats

1 large carrot, grated

1 shallot, finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

½ C flat-leaf parsley, chopped

juice of ½ lemon

2 T prepared horseradish

¼ t salt

¼ t ground black pepper

½ C low-sugar barbecue sauce

Ingredient Breakdown



> SALMON

Salmon is rich in omega-3s, protein, B vitamins and potassium!



> OATS

Oats are a gluten-free whole grain and a great source of important vitamins, minerals, fiber and antioxidants.



> PARSLEY

A half-cup of chopped parsley has just 11 calories and provides 108% of the Reference Daily Intake for vitamin A and 547% of the RDI for vitamin K.



> HORSERADISH

This spicy root vegetable boasts small amounts of calcium, potassium, magnesium, folate and other micronutrients.

Source: healthline.com.



Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. In a large bowl, flake salmon with a fork and stir in eggs, oats, carrot, shallot, garlic, parsley, lemon, horseradish, salt and pepper. Add salmon mixture to a 9-by-5-inch greased loaf pan and spread out into an even layer. Bake for 30 minutes, spread barbecue sauce over top and bake for an additional 10 minutes, or until salmon loaf is set in the center. Let cool several minutes before unmolding. Makes five servings.

Pasta Bowls

NOODLE THIS!

It often gets hammered in low-carb diets, but here is news that will keep some people happily slurping up a bowl of spaghetti. Research published in *Frontiers in Nutrition* revealed that noodle consumption in both children and adults is associated with better overall diet quality (as measured by the USDA's Healthy Eating Index 2001–2010 scale) and higher intakes of some key nutrients, including folate, magnesium and fiber.

In contrast to what many believe, consistent pasta consumption was not associated with weight gain in male adults and children and, in fact, in adult females was associated with reduced waist circumference. No differences were seen in total daily calories and sodium intake. Of course, you'll get more out of your pasta if it's made with whole grains and not drowned in a creamy sauce. Here, the shaped noodles are a delicious delivery system in place of rice for fiber-rich beans and other nutritional winners.



PHOTO: SANDY TODD WEBSTER

4 oz whole-grain rotini pasta

4 C baby spinach

1 C canned black beans

1 small diced avocado

2/3 C prepared frozen corn kernels

1 diced Roma tomato

1/2 C sliced red onion

1/2 C grated cheddar cheese

1/2 C jarred salsa of choice

Prepare pasta according to package directions in a pot of salted water. Drain well. Divide spinach among serving bowls and top each with an equal amount of pasta, beans, avocado, corn, tomato and red onion. Scatter on cheese and add dollops of salsa. Makes two servings.

Ingredient Breakdown



> AVOCADO

This fabulous fruit contains mono- and polyunsaturated fats that can lower cholesterol and support heart health. They're rich in magnesium, potassium, folate and vitamins, too.



> BLACK BEANS

Their full name? Black turtle beans! While they're native to Mexico, today they're grown mostly in India and Brazil. Packed with protein, black beans provide great value with a meaty texture.



> CORN

Sweet corn is a gluten-free grain and, in its natural form, a whole grain. One medium ear of yellow sweet corn contains about 100 calories.

Source: precisionnutrition.com.

Flax Berry Overnight Oats

THE PERFECT MAKE-AHEAD POWER BREAKFAST

Long before acai bowls and matcha lattes, flax was considered an original superfood. That's because inexpensive and nutty-tasting flaxseed has a top-tier nutritional résumé, including lofty amounts of omega-3 fat, soluble fiber and phytochemical lignans.

These team up to make eating flax good news for your ticker. A review of 62 previous research studies published in *Pharmacological Research* found evidence to suggest that frequent flax consumption can lower LDL cholesterol, total

cholesterol and triglyceride levels—making it a potential heart hero. A separate 2020 review study showed that flax may help lower the type of inflammation that can contribute to health woes like heart disease. To reap all the nutritional benefits that flax has to offer, it's best to consume it in its powder form, since whole flax seeds have a hard shell that resists digestion. That makes this make-ahead oats creation a smart way to kick off a day.

