

The **FAT** Chance Cookbook

Robert H. Lustig, M.D., M.S.L.

Recipes by Cindy Gershen

With Heather Millar

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book is the culmination of the hard work of the three authors, but also the three families that support them and eat and drink with them. Robert lives and cooks with Julie, his wife of 19 years, and his two amazing children, Miriam (14) and Meredith (8). All are on board. Julie was the brain trust behind the recent e-book, *Sugar Has 56 Names: A Shopper's Guide*. Meredith wants to be a chef, and has already decided she's opening an Italian restaurant when she grows up. But it will go light on the pasta and no panna cotta.

Cindy and her husband Lance, a pediatrician, live in Walnut Creek, California, 20 miles east of San Francisco. Cindy and Lance have a blended family of eight children: daughters Danielle, Rose, Jennifer and Sarah, and sons, Joe, Zack, Alex and Ben. They have nine grandchildren and three on the way. Lance helps Cindy run the family restaurant, Sunrise Bistro. Cindy loves cooking in general, but especially with her family. Her grandkids love picking tomatoes, raspberries and strawberries in her large kitchen garden. They clamor for ricotta gnocchi and whole grain pizza (both recipes are in this book), not cookies and candy.

Heather lives just a few blocks from Rob with her husband, Pete, an editor at Bloomberg News, and her daughter Erin (12), who loves sugar but knows she needs to limit it. When Pete and Heather met, Pete thought two Big Macs® and a shake was a good meal. Suffice to say, he's changed a lot in the last 25 years! Erin, like Meredith, loves to cook. Her specialties so far are whole grain bread, salad, and spaghetti sauce.

And finally, major kudos to Cindy's "Kitchen Helpers": the people who did the heavy lifting to make this book a reality. Assistant Kristin Zellhart, fellow teachers Pam Deane and Patrick Oliver, the nutritionists who helped compile the USDA nutritional information for each dish and all the kids in Cindy's classes—without them, this book would never have happened.

CHAPTER 1

Cook or Be Cooked

How many times have you had, or heard, these conversations?

“I know I’m carrying extra weight, but I just can’t lose it.”

Or:

“I lost 20 pounds last year, but I’ve gained it all back and then some.”

Or:

“My doctor just told me that if I don’t watch my diet and start exercising, I’m on my way to developing diabetes.”

This cookbook has been written to end those conversations. It will teach you to re-orient your food life, and your life in general. It will help you feel better, live healthier, be more productive, and—believe it or not—lose weight without dieting. You will be able to do this by taking advantage of the hormones that control energy balance and “satiety,” the feeling of being full.

Drafted with my dear friend, chef Cindy Gershen, these dishes are down-to-earth, decidedly easy, and delicious. The recipes either minimize or eliminate the ingredients that do damage to our bodies and our health: fructose (the sweet molecule that makes up of refined sugar); refined carbohydrates; and processed (fiber-less) foods of all kinds. They emphasize ingredients that will help your body recalibrate how it uses energy and stores fat: whole grains, whole vegetables (peels and all!), fiber, Omega-3 fatty acids, and high-quality protein. And here is a huge plus: most of them can be made in less than 30 minutes of active cooking time.

These recipes have not been pulled out of thin air. They are based on the science I outlined in my first book about the obesity and diabetes pandemics, *Fat Chance: Beating the Odds Against Sugar, Obesity and Disease*. They have been drawn from the more than 30 years of experience that Cindy has had as a successful restaurateur and caterer in the San Francisco Bay Area, where we both live.

Why *this* Cookbook?

Frankly, you need this cookbook, no matter what your weight. It's not just because the way most of us are eating today is making us fat. Even more alarming, the "Industrial Global Diet" is making us seriously ill. As I explain more fully in *Fat Chance*, 40% of normal-weight Americans suffer from the same diseases as the obese: Type 2 diabetes, lipid disorders, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, and dementia. Being thin or normal weight is not a "Get Out of Jail Free" card.

This affects all of us, doctors included. For instance, my friend, colleague, and noted surgeon-turned-nutrition-scientist Dr. Peter Attia discovered that he was pre-diabetic, even though he is young, slender and exercises three or four hours a day. Dr. Attia recounted his personal experience with pre-diabetes in a TedMed talk <http://www.ted.com/talks/peter_attia_what_if_we_re_wrong_about_diabetes.html>. He lost 40 pounds and reversed his pre-diabetes with improvements in his diet.

The bottom line is that the Industrial Global Diet is killing people while bankrupting the American medical enterprise. If we do nothing, in America Medicare will be broke by 2026 due to the enormous burden of chronic metabolic diseases such as diabetes. And America exports its diet around the world to the detriment of both developed, and developing, countries. It has to stop. But it won't stop until you make it stop.

Change will not come from the food and diet companies. It will not come from restaurants or supermarkets. You and your family will drive this change, cooking together in your own kitchens. Spatulas and spoons are the first line of defense in the war against bad food. Change starts at home. The food industry, like any industry, must be responsive to its customers. If you don't buy it, they won't sell it.

We've lost an entire generation of cooks to our Fast Food culture. Cooking is a skill passed down from parent to child. If your mother doesn't teach you, where are you supposed to learn to chop onions, or cream butter, or make salad dressing? American high schools used to teach home economics, and that's gone too, in the name of education cutbacks and *No Child Left Behind* (which is really No Child Moving Forward and No Teacher Left Standing). The majority of kids growing up today have never boiled water, not even in a microwave. Kids create a dish from scratch? As they say in Brooklyn, my hometown, "Fuggedaboutit!"

If you don't know how to cook—and a 2011 survey found that nearly one-third of Americans don't—fear not. These recipes do not require exotic spices or pricey

equipment or hours of prep time. All of them can be made with basic kitchen tools, with nothing more exotic than a blender, in less than half an hour of active cooking time. They have to be: they were tested by Cindy and her high school students at Mount Diablo High School in Concord, California, where she teaches healthy cooking and responsible eating. If kids can make these recipes in less time than a school period, you can too! And if high school students, who are notorious for not eating anything healthier than Hot Cheetos® and a corn dog or drinking anything healthier than a Starbuck's Frappuccino, can enthusiastically consume their own creations made by their own hands, you can too! In all honesty, your lives may depend upon it.

We're All Getting Fatter and Sicker

If you doubt the seriousness of this epidemic, consider these signs of the Dietary Apocalypse: Nearly 70 percent of Americans are overweight, 30 percent are obese. In 1980, only 5 percent of children scored above the 95th percentile in "Body Mass Index," (BMI), the standard way of gauging healthy body weight. Today, a whopping 20 percent of kids score above the 95th percentile. In 1980, there were almost no adolescent Type 2 diabetics. Today, there are 40,000. More than 8 percent, or approximately 25 million, Americans have diabetes today. By 2050, it is predicted that one-third of Americans will be diabetic.

This problem is not limited to rich, over-privileged countries like America. The World Health Organization has found that the percentage of obese humans worldwide has doubled in the last 28 years. Worldwide, the obese now outnumber the malnourished by 30 percent. Fifteen years ago, it was the other way around. Every country, even developing ones, has seen an uptick in obesity rates over the last decade. World authorities now consider obesity to be a greater threat to human health than smoking or infectious diseases.

Consider the magnitude of this change. And you know the really amazing thing? This massive, and I mean massive, upending of our food life has happened in just three decades.

It's Not Your Fault

Why do I care so much about getting people into their kitchens to cook healthy food? I'm a pediatrician. It's my job to care. I am a pediatric endocrinologist, which means that I care for children who have hormonal imbalances. Every day, I see the misery that results when the body's systems for maintaining and storing

energy go haywire. It's my job to take care of kids who have become obese because of brain tumors, hormone excesses or deficiencies, muscle weakness, or other problems. They are tragically overweight, and develop chronic metabolic diseases at frighteningly early ages.

But guess what? It's not their fault. And it's not your fault. Everyone thinks that obesity is a matter of personal responsibility. That explanation just does not cut it. Here are six reasons why your fat is not your fault.

1. **Obesity Is Not a Choice.** The quality of life for obese children is the same as for children on cancer chemotherapy. Obesity is not something to which people, especially children, aspire.
2. **Diet and Exercise Don't Work.** Everyone can name a celebrity who has lost weight, but the overwhelming majority of us ordinary folk fail in our weight loss efforts. Even if we are successful for a while, we gain it back in short order.
3. **The Obesity Epidemic Is Now a Pandemic.** This is not an American problem, an Australian problem, a British problem, or a Japanese problem. This is a global problem. Around the world, we are all eating the Global Industrial Diet.
4. **Even Animals Raised in Captivity Are Getting Fat.** Livestock animals drink the same water and breathe the same air that we do. We don't yet know why this is happening, but it argues in favor of some sort of environmental insult to which all life on the planet is now exposed.
5. **The Poor Pay More.** The poor often don't even have supermarkets, let alone access to healthy food. Can a person exercise personal responsibility if there's no healthy choice available?
6. **The Greatest Rate of Increase in Obesity Is in the Youngest Patients.** Two- to five-year-olds have experienced the greatest rate of weight increase in the last decade. It is impossible to assign personal responsibility, or free choice, to this age group. We even have an epidemic of obese six-month-olds. Infants don't diet or exercise.

For various reasons, the complicated system that regulates energy in their bodies—the nerves, hormones, and brain structures that determine what we eat, how much we eat, whether our body stores that energy as fat or uses it for the business of living—has gone haywire.

If We're All Dieting, Why Are We Still Fat and Sick?

You might say, “I don’t have a disease. What does all this have to do with me?”

Well, people around the world are putting on the pounds almost as quickly as the kids in my clinic. They’re gaining for similar reasons: the energy regulation systems in their bodies have been thrown out of balance. But in the case of the general public, the cause is not brain tumors or other medical issues. The cause is bad food. It’s a matter of what’s in the processed food of the typical modern diet, and what isn’t in that processed food.

Every item in the supermarket screams that it’s “low fat” or “low carb” or “low calorie.” Everyone has a new, magic solution: Eat low carb! Don’t eat fat! Eat lots of protein! Drink this powder! Fast every other day! Count food points! Buy prepared diet food! Eat wild food! Eat raw food! Juice your food! Eat only greens! Take this pill! Take that shot! Have your stomach stapled!

You might ask yourself why we think we have it right. Because we are not saying any of those things. We’re not proposing a magical solution. We’re proposing a sensible solution.

I ask you: have you seen anyone suddenly shed pounds and keep them off for more than a year or two with any of these miracle weight loss systems? Aside from bariatric surgery (which only works in about two-thirds of patients), everyone else loses for the first six months, and then the weight slowly returns over the next six months.

Big Food’s Not-So-Small Secrets

Here are some other things that the food and diet industries don’t want you to know:

- **A calorie is NOT a calorie.** The Coca-Cola Company’s 2013 video *Coming Together*, states: “Beating obesity will take action by all of us, based on one simple *common sense* fact: All calories count, no matter where they come from, including Coca-Cola and everything else with calories... “. In other words, “a calorie is a calorie.”

This is just not true.

The fact is that different calories are metabolized differently, and how those calories are metabolized and where they go have everything to do with what diseases you might develop. You cannot eat 1,500 calories of jelly beans each day, lose weight and be healthy. Your body uses and stores fuel—calories—very differently depending on the quality of those calories. Because: **A calorie is NOT a calorie.**

- **It's the insulin, stupid.** If you eat a steady diet of high-sugar, low-fiber, low-quality protein (burgers/chicken nuggets/pizza), and refined grains, you will jack up your insulin levels big-time. That drives energy storage into fat cells, makes fat in your liver, and makes you feel very tired as your energy is diverted away from your muscles and your brain.

On the other hand, if you eat low-sugar, high-fiber, high-quality protein (eggs, fish, lean meats), and whole grains, your insulin response will be much lower. You won't shunt energy into fat cells. Your body's energy systems will stay in balance. You will not only lose or maintain your weight, you will feel better. In *Fat Chance*, I outline the science behind these statements in great detail. I'll give you a quick summary of it below.

- **It's not about obesity.** The food industry would have you believe it's about obesity. Then they can blame your love handles on your lack of discipline, or automobiles, or television, or power lawnmowers, or the lack of sidewalks in our towns, or the lack of P.E. in our schools.

But guess what? Thin does not necessarily mean healthy. Someone who looks quite thin might have a lousy diet and have “visceral fat,” that is, fat around the internal organs, putting him as much at risk for disease as someone who's obese. That's the case for as many as 40 percent of the normal-weight population. Sure, we should all strive to maintain a healthy weight. But focusing only on weight loss is the wrong approach to our problems.

- **We live in a toxic food environment.** Our bodies are hard-wired to eat high-calorie food when it's available. And our brains are hard-wired to like sugar. A lot. Studies show that you must introduce a savory food 13 times to an infant before he/she will accept it. But if it's a sweet food, it takes only one try. Liking sugar is built into our DNA — because there are no foods in nature that are both sweet and

acutely poisonous. This was the signal to our ancestors that a given foodstuff was safe to eat.

Today, highly sweetened foods are immediately available everywhere you go. Plus sugar is addictive — weakly so, like alcohol, but addictive nonetheless. The food industry has hijacked these two phenomena for their own use. That’s why more than 80% of the 600,000 food items in the American grocery store are spiked with added sugar.

- **It’s not your fault.** When you start to lose weight, your body’s starvation response kicks in, and the hormone leptin drops. This makes you both hungrier and less energetic, defeating your best intentions. Our bodies are hard-wired to hang on to fat stores, for times of famine. But today, in most high- and middle-income nations, times of famine never come. The problem is that the “Global Industrial Diet,” by driving insulin higher, messes up the body’s finely tuned system for regulating energy.

- **Your fat is not your fate, provided you don’t surrender.** Not surrendering means we’ve got to start cooking, people. We need to completely rethink our relationship to food, and to the food industry. We need to embrace food, and be skeptical of the industry that supplies it. That’s why we wrote this cookbook.

What It’s Really About: “Metabolic Syndrome”

Though it sounds pretty grim, it’s not hopeless. We just need to understand what we’re doing to ourselves, and what the food industry is doing to us. And to understand that, it’s necessary to outline just a bit of science. This is a cookbook, not a textbook. If you want to understand the science in detail, the complete picture is sketched out in *Fat Chance*.

This is what you need to know: Obesity is not a character flaw; obesity is not a behavior; obesity is not a disease (despite the American Medical Association declaring it one). Obesity is not a defect in energy balance (calories in/calories out). Obesity is a defect in energy deposition—where excess energy is stored—that occurs because of changes in biochemistry and hormones that are caused by bad food.

Other downstream effects of obesity include sleep apnea, gallstones and problems with your joints and feet. If you carry a lot of extra pounds, you put yourself at higher risk of all of these conditions. And, not surprisingly given the obesity rates,

all of these medical problems have become more common in the last 30 years. They all increase the risk of early death.

This is not just a personal crisis for the people unlucky enough to carry lots of extra pounds. It's a financial and political crisis as well. All the diseases caused by excess body fat result in at least \$192 billion in medical bills in the United States alone. The U.S. spent \$245 billion on diabetes last year. The global cost runs into the trillions. That doesn't even take into account the lost productivity, and the sheer human misery generated by these diseases. There's simply not enough money to pay for it all.

Those extra pounds may take a toll on our vanity, but even more serious are the medical conditions that "travel" with obesity. These diseases known as "metabolic syndrome." They include, but are not limited to: Type 2 diabetes, fatty liver disease, high blood pressure, lipid problems, heart disease, polycystic ovarian disease, cancer and dementia. All of these are "chronic metabolic diseases" that occur due to ineffective energy processing, and can happen in normal weight people as well. Obesity is not the "cause" of these diseases; obesity is a "marker" for these diseases. When we tackle the cause, toxic food, both the diseases AND the obesity will get better, no matter what your weight.

Science for the Cookbook Crowd

Energy Storage and Insulin. Lloyd Blankfein, the president of Goldman Sachs, recently stated, "The only job of business is to make money". Not the primary job, the only job. Explains a lot, right?

The physiologic counterpart of this concept is, "The only job of the pancreas is to store energy." The pancreas makes enzymes that break down food into its component nutrient molecules. The pancreas also makes hormones like insulin, which escorts the energy from food into fat cells for storage.

It makes sense that the quest for, the regulation of, and the storage of energy—that is, calories—is one of the most important things that the body does. After all, if you don't store energy, none of the other processes of life can happen: no digestion, no breathing, no movement, no thought. None of it happens without calories. And insulin is the way the calories get where they need to go. Insulin shunts glucose and fatty acids to fat cells. It stores amino acids in muscle. It tops

off the liver's glucose stores as "glycogen," or liver starch. Insulin shunts energy in the blood into fat cells.

Here's the key takeaway fact: Insulin makes fat. More insulin, more fat.

