

**35 Super-Healthy
Recipes
for
Breakfasts, Lunches, Dinners,
Snacks & Desserts**

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A Brief History of Oats - And How You Should Eat Them

By John K. Williams, Ph.D.

Despite their widespread praise by nutritionists and bodybuilders alike, oats have a humble origin. They were the last of the major cereal grains to be domesticated, around 3,000 years ago in Europe, and apparently originated as weeds that grew within cultivated fields of various other crops.

Part of the reason why people were slow to embrace oats is because they go rancid very quickly, due to the presence of natural fats and a fat dissolving enzyme present in the grain. As a result, they have to be processed immediately after harvesting. The fats in oats are relatively healthy, with a lipid breakdown of 21% saturated, 37% monounsaturated, and 43% polyunsaturated.

Greeks and Romans considered oats to be nothing more than a diseased version of wheat. Oats were a lowly horse food for the Romans, who scoffed at the "oat-eating barbarians", or those pesky Germanic tribes who eventually toppled the West Roman Empire. Come to think of it, the Romans were never able to conquer the Scots. Big oat eaters, those Scots. Oats 2, Romans 0.

Even today, less than 5% of the oats now grown commercially are for human consumption. The chief value of oats remains as a pasturage and hay crop, especially for horses. Thousands of years and several empires later, most people still haven't caught-on.

Oats, What's So Good About Them?

Oats contain more soluble fiber than any other grain. Soluble fiber is the kind that dissolves in water, so the body turns it into a kind of thick, viscous gel, which moves very slowly through your body. One of the benefits is that your stomach stays fuller longer, providing satiety. Soluble fiber also slows the absorption of glucose into the body, which means you're going to avoid those nasty sugar highs and lows. Last but not least, it inhibits the re-absorption of bile into the system, forcing your liver to get its cholesterol fix from your blood. This serves to lower your blood-serum cholesterol. See what the Romans were missing?

Oats also have anti-inflammatory properties, and have been clinically shown to help heal dry, itchy skin. Oats are also highly absorptive, hypoallergenic, and help to soften skin, if you're into that kind of thing. They have the best amino acid balance of all the cereal grains, and thus can be used as water-binding agents in skin care products. Oat grains and straw appear in shampoos, dusting powders, moisturizers, cleansing bars, breast implants, and astronaut suits. OK, maybe those last two are figments of my imagination.

Varieties of Oats

From least to most processed:

Oat groats, or whole oats: These are minimally processed, only by removing the outer hull. They are very nutritious, but need to be cooked and/or soaked for a long period of time so you don't break your teeth on them.

Oat bran: This is the outer casing that is removed from the groats. The bran is particularly high in soluble fiber. Oat bran is very versatile, and can be used with groats or alone, and as an addition to baking recipes, or even raw in shakes.

Steel-cut oats, or Irish oats: These are groats that have been chopped into small pieces. They have a firmer texture than rolled oats, and people in the know often prefer them for hot oatmeal cereals and muesli. A tip on purchasing steel-cut oats: some of the name brand varieties are prohibitively expensive, so search for them in bulk, where you can fill an entire tub of protein powder (empty it first!) for \$5 US.

Rolled oats, or old-fashioned oats: These are oat groats that are steamed and flattened with huge rollers so that they cook quicker, in about 5 to 15 minutes.

Quick oats: These are groats that have been cut into several pieces before being steamed and rolled into thinner flakes, thus reducing the cooking time to 3-5 minutes. While they cook quicker, any oat aficionado will tell you that they lack the hearty texture and nutty flavor of the less-processed varieties.

Instant oats: These are made by chopping groats into tiny pieces, precooking them, drying them, then smashing them with a big roller. They need only be mixed with a hot liquid. They usually have flavorings and salt added. All of this processing removes all traces of the original texture and rich flavor of the groats.

Oat flour: Oat flour is made from groats that have been ground into a powder, and contains no gluten so it does not rise like wheat flour. It can also be made at home by grinding rolled oats into a powder in a blender.

Recipes

Enough rambling-on about fallen empires and baby-soft skin, it's time for the lowdown on how to cook these little miracle grains. I'm always baffled when I hear people say how much they despise oats. Maybe they're not so good if you use the quick oats, plain, cooked in the microwave, with dishwater, while being whipped by giant fish heads. I've never met a person who wasn't impressed with the taste of my blueberry oatmeal. And I've introduced it to a lot of people. Roommates, parents, friends, friends of friends, girlfriends, roommate's girlfriends, family and friends of girlfriends; nary an unsatisfied consumer, yet.

Protein & Carb Meals

Blueberry Oatmeal

Here it is, the breakfast that fulfills your every nutritional want and desire. A little warning: once you go steel-cut, there's no going back. This recipe makes a large bowl of oatmeal, which I usually eat during Massive Eating phases. You can reduce the ingredients if you want fewer carbs and overall k/cals during dieting phases.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup steel-cut oats
1/3 cup oat bran
1/2 cup frozen blueberries
1.5 scoops chocolate whey protein powder
Water, as directed
1/4 teaspoon salt
Dash of cinnamon (big dash)
Dash of Splenda (big dash)

Instructions:

Add steel cut oats into 3 to 4 cups of water at night before you go to bed. Bring to a boil, simmer a couple of minutes, then remove from heat, cover the pot, and hit the hay. The longer you simmer and/or the more water you use, the larger the bowl of oatmeal, as the oats tend to soak up water like a sponge.

In the AM, bring the oats to a simmer once again on medium-low heat, adding the salt, cinnamon, and raw oat bran. Continue stirring and simmering for 5 minutes, or until you get the desired thickness (you may have to simmer for longer to boil-off some of the water). Turn off the heat, then add the frozen blueberries and some Splenda.

Stir until the blueberries are melted, thus cooling the oatmeal and allowing the protein powder to be added. The consistency should be fairly thick; especially after the oat bran has been added and cooked a bit. You might need to add some water in the AM, depending on how much was boiled-off the night before.

Macronutrient Profile:

k/cal: 699
Fat (g): 13 (2.5s, 4.7m, 4.6p)
Carbs: 111 (20 fiber)
Protein: 54

Strawberry-Banana Oatmeal

Given that you will probably never tire of the blueberry oatmeal, you might be tempted to neglect this recipe. But give it a try; variety is good!

Ingredients:

1/2 cup steel-cut oats
1/3 cup oat bran
3/4 cup frozen or fresh strawberries
1 medium banana, sliced
1.5 scoops strawberry or vanilla whey protein powder
Water, as directed
1/4 teaspoon salt
Dash of cinnamon (big dash)

Instructions:

In the evening, prepare the oats in the same manner as the Blueberry Oatmeal recipe. Again in the morning, bring the oats to a simmer and add the banana, salt, cinnamon, and oat bran. Keep stirring and simmer until you have the desired consistency (10 minutes or so), remove from heat, and stir-in the strawberries and protein powder.

Macronutrient Profile:

k/cal: 696
Fat (g): 11 (2.3s, 3.9m, 3.7p)
Carbs: 116 (19 fiber)
Protein: 50

Baked Apple-Cinnamon Oatmeal

If you're in the mood for a hearty meal to feed that insatiable P+C demon inside of you, this one might just appease the beast.

Ingredients:

3 cups old fashioned oats
1 cup oat bran
1 large apple, chopped (I prefer Macintosh)
4 scoops vanilla or strawberry protein powder
1 tsp salt
2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 cup pitted dates, chopped
4 cups water
1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions:

Combine dry ingredients in a bowl and mix well. In a separate container combine water and vanilla. Combine all ingredients, stirring gently. Pour into 8" x 8" baking dish, coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350 degrees F for 35 minutes, or until the liquid has been absorbed and the oatmeal is tender. Over baking will result in dry oatmeal.

If you really want to make it special, put it in a bowl and pour a little milk over it. The two go hand in hand.

Makes 4 servings

Macronutrient Profile, per serving:

k/cal: 520
Fat (g): 9 (2s, 3m, 4p)
Carbs: 85 (15 fiber)
Protein: 35

Apple Cobbler Protein Bars

Ingredients:

1 cup oat flour
1 cup whole wheat flour
6 scoops strawberry or vanilla whey protein powder
2/3 cup nonfat plain yogurt
1 jumbo egg white
1 cup oat bran
1 cup granulated Splenda
1 cup applesauce, unsweetened
2 tbsp honey
1 large apple, chopped
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 tsp cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt
1 tbsp olive oil

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350-degrees F.

Combine these in a large bowl: oat flour, whole wheat flour, salt, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, and most of the Splenda, leaving a couple of tablespoons for later. Stir these dry ingredients together.