½ C rolled oats

2 T ground flaxseed

¼ t cinnamon

¼ t ginger powder

¾ C milk or unsweetened dairy-free milk

2 T chopped almonds

½ C blueberries

1 t honey or maple syrup



In a bowl or half-pint glass jar, stir together oats, flax, cinnamon and ginger powder. Stir in milk, cover and chill overnight. In the morning, top with nuts, berries, and honey or maple syrup. Makes one serving.

Ingredient Breakdown



> ROLLED OATS

Oats offer lots of potential benefits, including reduced cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Plus, they're very filling and naturally gluten-free.



> FLAXSEED

Flaxseeds have been prized for their health-protective properties for centuries—even Charles the Great ordered his subjects to eat flax seeds for their health.



> BLUEBERRIES

Blueberries are among the most nutrient-dense berries. Pretty impressive, given that they are about 85% water, and an entire cup has only 84 calories.



> ALMONDS

Almonds are native to the Middle East, but the U.S. is now the world's largest producer. Among other benefits, they are among the world's best sources of vitamin E.

Source: healthline.com.

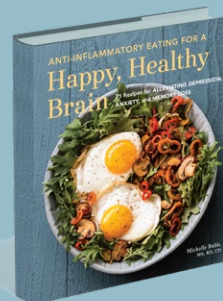
Curried Shrimp Kebabs With Spring Slaw

STICK TO GREAT EATING

This recipe by Michelle Babb, MS, RD, CD, author of *Anti-inflammatory Eating for a Happy, Healthy Brain* (Sasquatch Books 2016), is one of 75 in an evidence-based cookbook that aims to teach readers how to use diet to improve one's state of mind with anti-inflammatory foods. Babb opens the book by explaining the science behind this eating plan and then provides the "how-to" with tasty concoctions ranging from simple to easy gourmet.

Satisfy your taste buds, your microbiome and your mood with this dish, just right for ushering in spring.

"Whenever I make curried shrimp, I have the desire to pair it with coleslaw. I enjoy the texture combination," says Babb. "I love how the broccoli and cabbage add some crunch." If you can't find broccoli slaw, she suggests using just cabbage.



For the Slaw

- 1 (10 oz) bag broccoli slaw or 1 head green cabbage, shredded
- ½ small head purple cabbage, shredded
- 1 small jicama, peeled and shredded
- ¾ C shelled spring peas or frozen petite peas, thawed
- ½ C slivered almonds
- ¼ C walnut oil
- 3 T freshly squeezed lime juice
- 1 T raw honey or agave nectar
- 1 t ground cumin
- ½ t garam masala
- ¼ t sea salt

For the Kebabs

- ½ C extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 T curry powder
- ½ t crushed red-pepper flakes
- ½ t salt
- 1 lb large tail-on shrimp, shelled and deveined
- 4-5 (10-inch) wooden skewers soaked in water for 20 minutes



Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. In a medium bowl, whisk olive oil, garlic, curry powder, red-pepper flakes and salt. Add shrimp and toss until well coated. Marinate for 20-30 minutes.

Meanwhile, make the slaw. In a large bowl, combine broccoli, cabbage, jicama, peas and almonds. In a small bowl, whisk together walnut oil, lime juice, honey, cumin, garam masala and salt. Drizzle dressing over slaw and toss until well coated.

Thread shrimp onto presoaked skewers and arrange on a baking sheet. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until shrimp are opaque throughout.

Place a generous scoop of slaw in the center of each plate, and lay a shrimp skewer across the top. Garnish with lime wedges. Makes four servings.

SOURCE: Recipe and photos reprinted with permission from the author and from Sasquatch Books, Seattle, sasquatchbooks.com.