Calories come from various kinds of foodstuffs, from carrots to cheesecake. The calories arrive at the stomach and then the small intestine, where foodstuffs are broken down into smaller components. The liver has first dibs on all of these nutrients. Whatever the liver can't take up goes into general circulation in your bloodstream. When bloodstream glucose levels rise quickly, the pancreas releases the insulin to store the excess.

Energy Balance and Leptin. On top of the energy storage system is another complex system that's supposed to signal when you're hungry and when you're full. A structure at the base of your brain, the hypothalamus, acts like a traffic cop, monitoring what's going on and directing the various hormonal systems of your body.

The hypothalamus reads what's happening through the blood signals it gets: the hormones insulin and leptin. Insulin tells the hypothalamus when there are excess nutrients that need to be stored. Fat cells produce a different hormone, leptin, that tells the hypothalamus whether or not there are enough energy stores on board in the first place. In response to these signals, the hypothalamus tells your body whether you need more or less energy, whether you need to eat, or whether you need to push your chair from the table.

When these systems operate as they should, you feel hungry when you're running low on calories, and you feel full when you have had enough calories. When you need to expend energy, you have it on board. Things stay mostly in balance; you feel good; and you maintain a stable weight.

Too much, too fast. But what happens when you eat a meal of processed food, say, a Big Mac®, super-sized fries and a full-sugar Coke? Or, what happens when you eat what may seem a "healthier" option, such as pasta with packaged tomato sauce, salad and croutons with bottled dressing and ice cream for dessert? That's when your finely balanced energy system starts to run off the rails.

That fast food meal (or the home-cooked meal made with processed ingredients) delivers a huge burst of nutrients into your upper alimentary tract: boatloads of glucose, fructose, fats, and proteins. Because they've already been partly processed

and because there is no fiber to slow it down, these nutrients race through the stomach and small intestine. These organs absorb the nutrients very quickly, bringing everything to your liver all at once. There, your liver cells get overwhelmed, and turn the excess into liver fat. The pancreas gets the signal that the liver is sick, and chugs out more insulin to make the liver do its job. This drives energy into fat cells for storage, making your body weight go up.

So what do you think happens if you processed or fast food regularly, day after day, year after year? Excess insulin means excess fat. Excess insulin also means that your brain can't tell if your leptin hormone is working. If your brain can't see your leptin, your brain thinks it's starving, and that makes you feel hungrier. Now you are in a vicious cycle: The more you eat, the higher your insulin goes, and the more your brain thinks it's starving.

How your cells get sick. At the cellular level, the avalanche of energy and nutrients overwhelms your body's cellular power generators, called "mitochondria." When the mitochondria get overloaded they have no choice but to turn the extra energy into liver fat, making your liver even sicker. That makes you fatter, lazier, sicker; and you don't even know where all these problems came from. How can all this be happening when you're dieting, buying "low-fat" and all the rest? Now you have "metabolic syndrome." Now you are losing years of life as your cells and your body age more quickly.

What the science shows is that obesity is not the result of aberrant behaviors. Rather, obesity is the result of the nutritional alterations that drive our insulin levels higher. Gluttony and sloth are not the cause of the rapid, global rise in obesity. Rather, they are the symptoms.

With a few rare individual exceptions, that's the biochemical and hormone situation for the 1.5 billion overweight and obese people on the planet. And it's a problem for a sizeable proportion of normal weight people, too. The majority of people today, regardless of weight, produce twice as much insulin for the same dose of glucose as people produced 30 years ago. Even if they're eating about the same amount as the generation before them, they're making more fat in response. That means things are getting worse just by doing nothing. And that's what we're seeing on the streets, in our homes, and in my clinic.

The not-so-usual suspects

Stress, environmental factors, lack of sleep and many other things feed into the obesity pandemic, by changing various biochemical pathways. And each person's insulin and leptin situation is slightly different. But really, the major cause of our ballooning waistlines worldwide boils down to two words: "Toxic food."

The modern diet is larded with things that upset our energy balance and our health. Here are just a few:

- **Fructose:** Fructose is the Voldemort of the metabolic syndrome pandemic, stealthy, ever-present and bad for the common good. The refined, white sugar that you put in your coffee or sprinkle on your cereal consists of molecules that have two halves: One half is "glucose," a minimally sweet substance (think molasses) that all your cells need for energy. The other half is "fructose."

Fructose is the sweet stuff. We like it. A lot. But the truth is that our bodies don't need fructose. There is not one biochemical reaction in the body that requires fructose. A technical way to say this is: Fructose IS an energy source, but it IS NOT a nutrition source. You can get along perfectly fine without fructose. Aside from its effects on the pleasure center of the brain, fructose has lost whatever value it might once have had to humankind. It's vestigial (a hold over, unnecessary). We don't need it. But boy, do we want it.

Does sugar cause weight gain? The data say yes, but not all that much. Is sugar a cause of obesity? In some people, probably so. Is sugar THE cause of obesity? Not even close. What fructose does is cause metabolic syndrome, and that's what makes you sick. Because your liver has a harder time metabolizing it. So, instead, the liver turns fructose into liver fat, and that leads to metabolic syndrome. This drives your insulin even higher, driving more weight gain. The converse is that when metabolic syndrome improves, your weight will improve of its own accord.

Americans now consume an average of 22 teaspoons of sugar each day, up nearly 50 percent from a generation ago, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). We need to cut that in half, according to the AHA.

But just cutting out "high fructose corn syrup" (HFCS) will not save you. HFCS, honey, molasses, agave syrup, brown sugar, organic demerara sugar, beet sugar—to your body, these are all the same thing, chemically.

Today, sugar is everywhere: A 2012 report by the magazine *Mother Jones* found that a generation ago, Americans spent 11.6 percent of their food dollars on processed foods and sweets; now, Americans spend 22.9 percent of food dollars on them. And sugar (the sweet stuff) is in all kinds of places you might not expect: yogurt, spaghetti sauce, crackers (Check out Wheat Thins™!), ramen noodles, even hamburger meat!

- **Trans-fats:** Patented in 1902, and introduced to our food supply (Crisco) in 1911, trans-fats are the single most dangerous item in our food supply. They increase the shelf life of every item to which they are added. Bacteria don't have the machinery to digest trans-fats; so foods with trans-fats keep longer. And guess what? Your mitochondria, those cellular power plants, are just repurposed bacteria. They can't digest trans-fats either. Rather than being converted into energy by the mitochondria, trans-fats just stick around, literally: They line our arteries and our livers, causing disease.

- **Omega-6 fatty acids:** These lead to the production of inflammatory compounds, the ones targeted by aspirin. We need some Omega-6s to help our immune system function, but they're supposed to exist in balance with the Omega-3 fatty acids that fight inflammation. We're supposed to have a 1:1 ratio between omega-6s and omega-3s. Today, most of us have 25 times more Omega-6s on board than Omega-3s. That leads to a pro-inflammatory state that drives heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Omega-6s are found in canola and corn oil, and in the meat from animals fed corn and soy. It makes a difference where you get your protein: Corn-fed beef, chickens fed commercial pellets and corn-fed, farmed fish—all these feed into chronic inflammation in your body.

- **Alcohol:** In small amounts, alcohol can be protective against disease, keeping your system on “alert,” keeping your liver's detoxifying enzymes “ready to go”, ready to process the toxic parts of your food. But in large amounts (more than two drinks per day for a man, one for a woman), alcohol overwhelms your mitochondria, gets turned into liver fat, and drives the development of metabolic syndrome. Just look at the “beer belly” of many adults today.

- **Branched-chain amino acids:** These compounds—leucine, isoleucine, valine—are the essential building blocks of protein. When you are building muscle, these compounds are good. That's why body builders take “Protein Powder.” But when you're not building muscle, these amino acids go to the liver mitochondria to get

turned into energy. And when the mitochondria get overwhelmed, they turn these branched-chain amino acids to liver fat. And liver fat, well, you get the punch line by now: Liver fat leads to metabolic syndrome. Branched-chain amino acids occur in many foods, but you find their highest levels in corn-fed beef, chicken, and farmed (corn-fed) fish.

What's Good for Big Food is Bad for You

The packaged, processed foods that make up 80 percent of what's for sale at your local Kroger's, Piggly Wiggly, Walmart or Safeway are great for the food companies: They're cheap. They're highly profitable. Even better, they keep forever: Thus, the 10-year-old Twinkie®; the Oreo® that never spoils.

These processed foods have been engineered to make you crave them. They're full of sugar, fat, salt and caffeine. Even worse, the ingredients in processed food make you overindulge once you get your mouth around them. Though there's still a robust academic debate about whether fast food can be addictive, doctors no longer dismiss the idea out of hand.

Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse, has gone on record supporting the concept of food addiction. Let me tell you this: After treating obese children for the last 15 years, I can categorically say there are loads of kids who can't fend off a Big Mac® Attack. The science says that sugar is addictive, though not in everyone, like alcohol. But it's addictive nonetheless. Combine sugar with another addictive substance, like caffeine, and now you've a truly addictive, toxic brew: It's called soda.

The food that's cheapest and most available may be good for the food companies. For us mere mortals, that food is a health disaster. It's toxic at high dose, and we're overdosed. Most of the food that surrounds you—in the coffee break room, at the meeting, in the store, at the convenience store check-out, in the movie theater, at street-side stands, at sports events, and in your own cupboards—is processed and will make you fat or sick, or both.

Target the Biochemistry to Improve your Health

So far, medical research has yet to find a pill or a shot that will really fix obesity, or metabolic syndrome for that matter. We can treat all the different diseases that travel with metabolic syndrome, but we can't stop the cellular damage. Based on

how metabolic syndrome occurs (mitochondrial energy overload), there is no obvious drug target; so I wouldn't hold my breath waiting for the "magic bullet". But don't despair. There really is hope.

In order to reverse obesity and metabolic syndrome, we have to reverse the damaging biochemistry. That means we need to give the cellular power plants, the mitochondria, a break. We need to stop the liver overload in order to fix the insulin resistance. We need to get the insulin down in order to fix the leptin resistance, the reason we think we're hungry even though we're fat.

Calories are not the target. **INSULIN IS THE TARGET.**

As long as insulin stays high, the drive to eat and the drive to store energy cannot get better. *Get the insulin down.* That's what my clinic at UCSF does. That's what the recipes in this cookbook do. That's why this cookbook is different. And that's why this cookbook is necessary.

Until the food industry reformulates its fare to provide quality not quantity, and until the U.S. Government stops subsidizing the very foodstuffs that drive disease (corn, soy), the American food-scape is unlikely to change. In the meantime, how do we lower our insulin? We must start eating differently, more like our parents and grandparents. We should be cooking food that has these things:

- **Fiber:** Everyone thinks that fiber is the throw-away nutrient. In fact, fiber is the stealth nutrient. It slows down the rate at which your body can convert food into energy. High-fiber food is like a timed-release capsule. It releases energy into your bloodstream at a slower rate. That way, your mitochondria, and thus your liver, your pancreas and your brain—get the energy slower, so they don't get overwhelmed. Also, fiber reaches the end of the intestine faster. That sends a satiety, "I'm full," signal to your brain sooner, so you won't eat as much.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** These are anti-inflammatory compounds that we need to keep the Omega-6s in check. You must eat them; your body can't make them. Omega-3s come from algae. Wild fish eat algae. We eat the wild fish. Yes, wild fish is more expensive than farmed fish, but many species of farmed fish eat corn. You might as well eat a steak. Another slightly cheaper source of omega-3s is flaxseed. You can also buy eggs from chickens that eat feed rich in omega-3s.
- **Micronutrients:** Some early research suggests that, as we've bred bigger and sweeter fruits and vegetables, that produce has become less nutritious. Some

studies suggest that domestic produce has fewer healthy micronutrients and antioxidants, compounds that combat inflammation. That's what's behind all the calls to eat "wild food." You don't need to forage for your veggies, but you do need to eat lots of leafy greens like spinach and kale, lots of fruits and vegetables, peels and all. Supermarket produce will do as well as the fancy organic kind for your general needs.

Eat "Real" Food

Food writer Michael Pollan has said, "Don't eat food that your grandmother wouldn't recognize as food." We don't need to go that far. After all, would Grandma recognize tempeh, tofu or edamame? Pollan also has said, "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." But when you eat "real" food, the not-too-much takes care of itself. And there are plenty of plants—corn, soy, refined wheat—that aren't all that good for you.

No, the science says that we need to get back to basics. We need real, whole food that we cook at home: whole grains, grass-fed meats, meat and eggs from free-range chickens, wild fish, whole vegetables and fruits, peels and all.

Sounds utopian to most. Indeed, the problem is that "real" food is expensive and considered "specialty" food. This cookbook takes that into account. These recipes are designed for everyone, including parents in low-income neighborhoods. You should be able to afford and find the ingredients in these recipes at most local supermarkets. If you can't, demand these ingredients. More on that later.

You aren't going to find these healthier ingredients in "diet" frozen dinners. You're not going to find them in packaged sauces, packaged cereals, packaged desserts, packaged snacks, or condiments, even those labeled "healthy." In fact, if products are labeled "low-fat," that often means that the fat has been replaced with sugar instead.

You're not going to find this kind of real food at McDonald's, or at any other fast food chain. Witness what happened to the "McLean Deluxe," hamburger meat infused with seaweed. Even though it tasted pretty good, people would not purchase it. When people go to McDonald's, they are not going to be diet-conscious. Even if you eat a salad from the drive-thru, that salad is going to come with croutons and salad dressing dripping in sugars, trans-fats, and Omega-6s. In fact, a McDonald's salad (plus the dressing) has more calories and sodium than

does a Big Mac®. The “healthy” chicken topping the salad will have been fed corn or soy, because that’s cheaper. So the chicken will be full of branched-chain amino acids and omega-6s which leads to—you’ve got it now—metabolic syndrome.

Dessert should be special, a once-a-week affair. Refined sugar should be a treat, something to look forward to. It should not be an everyday, every meal centerpiece. And if you’re going to have dessert, make it fantastic, something to remember. If you can buy it at a supermarket, I promise you, it’s NOT fantastic.

Yes, avoiding the sugar and other problem nutrients in processed food are a little more trouble. Cooking things from scratch may take a little more time. In some cases—fresh berries or high quality meats or fish—may cost a little more. Would you rather pay a couple extra bucks for good produce and spend a little more time cooking whole grains? Or would you rather end up with a life-long, chronic condition that costs tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars, and may even cost you your life? Think of it this way: it’s your time, or your health. Short-term gain for long-term pain.

The Inspiration for this Cookbook

I started synthesizing the science into these conclusions more than a decade ago. Long before I gave a lecture which turned into a 3-million-plus-hit YouTube video explaining the science and the policy implications of sugar [<youtube.com/watch?v=dBnniua6-oM>](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBnniua6-oM), long before I wrote *Fat Chance*, long before I appeared on *60 Minutes*, *NPR Science Friday*, and *The Colbert Report*, I started speaking to the medical community about the obesity pandemic and the science behind it.

While giving a talk at John Muir Medical Center in 2006, I met Cindy Gershen. Cindy’s husband, Lance, is a pediatrician, and he had let her know about the subject of the talk. She came armed for bear. At first, I thought she was a stalker. Then I realized, no, she was way worse! She practically held me down kicking and screaming while she extracted every scientific point I had made to date. Then she said, “Thank you. You have just scientifically validated everything I’ve learned through experience.” We’ve been best friends ever since.

Cindy’s Story

When Cindy was in her mid-20s and pregnant with her third child, in 1981, she opened her first food business, Sunrise Bakery and Café in Walnut Creek, California, 20 miles east of San Francisco. After her son was born, his sleep patterns didn't let her rest much. So she stayed up with him through the night and baked pastries, quiches and breads for her café. People lined up outside for a taste of that home cooking.

She soon outgrew the café's space, and opened Sunrise Bistro, a block away from the café. She continued the homemade tradition there, and expanded it beyond breakfast and snacks to include lunch and dinner entrees.

Two decades later, the Bistro was still going strong and had added a catering department. Yet Cindy rarely made it out the kitchen. Over the years, she had loaded 210 pounds onto her petite, 5-foot-3-inch frame. She had thought she was eating healthy food, but still, she had become obese.

Cindy felt tired, depressed and ashamed. She told me that, during her fat years, she had a constant negative feedback loop going in the back of her mind, "How could she have let her body get so out of whack? What was wrong with her?" She told me that she would have done anything—anything—to get rid of the weight.

Cindy had tried a million diets: Weight Watchers, fasting, diet shakes, you name it. Although she had a wealth of knowledge, she realized she lacked commitment. One day, Cindy said, she decided not to diet. Instead, she said that she fundamentally changed her approach to food. She kept her portions to reasonable levels. She eliminated snacks. She cut refined flour and refined sugar out of her diet. She avoided sodas, alcohol and juice. She ate small amounts of whole grains, added lean proteins and dairy, doubled her fruits and tripled her vegetables.