Put the yogurt, egg white, vanilla extract, and olive oil in a blender, and turn it on low. Add the protein powder 1 scoop at a time, until thoroughly blended. Pour this mixture into the bowl, and stir together until it has the consistency of dough.

Coat a 8X12 inch baking pan with cooking spray, then pour the mixture into the pan, flattening it up to the edges.

Next, mix the applesauce, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, chopped apple, and honey together, and pour over the top of the dough mixture in the pan, spreading evenly.

Sprinkle the oat bran over the top, until thoroughly and evenly covered, then sprinkle the remaining Splenda over the top.

Bake for 15 minutes at 350-degrees F, and then switch to broil for 3-4 minutes, just until top is slightly browned. Be careful not to overcook. Makes 12 bars.

Macronutrient Profile (each serving)

K/cal: 183

Fat: 3 g (1s, 1m, 1p)

Carbs: 27g (4 fiber)

Protein: 16 g

Cranberry Oat Brownies

These are simple, quick, and delicious, combining nutritious ingredients that all compliment one another.

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups rolled oats, ground into a powder in a food processor
1 cup whole wheat flour
5 scoops chocolate protein powder
1 cup granulated Splenda
1/3 cup dried cranberries
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp salt
2/3 cup nonfat plain yogurt
1/3 cup applesauce
2 tbsp honey
1 tbsp olive oil

Combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl, mixing briefly. Add the yogurt, applesauce, and oil to a food processor, and mix on low.

Add the protein powder into this mixture, while blending, one scoop at a time, until thoroughly blended.

Pour this mixture into the dry ingredients, add the honey, and stir together until everything is mixed well.

Pour the dough into an 8X12 inch cooking dish, and bake at 350-degrees F for 10-12 minutes (don't cook it too long or it will lose it's chewy texture and moisture).

Makes 8 brownies.

Macronutrient Profile, per brownie:

k/cal: 253

Fat (g): 4 (0.8s, 2.2m, 0.9p)

Carbs: 37 (4 fiber)

Protein: 18

Cranberry-Orange Whole Grain Loaf

If you want to surprise your family with a tasty side dish at Thanksgiving, throw one of these on the table. Or make a loaf any other time of the year to fulfill those macronutrient requirements.

Ingredients:

1.5 cups rolled oats
1 cup whole wheat flour
½ cup nonfat dry milk powder
4 scoops strawberry or vanilla whey protein powder (for the love of God, don't use chocolate, ech!)
0.5 cups water
Juice from 1 orange
Grated peel from 1 orange (don't go overboard on the peel, or it gets bitter)
½ cup applesauce
½ tbsp canola oil
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tbsp baking powder
Dash of ground nutmeg (small dash)
½ tsp salt
¾ cup dried cranberries
2 teaspoons whole flax seeds*
½ cup granulated Splenda

Instructions:

Combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl, and mix with a large wooden spoon.

Add the water, applesauce, oil, vanilla, and mix thoroughly. Using a fine grater, shave the outer skin from an orange, until obtaining about 2 tablespoons of grated peel. Add the grated peel, and squeeze the orange into the mix, removing any seeds.

Divide the mixture into two loaf pans, coated with cooking spray. Cook for 20-25 minutes at 350 degrees.

*Whole flax seeds are not digested, unless you spend 20 minutes chewing every bite. They are added to this recipe more for texture, so don't worry about the chewing thing. For the nutritional information, half of the given seeds were included in the macronutrient profile, which is based on the assumption that half of the seeds will pass straight through you.

Macronutrient Profile, per 1/3 loaf:

k/cal: 327
Fat (g): 5 (1s, 2m, 2p)
Carbs: 53 (7 fiber)
Protein: 22

Ginger Apricot Scones

Well, well...aren't we fancy with our homemade scones? Don't worry, if the guys in the gym ask you what you're eating, you can just call them "protein pucks".

1 cup whole-wheat flour, plus ½ cup of wheat flour, set aside
1 cup rolled oats
1 cup oat flour
6 scoops strawberry whey protein powder
¾ cup dried apricots, chopped
½ cup applesauce
2-inch cube of fresh ginger root, peeled and chopped
¼ cup granulated Splenda
1 ¼ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
¼ cup nonfat dry milk powder
½ cup water
½ tbsp canola or olive oil

Instructions:

Combine the dry ingredients in a large bowl (except the ½ cup whole wheat flour). To make the oat flour, process 1 cup of rolled oats in a blender on high, until transformed into a fine powder.

Add the applesauce and water, and mix until a soft dough is formed. Spoon-out 1/3 of the dough and place on a floured surface. Sprinkle flour over the top of the pile, and flatten into a 3/4 –inch thick circular patty. Cut the circle into four wedges (twice crosswise). Place each wedge on a cookie sheet coated with cooking spray. Repeat for the remaining 3rds of the dough.

Cook for 10-12 minutes at 350 degrees F.

Makes 12 scones

Macronutrient Profile, per scone:

k/cal: 189
Fat (g): 3 (0.5s, 1.5m, 1p)
Carbs: 27 (4 fiber)
Protein: 14

Savory Oatmeal Recipes

All right, there are enough recipes above to satisfy the sweet tooth of your average Krispy Kreme junkie. But don't be fooled into thinking that oats are synonymous with the adjectives "fruity" or "sugary". The versatility of oats is endless, and the following savory recipes will put to rest any misperceptions of some schmaltzy sucrose addict feverishly devouring a tray of oat brownies. Here are some recipes that hark back to the time of the "oat-eating barbarians".

Shakshuka

You won't find many Levantines eating a sugary bowl of cereal for breakfast. Shakshuka, a seasoned mixture of tomatoes and eggs, is a common breakfast in the Eastern Mediterranean. Here is a version with the added goodness of oats.

Ingredients:

1/3 cup steel-cut oats
2 large tomatoes, chopped
2 tbsp tomato paste
1 medium onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, chopped
1 large egg, whole
3/4 cup raw egg whites
salt and pepper, to taste

Instructions:

Bring the oats, tomatoes, and tomato paste to a boil in 2 cups of water. Cover and reduce heat to a simmer for 25 minutes.

Sauté the onion and garlic in a skillet coated with cooking spray and add these to the pot when the oats have finished cooking. The consistency should be thick, but a little soupy. More water may need to be added at this point to achieve the desired consistency.

Spread the whole egg and egg whites over the surface, stirring gently to break the yolk. Cover and simmer for an additional 3-4 minutes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and serve it up.

Macronutrient Profile:

k/cal: 516
Fat (g): 10 (2.3s, 3.2m, 2.5p)
Carbs: 71 (13 fiber)
Protein: 40

Oat-Chicken Salad

This recipe is light and refreshing, for those hot August days when a steaming bowl of oats is the last thing on your mind.

Ingredients:

Chicken breast, 6 oz cooked
½ cup steel-cut oats
1 large tomato, chopped
1 large cucumber, chopped
2 scallions, diced
1/3 cup fresh mint and/or parsley, chopped
Juice from 1 fresh lemon
Dash of salt
2 large romaine leaves

Instructions:

I usually grill a few pounds of chicken breasts and store them in Ziploc bags in the fridge for a quick protein fix. Slice one of these chicken breasts and put aside for later.

Place the oats in a pot and cover with boiling water. Allow to sit for 20 minutes, then drain. When well drained and slightly cooled, mix the oats with the tomato, cucumber, scallions, mint/parsley, lemon juice and salt. Cover and refrigerate until cool.

Serve over the romaine leaves and top with the sliced chicken breast.

Macronutrient Profile:

k/cal: 700
Fat (g): 13 (2.9s, 3.9m, 3.7p)
Carbs: 77 (15 fiber)
Protein: 72

Stuffed Bell Peppers

Here is a hearty recipe that combines the goodness of oats, good quality protein, and plenty of antioxidants from the veggies and spices.

Ingredients:

12 oz ground turkey breast (98% lean)
1 cup whole groats, or steel-cut oats
1 medium onion, chopped
2 large tomatoes, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
4 whole green bell peppers
1 tsp ground cumin
1 dash dried red chili pepper
Salt and pepper, to taste
3 cups chicken broth, from bouillon

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 325-degrees F.

Sauté the oats and garlic in a nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray on medium high heat for about 5 minutes, until they start to brown. Begin adding the chicken broth to the skillet ½ cup at a time, until 2 cups of broth have been absorbed. Set the oats aside in a large bowl.

In the same skillet, stir-fry the ground turkey with the onions until the turkey is cooked throughout, and then add the chopped tomatoes, cumin, ground chili pepper, and salt/pepper. Add this turkey mixture to the oats, and stir together.