Spelt Chili

HERE'S A GREAT WAY TO TAP THE VALUE OF LEGUMES AND WHOLE GRAINS

If you want to know which foods deserve prime real estate in your shopping cart, a study in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* offers some guidance. German investigators reviewing how certain food groups influence disease markers found that nuts, legumes and whole grains had the greatest impact on metabolic measures like LDL cholesterol, blood triglycerides and insulin resistance, while sugary drinks per-

formed worst. The study combed through 66 randomized trials with 3,595 subjects, comparing 10 food groups: refined grains, whole grains, nuts, legumes, fruits and vegetables, eggs, dairy, fish, red meat, and sugar-sweetened beverages.

These findings suggest trying out this hearty vegetarian chili, which serves up a dynamic duo of whole grains and legumes via spelt berries and kidney beans.

Fast Facts About Spelt

- Spelt is a type of wheat (and, yes, it contains gluten).
- It's one of the oldest cultivated crops in human history—first used more than 8,000 years ago!
- It's good source of fiber—a cup of cooked spelt contains 7.6 grams—and it also serves up small amounts of calcium, selenium, and vitamins B₁, B₆ and E.
- In addition to being a healthy ingredient in food recipes, spelt is used to brew beer in Bavaria and Belgium.



1 C whole spelt berries

2 t canola oil

1 yellow onion, chopped

½ t salt

1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes

1 large yellow or orange bell pepper, chopped

1 large red bell pepper, chopped

3 garlic cloves, minced

2 T tomato paste

1 T chili powder

1 t dried oregano

1 t cumin powder

1 t coriander powder

1 ½ C low-sodium vegetable broth

1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes

2 (15-ounce) cans kidney beans, rinsed and drained

1 C frozen corn kernels

Place spelt, 3 cups water and a couple pinches of salt in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, covered, until spelt is tender (about 40 minutes). Drain off excess liquid. In a separate large saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and salt; heat 5 minutes. Place sweet potatoes, peppers and garlic in pan;

heat 5 minutes. Add tomato paste, chili powder, oregano, cumin and coriander; heat 1 minute. Place broth, tomatoes and beans in pan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 15 minutes, or until potato is tender. Stir in spelt and corn; heat 5 minutes. Makes six servings.



Sources: healthline.com; organicfacts.net.

Orange-Spinach Smoothie

GIVE THIS TASTY BREAKFAST OPTION A WHIRL

The gravel-voiced sailor man was smart to make spinach his vegetable of choice. This green giant has a wealth of nutritional highlights, including vitamin K, vitamin C and lutein, a potent antioxidant. Higher intakes of lutein have been linked to healthier cholesterol levels (for better heart functioning) and improved eye health, according to *The Journal of Nutrition and JAMA*.

If you want to soak up more lutein from your spinach, consider giving it a ride in the blender. In a study published recently in *Food Chemistry*, Swedish researchers found that heating methods like boiling and frying caused spinach to lose some of its lutein, with losses rising as cooking times and temperatures increased. In contrast, raw spinach retained the most lutein, while liquefied greens (think smoothies and juicing) delivered the biggest antioxidant punch. Interestingly, adding dairy to blitzed spinach enhanced lutein levels even further.

When uncooked spinach is chopped into small pieces, it's believed that more lutein is released from the leaves, and dairy fat increases the solubility of lutein. That makes this verdant smoothie an excellent option for a quick breakfast or postworkout refresher. Serves one.

¾ C milk

½ C baby spinach

2 T hemp seeds (hemp hearts)

1 t honey

1 t lime zest

1 medium orange, peeled

1 C ice cubes

Place all of the ingredients in a blender container in the order listed and blend until smooth. Makes one serving.



Ingredient Breakdown



> SPINACH

What a nutrition powerhouse! In 2 cups of spinach, there are only 14 calories but 1.7 grams of protein, 1.3 g of fiber, vitamins K and A, and magnesium, iron, copper and riboflavin.



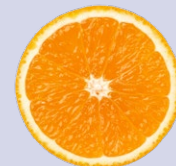
> HEMP SEEDS

Super-nutritious, hemp seeds are from *Cannabis sativa* (same species as marijuana but a different variety). There's only trace amounts of THC, but lots of healthy fats, protein and minerals.