Over six months, Cindy lost 100 pounds. She felt healthier, more clear-headed, and more energetic than she had in years. As of this writing, she has kept that weight off for 15 years.

"Until I heard you talk, I didn't understand why what I did worked," she told me. "And, it is so liberating to learn that my problem with weight did not have its roots in some character flaw."

In very simple terms, when Cindy cut out added sugar, she broke an addictive cycle with food and stopped a whole grab-bag of unhealthy processes in her body:

insulin and leptin resistance, misfiring biochemical signals that meant she never felt full, overloaded mitochondria, liver fat: in other words, “metabolic syndrome”.

When Cindy ate real food rather than processed food, she felt less hungry because it took her body longer to process the fuel she was putting into it. That has helped her to stick with her new, healthier habits. By reducing her insulin, Cindy’s positive feedback loop (leptin resistance) regained its servo-mechanism (leptin sensitivity), and became a negative feedback loop once again, allowing her to lose the weight and keep it off.

Cindy still gets choked up when she talks about that day that we met. She understands better than most how painful it is to be severely overweight: the cycle of self-blame and shame and diet failure and hopelessness. She often says she can’t believe how good she feels now. She brims with energy. Let me tell you, this grandmother gets more done before 9 a.m. than most people do in an entire day. I’m an overachiever, and yet she puts me to shame. She says she still marvels at the revelation of feeling so good about her body after decades of hating it.

Cindy finally reversed her obesity by reversing her biochemistry. She did it by cooking and eating “real food”; indeed, with many of the recipes you’ll find in this book.

Rob and Cindy Go on the Road

Not long after our first meeting, Cindy and I started working together. We called our events “Eat and Learns.” You can’t talk to people about the benefits of “real” food; you have to show them. That means feeding them.

We spoke at retirement communities and political gatherings and schools and conferences. I’d explain the science, Cindy would tell her story and the method behind the madness. Then we’d cook a healthy meal with the audience to show them that it’s not difficult.

We do the same thing in my clinic: We hold a “teaching breakfast” with the patients and the parents. We’ve learned that you can’t get kids to change until the parents change; and they won’t change until you show them four things: 1) Their kid will eat the food; 2) Other people’s kids will eat the food; 3) They themselves like the food; and 4) They can afford the food.

Providing all that information provides the best chance of turning a family around; anything less than that is doomed to failure. And that's what we continue to see from all these healthy-eating programs nationwide. Most health and diet regimes don't work long-term. It's time for a change.

Changing Communities

Emboldened by her scientific understanding of her own story, Cindy revamped the menus of her restaurant and catering business, cutting down on sugar and refined flours, adding lots more beans, grains, vegetables and fruits to her menus.

Gradually, Cindy became a public advocate for healthier food and healthier lifestyles. She sponsored a "Mayor-A-Thon" to get politicians involved, walking a mile-a-week with elders at a large retirement community to promote healthier lifestyles. She organized health festivals. She challenged other restaurants to serve healthier food to their customers. She started a non-profit, Wellness City Challenge <wellnesscitychallenge.org>, to promote healthier lifestyles. I agreed to serve on the board of Wellness City Challenge, and still do. I have also started my own non-profit, The Institute for Responsible Nutrition <responsiblefoods.org>, to provide the medical, nutrition, and legal know-how to take on the processed food industry. We work together to change communities. Today, the San Francisco Bay Area. Tomorrow, we're coming to your town.

As Cindy got more and more involved with promoting healthy lifestyles in local communities, she started to work more and more with schools. She saw kids like those who populate my medical practice at UCSF: pre-teens with diabetes, grossly obese teenagers, kids who have trouble focusing, kids who are hyperactive, kids with constant fatigue. Cindy felt that many of these problems could be solved if only kids had the knowledge and the power to change how they eat. Eventually, she decided that she needed to start teaching these kids about nutrition and how to cook healthy food.

Cindy got a part-time job as a teacher at Mount Diablo High School, an under-served, struggling school in the suburban town of Concord, about 10 miles from affluent Walnut Creek, where she lives and operates her businesses. Cindy says she is blessed with the people who staff her businesses, so she could run the restaurant and catering operations while only checking in for a few hours each day. She was free to become a part-time high school teacher.

Think about this: Cindy gave up a lucrative day job that she loves to take on the biggest challenge in America: toxic food. Talk about being an overachiever!

Kids Will Eat This Food and Like It

During the 2011-2012 school year, Cindy taught one class of about 20 high school juniors how to cook healthy food. Together, they fed their entire class and offered free breakfast and lunch to all the teachers who wanted to participate. The kids ate food that everyone else says teenagers won't eat: Whole foods low in sugar, high in fiber and nutrients. Dessert was fruit, not cakes and cookies. She has continued these efforts, adding more classes through the 2012-2013 calendar and into the current school year.

I have visited Cindy's classes many times, and what I've seen there gives me so much hope for the future. Some of Cindy's students have lost 50, even 100 pounds, eating the dishes you'll find in this cookbook. Teens who once had trouble focusing, who were once behavior problems, who once had no direction have become energized and ambitious. Cindy has changed their food and empowered her charges for the rest of their lives. The mantra of the class: "Change the Food, Change the Future."

When we were choosing the recipes for this book, Cindy enlisted students from her classes to help test the recipes at a scale more appropriate for a home kitchen, rather than for a restaurant or a school cafeteria. After they cook, the kids eat their creations; servings of shaved, roasted brussel sprouts, kale chips, and quinoa. When I've visited Cindy's classes, I have witnessed it again and again.

Look, I'm a pediatrician. I get to see other people's kids all day. And I'm telling you this: You have never met a more positive, friendly, alert, and engaged group of young people. No attitudes or obsessing over smart phones or gang colors here. These kids are armed with survival skills, and they're not just surviving; they're thriving.

You Can Do It Too

When they see my videos on YouTube or read *Fat Chance*, people frequently email me. The most common question, is, "So what do we do now?" Cutting out

sugar and the bulk of refined flours, making things from scratch—All that sounds so difficult. It sounds so complicated. It sounds so bland. It sounds so un-fun.

Both the food and the diet industries would like you to believe just that. The reason Cindy and I decided to write this book together is that it's just not true. It's another misleading, corporate dogma to be debunked.

With new knowledge, a new approach to food, and a few basic cooking techniques and recipes, you can change your life based on the science I outlined in *Fat Chance*. The food you make can be delicious; and it can be fun.

The steps you need to take are not all that complicated, and it's our hope that this book will show you that's so. You don't need to diet. In fact, if you ever go on a diet again, I will have failed. You can lose weight and keep it off. Even more important, you can reverse the damage of metabolic syndrome. You can live a longer, happier, and healthier life. And ultimately, it's cheaper too. Let's get cooking!

CHAPTER 2

Defensive Nutrition

We did not write this cookbook to tell you all the things that you can't have. I do not count calories, and neither does Cindy. We do not diet. We stay active, but we have not become gym rats or prisoners to the treadmill. We have made peace with our bodies and with our food.

Some people espouse the concept of "Caloric Restriction," an extremely low calorie diets, as the only way to lose weight and increase lifespan. The joke goes, "Caloric Restriction won't make you live longer, it will just feel that way."

You don't need to drastically cut your intake to 1,000 or 1,200 calories a day to live long and prosper. You need to eat real food. If you're feeling draggy, old, and tired, check out your food. I'll bet you 10-to-1 that toxic food's your culprit.

Both Cindy and I love to eat. We love to cook. We love the hunt for ingredients at their peak: in stores and in farmer's markets, and sometimes in our own gardens. We love the heavy round fuzz of a peach in August. We love the luxuriant delicacy of just-picked salad greens. We love pizza, the gooey mess of melted mozzarella cheese. We love the savory, fatty indulgence of a well-cooked, but reasonably-sized, piece of meat. We enjoy the (very) occasional sweet treat.

We think that gathering around a table with friends is one of life's great pleasures. I love chopping and stirring in the kitchen with my wife Julie, and our two daughters, Miriam, 14, and Meredith, 8. We're like any other family: we love barbecues, holiday dinners, and picnics. We love eating together. That's why we cook.

Cindy can whip up a brunch for 30 without breaking a sweat. It helps that she grew up in a big, boisterous, Italian family. She brought three kids, and her husband Lance brought five kids, to their marriage. They've got loads of grandkids. Parties at Cindy and Lance's house feature amazing spreads: tables groaning with salads of all kinds, sliced fruit, rice and grain gratins and casseroles, grilled meats, poached fish. There's not a chip or a pretzel in sight, and no one ever complains.

Shopping, cooking and eating should not be a guilty pleasure that makes you sick and threatens your life. Give us three weeks. Shop, and cook, and eat in the spirit of this book for that period. That's about the same amount of time it takes most of

my patients to detox off sugared soda. I'm willing to bet your health that you won't even miss the processed junk food. In fact, the processed food will not taste as good to you. I've seen it again and again. Once people taste "real" food again, they don't go back to the processed kind.

How Real Food Became Toxic Food

It seems like every day someone comes out with a new theory, or program, or cookbook, promising the solution to all our food woes. What we are proposing with these recipes is not magic — it is, rather, a complete re-orientation of our food lives, based on the science of what is driving our obesity and diabetes epidemics.

This isn't as difficult as it sounds. What we are proposing is that you shop, cook and eat more like your grandparents did. The food in this book is simple and straightforward. It's also delicious.

It's easy to forget how much our food lives have changed in the last 50 years: A couple of generations ago, "convenience food" didn't really exist. If food was "packaged," that probably meant that your mother, or your aunt or your grandmother canned it. People shopped every two days and ate fresh, seasonal ingredients. There wasn't really a freezer section at the grocery store. People cooked dinner each night. It was a rarity when families went out to eat.

In the 1960s, packaged foods roared onto the market: Swanson TV dinners, Birds-Eye frozen vegetables, Hamburger Helper®, Kraft Macaroni & Cheese, Chef Boyardee Beefaroni™, Rice-A-Roni®, Lunchables®, Ore-Ida Golden Fries™ and on and on. All these foods were seen as efficient and modern. People chomped down on them. Gradually, where once we'd had farmers and food, we had spawned a "food industry."

At the same time, families began to find it difficult to get by on one salary. Gradually, two-income households became the norm. In addition, the suburbs grew, and parents became glorified chauffeurs for their kids' endless activities aimed at getting them a leg up for college. Life got harried and busy. Feeling the chaos and the new frenetic pace, people stopped cooking. They started relying on meals out, usually at fast-food outlets. Or they bought "ready-to-eat" processed foods from the supermarket. Along the way, food became an individual "commodity." The goal became: can I get the lowest price — instead of am I getting the best I can?

Then, in the late 1970s, dietary saturated fat became the bogeyman. As Americans raced to cut fats out of their diet, the food companies raced to respond. But they had a problem: How could all these popular processed foods be made to taste good without the fat? Pretty quickly, they came upon a solution: Add sugar. And boy did they add sugar! Today, you find added, refined sugar in all kinds of places that you might not expect it: spaghetti sauce, bloody Mary mix, taco seasoning, fast food French fries, sliced bread, every breakfast cereal, most yogurts, and pretty much anything in the freezer case or the snack and soda aisle. And excess sugar is the real bogeyman for both obesity and diabetes.

By the 1980's, families were eating several meals a week that, you guessed it, were not only fatty and full of refined carbohydrates, but positively loaded with sugar. Funny thing: This is exactly the same time that the obesity epidemic reared its ugly head. And it's gotten worse every decade since.

Why is This Cookbook Different?

Remember that your body needs five classes of essential nutrients to remain healthy:

- **Protein:** The body's building blocks. 4 calories/gram. Of the 20 amino acids, nine are essential; your body can't make them. You must eat them.
- **Fats:** Concentrated source of energy. 9 calories/gram. There are several essential fatty acids as well, such as oleic acid, DHA, and EPA. You can't make them. You must eat them.
- **Vitamins and other metabolic co-factors:** Drivers of various cell processes, such as energy metabolism, growth, and repair. The only vitamin that you don't have to eat is Vitamin D, provided you get enough sunlight (and we don't). The rest must be eaten.
- **Minerals:** Necessary catalysts of numerous body functions. Again, no options; you have to eat these.
- **Water:** Remember, our bodies are mostly water!

Wait – something's missing.... What about carbohydrates, you say?

Carbohydrates are your body's "easy" fuel, at 4 calories/gram. In addition, glucose molecules are necessary to add to various proteins to change their characteristics (for instance peptide hormones), a process called "glycosylation."

So why aren't carbohydrates essential? Because the only carbohydrate your body needs is glucose, and your liver is very efficient at making it from protein or fat when it needs to. So, while glucose is "essential", dietary carbohydrate is not. Worse yet, if you over-consume dietary carbohydrate, your liver will turn the excess into fat, driving disease. So carbohydrate is decidedly a good-news-bad-news deal. How do you make carbohydrates good news? Consume them with their inherent fiber! Eat them as whole grains, the way they came out of the ground. That slows absorption, and keeps the liver healthy. It is the fiber that's essential, not the carbohydrate!

Most diets and weight loss programs emphasize one or more of these essential nutrients, while discounting the others. What we're saying is that we all need to get "real." We need ALL these nutrients to live and function at our best. We just need to consume them from basic ingredients, in reasonable portions.

Though the media and my critics love to tag me as the "anti-sugar guy," I'm not. Like Berkeley restaurateur Alice Waters of Chez Panisse fame, and food writer Michael Pollan of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* fame, I'm a "real food" guy.

You might say Alice Waters leads the "aesthetic school" — real food for food's sake, because it looks and tastes better. Michael Pollan leads the "socio-ecological school," real food because the changes in our diet have hurt our economy and our environment. I'm in the "biochemical school," real food promotes healthy body biochemistry, while processed food diet is literally toxic — it causes chronic disease.

You may choose the school you prefer. Choose the issue that floats your boat. It doesn't matter. Real food is the answer to all of our eating problems. That's what makes this cookbook different. If you care about food, if you care about your environment, if you care about health, then this cookbook is for you.

Back to Basics

The food that we emphasize in this cookbook has a lot in common with the food your forebears used to enjoy:

- It includes meats and fats and cheese and eggs. Eaten in moderation, your body needs the proteins and fats in these foods. If you travel to remote areas of the world where people don't have enough fat in their diet, they look sick with thin, brittle hair and dry, papery skin.
- It does not eliminate the sugar that occurs naturally in foods like milk, potatoes and fruit. What it does eliminate is most of the refined sugar that is currently added to processed food by the bucket load.
- It emphasizes foods that provide lots of fiber: green food and brown food. Fiber is essential because it slows the digestion of food, delivering nutrients and energy to your liver and your bloodstream at a steady rate, avoiding the spikes in blood sugar that shunt calories to fat and cause myriad problems.
- It's full of whole grains: hulled barley, steel cut oats, quinoa, farro, brown rice.
- It cuts out processed foods, sauces, and condiments.
- It provides delicious, healthy alternatives to prepared food pitfalls that can undercut even a home cook trying to be healthy: salad dressing, ketchup, jarred spaghetti sauce, and barbecue sauce.
- It offers no-sugar and low-sugar desserts. Where we've provided "full sugar" treats, the recipes still call for one-third less sugar than conventional recipes. We promise that you and your family won't even notice the difference.

Sugar: "A" Cause or "The" Cause?

Sometimes, when I meet someone at a party or hospital function and tell them what I do, they exclaim, "Oh! You're the anti-sugar guy!" Well, yes and no. Sugar is a big part of the problem, but it's actually way more complicated.

People often ask, "Is sugar the cause of obesity?" Common sense would argue that sugar is clearly related to excess weight. But I don't believe in common sense, I believe in data. The data show that the two most "obesogenic" (obesity-causing) foodstuffs in our diet are potato chips and French fries (carbohydrate and fat together). Sugar comes in a distant third. Furthermore, the data actually show that sugar only accounts for a total of 0.8 extra BMI points, leaving us to account for an average increase of five to seven BMI points nationally. As I said in Chapter 1, sugar is "*a*" cause of obesity, not "*the*" cause.

It's not the calories in sugar that do the most damage, it's the way that excess added sugar is metabolized in the liver, which causes chronic disease, and distorts brain and hormone signaling, leading people to feel more and more hungry, even as they eat more and more.

Eating more calories than you burn may give you love handles or a bottom that's larger than you might want. But that fat is just under the skin, what doctors call "subcutaneous fat," that may make you depressed when you shop for bathing suits. But that kind of fat won't necessarily make you sick.

What makes you sick is inappropriate energy storage in organs not designed for energy storage. As I've outlined above, the spikes in blood sugar caused by eating processed food overwhelm your body's systems, and force it frantically to stash calories wherever it can: mostly in the liver, muscles and other organs. This is what doctors call "visceral fat", and that kind of fat leads to the group of illnesses we call "metabolic syndrome."