Cut the top off each bell pepper and scoop out the seeds and membrane, being careful not to break the peppers. Fill each pepper with the ground turkey-oat mixture and place in a baking dish. Add the remaining 1 cup of chicken broth to the baking dish, and cover first with plastic wrap and then tin foil (the plastic wrap will not allow the tin foil to stick to the peppers). Bake the stuffed chili peppers for 30 minutes at 325 degrees.

Makes 2 servings.

Macronutrient Profile, per serving:

k/cal: 709
Fat (g): 11 (2.3s, 2.9m, 3.8p)
Carbs: 95 (18 fiber)
Protein: 61

Tex-Mex Chicken-Vegetable-Grain Medley

If you're short on time and need a quick fix, this one's easy to prepare and is tasty to boot. If you really want to decrease your cooking time, you can make the oats in bulk at the beginning of the week.

Ingredients:

Chicken breast, grilled, 6 oz. cooked weight, cubed
Whole groats or steel-cut oats, ½ cup dry
Frozen vegetable mix (corn, peas, and carrots), ½ cup
1 stalk celery, chopped
Red bell pepper, ½ medium, chopped
2 tbsp barbecue sauce

Instructions:

Boil the oats in 2 cups of water for 30 minutes, or until most of the water is absorbed. When the oats are cooked, it's very simple: just stir all of the ingredients together in a pot on medium-low heat, until everything is warm. It can also be nuked.

Macronutrient Profile:

k/cal: 770
Fat (g): 13 (2.3s, 4m, 3.5p)
Carbs: 91 (14 fiber)
Protein: 71

These recipes should provide plenty of opportunities to turn those oats into something much more than a mushy, tasteless breakfast. Now it's time to go out and buy enough of these grains to fill all of the empty protein powder tubs that litter your house. Bon appetite!

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All recipes by Dr. John K. Williams, co-author along with John Berardi Ph.D., of the [Gourmet Nutrition cookbook](#).

John Williams is an archaeologist by training but his free time is occupied with eating well, training hard, and learning more about fitness and nutrition. John can be contacted at johnkew@yahoo.com.

All these recipes follow the principles outlined in the [Precision Nutrition](#) program developed by John Berardi and his team.

Falafel

It turns out that some of the dry falafel mixes out there are very healthy, as long as you don't deep-fry the stuff. Look for a mix with whole-wheat flour and lots of fiber.

Ingredients:

- * 1.5 servings of falafel mix (about 0.65 cups dry)
- * 1/2 whole wheat pita
- * 4 oz grilled chicken breast
- * 1/2 medium cucumber, chopped
- * 1 small tomato, chopped
- * 1/3 cup plain nonfat yogurt

Instructions:

1. Soak the falafel mix in water as directed on the box, and form a few 1" balls from the dough. Fry in a non-stick pan without oil, using a bit of Pam cooking spray if needed. I usually flatten the falafel balls a little in the pan and flip them repeatedly. It also helps to lower the heat and put a lid on the pan to cook them thoroughly.
2. Cut the chicken in cubes, adding some salt and pepper when grilling or reheating.
3. Chop the cucumber and tomato in small pieces and mix together with the yogurt, adding a dash of salt, and some fresh parsley if you have any.
4. Open the half pita, throw-in the cooked falafel and chicken, and put a layer of the yogurt sauce over it, saving the remainder for dipping.

Macronutrient Profile:

K/cal.: 614
Fat: 9 g (2s, 4m, 2p)
Carbs: 79 g (17 fiber)
Protein: 69 g

Dal Masala

Here is a recipe that I adapted from a meal that a college roommate from Bombay taught me to make. He was a strict vegetarian, and he'd always give me a look of resigned disapproval when I slipped some bird onto my plate with a sheepish grin.

Ingredients:

- * 1 cup cooked (boiled & drained) yellow split peas (you can substitute canned green peas if you're desperate)
- * 6 oz grilled chicken breast, cubed
- * 1 medium onion, chopped
- * 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- * 1/2 cup nonfat plain yogurt
- * 1/2 whole-wheat tortilla

Spices:

- * 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- * 1/2 inch cube fresh ginger root, finely chopped
- * Masala spice powder, 1-2 tablespoons
- * Salt, to taste

Instructions:

1. Stir fry the onions, garlic, and ginger in a nonstick skillet with Pam over medium heat for about 5 minutes, until onions start to brown. Add chopped tomatoes and about 1/2-1 cup of water to mixture (or chicken stock), add masala powder and salt to taste
2. Bring to a boil; add the chicken, then stir-in the yogurt 1 tablespoon at a time.
3. Eat with a heated wheat tortilla, which tastes a lot like naan when you heat it over the flame of a gas stove.

Macronutrient Profile:

K/cal: 670
Fat: 9 g (3 s, 3 m, 3 p)
Carbs: 70 g Fiber: 20 g
Protein: 80 g

Baked Yam with Turkey Meatball Marinara

Necessity is the mother of invention, and this recipe was created when I, as a broke college student, spent all of my money on 6 pounds of ground turkey breast during a sale, only to find out that it tastes like an old tire when grilled like a normal burger. But mix it with a few other ingredients and it's magic.

Ingredients:

- * 1 lb. ground turkey breast (97-98% lean)
- * 3 medium tomatoes
- * 2 medium yellow or white onions
- * 8 cloves garlic
- * 1 large green pepper
- * 1 large egg white
- * 2 medium yams
- * spices (below)

Instructions:

1. Poke some holes in the yams with a fork, wrap them in foil, and bake for an hour at 400 degrees. While they're baking, make the marinara sauce: chop the tomatoes and place them in a pan over medium-low heat. Mix in 4 cloves chopped garlic & 1 chopped onion, and sliced green pepper. Stew with a lid after stirring-in a dash of salt, some oregano & basil. Keep stirring the stuff as you cook the meatballs.

2. To make the meatballs, mix these together in a large bowl: ground turkey, 4 chopped garlic cloves, 1 chopped onion, raw egg white, and a dash of salt and pepper (the raw egg white holds them together when they cook). Form into 2-inch meatballs and place on a cookie sheet, throw these in the oven with the yam for 15-20 minutes (also @ 400 degrees). They're done when you can poke them with a toothpick and the juice that comes out is clear, rather than cloudy.

3. Cut the baked yams down the center and mash the interior with a fork. Stuff them with the meatballs, then pour the marinara sauce over them (it will thicken when it cools a bit), and then top with grated nonfat Parmesan cheese. Makes 2 servings.

Macronutrient Profile (each serving):

- * K/cal: 595
- * Fat: 6 g (2s, 1.5m, 2.5p)
- * Carbs: 79 g (13 g fiber)
- * Protein: 57 g

Moroccan Chicken

Bust-out the fez, it's time for a little taste of Marrakesh.

Ingredients:

- * 12 oz. grilled chicken breast, cubed
- * 1/2 cup whole wheat couscous, dry
- * 1 cup chicken broth, from bouillon
- * Sun-dried tomatoes, about 20 pieces, chopped
- * 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- * 1 medium onion, chopped
- * 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- * 1 can green peas, drained
- * 4 tablespoons nonfat plain yogurt
- * Spices, below

Instructions:

Fry the garlic and onions in a nonstick pan (large enough to hold all the ingredients listed above) with cooking spray for a couple of minutes until they start to brown, then add the chopped tomatoes. Stir until they become fluid, and then add the broth. Bring to a boil and add the following spices: 1 bay leaf (whole), 4 whole cardamon pods, dash of cinnamon, dash of tumeric, dash of chili powder, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon ground coriander. Slowly stir-in the yogurt, one tablespoon at a time. Add the chicken, sun-dried tomatoes, and peas. Then stir-in the dry couscous, cover, reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from heat, fluff with a fork, cover it again and let it sit for a few minutes before serving.

Makes 2 servings.

Macronutrient Profile (each serving):

- * K/cal: 670
- * Fat: 9 g (3 s, 3m, 3p)
- * Carbs: 73 g (12 fiber)
- * Protein: 73 g

A Note About Spices

It's amazing how picking-up a few spices, other than salt and pepper, can really make a huge difference in everyday cooking. A dash here, a pinch there, and suddenly you've got some gourmet muscle food. Make a trip to the spice section of a larger specialty market (whole foods, central market, etc.), or better yet, a Middle Eastern/Mediterranean food market. Pick up these spices (they'll be useful for spicing up all kinds of food):

(Fill a little baggie with each):

- * Ground cinnamon
- * Ground tumeric
- * Ground celery seed
- * Whole green cardamon pods
- * Whole bay leaves
- * Ground cumin
- * Whole black mustard seeds
- * Ground red chili pepper
- * Ground coriander

These spices are super-cheap, and they make your food taste great. Plus, they are full of anti-oxidants.