> HONEY

Honey is natural sweetener that can help fight inflammation, prevent bacterial growth and decrease oxidative stress.



> ORANGE

Oranges are a great source of fiber and help support beneficial gut bacteria. And just one 140-gram orange covers 92% of your daily vitamin C needs.

Source: healthline.com.

Mediterranean Bean, Quinoa and Kale Stew

VITAMINS ARE A-O-K!

It appears that eating vitamin K-rich foods like kale and other leafy greens more often is a recipe for longevity. A multiethnic study out of Tufts University found that older adults (ages 54–76) with low vitamin K levels were more likely to die within 13 years compared with those whose vitamin K levels were adequate. Why? Vitamin K is an essential

nutrient that is important for several bodily functions, including maintaining healthy blood vessels. So even if you are part of the younger generation, it's a good idea to get in the habit of eating for lasting health. Why not start with a bowl of this hearty vitamin K-rich stew!

1 T canola oil	2 garlic cloves, minced	4 C vegetable broth
1 yellow onion, chopped	2 T tomato paste	½ C quinoa
½ t salt	2 t dried thyme	1 (14 oz) can cannellini
8 oz chopped crimini mushrooms	½ t red chili flakes	beans, drained and rinsed
2 celery stalks, chopped	¼ t black pepper	5 cups torn kale leaves
2 medium carrots, chopped	1 C white wine	2 T red wine vinegar
	1 (14 oz) can diced tomatoes	1 C parsley



Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and salt; heat 6 minutes or until onion is soft and darkened. Add mushrooms, celery, carrot and garlic to pan; heat 3 minutes. Stir in tomato paste, dried thyme, chili flakes and black pepper; heat 30 seconds. Place wine in pan, raise heat to medium-high and simmer

for 2 minutes. Add broth, tomatoes and quinoa to pan. Return to a boil, lower heat to low and simmer, covered, for 15 minutes or until quinoa is tender. Stir in beans, kale and red vinegar; heat 1 minute. Ladle stew into serving bowls and serve garnished with parsley. Makes six servings.

Ingredient Breakdown



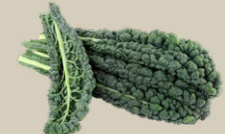
> CANNELLINI BEANS

Also called white kidney beans, cannellinis contain a wealth of B vitamins, as well as iron, potassium, zinc and other essential minerals.



> QUINOA

Gluten-free (and delicious) quinoa is an excellent protein source that contains all 9 essential amino acids plus iron, zinc, potassium, calcium and vitamin E.



> KALE

With just 8 calories in a cup, kale packs a nutritional punch with iron, calcium, vitamins C, K and A, and antioxidants, too.



> PARSLEY

Even the ancient Greeks appreciated parsley's value; winners at sports received a crown of parsley! It's also a great source for vitamins K, C and A.

Source: precisionnutrition.com.

Poached Chicken With Apple Chutney

AT THE CORE OF HEART HEALTH

Perhaps the old saying “An apple a day keeps the doctor away” isn’t so far-fetched—well, at least if you bump it up to two fruits daily.

In a joint randomized controlled study between researchers in Italy and England, 40 participants with mild hypercholesterolemia who consumed two apples daily for 60 days experienced modest improvements in a handful of cardiovascular disease risk factors, including

total and LDL cholesterol levels and microvascular vasodilation. Participants who consumed a calorie-matched beverage instead of the apples saw no improvements.

The dynamic duo of polyphenol antioxidants and soluble fiber pectin in the crispy fall fruit are likely behind these ticker-friendly benefits. That makes this sweet and savory dish a dinner meal your heart will love.