Sugar may not provide all the calories that are making us fat, but it's the carrot, the bait, the lure. Added sugar makes us crave more food, and makes our bodies store calories in the wrong places when we eat.

This allows the food industry to trumpet an excuse for the garbage diet they're foisting on the unsuspecting public:

- **We just give the public what it wants.** Well, as I've outlined above, if you give the public lots of added sugar, that makes people want ever more products with lots of added sugar. This way, Big Food can blame your extra fat on your bad habits and lack of discipline. If you didn't like Doritos® and Hostess® Fruit Pies, they wouldn't make them, right?

Again, it's not that simple, because processed food manufacturers have also discovered something they'd rather you not know:

- **If you build it, they will come.** In other words, if you add sugar to things, boy, do the consumers come. Thus far, all attempts to get people to eat less have met with failure. Why? Sugar interferes with our biochemical hunger and reward signals. Sugar tricks us into eating too much of the wrong things. Sugar makes us sick. And the food industry hides it in plain sight.

If It Has a Label, It's Processed

If you're going to avoid toxic food, you need to learn read food labels.

If it's not processed, it doesn't need a label. When was the last time you saw a nutrition label on a bunch of scallions, or a russet potato? Complete abstinence from processed food has become a major tenet of the "Slow Food" movement that's caught on in high-income cities like San Francisco, where we live, and in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles.

I certainly don't want to be a food scold. But people need to realize that if it has a nutrition label, it's processed. In an ideal world, your family wouldn't eat anything from a package. But I'm realistic: I know that "zero processed food" is just not "real world" for most families. I'm not always perfect in this regard myself. Every Wednesday, I see patients all day in clinic, with no access to a refrigerator. I get about 10 minutes for lunch on those days. My Wednesday lunch ritual has become Chinese food from the takeout place right on campus, which is hardly healthy.

By the same token, I realize that most people don't bake their own bread any more. The bread most of us eat is processed. Ditto for pasta. Most families buy canned beans, and many brands have added sugar. [Even the dried ones come in packages with labels.] Most of us eat cereal; 99 percent of which is processed and over-sugared. Some of us occasionally have a bag of pretzels, or chips. That's REALLY processed.

What to do? When you do buy bagged and boxed ingredients (even lightly processed foods), just do so with a healthy dose of skepticism.

With all the low-fat, low-carb, low-sugar, and low-calorie claims screaming from every jar, bag and box, you'd think that most things in the supermarket are good for you. That's what the food companies want you to believe.

Alas, the opposite is true: As I've pointed out, 80 percent of the food in most markets is processed. And the vast majority of that food is just packed with sugar, fat, and refined carbs. Unfortunately, the food industry gives us our processed food with a sugar chaser. That's what makes it taste good. Take out the sugar, salt and fat, and processed food tastes god-awful, like straw or sawdust. Journalist Michael Moss of *The New York Times* wrote a whole book about that, "*Salt, Sugar, Fat: How the Food Giants Hooked Us*".

You think you can figure out what's healthy by reading nutrition labels? Think again. Not only is the American food safety regulation and labeling system deeply flawed, but Big Food hides the toxic ingredients, or disguises them. You really can't judge a food by its label, that is, unless you know what you're doing. The whole country, the whole world actually, needs a tutorial in what I like to call "Label Reading 101."

Hiding in Plain Sight

With my wife Julie, I've written an e-book, *Sugar Has 56 Names: A Shopper's Guide*. In it, we explain these issues in detail and deconstruct the food labels of the most common processed foods. We hope you'll take this guide to the market with you on your smart phone or tablet. Just remember: You may think you're buying something that doesn't have sugar, but the food industry calls sugar by 56 different names.

Fifty-six names for sugar:

- Agave nectar*
- Barbados sugar*
- Barley malt
- Beet sugar*
- Blackstrap molasses*
- Brown rice syrup*
- Brown sugar*
- Buttered syrup*
- Cane juice crystals*
- Cane sugar*
- Caramel*
- Carob syrup*
- Castor sugar*
- Confectioner's sugar*
- Corn syrup
- Corn syrup solids
- Crystalline fructose*
- Date sugar*
- Demerara sugar*
- Dextran
- Dextrose
- Diastatic malt

Diatase
Ethyl maltol
Evaporated cane juice*
Florida crystals*
Fructose*
Fruit juice*
Fruit juice concentrate*
Galactose
Glucose
Glucose solids
Golden sugar*
Golden syrup*
Grape sugar*
High-fructose corn syrup*
Honey*
Icing sugar*
Invert sugar*
Lactose
Malt syrup
Maltose
Maple syrup*
Molasses*
Muscovado sugar*
Organic raw sugar*
Panocha*
Raw sugar*
Refiner's syrup*
Rice syrup
Sorghum syrup*
Sucrose*
Sugar*
Treacle*
Turbinado sugar*
Yellow sugar*

*Contains fructose

Here are a few main points to keep in mind as you navigate the nutritional minefield that is the average supermarket.

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency charged with keeping our food supply safe, is mostly interested in “acute” toxins, things that make you keel

over as soon as you consume them. The FDA is not set up to deal with foods that may cause serious health problems over time: things like sugar and refined carbs.

- The FDA keeps a list called “Generally Regarded as Safe,” (GRAS), begun in 1958. The GRAS list is the enemy of anyone who eats. An ingredient may get the GRAS seal of approval simply because of experience or common use in foods. Or, it may become GRAS because it’s safe under “the conditions of its intended use.” But in 1958, when the list started, no one foresaw our current sky-high levels of sugar, omega-6 fats, and trans-fats.

Too bad. Once something has been judged GRAS, it’s almost impossible to get that designation removed. And what about new ingredients? All the food companies have to do is pay a bunch of scientists to sit in a room and declare the ingredient GRAS. Of 10,000 items on the GRAS list, 3,000 have not even been reviewed. I don’t know about you, but that doesn’t make me feel very safe.

- The nutrition labels won’t save you. The information you really need just isn’t there. For instance, the label lists “*total sugars*” in your strawberry ice cream. But the natural sugars in the milk and the fruit won’t hurt you; it’s the “*added sugar*” you need to watch. Likewise, the label lists “*total fat*.” But all fats are not created equal. Olive oil is good for you, whereas trans-fats will kill you over time. Both get lumped together on the nutrition label.

Frankly, Cindy and I both think all food is inherently good. It’s what companies do to the food that’s not. It would be far more useful if Big Food would tell us what they did to the food; i.e. what they took out of each product and what they added in, rather than these nutrient totals. But I’m not holding my breath waiting for that to happen. Maybe, if enough consumers complain, if enough consumers send a message with their dollars and their votes, things will change. But that’s a process that will take at least a decade, if not more. In the meantime, you and I need to be food samurai: We need to slash through all the labeling and processing subterfuge to defend the health of our families.

Defensive Food Shopping

My wife Julie and I go into much more detail in *Sugar has 56 Names*, but here are some things to watch for as you make your way through the supermarket:

- **Serving Size.** Make sure to note how many servings are in each can or each bag. Who ever ate half a can of tuna or half a pack of ramen noodles, for instance? So, if the label says “two servings,” remember that the nutrition numbers are misleading you by half. You may glance at it and think, “Wow, only 150 calories!” But if there are two servings in the pack, you’re really consuming 300 calories.
- **Cholesterol is not the Bogeyman.** In the 1970s, we were told that eggs were bad for us because they have cholesterol. It turns out that if you’re not part of a small minority of people with a genetic lipid disorder, eggs may be one of the healthiest foods you can eat.
- **A Calorie is Not a Calorie.** As I’ve outlined above, your body metabolizes fat calories differently from sugar calories. It’s the number of calories from refined carbohydrate that you need to watch. Carbohydrates and sugar create the blood sugar spikes that lead to metabolic syndrome. Here’s your clue: Look at the Calories from Fat. Subtract the fat calories from the total calories, and you’ll get a rough idea of the calories from carbohydrate.
- **A Fat is Not a Fat-1.** Omega-3 fatty acids will save your life; trans fats will kill you. “Total Fat” is just not a useful measure. And a food can be labeled “trans fat-free” if it has 0.49 grams or less of trans fats per serving. So if you eat four processed foods each day, even though they may say “trans fat-free,” you may still be eating as much as 2 grams of trans fat, enough to do real damage over time.
- **A Fat is Not a Fat-2.** Omega-6 fatty acids, which promote inflammation, come from plant oils such as corn oil and soybean oil. Eating corn-fed beef, chicken or fish currently means high levels of Omega-6s. Honestly, it’s better for your health to eat a little less meat or pay a little more for grass-fed, free-range or wild-caught animals.
- **A Protein is Not a Protein.** Certain amino acids in protein are common, while others are rare. If you are deficient in the rare amino acids (for example, tryptophan), you don’t feel good, you are not happy, and you are hungry. It pays to eat the highest quality protein, with the highest concentration of tryptophan. That’s eggs.
- **A Carb is Not a Carb.** The nutrition label lists “total carbohydrates.” That includes the fiber plus the three types of carb, things that have glucose (starch), or fructose (sugar), or galactose (milk sugar). The body processes these different types of starch very differently. See *Fat Chance* for the science. Remember, carbs

are not essential, and can be detrimental. Eating carbs along with their inherent fiber will help reduce your blood insulin and improve your health. But you can't assume, for example, that "whole grain" bread really has that fiber, because the FDA has no definition for "whole grain." Look for more granular crusts on bread and baked goods: those are more likely to contain intact whole grain. Don't buy any carbohydrate that doesn't have at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

- **A Sugar is Not a Sugar.** The "total sugar" listed on the label includes the natural sugars inherent in fruits, vegetables and dairy. What you really need to worry about is "added sugar." It's not always easy to parse this out, but take the case of yogurt: A 6-ounce plain yogurt has 7 grams of sugar, all lactose. A pomegranate yogurt of the same size has 19 grams of sugar, so roughly 12 grams have been added. That's as much as a serving of Cap'n Crunch™ cereal. Maybe yogurt isn't always so healthy.

- **Ingredient Lists.** If it has more than five ingredients, it probably has fillers and chemicals that you don't need. If an ingredient has a name that's not in English, it's a filler, a preservative, or something else that makes it processed food, not "real food".

Six Rules to Shop By

As you can see, reading the current nutrition label and shopping in a modern supermarket is a lot like trying to navigate by a road map in Japanese. Michael Pollan came up with a whole book of "*Food Rules*." As I push the grocery cart, I keep in mind these six:

1. Don't go to the store hungry.
2. Shop the edges of the supermarket. Stay out of the aisles.
3. If the food has a company logo you've heard of, it's been processed.
4. If it says "partially hydrogenated," the trans-fats in that food will outlive you.
5. If it doesn't say "whole grain," it isn't. And even if it does say "whole grain," it might not be.
6. If sugar is any one of the first three ingredients, it's a dessert.

And don't forget: By my count, sugar has at least 56 names.

Thinking About Meals

As I've outlined in *Fat Chance*, we've got our food priorities dangerously off-kilter. You may think that the food pyramid that was in vogue when you were a kid is a good guide to a decent dinner for your family. But the food pyramid was never based on solid science; it was more of a marketing campaign. During the last half-century, the USDA has had two food guides, a food wheel, two versions of the food pyramid that recommended more grains and cereals than fruits and vegetables, and most recently, "My Plate," which recommends that half of our calories should come from fruits and vegetables. Does any of this make sense? What should you do? Do you think Julia Child was worried about the Food Pyramid?

Think about what you consider a good, healthy meal. Like the cover of this cookbook, is it meat, starch and a vegetable? Is it a turkey hero sandwich grabbed from a deli? Is it Cheerios® with a side of broccoli, an actual meal recently described to me by a UCSF med student?

Here's the deal: Whatever you may think constitutes a "healthy" meal, it probably doesn't have nearly enough fiber. It probably doesn't include enough whole grains. It probably makes meat the centerpiece, rather than as a bit of savory protein to accent the whole grains, vegetables, greens and fruits. It probably includes dessert. It probably includes processed foods like pasta, or supermarket bread, or even an "artisanal" baguette. It's fine to eat that way occasionally, but a steady diet of those kinds of meals will zap your energy. It will age you, because it's putting extra pressure on your liver. It will make you sick, slowly, but surely.

Cindy's Plate

When she was trying to get control of her food and her body, Cindy came up with a formula that she calls "Cindy's Plate." Until we have more rational, science-based guidance from the federal government, I think Cindy's formula makes a lot of sense. Remember, it's not about dieting. It's about eating real food in sensible portions.

Here's what Cindy eats in one day:

- Two 6-ounce portions of cooked vegetables (each about a cup).

- Two 6-ounce portions of salad and raw vegetables.
- Three 6-ounce portions of fruit.
- Two 4-ounce portions of lean protein: mostly chicken, turkey, fish, tofu, and eggs.
- Four to 6 tablespoons good fat: olive oil, rice bran oil, or safflower oil.
- Three one-cup portions of dairy: milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, or unsweetened alternative milks, such as soy, almond, rice, or hazelnut.
- 2 half cups of cooked whole grain or starch, polenta, hulled barley, cracked wheat, quinoa, brown rice, sweet potato, yams, or potatoes (grilled, roasted or baked).

Cindy almost never deviates from this guideline. She feels that if she did, she would return to her unhappy past of dieting and hating her body. And believe me: if you piled up 2 1/3 pounds of fruits and vegetables, a pound and a half of dairy, and half a pound of protein, you'll see that Cindy's not going hungry. In terms of volume, she's probably eating more than my patients who struggle with obesity.

Cindy doesn't worry about calories. Instead, she has a food plan. When she goes out, or when she goes on vacation, she simply eats according to her guidelines. She seeks out restaurants that will give her what she needs. She tries to eat roughly the same amount of vegetables, fruits, grains and protein wherever she is. She doesn't worry. She enjoys her food. She feels good every day.

Cindy doesn't believe in snacks. She believes that you need a period of fasting between meals to really taste your food, and to allow your blood insulin level to come down. Because of the way she eats, she's rarely hungry between meals. Sometimes, during a busy day in the clinic, I do grab for a snack to give me a boost of energy. When I do, I try to remember these guidelines: A snack should have no more than 150 to 200 calories. It should contain two food groups, such as dairy and vegetable, or meat and fruit. That rules out a 250-calorie bag of crackers, chips, or cookies!

When we're teaching classes, Cindy refers to her eating style as "Cindy's plate." I'm less controlled than Cindy. I admit it: I love a delicious meal in a restaurant or at home, and I'm just not going to measure out all my food exactly. I also carry more extra pounds than Cindy!

If you want to try Cindy's plate, you can divide up each meal this way. When you eat in a restaurant, try to divide your plate up this way as well:

- 1/2 vegetables or fruit
- 1/4 meat or dairy protein
- 1/4 dairy or whole grains

When you think of it this way, it's obvious how completely backwards the standard American diet has become. Instead of fruits and veggies taking up half the plate, fats, sugar and processed food do. We're eating exactly the opposite of the way that we should eat. Shop, cook and eat real food, and you'll be amazed how good you feel.

A Word About Dessert

Two generations ago, dessert was something that a family enjoyed after a special Sunday dinner. It did not accompany every meal. Ice cream was not a twice-a-day occurrence. School lunch did not come with cookies, cake, or candy.

Desserts are great. Of course they're great. Otherwise, why would it be so difficult to resist them? But they should be treats, not diet staples.

I'm on record: actor Alec Baldwin asked me if I eat dessert. When I'm in New York, I have a piece of Junior's cheesecake. When I'm in New Orleans, I enjoy bread pudding with whiskey sauce. Other than these kinds of dalliances, I'm pretty careful. When I do have a sweet dessert, I make it a really good one. Life's too short to eat bad dessert.

Dessert is not just ice cream, cakes, cookies, pies, and candy. The alcohol in a couple of glasses of wine are metabolized the same as the sugar in a piece of chocolate cake. That's dessert. Pancakes with maple syrup deliver more sugar than a slice of chocolate cake. That's dessert. If you have orange juice with those pancakes, that's two desserts. By all means, have a margarita when you go out to a Mexican place with friends. But remember, that's dessert.

If you go out for dinner, have the crabcakes remoulade, two glasses of wine, steak with bordelaise sauce, bread and butter, and potatoes au gratin — you've already had five desserts in one meal: the wine, the hors d'oeuvres, the potatoes, the white bread and butter, the bordelaise sauce. You've just had five sugar and carb-loaded treats, so don't feel particularly virtuous about splitting the apple tart or crème brûlée with your dining partner.

My kids know that during the week, if they want something sweet after a meal, they can reach for a piece of fruit. Julie and I try to make sure we stock the fridge with seasonal fruits at their peak so that our kids can satisfy their sweet tooth in a healthy way.

When Cindy goes out into the community to teach healthy cooking to young kids, she always asks, “How many desserts a day to stay healthy?”