Also, pick-up some whole garlic and ginger root. You can store the ginger root in the freezer indefinitely.

All recipes by Dr. John K. Williams, co-author along with John Berardi Ph.D., of the [Gourmet Nutrition cookbook](#).

John Williams is an archaeologist by training but his free time is occupied with eating well, training hard, and learning more about fitness and nutrition. John can be contacted at johnkew@yahoo.com.

All these recipes follow the principles outlined in the [Precision Nutrition](#) program developed by John Berardi and his team.

Protein & Carb Desserts, Snacks and On-The-Go Meals

By John K. Williams, Ph.D.

While sit-down meals are great, a lot of us find ourselves in work settings where grabbing a pre-made bar might be the most convenient option. The following recipes are portable and quick. These snacks would be considered Protein + Carb snacks.

A few notes about some of the dessert ingredients:

Flax meal is simply ground flax seeds. Flax seeds are cheap as sin in bulk, and you can grind them at home with a hand-held coffee grinder. I usually grind them just before their used. If you want to make the meal in bulk, just be sure to store it in an airtight container in the fridge to preserve its freshness.

Splenda is used as a low-calorie sweetener in many of these recipes, as I prefer its taste to other artificial sweeteners, but others can be used according to your preference. Splenda is not entirely carb-free, since they use a bit of maltodextrin to give it texture. There are 24 carbs in 1 cup of granulated Splenda. This was calculated into the nutritional information for the relevant recipes.

Bon appetit!

Granola Bars

These bars provide a nice snack, and they're good for that second post-workout meal after your shake.

Ingredients:

- * 2 cups raw oat bran
- * 2 cups rolled oats
- * 1 cup whole wheat flour
- * 1 cup egg whites
- * 1 cup nonfat milk
- * 2 cups chocolate whey protein powder
- * 1/2 cup granulated Splenda
- * 5-6 scoops maltodextrin (180 grams)
- * 1/2 tsp salt
- * 1 tsp cinnamon
- * 1 tsp vanilla extract
- * 2 tablespoons oil (canola or olive)

Instructions:

Mix it all together in a big bowl, then spread it out on a large nonstick cooking tray. Add some cooking spray, or wipe a little olive oil on the pan with a paper towel. Bake for 25-30 minutes @ 350 degrees.

Cut into 10 pieces.

Macronutrient Profile (each bar):

- * K/cal: 344
- * Fat: 5 g (1s, 2.5m, 1.5p)
- * Carbs: 54 g (Fiber: 7 g)
- * Protein: 28 g

Rice Pudding

Here's a tasty little treat that is also well suited for that second jolt of fast-acting carbs and protein after your PWO shake. Or you can split it up for a couple of desserts following P+C meals. It's a great choice to follow the Dal Masala recipe listed above.

Ingredients:

* 1 cup cooked basmati rice. The quality, fragrance, and taste of basmati are far superior to any other rice I've ever had. Sure the GI is higher than brown rice, but in this case the taste just doesn't compare. That's why I like to eat it as one of the post workout meals. Prepare the basmati rice in bulk by adding a cup of rinsed rice to 1.75 cups boiling water, cover and simmer on low heat for 15 minutes, remove from heat and fluff with a fork.

* 2 cups skim milk

* 2 scoops vanilla protein powder (try to find a brand that doesn't taste like powdered chicken feet, and depending on the brand, you might add some Splenda to get the desired sweetness).

* 2 tablespoons sugar-free instant Jell-O vanilla pudding

Instructions:

On medium-low heat, simmer the cooked rice in milk for 20 minutes or so, until rice bulks-up, cover and cool for a few minutes, then add the protein powder (and Splenda if necessary), and a dash of salt, stir, cover and put in fridge until it cools. Add Jell-O mix to cooled mixture, whip, and you're all set.

Macronutrient Profile:

* K/cal: 478

* Fat: 4 g (2s, 1m, 1p)

* Carbs: 63g (2 fiber)

* Protein: 47 g

Blueberry Bran Muffins

These little treats are made from low-GI carbs, so you don't have to worry about eating one or two after a P+C meal. They also have a bit of flax meal to add moisture, and just a couple of polyunsats. I've been eating these for a while and loving them, so recently I gave them the final test by taking a batch to a dinner party, complete with professors and their wives. Success! They were reduced to crumbs, followed with compliments about their taste, rather than their ingredients.

Ingredients:

- * 1 cup oat bran
- * 1/2 cup flax meal
- * 4 scoops protein powder, flavor of your choice (I like chocolate with this recipe).
- * 2/3 cup frozen blueberries
- * 1 cup granulated Splenda
- * 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- * 1/4 teaspoon salt
- * 1 teaspoon baking powder
- * 3 jumbo egg whites
- * 1 teaspoon maple extract
- * 2/3 cup water

Instructions:

Mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl, then add the egg whites, extract, and water. Stir until mixed well. Scoop into a muffin pan coated with cooking spray. Bake at 350-degrees for 25 minutes.

Makes 6 large muffins.

Macronutrient Profile (each muffin):

- * K/cal: 176
- * Fat: 4 g (1s, 1m, 2p)
- * Carbs: 20g (4 fiber)
- * Protein: 21 g

Blueberry Cheesecake

Yes, you read this correctly...blueberry cheesecake! Just be careful with these things, as it is nearly impossible to put the cheesecake down after you've taken one bite. From my experience, and the stories of my friends who have made them, it's almost impossible to keep an entire cheesecake around for longer than one day.

Ingredients:

* Crust:

- o 1 cup graham cracker crumbs
- o ¼ cup ground flax seeds
- o ¼ cup raw oat bran
- o 1 oz fat-free cream cheese, warmed in microwave
- o 1/3 cup water

* Cheesecake:

- o 2 cups low fat cottage cheese
- o ½ package (52 g) powdered Jell-O instant pudding, cheesecake flavor
- o 3 oz. fat-free cream cheese
- o 3 scoops strawberry whey protein powder*
- o 1 cup frozen blueberries and 4 tablespoons granulated Splenda (*see option 2 below before adding these at this stage)

Instructions:

To make the crust, mix crust ingredients in a large bowl. Stir this mixture until it is all the same consistency, then press into a 9-inch pie pan sprayed with Pam, stretching the crust up the sides of the pan. For the rest of the cake, put the other ingredients in a blender. Blend on high until smooth and creamy. You might have to blend it in smaller portions, depending on the power of your blender, but resist the temptation to add water, as this makes the cake soupy. Also, more Jell-O mix can be added for more desirable consistency. Pour the blender mixture into the crusted pan, and refrigerate for 1 hour.

*Blueberry option 2: to make a 'fancier' cheesecake, thaw the blueberries, then stir the Splenda in with them, and use this as a topping for the cheesecake.

Makes 6 slices.

Macronutrient Profile (each slice):

- * 258 k/cal
- * Fat: 5 g (2s, 1m, 2p)
- * Carbs: 30 g (2 fiber)
- * Protein: 25 g

Protein & Fat Meals

By John K. Williams, Ph.D.

Polyunsaturated Beef Stew

The ingredients and nutritional info below are for one serving, so quadruple the ingredients when you cook it and put the leftovers in the fridge for later.

Ingredients:

- * 6 oz sirloin steak, cut into 1-inch cubes
- * 5 baby carrots, halved
- * 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- * 1 large celery stalk, chopped
- * 1 cup beef broth (from can or bouillon cubes)
- * 1 tablespoon flaxseed oil

Instructions:

1. Brown the beef cubes in a nonstick skillet sprayed with Pam, just until the outside of the pieces are slightly cooked (inside still raw).
2. Put beef cubes in a larger pot with the broth, onions, celery and carrots.
3. Cover and boil over low heat for 30 min to 1 hour.
4. Stir in the flaxseed oil just before you eat it.

This is one of the only dishes I've made that flaxseed oil doesn't ruin the taste of it when you mix it in.

Macronutrient Profile:

- * K/cal: 450
- * Fat: 27 g (5s, 8m, 12p)
- * Carbs: 10 g (2 fiber)
- * Protein: 40 g

Turkey Kebabs With Spicy Beans

Here's a recipe that you might use to impress someone special, or just to take a much needed break from the grilled meat, oil shot syndrome.