3 medium-sized apples, chopped
1 C chopped dried figs or dried plums
1 shallot, finely chopped
2 t honey
2 t fresh thyme
1 t brown mustard seeds (optional)

½ t cinnamon
¼ t ground cloves
2 t lemon zest
¼ 6 oz chicken breasts, boneless and skinless
½ t salt

Combine apples, figs or plums, shallot, honey, thyme, mustard seeds, cinnamon, cloves, and lemon zest in a medium-sized saucepan. Place over medium heat until apples begin to sizzle, reduce heat to medium-low and cook covered, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes, or until apple has softened considerably. To poach chicken, place breasts and salt in a pot large enough to let them lie flat in one layer, and then add enough water to completely cover the meat by about 1 inch. Bring water to a very slight simmer with just a few bubbles breaking the surface, reduce heat to medium-low, partially cover, and cook for 15 minutes, or until meat is cooked through. Slice chicken breasts and serve topped with apple chutney. Makes four servings.

Ingredient Breakdown



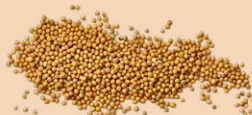
> APPLES

Apples are a great source of fiber and antioxidants. Super-filling but low in calories, they are an excellent choice for those looking to lose weight.



> PLUMS

Low in calories but loaded with vitamins, plums can help reduce the risk of several chronic diseases, including osteoporosis and diabetes.



> MUSTARD SEEDS

Mustard plants—native to the Mediterranean region—are related to nutrient-rich vegetables like broccoli, cabbage and Brussels sprouts. Seeds and leaves are both edible.



> CINNAMON

More than just a delicious spice, cinnamon is loaded with antioxidants and has been linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, among other health benefits.

Source: healthline.com.

Chili-Peach Gazpacho

HEAT THINGS UP!

Talk about flaming-hot health. Using data from over 570,000 people in the U.S., Italy, China and Iran, researchers at the Cleveland Clinic's Heart, Vascular & Thoracic Institute in Cleveland found that people who regularly eat chili peppers may be 26% less likely to die of heart disease and 23% less likely to die of cancer than everyone else.

These results, presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2020,

did not pinpoint how many chili peppers lower the risk or if certain types are more powerful for preventing disease. Nor did they prove that eating chili peppers can directly improve longevity, but it's thought that capsaicin—the compound that gives jalapeños and other peppers their punch—can lower inflammation in the body and even reduce appetite. Those benefits make this fiery peach gazpacho a summer soup that hurts so good.

⅔ cup water

1 lb peaches, pitted and quartered

1 orange bell pepper, seeded and quartered

½ English cucumber, peeled and chopped

2 scallions (green onions), sliced

1 jalapeño pepper, chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

¼ C chopped fresh mint or basil

2 T red wine vinegar

¼ t sea salt

¼ t black pepper

2 T extra-virgin olive oil



Add water, peaches, orange bell pepper, cucumber, scallion, jalapeño, garlic, mint or basil, red wine vinegar, salt, and pepper to a blender or food processor container. Blend together until well combined. With the machine running at low speed, slowly pour in olive oil through the top feed tube. Chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours before serving. Makes four servings.

Ingredient Breakdown



> PEACHES

How to pick the perfect peach? Look for fruit with a creamy gold to yellow undertone that's not too firm or too soft. Firm peaches will ripen within about 2 days at room temperature.