“One!” The students learn quickly.

The kids also learn that “dessert” is anything with lots of added sugar or refined carbs: an iced fruit bar, one cookie (a normal-sized cookie, not one of those disks the size of your hand), one or two pieces of hard candy. Dessert is not a whole bag of Fig Newtons, nor a quart of ice cream. That’s not dessert, that’s diabetes in a container. Over time, that sort of overindulging will most definitely kill you.

For a big dessert, like that decadent piece of chocolate cake or an ice cream sundae, or strawberry shortcake with whipped cream, I think that once a week is a good guideline. We find that when we do allow ourselves to indulge, it feels like an incredible luxury. We linger over each bite, and when we’re finished, we feel satisfied, not stuffed and guilty.

Dessert should be part of your life. And when you have it, it should be ethereal and sublime. Don’t throw away your dessert experience on packaged cookies or fluorescent Sponge Bob “ice cream” bars. Make it yourself. And make it special. There’s nothing worse than wasting your dessert on a store-bought preparation with 25 ingredients in it. My wife Julie’s cookies are legend; there’s no store-bought cookie that can touch them.

CHAPTER 3

Weapons in the War Against Toxic Food: Basic Cooking Techniques

I grew up in Canarsie, Brooklyn, watching my mother cook. There was no fast food back then, and the only processed food was Swanson® TV Dinners; the rest was all from scratch. Supper was all hands on deck when my father came home on the LL subway from working in Manhattan. My mother would always experiment on company, the more outlandish the menu, the better. The only time the family ate out was on Sunday evenings at the local Chinese restaurant. I still remember that place's broiled scallops with water chestnuts wrapped in bacon. Extended family dinners such as Jewish holidays meant Grandma's giblet soup, true nirvana. My greatest regret is that Grandma never wrote the recipe down. If she had, it would be in this cookbook! After Grandma passed away, nobody could make that soup as well as she had.

When I was in med school, I took a primary interest in cooking. A guy who cooked was a pleasant shock for a girl on the first date. Today, dinner still means all hands on deck: my wife, Julie, both girls, and myself. They wait till I get home, even when I'm on call, no matter what the time. And there's no TV during dinner. It's about the food, and being together.

Cindy grew up in the East Bay suburbs of San Francisco where she still lives. Her grandparents owned a catering business in Emeryville, a town between Oakland and Berkeley. Cindy likes to say that she can't remember a time when her family wasn't congregated in the kitchen, laughing, teaching, dancing and cooking, always cooking. Everything in her family happened in the kitchen.

Her grandmother and her aunts lived at the stove and around the family table. Cindy gravitated to them. They made the kitchen a safe haven, a place for nurturing. By age three, Cindy was helping to make Italian omelets, or "frittatas." By seven, she'd moved on to gnocchi, those amazing Italian pillows of semolina and ricotta cheese or potatoes.

From these expansive, joyful women, her Nana and her aunts, Cindy learned a casual style of cooking: a little bit of this, a little bit of that. Thank God she had a mother who didn't like to cook, but loved to eat. Cindy had a reason to cook, and an appreciative audience.

Her big boisterous family followed certain themes—each dish had a base that didn't waiver—but her relatives weren't afraid to experiment. Everything was fresh and homemade. They all tried to outdo each other, trying to serve up “the freshest” or “the best,” in the most loving way. It was about the food, but also about the atmosphere. The way they lived communicated this message, “I give you my time, because you are worth it.” Cindy says, “We cooked and ate as a family, and we felt loved.”

We feel that, for many families, there's just not enough love coming from home kitchens, nor from restaurants. It's our hope that this book will give you the tools to enjoy cooking, eating and experimenting in the same way that our families did. Food should foster family and community. It should be joyful. It should make you feel good. We want people to feel that food is worth their passion and their time. We want people to have more energy, to be happy and healthy. But remember — Food is NOT Love. Food is food. Love is love. Don't mistake the two. And kids need both.

Feeding your family should not be a chore. It should not be difficult. Strangely, with the advent of the Food Network and endless food reality shows—*Top Chef Master*, *Barefoot Contessa*, *Chefography*, *Extreme Chef*, *Ace of Cakes*, *The Chew*—you'd think that Americans would all be gourmet cooks. But I think that actually the endless food programming puts off many people. Cooking seems something that celebrities and experts do, not normal Americans.

Trust us, you don't need to be able to do all those things you see on cooking shows or in food magazines. Cooking doesn't have to be complicated. After all, people have been doing it for a 1.8 million or 400,000 or 12,000 years, depending on which archaeologist you believe. In this chapter, we'll give you the basics you need to get started. If you want to get fancy once you've mastered the basics, great. And if you don't, no one will notice; they'll only be too happy for a home-cooked meal.

Cooking is Hands-On

We both think the best way to cook is to get in there and use your hands. Obviously, wash your hands before you handle food. Cindy drills that into her students endlessly. Don't be afraid to toss salad ingredients with your hands before you add the dressing. Blending pastry or cookie ingredients with your hands works just as well as a pastry mixer or a food processor, sometimes it's even better. Feel those kale and chard greens, or those peaches and plums to see if they're fresh.

Poke that chicken breast or pork cutlet to decide whether it's done. Tap the top of a frittata, or a quick bread to see if it bounces back.

You've got to jump into cooking. It's about your body. So don't forget to use your body when you're feeding yourself. Feel. Poke. Test. Stir. Toss. Roll. Knead. Crumble. Rub.

Different Every Time

When you plan a meal, try to have all the elements of Cindy's Plate, as described in Chapter 2: one-half fruits or vegetables, one-quarter protein, one-quarter dairy and/or whole grains. Within this structure, there are infinite variations. That's what the recipes in this book are all about.

Here's how to think of a menu: let's say you're planning a meal for a lot of kids. For the salad, you could do mixed greens, carrots and tomatoes. Kid all like ranch dressing, so you can whip up a quick batch of our low-sugar dressing. For the main course, you could do stuffed bell peppers. Let's say you're out of the corn meal used in that recipe, then you could just add frozen corn or corn cut off fresh cobs to the ricotta stuffing. Maybe you have some kale, or some spinach in your crisper that needs to be used. You can layer that between the tomato sauce and the peppers. For dessert, you can slice some good apples and toss them in lemon juice.

We've made this menu many times for young kids, high school kids, at-risk kids, all kinds of kids. They all chow down with gusto.

Making Five Recipes from One

You'll also see that throughout this book we've included variations following each recipe.

Cindy likes to say that with one base recipe, you can travel around the world by just changing the herbs and seasonings. For instance, chicken may have descended from a Southeast Asian jungle fowl, but now every cuisine uses this bird. Tomatoes may come from South America, but they're used everywhere now, in East Asia, India, Europe, Australia. Everybody has onions.

So let's say you have a recipe that features Chicken Braised with Onions and Tomatoes. You can make this simple and plain, and it will be delicious. Or, you can bring in cultural influences, styling this basic recipe in many different ways:

South America: Add oregano, cumin, chili powder, potatoes and carrots. ¡Ahi Esto! Chicken Colorado.

Italian: Add basil, oregano, garlic, zucchini, eggplant, and bell peppers. Ecco! Now it's Chicken Cacciatore.

India: Add curry, cumin, cayenne, potato, peas and perhaps cauliflower or chickpeas. Sprinkle with chopped, fresh cilantro. Dekha! Feast on Chicken Curry.

China: Add a little brown sugar. Fry chicken with bell peppers and pineapple onion, ginger, garlic, cilantro. Qiáo! Now it's Chicken Stir Fry.

France: Add a splash of white wine, a couple tablespoons of cream, garlic and tarragon. Voilà! Chicken Fricassee.

Each time, you're basically starting off with chicken, tomatoes and onions. But you've got many different versions. Variety is the spice of life, and spice is the variety of food.

Or take the basic aromatic mix that the French call "mirepoix," chopped or diced onions, celery and carrots. We use it as the base for many recipes in this book. In China, they add ginger to this mixture. In India, it's curry; in South America, it's chili powder and cayenne. In Greece, they add dill, and in Scandinavia, they add dill and sour cream. From the same base come many different dishes.

Don't be afraid to play around with these variations. It's what makes cooking fun!

Can You Make Other Recipes Healthier?

Face it — Southern fried chicken, cream biscuits and sautéed collard greens with bacon are fantastic, but hardly staples of a healthy diet. Occasionally is fine, about once a week. Don't feel you always have to change what's good. This is real food, too. Enjoy it.

In general, we don't recommend radically changing recipes from other cookbooks. Rather, change the food you're eating and choose recipes that reflect that change. However, there are a few things you can do to add fiber and cut sugar from conventional recipes.

- Substitute the white flour in any recipe with one-third whole-wheat flour. It will add a little fiber, and no one will notice.
- Try using Cindy's fiber-rich baking blend: half whole-wheat flour, one-fourth oatmeal [what kind? Rolled?], one-fourth white flour. You can use this in pancakes, cookies, brownies, piecrust and pizza crust.
- Cut the sugar in any recipe by one-third. Most recipes today call for way more sugar than they did a generation ago. As your family's palate changes, they will begin to notice other flavors, like the chocolate, the oatmeal, the nuts. It's my bet they won't even miss the sugar.
- You can substitute applesauce or prune paste or pureed berries for refined sugar in some recipes. Just be aware that this will make the result a little more dense, and a little more moist. This tactic works best in quick breads, muffins, pancakes and dense desserts like carrot cake. You can't add applesauce or prune paste to white chiffon cake and expect it to taste even remotely like chiffon cake. Be realistic!

Shop Like You Mean It

As I travel around the country, a lot of people tell me that it's difficult to find some of the healthy ingredients similar to the ones we call for in this book. If you shop the way you've always shopped, that very well may be true. Food deserts — areas without a decent grocery or produce store—remain a very real problem, especially in poorer towns and neighborhoods.

But remember, grocery stores want to sell products to you. It doesn't matter that much to them if it's food that will make you sick (like sugary breakfast cereal or frozen dinners), or food that will make you healthy. Give them the opportunity to change. Ask for what you want. Change your neighborhood. Remember, if you don't buy it, they won't sell it.

Get together with a couple of friends. Get your office or school involved. Get some people together and go to the store manager and ask for what you want. I'm betting the manager would be more than happy to stock the ingredients you desire. You

don't have to wait for a Whole Foods or a Trader Joe's to come to town. Help your local stores to stock healthier choices by letting them know that's what you and your neighbors want.

Here are some other tips to help you eat healthy without breaking your budget:

- **Befriend your local butcher.** If you're worried about ground meat (remember pink slime?), pick out the roast you like, and ask the butcher to grind it fresh for you. I promise they will be happy to do this for you; they want your business more than Wal-Mart does. You can also do this with poultry like chicken or turkey. Make sure the market has a window into the butchering area, so you can see the butcher doing what you ask.

You can always ask the butcher to custom-cut things for you. This is as true in a chain supermarket as in a "boutique" butcher shop in some trendy town. Butchers will cut up a whole chicken into pieces, butterfly a leg of lamb, cut up a turkey or cut a roast into stew pieces. It's free. You just have to know to ask. Butchers will also give advice on how to cook various cuts of meat. If they won't custom cut, and if they don't know enough to give you advice, find another butcher, or talk to the store manager.

- **Shop seasonally.** Buy what's coming out of the nearby fields now. It will always be cheaper. That means cherries in June or July (not in January); and hard squashes in December (not in July). Buying seasonal usually also means buying local and sustainable.

- **Buy from local produce markets.** Big supermarkets throw away produce that's not perfect. Most cities and towns have little vegetable marts, often run by immigrant families. These small, mom-and-pop stores sell that produce in a "half-off" section. Don't turn your nose up at slightly bruised fruits, they will make lovely fruit compote or applesauce. They can be mixed into whole grain pancakes or muffins. Tomatoes with a little mold at one end can be trimmed and turned into sauce. Broccoli that's past its prime will do just fine in a quinoa casserole or in soup.

- **Buy in bulk from big box stores.** This is where we buy things like seasonal fruit, whole grains, nuts, raisins and other dried fruit, canned staples like tomato sauce. The stock turns over quickly in these stores. You know the goods won't be old.

• **Don't be penny wise and pound foolish.** A 99-cent, 1-pound bag of beans at a dollar store will likely be old and won't cook up as well. Splurge and spend a \$1.50 a pound at a big box store or a health food store.

Guess What? Real Food is Cheaper

Cindy planned the following summer meal for a family of four:

- Salad of carrots, cucumbers and romaine lettuce
1 1/2 pounds of greens at about 75 cents a pound. \$1.25
1/2 pound each carrots and cucumbers, at 50 cents a pound. \$1
- Barbecue chicken legs, or whole chicken or chicken parts
1 pound of chicken at \$2 a pound.
(Or ask the butcher to cut up a whole chicken, which is usually cheaper by the pound, that's enough for two meals plus soup into the bargain.)
- Roasted sweet potatoes
1 pound at 75 cents a pound. 75 cents
- Roasted zucchini or summer squash
1 pound at 69 cents a pound. 69 cents
- Sliced peaches, or another stone fruit such as plums or nectarines.
1 pound at 99 cents pound, or stone fruit. 99 cents.

So how does this add up?

Salad:	\$2.25
Chicken:	2.00
Sweet potato	.75
Squash	.69
Stone fruit	.99
 Yummy dinner for four	 \$6.68

You can't go to McDonald's with a family for that low price, and you won't have leftovers after burgers and fries. Why do you think there's a "food industry" anyway? They make big money. Remember that for every dollar you spend on

processed food, 19 cents is for the food and 81 cents is for the marketing. Real food is looking better and better...

How to Make Healthy “Fast Food”

We love to cook. Like most Americans, we don't always have the time. There are a few simple things you can do that will help you throw together a great meal in 15 to 30 minutes on a busy weeknight.

- **Whenever you cook, make extra.** This goes for meats and fish of all kinds, veggies, beans, whole grains, soups, stews, chili. You can mix leftover fish with a bit of mayo and chopped scallions and have it the next day in a sandwich, or you can simply crumble it over salad.
- **Freeze the extras in one-meal portions in plastic bags.** Date and Label! You may think you'll remember, but you won't. Chunky tomato soup and chili look amazingly similar when frozen.
- **Don't throw cooking water away.** When you cook beans or whole grains, the water they cook in will make soups and stews a little richer. Freeze in bags and use as needed.
- **Designate a “use me” shelf in your freezer.** Don't throw away those leftovers: that half cup of cooked broccoli, or that cup of uneaten pasta. Put it on the “use me” shelf and add to soups and stews, or whatever. Use things within three months. After that, freezer burn becomes a problem.
- **Get ready for real fast food in the morning.** When you know you're going to be in a rush, transfer a few bags from freezer to fridge before you leave for work. They will be ready to turn into a casserole, a pasta, an egg scramble or a stew when you get home.

Basic Cooking Rules

Cindy posts these rules in her cooking classes, but I find they're a good reminder to home cooks as well.

- Always wash your hands and put your hair up.

- Read over the recipe before you start cooking.
- Preheat the oven, if baking or roasting.
- Use a timer to keep track of cooking times.
- Never leave food out for more than 2 hours.
- Be sure to bleach or disinfect counters and sink before and after cooking. [Wash with soap and water?]
- Scrub vegetables instead of peeling.
- Read the label, check for sugar and fiber.
- Taste before adding salt.
- When steaming vegetables, always finish by rinsing them in cold water. This will hold the color and flavor.
- Never rinse pasta. Don't put olive oil or butter on pasta. The starch on the noodles helps sauces to cling. [Or in the water I imagine and a lot of people do.]
- Clean as you go!
- Compost and recycle = no waste! Good for the environment.

What You Need: Equipment

The cooking shows and magazines would love for you to buy every gadget and lovely platter in the Williams-Sonoma or the Dean & DeLuca catalogs. You don't need to do that. Here's what you need to make all the recipes in this book:

- Small, medium and large mixing bowls
- At least three wooden spoons

- Whisk
- Set of liquid measuring cups, glass or plastic with spouts
- Set of dry measuring cups, metal or plastic with smooth rims
- Set of measuring spoons
- Three rimmed, cookie sheets for roasting and baking
- Pyrex glass dishes in these sizes:
 - 8-by-8-inch
 - 9-by-13-inch
 - 5-by-9-inch
- A few platters, small, medium and large, two of each
- Serving bowls, small medium and large, two to three of each
- 1½ -gallon stockpot
- 1-gallon stockpot
- 8-inch omelet pan, non-stick or stainless
- 10-inch frying pan
- 12-inch frying pan
- Heavy cast iron skillet, preferably 12-inch
- Two saucepans, 1-quart and 2-quart sizes, with lids
- Small sieve
- Colander
- Paring knife
- 8-inch serrated knife, not pointed
- 8-inch, chef's knife
- Two cutting boards, one for meat, one for everything else.
- Pepper mill
- Peeler
- Grater
- Cheesecloth
- Spatula
- Potato masher (This is also good for other veggies!)
- Meat thermometer
- Blender
- Steamer insert
- Aluminum foil
- Parchment paper

Extras (Not absolutely necessary, but nice to have)

- Food processor
- Hand mixer

- Food scale (Top of the line costs \$100-plus, but you can get a perfectly serviceable scale at a big box store for about \$15.)
- Electric knife sharpener

Don't worry about buying fancy or pots and pans. Buy pots and pans that are heavy enough to be sturdy and keep food from burning. You don't need "top of the line" kitchenware to cook the food in this book. Cast-iron skillets and sturdy stainless steel pots will do just fine. Cuisinart makes affordable stainless steel cookware. You can also find decent cookware at the big box stores. Just make sure the pots and pans are not too thin: Over-thin cookware means burnt dinners. Pots should feel substantial in your hands, not feather-light.