Ingredients:

Turkey Kebabs

- * 1 lb. ground turkey, 7% fat
- * 2 whole eggs
- * 2 tablespoons olive oil
- * 3/4 teaspoon ground celery seed
- * 1/2 teaspoon tumeric
- * 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- * 1/2 teaspoon coriander
- * couple dashes ground red chili
- * 1 teaspoon black pepper
- * 1 teaspoon salt
- * 1" cube fresh ginger, finely chopped
- * 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

Spicy Beans (side dish)

- * 1 lb fresh green beans, cut into 1" links
- * 4 teaspoons black mustard seeds
- * 1/2 teaspoon red pepper
- * 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- * 1 teaspoon salt
- * 3 tablespoons olive oil

Instructions:

Turkey Kebabs

1. Mix all of this together in a big bowl, then form into 2" balls and put on a baking sheet.
2. Sprinkle top of meatballs with black mustard seeds, then bake at 400-degrees for 15-20 minutes.

Spicy Beans:

3. Boil the beans in a big pot for 5 minutes, then drain and rinse in cold water.
4. Spray a nonstick pan with cooking spray and add garlic and mustard seeds.
5. Fry until seeds start popping, and then add the beans.
6. Stir-fry for 10 minutes or so, remove from heat, then stir-in the olive oil and the rest of the spices.

Macronutrient Profile for 1/2 of the turkey kebabs and 1/3 of the beans.

- * K/cal: 677
- * Fat: 48 g (9s, 30m, 7p)
- * Carbs: 11 g (4 fiber)
- * Protein: 55 g

Mediterranean Salad

Here's a good quick fix for filling-in one of the P+F vacancies, or for serving as an appetizer with one of the other main dishes.

Ingredients:

- * 6 oz extra lean ground beef
- * 1 oz pecans
- * 8 giant pitted olives
- * Generous amount of romaine lettuce
- * 1 tablespoon olive oil
- * 1 oz feta cheese, crumbled

Instructions:

1. Fry the ground beef in a nonstick skillet, breaking into small chunks with spatula.
2. Remove from heat and stir-in pitted olives and pecans.
3. Put this mixture over a bed of lettuce, drizzled with olive oil, and sprinkle with feta cheese.

Macronutrient Profile:

- * K/cal: 703
- * Fat: 55 g (12s, 32m, 9p)
- * Carbs: 6 g (4 fiber)
- * Protein: 50 g

Asian Chicken Curry

Here's a real bastard-child recipe that mixes Asian and Indian elements, as well as some good old natty PB.

Ingredients:

- * 12 oz. Grilled chicken breast, sliced
- * 1 green bell pepper, sliced
- * 6 scallions, chopped
- * 6 white mushrooms, sliced (replace with shitake if you've got them)
- * 2 cups chicken broth, from bouillon
- * 4 tablespoons natural peanut butter
- * 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- * 1-inch cube of ginger, finely chopped
- * Spices, below

Instructions:

1. Stir-fry the garlic and ginger in a nonstick pan with cooking spray for a couple of minutes, add the veggies and continue stirring for a few more minutes, then add the chicken and broth.
2. Bring to a boil, then stir-in a dash of tumeric (not too much), a teaspoon of ground celery seed, as much chili powder as you dare, a teaspoon of coriander, a dash of cumin, and salt to taste.
3. Stir-in the peanut butter slowly, then serve it up.

Makes 2 servings.

Macronutrient Profile (each serving):

- * K/cal: 525
- * Fat: 23 g (5s, 12m, 5p)
- * Carbs: 14 g (5 fiber)
- * Protein: 66 g

Beef Curry

Ingredients:

- * 1 lb. Beef Sirloin, grilled to medium-rare and cubed
- * 1 small-medium eggplant, cubed
- * 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- * ½ medium onion, chopped
- * 1 cup broth (beef or chicken bouillon)
- * 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- * 1-inch cube of ginger root, finely chopped
- * 4 tablespoons plain yogurt, whole
- * 2 tablespoons olive oil
- * Spices, below

Instructions:

1. Fry the onions, garlic, and ginger in a nonstick pan with cooking spray until brown, then add mushrooms and eggplant.
2. Stir-fry for a few minutes, then add beef and broth.
3. Bring to a boil, and add the following spices: 1 bay leaf (whole), 5 cardamon pods, a dash of chili powder, a dash of tumeric, 1 teaspoon ground coriander, ½ teaspoon ground cumin, ½ teaspoon ground celery seed, 1 teaspoon Masala spice, and 1 teaspoon salt.
4. Stir-in the yogurt, one tablespoon at a time. The fat profile of whole yogurt is not ideal, but even just four tablespoons really makes this dish nice and creamy. Add more if you want it to taste better, and don't mind the extra saturated fat. Just before serving, stir-in the olive oil.

Makes 2 servings.

Macronutrient Profile (each serving):

- * K/cal: 528
- * Fat: 26 g (6s, 15m, 2p)
- * Carbs: 14 g (4 fiber)
- * Protein: 57 g

Salmon With A Cream Spinach Sauce

Here's a way to have your fish oil, and eat it too. This one is damn tasty, and quick to boot. When I first started trying to make fish meals with sauce, they turned into a mushy sludge. But salmon is an ideal choice because it's fairly solid, and if you don't overcook it, it doesn't flake apart. The sauce with vegetables adds a boatload of flavor and transforms it into a well-rounded meal.

Ingredients:

- * 20 oz salmon fillet, skin removed
- * 2 cups frozen spinach
- * 1/3 raw eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes
- * 2 large slices onion, finely chopped
- * 1 plum tomato, finely chopped
- * 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- * 1-inch cube ginger root, finely chopped
- * 1 ½ oz. goat cheese, soft type
- * Spices, see below

Instructions:

1. The salmon needs to be lightly seared. This is best done on an outdoor grill by placing the whole fillet/ fillets on a grill at high heat for 4 minutes on each side. The outside will get browned, but the inside will still be raw. You can also do it on a Foreman Grill, for a quick 4 minutes (don't overcook), or in the oven on broil for 4 minutes on each side.

2. After searing, cut the salmon into large cubes (1-2 inches) and set aside. Use a sharp knife, and be careful not to cause too much flaking (quick slashes).

3. While you're pre-cooking the salmon, spray a heated nonstick pan (large wok-style) with cooking spray, and toss-in finely chopped onion slices, garlic, ginger, 4 whole green cardamon pods, and 1 whole bay leaf.

4. Stir-fry on medium heat for 10 minutes, until onions start to become brown. Keep some extra chicken broth to add to the pan when it gets too dry (a couple of tablespoons at a time).

5. Add the tomatoes and eggplant next and stir for a couple of minutes, then pour-in one cup of chicken stock.

6. Bring to a boil and add the following spices: ½ teaspoon tumeric, ½ teaspoon cumin, ½ teaspoon coriander, and salt to taste (½ -1 teaspoon, depending on how salty the chicken stock is).

7. Mix these spices together, and as the mixture is at a low boil, stir-in the goat cheese, 1 tablespoon at a time.

8. Add the salmon cubes to the mixture, being careful not to break-up the pieces by placing them gently in the pan and spooning sauce over them.

9. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes, stir-in ½ teaspoon Masala spice (careful with those salmon chunks!), and it's time for gnashing of teeth.

Makes 2 servings.

Macronutrient Profile (each serving):

- * K/cal: 658
- * Fat: 36 g (10s, 12m, 12p)
- * Carbs: 14 g (5 fiber)
- * Protein: 67 g

All recipes by Dr. John K. Williams, co-author along with John Berardi Ph.D., of the [Gourmet Nutrition cookbook](#).

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Protein & Fat Desserts, Snacks and On-The-Go Meals

By John K. Williams, Ph.D.

While sit-down meals are great, a lot of us find ourselves in work settings where grabbing a pre-made bar might be the most convenient option. The following recipes are portable and quick.

If you like the health benefits of flax, but can't stand the taste of the oil, these recipes are especially for you.

A few notes about some of the dessert ingredients:

Flax meal is simply ground flax seeds. Flax seeds are cheap as sin in bulk, and you can grind them at home with a hand-held coffee grinder. I usually grind them just before their used. If you want to make the meal in bulk, just be sure to store it in an airtight container in the fridge to preserve its freshness.

Splenda is used as a low-calorie sweetener in many of these recipes, as I prefer its taste to other artificial sweeteners, but others can be used according to your preference. Splenda is not entirely carb-free, since they use a bit of maltodextrin to give it texture. There are 24 carbs in 1 cup of granulated Splenda. This was calculated into the nutritional information for the relevant recipes.

Bon appetite!