> CUCUMBER

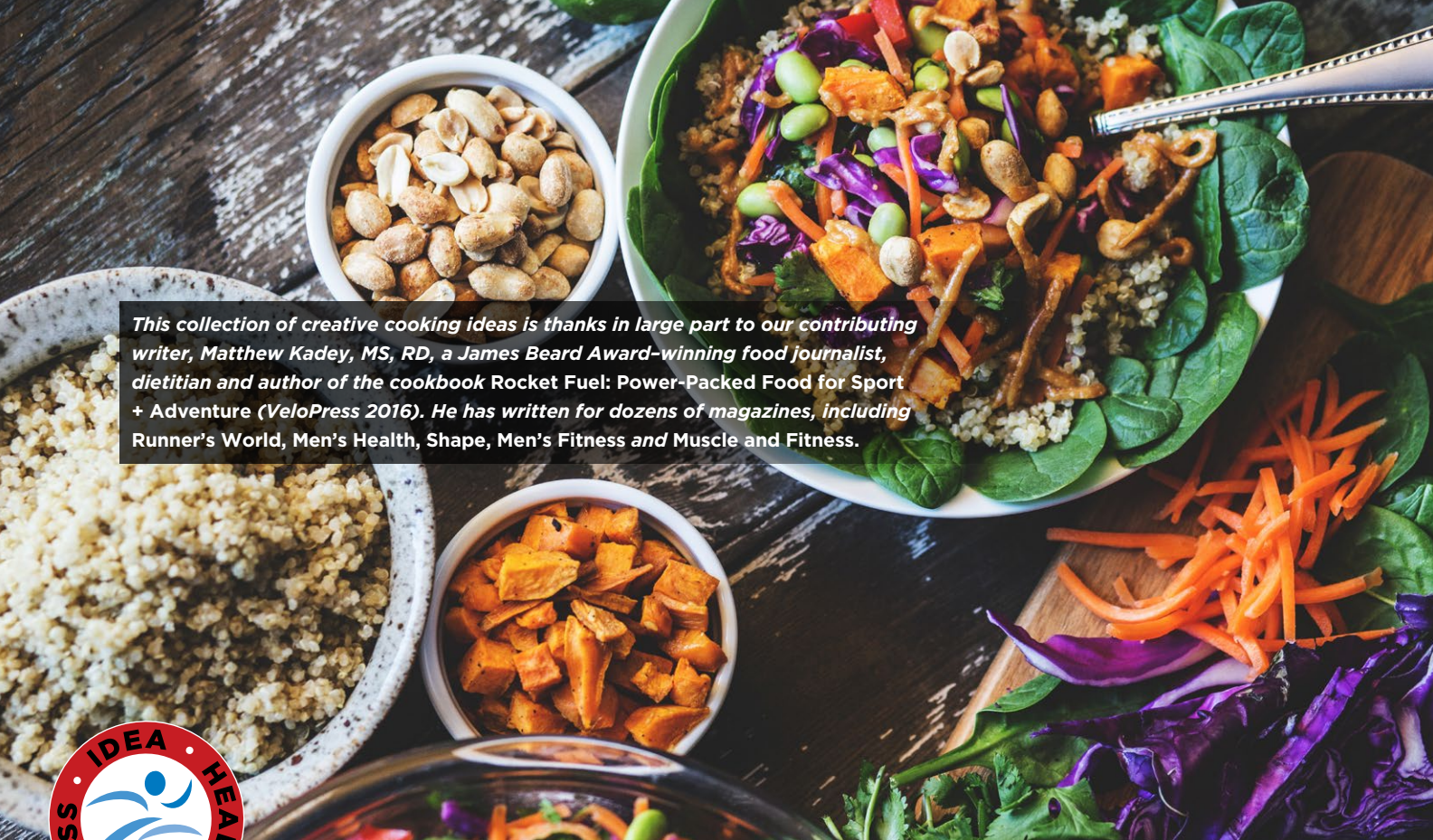
Although about 90% water, cucumbers are a good source of vitamin K, magnesium and potassium. Surprise fact? They're members of the gourd family.



> JALAPEÑO

Here's another hot tip: One jalapeño provides more than a day's worth of vitamin C. To cool things down, remove the seeds before cooking.

Source: precisionnutrition.com.



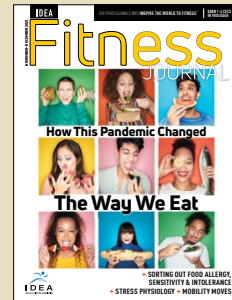
This collection of creative cooking ideas is thanks in large part to our contributing writer, Matthew Kadey, MS, RD, a James Beard Award-winning food journalist, dietitian and author of the cookbook *Rocket Fuel: Power-Packed Food for Sport + Adventure* (VeloPress 2016). He has written for dozens of magazines, including *Runner's World*, *Men's Health*, *Shape*, *Men's Fitness* and *Muscle and Fitness*.



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