What You Need: Knife Basics

When Cindy looks to hire kitchen staff at her restaurant, one of the first things she looks for is "knife skills." Face it — there are no knife skills if the knife is not sharp. Many people don't want to cook because they are afraid of their knives. And dull knives are something to be afraid of. Buy knives that feel good in your hand and keep them sharp with a honing steel, also called a sharpening steel. (You may want to buy an electric knife sharpener, but those are expensive.)

If you're going to cook, you must know how to handle a knife. Whole books have been written on knife technique. You don't have to know how to debone and butterfly a chicken, but you should be able to handle a chef's knife. Here are just a few basic tips:

- Hold the tip of the knife down. Use it as an anchor.
- Meanwhile, push down and forward with the hand on the handle.
- Curl the first two finger joints of your free hand under. Press your knuckles against the flat of the blade to guide it. Move your free hand back as you cut, keeping the flat of the blade against your knuckles.
- Don't cut with the front and tip of the knife. Cut with the part of the blade back toward the handle. This way you don't have to lift the knife up very far to cut, and you're less likely to cut your fingers.

What You Need: In Your Pantry

It's always easier to cook when you have a critical mass of ingredients in your kitchen. These are the things that we think are good to have on hand most of the time. These recommendations are good for a family of four. Buy more if your family is larger, or less if your family is smaller.

Beans and Grains

If you're buying in bulk at a big box store, you'll have to buy at least four or five pounds of many of these items. Don't buy more than that. Always have at least one pound of each variety stored in airtight containers. Plastic works fine, but you can also reuse large jars for dry goods storage. Label and date!

Use these staples -- that's the whole point of changing your eating style, right? Because the whole grains contain fats in their hulls, bran and germ, they will go bad after about six months. Old beans take longer to cook and don't taste as good.

- Barley, dehulled (unprocessed, takes a bit longer to cook) or pearled (hull and bran removed, cooks faster, still a good source of fiber)
- Brown rice
- Corn meal
- Farro (a whole grain, often thought to be wheat, but actually a plant and grain all its own with a complex nutty taste, not as heavy as many other whole grains.)
- Oats, steel cut (Whole grain groats, the inner portion of the oat kernel, that have been cut)
- Oats, rolled (Groats that have been rolled into flat flakes, then steamed and lightly toasted. These cook faster than steel-cut oats. Most sold as "oatmeal" usually, but not always, have had the nutritious outer bran removed because the bran can make the grain spoil faster. If you want rolled oats with the bran, these are usually sold as "old-fashioned" oatmeal. "Quick" oatmeal is more highly processed, rolled, steamed, toasted and cut into small pieces so that it will cook faster)
- Quinoa (Not a true cereal because it does not come from a grass, but from a plant called goosefoot. A staple in Peru and Bolivia, quinoa provides healthy fats, calcium and antioxidants. It has a texture similar to couscous)
- Wheat, cracked (Crushed or steel cut raw wheat, high in fiber)
- Wheat, bulgur (Wheat kernels partially steamed and toasted, then cracked)

- Whole-wheat flour (Whole grains of wheat, bran, germ and endosperm, ground.)
- White flour (Only the endosperm of the wheat grains, ground)
- Chickpeas (Also called garbanzo beans)
- Kidney beans
- Lentils, any color, red, yellow or green
- Pinto beans
- Split peas, yellow or green

Nuts, Seeds, Dried Fruit

Buy raw, store in the freezer. As you need them, toast in a 350° oven for about 8-10 minutes; check them at 8 minutes. Nuts burn very fast, so use a timer! (Toast a little extra each time, toss in salads or grain pilaf, or have a few as a healthy snack.)

- Almonds
- Coconut, unsweetened, the big wide strips, not the sugar-saturated shreds. You may have to go to a health food store to find these.
- Pecans
- Sunflower seeds
- Walnuts
- Raisins
- Dried fruit of your choice, apricots, pears, whatever (for granola and salads).

Canned or Jarred Goods

- Canned beans in water, one or two cans each of the varieties above.
- A few jars of tomato sauce or marinara sauce, look for brands that just use tomatoes and spices. There's no need to add sugar to tomatoes!
- At least three 28-ounce cans crushed tomatoes.
- Three or four cans of tuna in water (dolphin-safe). Tuna has gotten a bad rap due to its mercury content. Chunk Light has less mercury than Solid White. So you can give your kids (over 6 years old) Chunk Light tuna sandwiches once a week, or Solid White sandwiches twice a month, and stay under the toxic threshold.

Seasonings

Herbs and spices are the keys to dynamite cooking and big compliments. You'll see that in many of this book's recipes, we used dried herbs and fresh herbs interchangeably. We've done this because we know that not everyone is inclined to

keep a lot of fresh herbs in their refrigerator. If that means you, then just use dry herbs. The dishes will still be delicious. If you don't mind the extra expense, and space in your crisper, use fresh herbs, which will impart a clearer, more intense taste profile than their dried counterparts. Just remember that fresh herbs don't stand up to long cooking, and that you generally need three times the amount of fresh herbs. Add fresh herbs just before you finish cooking, or sprinkle them over finished dishes.

Keep herbs in small glass containers in a dark cupboard. Don't keep for more than a year. Buy them at a health food store, or another market that sells them in bins. They are much, much cheaper in bulk. It often makes sense to designate a particular month to replace all your spices. If that's too much trouble, or too expensive, date the jars as you buy them.

- Allspice (Just a small jar, this is used in small amounts.)
- Basil
- Cardamom, ground
- Chinese 5-spice powder
- Chives, dried
- Chili powder
- Cinnamon, ground
- Cloves, ground
- Coriander, ground
- Cumin, ground
- Curry powder
- Dill
- Garlic powder
- Garam masala (An Indian spice blend. Delish!)
- Ginger, ground
- Italian seasoning
- Mustard, powdered
- Mustard seed (Good in salads, and whole grain pilafs.)
- Nutmeg, ground
- Onion powder
- Oregano
- Paprika, smoked
- Paprika, sweet [really, both kinds? I haven't found them that easily and yes I do have Garam Masala]
- Pepper, cayenne
- Pepper, black

- Red pepper flakes
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Salt, celery (Good in salads and stews.)
- Salt, iodized (The regular kind.)
- Salt, kosher (Salt flakes, have a nice texture for salads.)
- Salt, garlic
- Sesame seeds
- Thyme

After nine months, when herbs get close to the end of their peak flavor, combine them into herb blends to use them up quickly:

- Chinese blend: ginger, mustard, 5-spice powder, salt
- Italian blend: oregano, basil, thyme, rosemary, red pepper flakes
- Indian blend: cumin, curry, coriander, cardamom
- Spanish blend: oregano, cumin, chili powder, cayenne, red chilies

I realize you are not trying to be comprehensive, but I was kind of surprised not to see cinnamon, dill, mint, even nutmeg. I admit I often use more eccentric things like turmeric and tagine spices, but those seemed very basic.

Dry Storage

If you have enough space, keep these in a dark, dry cabinet. Don't buy huge bags of potatoes or onions unless you can use them up in a couple of weeks. Otherwise, they'll spoil. It's usually adequate to have four or so on hand.

- Garlic, one head
- Onions, yellow
- Potatoes, sweet. These come in many varieties: red, pink, orange, yellow, even violet and purple. They're all delicious. Sweet potatoes are also a better source of fiber, complex carbs, protein, iron and calcium than other vegetables.
- Potatoes, russet.
- Shallots (smaller than onions, but sweeter, and with a little kick.)

Baking

- Baking powder
- Baking soda
- Chocolate chips, good quality (Dessert should be worth it!)

- Honey, a medium-sized jar (It crystallizes if kept too long), a good grade
- Sugar, brown
- Sugar, white, a small container
- Vanilla or vanilla extract
- Yeast, rapid-rise packets, or a jar. (Keep in fridge and it will keep longer. Wet yeast can be cut into cubes and put in the freezer.)

Condiments and Vinegars

Everyone has their favorites, but these are the basics you should always have around:

- Hot sauce, such as Tabasco, Tampico or Sriracha (Or all of them!)
- Mayonnaise, Best Foods (West Coast) or Hellman's (East Coast)
- Mustard, Dijon
- Mustard, yellow
- Soy sauce, light salt
- Tamari sauce (Tamari is thicker, darker and richer than soy sauce.)
- Worcestershire Sauce (Great for marinades and dressings. It has a very small amount of sugar.)
- Red wine vinegar
- White wine vinegar
- Balsamic vinegar
- Apple cider vinegar

Oils

Many oils have a “best before” date stamped on the label. If your brand doesn't, figure that nut oils or flavored oils will last about a year. Vegetable oils,—olive, safflower, canola, peanut and so on—last one to two years in the pantry. All oils will last a bit longer if you keep them in the refrigerator.

- Olive oil (makes your liver work better). Just know that its “smoke point” (when the oil begins to smoke and burn) is relatively low. Don't use olive oil if you're going to be cooking over very high heat.
- Rice bran oil. It has a higher smoke point than olive oil, making it good for frying. It does not have the unhealthy omega-6 fatty acids found in corn or canola oil.
- Safflower oil, organic, cold press. A neutral-flavored oil, it has been shown to increase a protein that regulates blood glucose levels.
- Sesame oil. The only oil for Chinese cooking, it's generally used for flavoring.

Refrigerator Staples

In general, we eat fruits and veggies with the peels intact. Cindy swears by kiwi with the fuzzy skin—and her students eat it—but you don't have to go that far. Peel hard squashes, garlic, shallots, onions, citrus, bananas, melons, pineapple, and yes, kiwi. But your family probably won't even notice if you leave the fiber-rich peels on many other things: eggplant, potatoes, carrots, soft squashes, apples, peaches, pears and plums.

- Apples
- Beans, green
- Beets (Buy with the tops, they're cheaper and you can sauté the tops as a green veggie.)
- Broccoli
- Brussel sprouts
- Butter, unsalted
- Carrots
- Celery
- Cauliflower
- Chicken breasts or thighs
- Kale
- Lemons
- Limes
- Milk, 2 percent, 1 gallon
- Oranges
- Pineapple
- Sparkling water, plain or flavored such as raspberry or orange (This is a good substitute for soda. You can also make your own by chilling seltzer or plain water with a fruit of your choice: lemons, limes and oranges of course, but melons and strawberries also work well.)
- Swiss chard
- Tofu, firm
- Turkey, ground
- Yogurt, Greek, plain, unsweetened, no fat, no pectin
- Yogurt, plain, unsweetened, no fat, no pectin

Freezer staples

- Artichoke hearts

- Asparagus
- Beef, ground
- Berries, lots of berries: raspberries, blueberries, blackberries, mixed berries.
(Look for “individually quick frozen,” no additives.)
- Chicken, ground
- Corn
- Green beans
- Kale
- Pineapple chunks
- Rice, brown, cooked. (You can buy this at some markets, or make your own and freeze, excellent for “healthy fast food.”) [Does it freeze better than other grains? I’ve always just kept them in the fridge.]
- Spinach, chopped
- Shrimp or prawns
- Turkey, ground

Glossary of Cooking Terms

As we’ve relied more and more upon processed foods, many of us have forgotten the terminology of the kitchen. Some of us have never learned it in the first place. You will no doubt know some of the terms below, but if you don’t quite remember other terms in this book’s recipes, please refer to this list:

AL DENTE

Italian expression used to describe pastas, vegetables or grains that have been cooked until they offer a slight resistance to the bite.

BAKE

To cook with dry heat (oven, barbecue), usually at medium, or low heat. usually 350°F or lower.

BARBECUE

Generally to refer to grilling done outdoors or over an open charcoal, gas or wood fire. More specifically, barbecue refers to long, slow direct-heat cooking that includes liberal basting with a barbecue sauce or spice rub.

BASTE

To moisten foods during cooking with pan drippings or special sauce to add flavor and prevent drying.

BATTER

A mixture containing flour and liquid, thin enough to pour.

BEAT

To mix rapidly in order to make a mixture smooth and light by incorporating as much air as possible.

BLANCH

To immerse in slightly salted, rapidly boiling water and allow to cook just briefly. This is usually followed by “**Refreshing**,” immediately plunging ingredients into ice water to stop the cooking process.

BLEND

To thoroughly mix two or more ingredients.

BOIL

To heat a liquid until bubbles break continually on the surface.

BROIL

To cook under strong, direct heat in an oven or a salamander (a restaurant-grade broiler).

CARAMELIZE

To heat sugar, or ingredients with natural sugars (like onions or fruit) until they turn golden brown and have a caramel taste.

CHOP

To cut into pieces with a sharp knife or another chopping device.

CLARIFY

To separate and remove solids from a liquid, such as broth or melted butter, thus making it clear.

CREAM

To soften a fat, especially butter, by beating it at room temperature. Butter and sugar are often creamed together to make a soft paste that is used as a base for baked goods.

CURE

To preserve foodstuffs, especially meats, by drying and salting and/or smoking.

DEGLAZE

To dissolve the thin glaze of juices and brown bits on the surface of a pan in which food has been fried, sautéed or roasted. To do this, add liquid and stir and scrape over high heat, thereby creating a liquid that can be used as a sauce.

DEGREASE

To skim fat from the surface of stews, soups, or stock. This may also be done by cooling in the refrigerator so that the fat hardens, and can be easily peeled from the surface.

DICE

To cut food into cubes of uniform size and shape.

DISSOLVE

To become incorporated into a liquid, forming a solution.

DREDGE

To coat a food item in flour or bread crumbs before cooking it.

DRIZZLE

To drip a thin line of frosting, oil or sauce back and forth over the top of the thing that you are baking or cooking.

DUST

Generally means to put a very light coating of some kind of powdered material on top of something, like dusting the banana bread with cinnamon, or dusting a greased pan with flour.

FILET

A boneless cut of meat or fish.

FLAKE

To break into small pieces.

FOLD

To incorporate a delicate substance, such as whipped cream or beaten egg whites, into another substance without releasing air bubbles. Cut down through the mixture with spoon, whisk, or fork; go across bottom of bowl, up and over, close to

surface. The process is repeated, while slowly rotating the bowl, until the ingredients are thoroughly blended.

FRY

To cook in hot fat.

1. To cook in a shallow layer of hot fat is called shallow-fat frying,
2. To cook in a deep layer of hot fat is called deep-fat frying.

GARNISH

To add elements, such as chopped herbs, lemon slices or flowers, to make plated food look good.

GRATE

To rub on a grater that separates the food in various sizes of bits or shreds.

GRATIN

From the French word for "crust." Describes any dish that is baked in a shallow dish with a topping of seasoned breadcrumbs and cheese.

GRILL

A grill is an open rack or grate with a heat source underneath. Depending on the type of grill, the heat source can be an open flame (either gas or charcoal) or electric.

GRIND

To crush, pulverize, or reduce to powder.

JULIENNE

To cut vegetables, fruits, or cheeses into thin strips.

KNEAD

To work and press dough to develop the gluten strands in the flour. This can be done with the palms of the hands or with a machine such as a standing mixer with a dough hook.

MARINATE

To flavor and moisturize pieces of meat, poultry, seafood or vegetable by soaking them in or brushing them with a liquid mixture of oil, vinegar and seasonings. Dry marinades (rubs), mixtures composed of herbs or spices, can be rubbed into meat, poultry or seafood.

MISE EN PLACE

A French phrase that means "putting in place", as in "set up." It is used in professional kitchens to refer to organizing and arranging the ingredients that a cook will require during his or her shift. This also works well in a home kitchen. Collect and prepare all the things you need for a recipe before starting to cook.

MIREPOIX

Also a French term for a combination of chopped carrots, celery and onions used to add flavor and aroma to stocks, sauces and soups. Also referred to as "aromatics."

MINCE

To cut or chop food into very small pieces.

MIX

To combine ingredients, usually by stirring.

PAN-BROIL

To cook (steak, for example) over direct heat in an uncovered, usually ungreased, skillet.