Peanut Butter Fudge Bars

Some people have told me that these bars stick to their teeth, which might result from adding too much water. I try to use as little water as possible, making it more of a moldable matrix instead of a slimy mess. Just be sure to drink a lot of water with the bars so you can digest the protein.

Ingredients:

- * 2 scoops chocolate protein powder
- * 2 scoops flax meal (ground flax seeds)
- * 4 tablespoons chunky natural peanut butter

Instructions:

1. Mix these together in a bowl, adding $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water (or less if you can manage) and Splenda, to taste. At first, it will seem like it's not enough water, but keep stirring, and it will eventually become a moldable blob of dough that looks like what you would imagine it will be on the way out of your body.

2. Divide the mixture in half, and put it into separate pieces of plastic wrap, shaping into a bar within the wrap. It's easier to shape them by laying plastic wrap in one side of a small casserole dish, pressing the dough into the natural shape of the dish.

3. Put the bars into the fridge, or store them in the freezer. You can eat them chilled, or even frozen, or you can eat it right out of the bowl with a spoon if you're feeling impatient.

The carb amount is on the high-end for P+F meals, but they are mostly low-impact carbs from the flax seeds. Plus, you get the added benefits of the fiber.

Macronutrient Profile (each bar):

- * K/cal: 380
- * Fat: 23 g (5s, 11m, 7p)
- * Carbs: 15 g (6 g fiber)
- * Protein: 33 g

Almond-Coconut Bars

Here's a variation of the previous bars, with a few more bells and whistles, making them taste sort-of like an Almond Joy, if you have a vivid imagination.

Ingredients:

- * 1/2 cup flax seed meal
- * 5 tablespoons low fat cream cheese
- * 1/2 cup sliced almonds (blanched and raw)
- * 5 scoops chocolate whey protein powder
- * 1/2 cup granulated Splenda
- * 1/4 cup water
- * 1/2 tablespoon oil
- * 1 teaspoon coconut extract
- * 2 teaspoons almond extract

Instructions:

1. Nuke the cream cheese just until it's soft enough to mix.
2. Combine all dry ingredients in bowl, and then mix in the rest, until it becomes a big glob. Resist the temptation to add more water; just keep stirring and it will mix.
3. Press into 8x8 brownie pan, sprayed with Pam.
4. Chill and cut into 5 pieces. Put each piece in plastic wrap and store in fridge or freezer.

Like the other bars, these melt very easily; so don't keep them in your back pocket.

Makes 5 bars.

Macronutrient Profile (each bar):

- * K/cal: 270
- * Fat: 14 g (4 s, 5m, 5p)
- * Carbs: 12 g (3 fiber)
- * Protein: 27 g

Banana Flax Loaf

The tastiness of this treat increases exponentially with the amount of Splenda and oil that you put in it. The ingredients below have modest amounts of each, to avoid too many carbs and a larger than normal fat-protein ratio. But don't be afraid to tweak the ingredients to get the desired taste.

Ingredients:

- * 4 scoops vanilla or chocolate protein powder
- * ½ cup flax meal
- * ½ cup granulated Splenda
- * 1 teaspoon baking powder
- * ¼ teaspoon salt
- * 1 oz chopped walnuts
- * 1 jumbo whole egg + 1 egg white, beaten
- * 2 tablespoons olive oil
- * 1 ½ teaspoons banana extract
- * ¼ cup water

Instructions:

1. Set the oven to 350 degrees.
2. Stir all of the dry ingredients together in a large bowl, then add the oil, water, eggs, and banana extract and mix well.
3. Coat a 4X8-inch casserole dish with cooking spray, and pour-in the mixture.
4. Sprinkle some whole flax seeds over the top and bake for 25 minutes at 350 degrees (don't over bake or it will become dry).

Makes 4 servings.

Macronutrient Profile (each serving):

- * K/cal: 350
- * Fat: 21 g (3s, 8.5m, 8.5p)
- * Carbs: 13 g (4 fiber)
- * Protein: 30g

Protein, Carb & Fat Meals

Pan-Seared Salmon with a Citrus Mint Sauce

By Dr. John M. Berardi, Ph.D. and Dr. John K. Williams, Ph.D., authors of the bestselling optimal nutrition cookbook, [Gourmet Nutrition](#).

There are limitless possibilities for cooking and flavoring salmon. Here is an out of the ordinary twist that combines citrus and mint to compliment that ever-gratifying crispiness of seared salmon. For this recipe, prepare the sauce first so that you can serve the salmon when it's hot and crisp. And don't forget to add a nice helping of veggies to this dish. Try some grilled asparagus for an extra special treat. Now on with the show . . .

Part 1: Citrus-Mint Sauce

- 2 tablespoons grapefruit juice squeezed from ½ fresh pink grapefruit
- ½ pink grapefruit, cut into sections for serving
- 2 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 1 medium shallot, minced (about 3 tbsp)
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh mint leaves
- Salt & pepper, to taste
- Dash of Splenda (equivalent to 1 tsp sugar)

Make sure to remove all of the membrane from the grapefruit sections. Combine the grapefruit juice, lime juice, shallot, and Splenda in a medium bowl. Mix well, and then gradually stir-in the olive oil, mint, and chives. Season to taste with salt and pepper and set aside while cooking the fish.

Part 2: Pan-Seared Salmon

- Two 8-ounce salmon fillets, without skin
- 1 tbsp Smart Balance butter spread or coconut oil
- Salt & fresh ground pepper, to taste

Pat the salmon fillet dry with a paper towel, and then season both sides of each fillet with salt and a generous amount of pepper.

Heat the butter or oil in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering but not smoking. Add fillets to the skillet and cook until edges are opaque and bottoms are golden brown, about 3 to 4 minutes for 1-inch thick fillets. Gently flip the fillets with a spatula and cook another 2 to 3 minutes, until it is firm yet tender and moist, and the flesh has become opaque with a slight translucence.

Before serving, whisk the citrus mint sauce to recombine, and drizzle it over the fish fillets. Serve immediately garnished with grapefruit sections.

Serves two.

Nutritional information

Per Serving

| | | | |
|---------------------|------|-------|--|
| Total Calories | 529 | k/cal | |
| Protein | 46 | g | |
| Total Carbohydrates | 12 | g | |
| Fiber | 0.13 | g | |
| Sugars | 8 | g | |
| Total Fat | 33 | g | |
| Saturated | 5.3 | g | |
| Monounsaturated | 16 | g | |
| Polyunsaturated | 9 | g | |
| Omega-3 | 4.2 | g | |
| Omega-6 | 3.2 | g | |

Tip: When is salmon cooked just right?

Cooking your salmon until it's 'flaky', as commonly suggested, can result in overcooking. Here's how to cook it just right: use a paring knife to peek inside the middle of the fillet. If the flesh is translucent, it is undercooked. If it is opaque and slightly flaky but still juicy, it is ready to serve. It is overcooked when the flesh falls apart and looks dry.

Food Fact: Are all omega-3's created equal?

Plants provide a form of omega-3's called alpha-Linolenic acid (ALA). Flax seeds are one of the best sources of ALA. But it's becoming clear that some of the best health benefits come from docosahexaenoic acids (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), which are found in fatty marine fish, like salmon and mackerel. DHA is particularly beneficial, and contributes to better body composition, brain health, stress relief, and has even shown potential in preventing dementia. Granted, some ALA can be converted into EPA and DHA, but the conversion rate is low, particularly in men.

Beef Braised in a Red Wine Sauce

By Dr. John M. Berardi, Ph.D. and Dr. John K. Williams, Ph.D., authors of the bestselling optimal nutrition cookbook, [Gourmet Nutrition](#).

Few meals are as hearty as slow-cooked beef smothered in a red wine sauce. For this recipe, we used a bottle of cabernet sauvignon, given its powerful flavor that is able to withstand 3 hours in the Crock-Pot. If you're willing to part with a bottle of Barolo, it is the ideal wine for this recipe. However, since Barolo starts at around \$30/bottle, most of us would rather use a cheap but potent cabernet.