PAN-FRY

A form of frying characterized by the use of minimal cooking oil or fat (compared to shallow frying or deep frying); typically using just enough oil to keep what is being cooked from sticking to the pan.

PARBOIL

To cook food partially so that its cooking time will be reduced when added to a recipe.

PEEL or PARE

To remove the outermost skin of a fruit or vegetable. Whenever possible, don't do it! The fiber in most peels tastes good and is good for you.

PICKLE

To preserve meats, vegetables, and fruits in a mixture of salted water, vinegar and spices.

PINCH

As much of an ingredient as you can pinch between your thumb and forefinger,
Usually refers to salt or sugar.

PLANKED

Cooked on a thick hardwood plank.

PLUMP

To soak dried fruits in liquid until they swell and soften.

POACH

To cook very gently in hot liquid kept just below the boiling point.

PUREE

To mash foods by hand, rub through a sieve or food mill, or whirl in a blender or food processor until very smooth.

REDUCE

To thicken and intensify the flavor of a liquid mixture by rapidly cooking the liquid uncovered and allowing the water to evaporate until the desired volume remains.

REFRESH

To run cold water over food that has been parboiled, to stop the cooking process quickly.

RENDER

To melt hard fat, such as lard.

ROAST

To cook by dry heat in an oven, usually at a high temperature, above 350°F.

SAUTE

To cook and/or brown food in a small amount of hot fat.

SCALD

To bring to a temperature just below the boiling point.

SCALLOPED

Baked, usually in a casserole, with sauce or another liquid such as milk or broth.

SCORE

To cut narrow grooves partway through the outer surface of food.

SEAR

To cook over very high heat, browning the surface. This locks in the juices.

SHRED

To cut or tear in small, long, narrow pieces.

SIFT

To put dry ingredients through a sieve or sifter.

SIMMER

To cook slowly in liquid over low heat at a temperature of about 180°. The surface of the liquid should be barely moving, broken from time to time by slowly rising bubbles.

SKIM

To remove impurities, whether scum or fat, from the surface of a liquid during cooking, for a clear, cleaner-tasting result.

STEAM

To cook over boiling water in a steamer, pressure cooker, or double boiler.

STEEP

To extract color, flavor, or other qualities from a substance by leaving it in water just below the boiling point.

STERILIZE

To destroy microorganisms with heat.

STEW

To simmer slowly in a small amount of liquid for a long time.

STIR

To mix ingredients with a circular motion until well blended or of uniform consistency.

TOSS

To combine ingredients with a lifting motion.

TRUSS

To secure poultry with string or skewers, so that it holds its shape while cooking.

WHIP

To beat rapidly to incorporate air and create expansion, as in heavy cream or egg whites.

CHAPTER 4

The Basics: Dressings, Sauces, Staples

Commercial condiments are catastrophes because they are sugar apologists: salad dressing, sauces, even pickle juice. This is very much on purpose. In this chapter, you'll find easy alternatives to bottled and canned dressings, sauces and staples. Want salt and crunch? Bypass the Ruffles® and try some kale chips or roasted chickpeas. Think bread is too difficult to make? Our Whole-wheat Sponge Bread, with all the fiber you need and none of the added sugar of store-bought bread, requires only one bowl, one pan, one rise and 20 minutes of active time.

It may sound really extreme to make your own ketchup and barbecue sauce. But they keep for quite a while, and you'll notice that many of the recipes in this chapter make large batches. That way, if you do get ambitious enough to make ketchup, you'll only have to do it every few weeks. Salad dressings can be used in other things besides salad: Marinate meats in them, or toss vegetables in them before roasting. A bonus: All of these things taste better when they're homemade. And they won't make you sick, the way the conventional processed foods will.

None of these recipes is difficult, honest. They just take a little bit of planning and a little bit of time, in many cases just five to 10 minutes.

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- Blue Cheese Dressing
- Italian Dressing
- Ranch Dressing
- Balsamic Dressing
- Caesar Dressing
- Enchilada Sauce
- Tomato Sauce
- Barbecue Sauce
- Ketchup
- Cauliflower Béchamel Sauce
- Spinach and Ricotta Filling
- Roasted Tomatoes
- Fajita Seasoning Mix
- Barbecue Rub

Roma Tomato-Basil Salsa
Fruit Salsa
Marinated Olives
Kale Chips
Roasted Chickpeas
Edamame Spread
Basil Pesto
Whole-wheat Sponge Bread

Blue Cheese Dressing

Makes 1 quart

Serving Size: 2 tablespoons

Total Servings: 32

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

Cindy has made this recipe in her restaurant for more than 30 years. It came from an older chef she knew when she first started working in kitchens in the early 1970s. Sometimes simple is just better. Use a really good mayonnaise.

Ingredients

2 cups mayonnaise
½ cup buttermilk
5 ounces sour cream
5 ounces crumbled blue cheese
2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped, or 2 teaspoons dried
1½ teaspoons garlic salt
Pinch of pepper

Step 1: In a large bowl, mix all ingredients until smooth.

Stored in a sealed glass jar or container in the refrigerator, this dressing keeps for two weeks.

VARIATIONS:

- Use Maytag blue cheese

- Use Gorgonzola cheese

GOES WELL WITH:

- Salads
- Carrot sticks, celery sticks, or other cold veggies
- Sandwich fillings – makes a great spread

Per serving: Calories 130, Calories from Fat 120, Total Fat 13g (20% DV), Saturated Fat 3g (15% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 10mg (3% DV), Sodium 160mg (7% DV), Carbohydrates < 1g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 1g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 4%, Iron 0%.

Italian Vinaigrette Dressing

Makes 1 quart

Serving Size: 2 tablespoons

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

This is the classic salad dressing, without all the high-fructose corn syrup in many bottled brands. Cindy's aunts and grandmother made this when she was growing up. It was the first salad dressing she had in her restaurant. Simple and flavorful, it's a keeper.

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, or 2 teaspoons dried

1 tablespoon Italian seasoning

½ tablespoon dried onion flakes or fresh minced onion

1 teaspoon fresh garlic, peeled and minced, or 1/3 teaspoon garlic powder

1/2 teaspoon cracked pepper

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 cup red wine vinegar

3 cups olive oil, or a blend of olive and safflower oils

Step 1: Mix together all ingredients except oil in a jar or bowl.

Step 2: Slowly add oil to ingredients, whisking constantly until the mixture thickens slightly.

Stored in a sealed glass jar or another container, this keeps for one month in the refrigerator.

VARIATIONS:

- Add a pinch (about 1/8 teaspoon) of cayenne or red chili
- Add ½ cup crushed tomatoes or ¼ cup tomato paste
- Use ¼ cup fresh cilantro and oregano, finely chopped, in place of Italian seasoning
- Use ¼ cup basil, finely chopped in place of Italian seasoning

GOES WELL WITH:

- Raw or cold steamed vegetables
- Chicken and beef as a marinade
- Watermelon feta and basil salad

Per serving: Calories 180, Calories from Fat 180, Total Fat 20g (31% DV), Saturated Fat 2g (10% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 80mg (3% DV), Carbohydrates 0g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 0%, Iron 0%

Ranch Dressing

Makes 2 cups

Serving Size: 2 tablespoons

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Packaged ranch dressing has loads of sugar many other things that we're not sure we want to feed our children and grandchildren. Homemade salad dressing beats the pants off store-bought, because you can control what's in it. This one has no sugar. The fat is not problematic in any way. Most importantly, it has minimal salt. Remember, you can always add salt, but you can't take it out. Kids love ranch and this is a great recipe. Use a really good mayonnaise.

1 cup mayonnaise

1 cup buttermilk

1/8 teaspoon, or a pinch, dried chilies, or crushed red pepper

1 teaspoon dried parsley, or 1 tablespoon fresh parsley
½ teaspoon garlic powder
½ teaspoon onion powder
¾ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground pepper
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon red onion or shallot, peeled and minced

Step 1: Put all ingredients in a bowl.

Step 2: Whisk until well combined.

Stored in a sealed glass jar or another container, this keeps for two weeks in the refrigerator.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Any salad
- Dipping vegetables

Per serving: Calories 110, Calories from Fat 100, Total Fat 11g (17% DV), Saturated Fat 1.5g (8% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 240mg (10% DV), Carbohydrates 1g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars < 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 2%, Iron 0%.

Balsamic Vinaigrette

Makes 1 quart

Serving Size: 2 Tbsp

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

You can't get any simpler than this. And it's so good

1 cup balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
4 cloves garlic or shallots, peeled and finely chopped
3 cups extra virgin olive oil, or a blend of olive and safflower oils.

Step 1: Combine balsamic vinegar, salt, ground pepper and garlic or shallots in a bowl.

Step 2: Slowly add oil, blending until ingredients are thoroughly combined.

Stored in an airtight jar in the refrigerator, this keeps for one month.

VARIATIONS:

- Add ¼ cup fresh basil or parsley, finely chopped.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Salads.
- Carrot and celery sticks, or other crudités.
- As a marinade for chicken or fish.

Per serving: Calories 190, Calories from Fat 180, Total Fat 20g (31% DV), Saturated Fat 3g (15% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 220mg (9% DV), Carbohydrates 2g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 0%, Iron 2%.

Caesar Dressing

2-3 cups

Serving Size: 2 tablespoons

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

Caesar salad gets a bad rap. People worry about using the raw eggs called for in many recipes. Drenched in dressing and smothered in croutons and cheese, it can have as many calories as a Burger King® Whopper. It doesn't have to be this way. With a moderate amount of dressing, croutons and cheese, Caesar can be a healthy choice. Boiling the egg makes it safer to use. Plus, the dressing has many uses

- 1 egg, boiled for 1 minute
- 1 ounce anchovies (optional), chopped
- 1/8 teaspoon, or a pinch, pepper
- 2 ½ tablespoons lemon juice
- 5 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 clove garlic, peeled and minced
2 ½ tablespoons Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 ½ cup olive oil

Step 1: In a bowl, add all ingredients except the oil.

Step 2: Blend slowly until combined, then slowly add oil, combining until smooth and creamy. Stored in glass jar or another container, this keeps for two weeks.

VARIATIONS:

- Be sure to add a good grated Parmesan cheese.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Romaine lettuce
- Chopped chicken
- Grilled salmon
- Shrimp
- Use it for dipping vegetables, or crudités.

Per serving (Without Anchovies): Calories 180, Calories from Fat 180, Total Fat 20g (31% DV), Saturated Fat 3g (15% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 65mg (3% DV), Carbohydrates < 1g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 2%, Calcium 0%, Iron 2%.

Enchilada Sauce

Makes 4 cups

Serving size: ½ cup

Active time: 15 minutes

Total time: 20 minutes

Canned enchilada sauce has all kinds of sugar and preservatives in it. Luckily, making your own couldn't be simpler. You can also use this to top eggs, or breakfast burritos. It's lovely over polenta. Make the sauce ahead and freeze it. Then you can whip up a weekday Latin feast in no time.

3 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon flour

¼ cup chili powder
2 cups vegetable or chicken stock
2 cups homemade tomato sauce, simmered until reduced to 1 cup
1 teaspoon oregano, fresh if available
1 teaspoon cumin
Salt and pepper to taste.

Step 1: Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add flour and chili powder and stir until the flour begins to brown.

Step 2: Add tomato sauce, bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce heat to low, and simmer uncovered until sauce has reduced to one cup.

Step 3: Gradually stir in the spices, stock and the reduced tomato sauce. Cook over medium heat for 10 minutes until the sauce thickens. If it gets too thick, add a little more stock or water. Taste and adjust seasonings.

In a sealed container, this keeps in the fridge for seven days. Can be multiplied and frozen.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Enchiladas
- Breakfast Burritos
- Mexican food of all kinds: tacos, enchiladas, burritos, tostadas.
- Mixed into browned ground meat, used in Mexican dishes or taco salad.
- Drizzled over eggs.
- As a topping for whole grains like polenta.
- Mixed with sautéed onions, peppers and corn kernels.

Per serving: Calories 110, Calories from Fat 60, Total Fat 7g (11% DV), Saturated Fat 0.5g (2% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 220mg (9% DV), Carbohydrates 12g (4% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 5g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 30%, Vitamin C 10%, Calcium 4%, Iron 10%.

Tomato Sauce

Makes 2-3 quarts

Serving: ½ cup

Active time: 15 minutes

Total time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Convincing people that they need to buy processed spaghetti sauce is one of the biggest cons ever. Jarred sauce has lots of added sugar, plus it's expensive. There's no reason to waste money on ready-made sauce.

Nothing could be easier than making a batch of marinara sauce. This recipe has no sugar, and the seasonings you want, not the ones they sell. Once it's made, it's just as fast as Prego®, Ragu®, or Newman's Own. Its uses are endless. This makes a big batch. Freeze extra for later.

1 cup diced onions.
2 tablespoons Italian seasoning
2 tablespoons garlic, peeled and chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
12 cups homemade Tomato Sauce or three 28-ounce cans crushed tomatoes
½ cup water
Salt and pepper, to taste

Step 1: Peel and chop the onions and garlic.

Step 2: Sauté the garlic and onions on medium high until brown and tender.

Step 3: Add all the spices, sauces and water. Reduce the heat and simmer for one hour.

Can be used immediately. Keeps in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to four days. It also freezes well, for as long as three months.

VARIATIONS:

- Endless.
- Add chopped fresh basil, parsley, oregano or rosemary, or all three.
- Add chopped fresh mint, ground cumin and a bit of hot sauce for a Middle Eastern spin.
- Add chopped olives, bottled capers, and a bit of anchovy.
- Add a little bit of cream

GOES WELL WITH:

- Just about everything.
- Pasta.
- Polenta.
- Drizzled over roast meats.
- Mixed with scrambled eggs.

Per serving: Calories 60, Calories from Fat 15, Total Fat 1.5g (2% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 280mg (12% DV), Carbohydrates 10g (3% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 15%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 4%, Iron 10%.

[Goes without saying here] Barbecue Sauce

Makes two cups

Serving Size: 2 tablespoons

Active time: 20 minutes

Total time: 40 minutes

Most commercial barbecue sauces are just loaded with sugar: 16 grams per serving, 30 grams per serving, even 44 grams (the equivalent of four cans of Coke) per serving. If you eat that stuff, you might as well put a melted Snicker's® candy bar on your grilled steak or chicken.

The thing in the barbecue sauce that makes the tang is the vinegar, not the sugar. So play up the vinegar! The meat has fat, which will soften the impact of the vinegar anyway. Also, making your own means eating less salt, which is also good for you. This version avoids sugar-laden commercial ketchup, substituting tomato paste instead. The bacon lends a smoky flavor; the onion makes the sauce chunky. If you prefer smooth sauce, just puree everything in a blender or food processor.

2 thick strips of bacon, chopped fine (optional), or 2 tablespoons olive oil

1 large yellow onion, peeled and chopped fine

4 cloves of garlic, peeled and minced

1/3 cup apple cider vinegar

1 6-ounce can tomato paste

1 cup fresh tomato sauce

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon chili powder

1 pinch ground cloves (1/8 teaspoon)

½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 pinch salt, or to taste.
Black pepper, coarsely ground, to taste

Step 1: In a large saucepan over medium heat, add oil and onions and cook, stirring frequently, until the onions begin to soften. (Optional): In place of oil, use the bacon and cook until bacon has rendered most of its fat and has begun to brown, then brown onions..

Step 2: Reduce the heat to low, cook until everything turns a rich caramel brown, 20 to 30 minutes.

Step 3: Bring the heat back up to medium. Make a space in the center of the pot, add the garlic. Cook, stirring for 30 seconds. Add the rest of the ingredients. Bring the sauce to a boil, then reduce heat to low. Simmer, uncovered, until sauce thickens, about 30 minutes.

GOES WELL WITH:

- You name it.
- Sandwiches.
- Grilled meats and fish.
- Roasted potatoes or corn.

Per serving (without bacon): Calories 20, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 160mg (7% DV), Carbohydrates 4g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (4% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 6%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%

Ketchup

Makes one cup

Serving size: 2 tablespoons

Active time: 10 minutes

Total time: 40 minutes

There's a big problem when Ingredient #1 in ketchup is high-fructose corn syrup. Tomatoes already have lots of natural sugar in them. But the food companies add still more refined sugar to ketchup. Just 1 tablespoon of your average supermarket

ketchup has as much added sugar as half a can of soda. And when have you ever eaten a burger, or anything else, with just one tablespoon of ketchup?

There are some sugar-free ketchups on the market, but not many. Making your own may sound like a major hassle. But you know, that's what great restaurants do. And it's one of the reasons they're great. Think about it...

1 cup homemade Tomato Sauce or canned sauce (Just tomatoes and spices, nothing else!)