Ingredients

- 3 ½ pounds boneless chuck roast
- 1 bottle cabernet sauvignon
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 2 medium onions, coarsely chopped
- 2 medium carrots cut into ¼-inch thick slices
- 3 medium celery stalks cut into ¼-inch thick slices
- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- Parsley, rosemary and thyme – 1 tsp each dry, or ½ cup fresh parsley, 1 tbsp fresh rosemary and 1 tbsp fresh thyme
- Salt & pepper, to taste

Instructions

1. Divide the roast into two fairly equal pieces by splitting down the center, using the seam of fat as a guide. Trim the excess fat, leaving a thin layer above the meat. Pat the meat dry with paper towels and coat generously with salt and pepper.
2. Brown the meat in a large nonstick skillet over high heat in 1 tbsp olive oil. Remove the browned roast, leaving the juices and oil behind, and reduce heat to medium. Sauté the garlic, onions, carrots, and celery together with the tomato paste. Add the wine, tomatoes, rosemary, thyme, and parsley. Increase heat to high and bring mixture to a boil. Occasionally whisking, boil for about 15 minutes, or until the vegetables break down and the sauce thickens and reduces to about 3 ½ cups. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
3. Transfer the meat and the sauce to a Crock-Pot, cooking covered on high for 3 hours, turning the meat with tongs every 45 minutes.
4. After the roast is cooked, transfer it to a cutting board and let it sit for about 5 minutes. Cut the meat into ½-inch slices, and served in deep plates with sauce poured over the sliced beef.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutritional information

Per Serving

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------|--|
| Total Calories | 615 | k/cal | |
| Protein | 63 | g | |
| Total Carbohydrates | 18 | g | |
| Fiber | 4 | g | |
| Sugars | 8 | g | |
| Total Fat | 18 | g | |
| Saturated | 5.6 | g | |
| Monounsaturated | 8.4 | g | |
| Polyunsaturated | 1.0 | g | |
| Omega-3 | 0.9 | g | |
| Omega-6 | 0.1 | g | |

Tip: How to get the beef just right

For extra tenderness and juiciness, allow the beef to cool slightly on the cutting board, and cut it against the grain in long, diagonal pieces.

Food Fact: Cattle were domesticated earlier than crops in Africa

Archaeologists have demonstrated that cattle were domesticated as early as 9500 years ago in the marginal environments of the Sahara. This is a very early date, and it is particularly interesting when compared to the date of the first domesticated African plants, after 4000 years ago. Fiona Marshall of Washington University concludes that people during this time herded cattle because it provided a predictable resource suitable for a highly mobile lifestyle. There was just too much risk involved in trying to cultivate in arid conditions. So every time we have a nice helping of beef, we can thank the folks in the Sahara who nearly 10,000 years ago figured out a way to produce food that carries itself around.

Quinoa Ostrich Chili

By Dr. John M. Berardi, PhD and Dr. John K. Williams, PhD, authors of the bestselling optimal nutrition cookbook, [Gourmet Nutrition](#).

For those among you who are bean averse, here is a chili recipe that replaces gassy legumes with quinoa. Why quinoa? Because it tastes great, and it is one of the most nutritious whole grains on the planet. Ostrich complements the robust flavors of quinoa, tomatoes, and spices. Ostrich is a red meat closer in taste and texture to beef than to chicken. If you can't find it, ground turkey will do in a pinch. When you toss in a heap of veggies, you're left with a stand-alone hearty, delicious, and highly nutritious meal that will satiate the appetite of two ravenous individuals. This recipe was also designed with busy individuals in mind, and can be completed in 30 minutes from start to finish.

Ingredients

- 1 lb. ground ostrich, or ground turkey
- ½ cup dry quinoa
- 3 cups water
- 1 small can (6 oz) tomato paste
- ½ medium onion
- ½ cup frozen corn kernels
- ½ package mixed frozen pepper strips
- ½ tsp cumin
- 1 tbsp chili powder
- ½ tsp salt
- Tabasco sauce, to taste

Instructions

1. Bring the quinoa to a boil in 3 cups water and a pinch of salt. Cover and reduce heat to medium. Set a timer for 30 minutes.
2. Brown the ground ostrich and onions in a nonstick skillet. Add the corn and peppers and toss over high heat until vegetables are thoroughly thawed and start to brown.
3. By now, about 10-15 minutes should have elapsed since you started boiling the quinoa. Remove the lid from the quinoa and stir-in the tomato paste until mixed. Add the browned ostrich and vegetables, stir, and then add the spices. Mix completely, cover, and simmer on low heat for the remainder of the time, or until you have the desired consistency (should be fairly thick).

Makes 2 servings.

Nutritional information

Per Serving

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------|--|
| Total Calories | 700 | k/cal | |
| Protein | 59 | g | |
| Total Carbohydrates | 66 | g | |
| Fiber | 11 | g | |
| Sugars | 0 | g | |
| Total Fat | 17 | g | |
| Saturated | 5.5 | g | |
| Monounsaturated | 6.9 | g | |
| Polyunsaturated | 4.2 | g | |
| Omega-3 | 0.2 | g | |
| Omega-6 | 3.0 | g | |

Tip: Toasting your quinoa

For a smokier flavor, toast the quinoa before you boil it. This can be done in a dry nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Pour the dry quinoa into the skillet (no oil), and stir continuously until the grains start to pop and you can smell a nice, toasty fragrance. This should not take longer than 3-5 minutes.

Food Fact: Quinoa, the Mother Grain

The ancient Incas called quinoa the “mother grain,” because they relied so heavily on its nutritive properties. Quinoa is gluten-free, and contains none of the allergens common to grains from the grass family such as wheat, rye, barley, oats, and corn. Furthermore, quinoa contains lysine, an amino acid deficient in many grains, making it a complete protein. Quinoa is also an excellent source of calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, and B vitamins.

Stir Fry Veggie Extravaganza

By Dr. John M. Berardi, PhD and Dr. John K. Williams, PhD, authors of the bestselling optimal nutrition cookbook, [Gourmet Nutrition](#).

Most of us could benefit from increasing our intake of fresh, whole vegetables. If the cancer-fighting properties of vegetables aren't enough incentive, then take into consideration that they contain a ton of micronutrients that fill nutritional voids, they have small quantities of healthy fats such as omega-3's, they counteract high acidity produced by high protein diets, and they give us a big dose of fiber.

Getting ample vegetables sounds great in theory, but in practice many of us fail utterly in finding ways to consistently consume our photosynthesizing friends. Let's face it, the world is full of veggie haters. As the famous and sometimes gruff 20th century archaeologist Francois Bordes used to say when asked if he would like a salad with his meal, "What do I look like to you, a rabbit?"

Sure, vegetables can be downright repulsive, but given the correct method of preparation, even the most finicky of eaters can reap the benefits of these wonder foods, sow good eating habits, alleviate any seeds of doubt, and harvest superior nutritional properties. Now that the puns are out of the way, let's move on to the recipe.

Asian stir-fry is one of the best ways to eat vegetables in both quantity and variety. Cooking the vegetables quickly over high heat keeps them crisp (no more mushy cafeteria mystery vegetable), and slightly caramelizes their surface, dramatically enhancing flavor. Another bonus is that you can cook stir-fry in bulk, storing tasty vegetable-laden meals for days at a time.

After messing around with varieties of this recipe, we finally discovered a great combination of vegetable variety, healthfulness, texture, and taste. You'll be surprised at how easy it is to significantly increase your vegetable intake with just this one recipe.

This is a stand-alone dish that needs no rice. Just pile it high on a plate and enjoy. There is enough variety that it can even be cooked and eaten without meat, as a side dish for us omnivores, or as a main dish for a vegetarian.

Ingredients

- 1 lb chicken breast, sliced thin
- 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 whole dried chili peppers, chopped
- 2 tbsp white cooking wine
- 2 cubic inches fresh ginger, peeled and chopped
- 2 tbsp corn starch, mixed together with 4 tbsp water
- 1 cup fresh shitake mushrooms
- 2 stalks celery, diagonally sliced
- 2 bundles scallions (green onions) (15 total), diced
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 1 yellow bell pepper, sliced
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 2 handfuls snow peas (25-30 pods)
- 1 can sliced water chestnuts, rinsed and drained
- 1 can slivered bamboo shoots, rinsed and drained
- 1 head Napa cabbage, sliced
- 3 cups fresh bean sprouts
- 1 bouillon cube (chicken or vegetable), mixed with 1 cup hot water
- 4 tbsp soy sauce
- ½ cup whole roasted and salted cashews

Instructions

First slice the chicken breast and marinate it in a large bowl together with half of the chopped garlic, crushed chili peppers, white wine and a dash of salt.

Chop all of your vegetables and get them ready before the cooking process starts. Also, make your cornstarch solution in a small bowl or cup by stirring 2 tablespoons of cornstarch into 4-5 tablespoons of water. Stir until thoroughly mixed into a thick solution.

Heat a large nonstick wok over medium-high heat, and then add the sliced chicken together with the marinade. Stir-fry for a few minutes, until browned. Push the chicken up to the sides of the wok, lightly coat the surface with cooking spray, and then add the remaining garlic and chopped ginger. Stir-fry for a couple of minutes, and then add vegetables, two at a time, stir-frying about 4 minutes each batch. When the wok gets too full, place the contents into a large bowl and continue stir-frying the remaining vegetables. If the wok gets dry, you can coat it again with cooking oil, or add some soy sauce.

After you've worked your way through the vegetables down to the cabbage and bean sprouts, push the vegetables to the side of the wok, add the broth, and bring to a boil. Thicken the broth by stirring-in the cornstarch solution (stir it again before slowly adding).

Return all of the vegetables and chicken to the wok, and toss together with the soy sauce and cashews. Don't add the cashews until the very end to ensure a crunchy texture. Mix thoroughly and serve.

Makes 3 large servings (or several small ones).

Nutritional information

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------|--|
| Per Serving | | | |
| Total Calories | 621 | k/cal | |
| Protein | 54 | g | |
| Total Carbohydrates | 74 | g | |
| Fiber | 18 | g | |
| Sugars | 0 | g | |
| Total Fat | 15 | g | |
| Saturated | 3 | g | |
| Monounsaturated | 7 | g | |
| Polyunsaturated | 4 | g | |
| Omega-3 | 1 | g | |
| Omega-6 | 3 | g | |

Tip: Slicing vegetables, the safe way

This recipe requires a lot of chopping, so to ensure you don't get bits of finger in your meal, let's discuss how to chop vegetables quickly and safely. It's very important to have a good knife. Sharp knives are actually safer because you don't have to use so much force to cut the vegetables. The knife should also have a broad blade, such as a chef's knife or a cleaver. The blade needs to be broad so that you can place the side of the knife on your knuckles as you chop. Holding the vegetable with your fingertips on the cutting board, fold your knuckles over and lightly move the knife across them while chopping, being careful not to raise the knife above the level of your knuckles (never let the side of the knife lose contact with your guiding hand). As long as you keep your fingers tucked away, then no worries.

Food Fact: Cabbage, the forgotten veggie

Cabbage is one of those veggies that is often overlooked in western diets. The good news is that it tastes great in this stir-fry, and the better news is that cabbage has great health properties. Cabbage contains a beneficial phytochemical called indole-3-carbinole (I3C), which has powerful cancer-fighting properties. I3C also helps to break down estrogen in the body, which further decreases cancer risk, particularly breast cancer in women.

Spinach Soufflé

By Dr. John M. Berardi, PhD and Dr. John K. Williams, PhD, authors of the bestselling optimal nutrition cookbook, [Gourmet Nutrition](#).

Given the excellent nutritional properties of spinach, it would be a shame to restrict our intake of this leafy green to the occasional salad. Anyone who's ever cooked spinach quickly realizes that a giant mound of fresh spinach reduces to a tenth of its original size. So unless you enjoy eating Volkswagen-sized salads, some cooking is in order.

Most people's preconception of cooked spinach is the slimy stuff that Popeye pulls from a can. Judging spinach on the basis of the canned variety is like dismissing the entire Beatle's White Album because of the song "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da". Don't torture yourself; fast forward to "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" and pull a nice spinach soufflé out of the oven. Life is good.

Ingredients

- 2 packages frozen spinach (10 oz. each), thawed and drained
- 1 cup low fat cottage cheese
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup egg whites
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Dash of ground nutmeg (1/8 tsp)
- Salt & pepper, to taste

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 400-degrees F.

Combine spinach, cottage cheese, egg whites, garlic, nutmeg, and salt/pepper in a blender or food processor. Blend until you have the desired consistency. For a more textured final product, blend just until mixed. For a smoother dish, blend thoroughly.

Stir the Parmesan cheese and baking powder into the blended mixture, and then pour everything into a casserole dish coated with cooking spray.

Bake for 20 minutes, or until lightly set. Test to see if it's done by shaking the dish slightly: the center should not jiggle.

Makes a large meal for one, or 2 servings as a side dish.

Nutritional information (entire dish)

Per Serving

| | | | |
|---------------------|------|-------|--|
| Total Calories | 562 | k/cal | |
| Protein | 75 | g | |
| Total Carbohydrates | 37 | g | |
| Fiber | 17 | g | |
| Sugars | 0 | g | |
| Total Fat | 16 | g | |
| Saturated | 9 | g | |
| Monounsaturated | 4 | g | |
| Polyunsaturated | 4 | g | |
| Omega-3 | 0.31 | g | |
| Omega-6 | 0.74 | g | |

Tips: Preparing your spinach; soufflé in a hurry

Be sure to thaw your spinach entirely before preparing this dish. This can be done in the microwave, or simply by placing the spinach in the fridge for a couple of days. Squeeze as much of the water from the spinach as you can before mixing.

If you're in a hurry and don't have time to bake it in an oven, use a microwave safe casserole dish, cover with plastic wrap, and cook on high for 3 minutes. Release the steam, recover, and cook on high for another 3 minutes, or until thoroughly cooked.

*Disclaimer: cooking this dish in a microwave is vastly inferior to the taste of the oven-cooked version. Do yourself a favor and spend the extra 15 minutes to cook it in the oven.

Food Fact: The power of spinach

Spinach and other leafy greens pack an incredible amount of nutrients into each calorie compared to other foods. There are at least 13 different flavonoid compounds in spinach that function as anti-oxidants and anti-cancer agents. In addition, spinach contains a carotenoid called neoxanthin, which both combats and helps prevent prostate cancer. Need more? Spinach is also one of the best sources of the elusive vitamin K, which helps maintain bone health. Anti-inflammatory nutrients, protecting the brain from oxidative stress, better eyesight...the list of benefits from spinach is seemingly infinite.

Seared Turkey and Squash with Saffron and Apple

By Dr. John M. Berardi, PhD and Dr. John K. Williams, PhD, authors of the bestselling optimal nutrition cookbook, [Gourmet Nutrition](#).

This medley of ground turkey, butternut squash and apples in a creamy saffron sauce is perfect for a cozy autumn meal. Using frozen butternut squash reduces the cooking time significantly, so this one is great for a quick, light meal for two. The total preparation and cooking time is about 15 minutes.

Ingredients

- 1 lb lean ground turkey
- 2 medium apples, chopped and seeded
- 1 package (12 oz) frozen butternut squash
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms (about 8 medium)
- 1/2 cup (8 tbsp) whole plain yogurt
- 1 inch cube fresh ginger root, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 chicken bouillon cube, dissolved in 1 cup warm water
- 1 pinch saffron
- Salt, to taste

Instructions

Brown the turkey, garlic and ginger in a nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray over medium high heat, until turkey is browned (about 5 minutes). Add the apples, squash and mushrooms, and continue stirring for 5 minutes, or until vegetables start to soften. Add the cup of chicken broth, bring to a boil, and then add the yogurt one tablespoon at a time while stirring continuously. Add the saffron sparingly, and stir the mixture until the saffron imparts a yellow color, and the sauce is thick and creamy.

Makes 2 servings.

Nutritional information, per serving

Per Serving

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------|--|
| Total Calories | 605 | k/cal | |
| Protein | 58 | g | |
| Total Carbohydrates | 54 | g | |
| Fiber | 7 | g | |
| Total Fat | 19 | g | |
| Saturated | 5.8 | g | |
| Monounsaturated | 6.7 | g | |
| Polyunsaturated | 4.2 | g | |
| Omega-3 | 0.3 | g | |
| Omega-6 | 3.6 | g | |

Tips: Peel, freeze and dice your ginger

After purchasing a large, plump ginger root at the market, take it home and remove the skin with a vegetable peeler. Then store your peeled ginger root in a Ziploc bag in the freezer. It will keep almost indefinitely this way, and you'll always have it on hand when it's needed. It is also easier to chop frozen. Just shave-off a few slices with a broad bladed knife, being careful not to get your fingers in the way. The slices can then be easily chopped.

Food Fact: Yogurt helps fight bad breath

In addition to providing a good source of protein and calcium, a new study demonstrates that the active bacteria in yogurt help reduce the stink-producing compounds on the back of our tongue by 80%. Specifically, *Streptococcus thermophilus* and *Lactobacillus bulgaricus*, found in yogurt were shown to reduce odor-causing compounds in the mouth of subjects fed 3 oz of yogurt twice daily.

All these recipes follow the principles outlined in the [Precision Nutrition](#) program developed by John Berardi and his team.

If you want to build the body you never thought you could have, start eating the meals you never thought you could eat! Get over 100 recipes and a no-nonsense nutrition plan that will show you how to make it work in the bestselling cookbook written by Dr. Berardi and Dr. Williams, [Gourmet Nutrition](#).