3 tablespoons red or white wine vinegar

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

¼ teaspoon onion powder

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

Pinch celery salt

Pinch mustard powder

Pinch allspice

Pinch ground cloves

Pinch cinnamon

Step 1: Combine all ingredients in a small saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring frequently, for 30 minutes, until sauce thickens and the flavors meld.

Step 2: Let cool in fridge for at least 1 hour.

In a sealed glass or plastic container, this keeps two weeks in the refrigerator It won't last that long. This recipe can be doubled. Does not freeze well.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Just about everything!

Per serving: Calories 15, Calories from Fat 10, Total Fat 1g (2% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 190mg (8% DV), Carbohydrates 1g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars < 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 6%, Calcium 0%, Iron 0%.

Cauliflower Béchamel Sauce

Makes 3-4 cups

Serving Size: ½ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

This is a great base, and a great alternative to fat and sugar-laden commercial white sauces. I like to mix it with cooked barley and shredded chicken over a bed of wilted spinach and topped off with grated Parmesan cheese.

1 large head cauliflower, cut into small pieces

¼ cup pine nuts, toasted

¼ cup milk or a milk alternative like plain, unsweetened almond milk or soy milk

¼ tsp nutmeg

1 ½ tsp salt or to taste

Step 1: In large pot, steam cauliflower 10-12 minutes or until tender. Dry toast pine nuts in pan over medium heat until just golden brown.

Step 2: In a bowl, or a food processor if you have one, combine cauliflower, pine nuts, milk, nutmeg and salt. Mash or puree until creamy.

VARIATIONS:

- Use butternut squash in place of cauliflower
- Add cheese, olive oil or nut oil to taste.
- Add one or two herbs, tarragon or parsley would be nice here, fresh or dried.
- Add a pinch (1/8 teaspoon) cayenne pepper.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Use in place of cream in soups.
- Layer with roasted eggplant, chopped cooked spinach, browned ground meat and Parmesan cheese to make a quick moussaka.
- Layer with lasagna noodles, meat sauce, cheese and sautéed greens.
- As a sauce for chicken alfredo.
- As a base for white pizza.

Per serving: Calories 80, Calories from Fat 35, Total Fat 4.5g (7% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 640mg (27% DV), Carbohydrates 8g (3% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 3g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 110%, Calcium 4%, Iron 6%.

Spinach and Ricotta Filling

Makes 6 cups

Serving size: ½ cup

Active time: 10 minutes

Total time: 10 minutes

This is a staple at Cindy's restaurant. They use it to stuff peppers, zucchini and mushrooms. They wrap it in house-made crepes to make cannelloni. They layer it with grilled eggplant to make vegetarian lasagna. It can be topped with tomato sauce. This needs to be part of your repertoire!

2 cups ricotta cheese

2 cups grated dry Monterey jack cheese, or other white, mild cheese

1 ½ cups grated Parmesan cheese

1 pound frozen chopped spinach, thawed

Salt and pepper to taste

Step 1: Grate the cheeses.

Step 2: Drain the thawed spinach and squeeze as much water as you can from it. You can do this by squeezing handful by handful, or by draining in a colander and pressing down to remove the liquid. Or, you can put all the spinach in a kitchen towel, twist the ends and squeeze until most of the excess water has been removed.

Step 2: Combine ricotta, dry jack and 1 cup Parmesan in a large bowl. Mix with your hands, or with a spoon. Add the spinach. Mix until combined. This spinach mixture lasts for 5 days in the fridge, in a covered, sealed container. Don't freeze.

VARIATIONS:

- Add 1 tablespoon minced or crushed garlic, sautéed.
- Add 1 tablespoon Italian herbs.
- Add 1 tablespoon chopped fresh herbs, basil or parsley or tarragon.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Stuffed into bell peppers that have been halved, and seeds and ribs removed.
- Stuffed into zucchini that has been cut lengthwise, and hollowed out.
- Stuffed into small mushrooms and broiled as an appetizer.

- Stuffed into Portobello mushrooms and roasted for dinner.
- Layered with grilled eggplant and tomato sauce for eggplant lasagna.
- Stuffed into chicken breasts and baked.
- Stuffed into pasta shells baked in tomato sauce.

Per serving: Calories 210, Calories from Fat 130, Total Fat 15g (23% DV), Saturated Fat 9g (45% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 50mg (17% DV), Sodium 390mg (16% DV), Carbohydrates 4g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber 1g (4% DV), Sugars < 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 16g, Vitamin A 100%, Vitamin C 2%, Calcium 40%, Iron 6%.

Roasted Tomatoes

Makes 2 cups

Serving Size: ½ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

Roasting caramelizes the natural sugars in tomatoes, making the flavor more intense and the fruit a little chewy.

6 large Roma tomatoes, chopped into large chunks
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 teaspoons salt

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Step 1: Wash tomatoes and chop into large pieces.

Step 2: In a bowl, toss tomatoes with oil and salt. Pour into one layer on a greased baking pan. Roast in baking pan until tomatoes are browned on top, about 20 minutes.

How to handle fresh tomatoes: A common mistake is *keeping tomatoes in the refrigerator*. *storing tomatoes in refrigerator* does not keeps them fresher longer; Fact: Refrigeration makes them mealy after only a couple of days and diminishes their flavor. I keep mine on the counter in a bowl away from heat and sunlight. Store in airtight container in the fridge for up 5 days or freeze in freezer bags for up to 3 months. Be sure to date and label. Recipe can be multiplied.

VARIATIONS:

- Use cherry tomatoes or any type of fresh, ripe tomatoes
- Cut tomatoes into thick slices rather than chunks.
- Toss with capers and fresh chopped basil at the end of cooking
- Layer raw boneless skinless chicken breast and thigh meat cut into 1 inch pieces over raw tomatoes and roast together. This also works with fish.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Pasta.
- Chilled and served with a salad.
- With cheese, as an appetizer.
- Mixed with sautéed zucchini and bell peppers.

Per serving: Calories 80, Calories from Fat 60, Total Fat 7g (11% DV), Saturated Fat 1g (5% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 590mg (25% DV), Carbohydrates 4g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber 1g (4% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 15%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 0%, Iron 2%.

Fajita Seasoning Mix

Makes 1½ cups

Serving size: 2 tablespoons

Active time: 10 minutes

Total time: 10 minutes

Big Food needs to add sugar to packaged spice mixes, to preserve freshness and taste, and also to cover up sour, bitter or other unwanted flavors. I can't imagine why you'd spend \$3 on a fajita seasoning packet when making your own is way cheaper and way healthier

Remember to read the label on all spice blends when buying processed food.

Check out the 56 names for sugar. Here's a great substitute for taco seasoning. It's homemade, low salt, and no sugar.

½ cup chili powder

1 tablespoon salt

¼ cup paprika
2 teaspoons onion powder
1 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
¼ cup garlic powder
1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon ground cumin

Step 1: Mix all ingredients in a small bowl.

Step 2: Store in an airtight container.

Keeps three months.

VARIATIONS:

- Add crushed oregano.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Fish and meat.
- Tacos.
- Burritos.

Per serving: Calories 35, Calories from Fat 10, Total Fat 1g (2% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 680mg (28% DV), Carbohydrates 6g (2% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars < 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 50%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 4%, Iron 10%.

Barbecue Rub

Makes 3/4 cups

Total Time: 10 minutes

Active Time: 10 minutes

This is the recipe that Cindy uses at her restaurant. People really appreciate not having their meat drenched in sugar. It's important to use this on a good cut of meat, so that you don't need to cover up any flavors that aren't the best.

Ingredients

¼ cup kosher salt
2 tablespoons onion powder

1 tablespoon smoked paprika
1 tablespoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon chili powder
½ tablespoon black pepper

Step 1: Mix all ingredients together and store in airtight container.

This keeps for 3 months, stored in an airtight container. Do not refrigerate or freeze, moisture will cause the mixture to clump up.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Chicken.
- Beef.
- Pork.

Per serving: Calories 5, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 400mg (17% DV), Carbohydrates 1g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 0%, Iron 2%.

Roma Tomato Basil Salsa

Makes 2 cups

Serving size: 2 tablespoons

Active time: 10 minutes

Total time: 10 minutes

Use firm Roma tomatoes, they're less watery than other varieties. This can be used cold or hot.

1 pound Roma tomatoes, diced into ¼-inch pieces
1 tablespoon garlic, peeled and minced
1 tablespoon cracked black pepper
1 teaspoon salt
½ cup fresh basil, chopped
¼ cup balsamic vinegar
½ cup extra virgin olive oil

Step 1: Chop tomatoes. Peel and mince garlic.

Step 2: Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Best when used immediately.

VARIATIONS:

- If leftover, add to marinara sauce for a little extra punch.
- Spread the salsa over salmon or white fish, adding capers and olives and bake in a 350°F oven.
- Roast eggplant, zucchini or bell peppers, top with mozzarella or ricotta, and top with this salsa for a delicious main course or an appetizer.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Polenta
- Brown rice.
- Barley.
- Whole-grain pasta
- Grilled chicken
- Fish
- Tofu

Per serving: Calories 70, Calories from Fat 60, Total Fat 7g (11% DV), Saturated Fat 1g (5% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 150mg (6% DV), Carbohydrates 2g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 6%, Vitamin C 8%, Calcium 0%, Iron 2%.

Fresh Fruit Salsa

Makes 2 cups

Serving size: 2 tablespoons

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

This is a great summertime salsa for grilled fish or chicken. If using yellow onions, be sure to seek out the sweet varieties, Walla Walla or Vidalia. Regular yellow onions will overpower the fruit flavors.

1 cup of mango or papaya, peeled and diced
½ cup of fresh strawberries, stemmed and diced
1 tablespoon lemon or lime juice

1 teaspoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon salt
Pinch red pepper flakes
½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped fine
½ cup sweet onion (Walla Walla or Vidalia), or red onion, chopped fine

Step 1: Mix all ingredients together in a bowl. Stir well.

Step 2: Let sit for 30 minutes to marinate. Serve chilled or room temperature. It can also be heated.

VARIATIONS:

- Add pineapple.
- Add kiwi.
- Add 2 tablespoons fresh mint, minced.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Roasted or grilled chicken.
- Roast or grilled fish.
- Tofu.

Per serving: Calories 10, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 75mg (3% DV), Carbohydrates 3g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 15%, Calcium 0%, Iron 0%.

Marinated Olives

Makes 2 cups

Serving Size: 2 tablespoons

Total Time: 40 minutes

Active Time: 10 minutes

Marinated olives are such a Mediterranean staple. Put these out for friends with cheese, fruit and wine. Make sure the citrus zest is finely chopped or grated, big pieces will overwhelm.

Ingredients

2 cups mixed olives: green, black, Spanish, or Kalamata,
1 teaspoon fresh oregano, basil or thyme
1 teaspoon fresh lemon or lime zest, grated or minced
1 teaspoon fresh lemon or lime juice
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

Step 1: Mix all ingredients and let marinate for at least two hours, six is better.

Store covered in airtight container for up to two weeks.

VARIATIONS:

- Add roasted garlic or small onions, minced.
- Add cayenne pepper.
- Substitute walnut oil for the olive oil.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Mediterranean dishes with tomatoes and fresh herbs.
- On a salad.
- Roasted tomatoes.
- Roasted chicken.

Per serving: Calories 25, Calories from Fat 20, Total Fat 2.5g (4% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 125mg (5% DV), Carbohydrates 1g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (2% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%.

Roasted Chickpeas

Makes 2 cups

Serving Size: 1/4 cup

Active Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

The kids in Cindy's high school classes love these! You eat them as a snack or toss them into a salad, whole grain pilaf or pasta. These are better if you to start with dried chickpeas (also called garbanzo beans) Soak and cook them yourself. If you don't have time for that, use canned chickpeas.

2 cups cooked or 1 15-ounce can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 tablespoons olive oil

½ teaspoon salt, or to taste
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Step 1: Dry cooked and drained chickpeas with paper towels and place in bowl. Add all other ingredients and toss.

Step 2: Line baking sheet with parchment or wax paper and spread chickpeas out into one even layer.

Step 3: Bake until golden brown and crunchy, about 30 minutes, stirring halfway through so they cook evenly.

Step 4: Remove from oven and let cool. Can be eaten right away or stored in an airtight container for about 1 day.

VARIATIONS:

- Toss with fresh herbs when they come out of the oven: parsley, oregano, thyme, and rosemary would all work.
- When you toss with salt and cayenne before baking, add dried spices: chili powder, cumin, curry powder, garam masala.
- Vary the oil you use. Try sesame or walnut oil.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Topping for soups.
- Tossed in salads.
- Added to pasta dishes.
- Tossed over curries.
- Mixed with roasted nuts for a great appetizer.

Per serving: Calories 80, Calories from Fat 20, Total Fat 2.5g (4% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 320mg (13% DV), Carbohydrates 13g (4% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 4%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%.

Kale Chips

Serves 4 to 6

Serving Size: ½ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Don't pay \$6 for a small bag of kale chips. It's easy to make your own, and they taste better. It may take a while for kids to get used to these, but trust me: Before long, your kids will be scarfing these up as fast as you can make them.

1 bunch curly kale washed and dried well
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon lemon zest
1 tablespoon olive oil plus some for the sheet pan
½ teaspoon salt

Preheat oven to 300° F.

Step 1: Lightly oil two cookie sheet pans about 1 teaspoon per pan, or use cooking spray.

Step 2: Strip the curly leaves off of the kale by holding the bottom of each stem and pulling your hand up along it, stripping off the leaf part and leaving behind the tough stem. Tear the kale into large pieces and put in a large bowl. Add the lemon juice, oil and salt to the bowl using your hands to mix so that the leaves are evenly coated. Caress the leaves as if you were putting moisturizer on them, make sure to get all the nooks and crannies.

Step 3: Arrange the kale on the baking sheets in a single layer and put in oven.

Step 4: Bake until leaves are dry and crisp, but before they start turning dark brown, about 20 minutes.

Step 5: Sprinkle on the grated lemon zest and serve warm or room temperature.

These will hold their crispness at room temperature for one day.

VARIATIONS:

- Try adding cayenne and dill.
- Try using flavored salt, such as smoked or truffle salt.
- Use a flavored oil, or walnut oil.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Soup, chili or sandwich
- As a snack or on an appetizer table with marinated olives, fruit and cheese
- Sweet potato chips

Per serving: Calories 50, Calories from Fat 35, Total Fat 4g (6% DV), Saturated Fat 0.5g (2% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 310mg (13% DV), Carbohydrates 4g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (3% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 1g, Vitamin A 130%, Vitamin C 80%, Calcium 6%, Iron 4%.

Edamame Spread

Makes 2 cups

Serving Size: ¼ cup

Active Time: 8 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Edamame are simply boiled soybeans. You can usually find them frozen. This spread is high fiber and high protein. Kids love it. Use it in place of hummus.

1 pound frozen, shelled edamame

¼ cup lemon juice

1 teaspoon garlic, about 3 cloves, peeled and minced

Pinch black pepper

½ cup truffle, walnut oil, extra virgin olive, or avocado oil

Step 1: Boil edamame in salted, boiling water for 1 minute.

Step 2: Drain and put edamame into a blender, or food processor if you have one, with lemon juice, garlic, pepper and oil. Blend until smooth.

VARIATIONS:

- Substitute chickpeas for edamame.
- Substitute white beans for edamame.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Sliced bread, spread with olive oil and toasted, often called “crostini.”
- Stuffed cherry tomatoes

- On bread
- In a wrap with roasted vegetables

Per serving: Calories 150, Calories from Fat 120, Total Fat 13g (20% DV), Saturated Fat 2g (10% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 5g (2% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (8% DV), Sugars 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 5g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 8%, Calcium 2%, Iron 6%.

Basil Pesto

Makes 1 cup

Serving Size: 2 tablespoons

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Pesto is such a wonderful sauce. So versatile, you can use it in pasta, on pizza, to marinated meats and fish, mixed into ricotta or sour cream to make a dip or a stuffing.

2 cups packed fresh basil leaves

2 cloves garlic, peeled

¼ pine nuts or walnuts (optional)

2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil

Kosher salt and cracked black pepper to taste

½ cup grated parmesan, pecorino or reggiano cheese (optional)

Step 1: Combine basil, garlic and nuts in a blender, or food processor if you have one, and pulse until coarsely chopped. Add half the olive oil and process until fully incorporated and smooth. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

If using immediately, add all the remaining oil and pulse until smooth. Transfer the pesto to a bowl and mix in the cheese.

If freezing, transfer to an airtight container, drizzle remaining olive oil over the top, freeze for up to 3 months. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight. Stir in cheese.

VARIATIONS:

- Use half spinach, half basil
- Use cilantro in place of basil
- Add one red chili pepper

- Play around with nut varieties: almonds and pecans also work.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Added to salad dressing.
- Spread on sandwiches.
- Spread over fish, chicken or meat. You can then roast, pan fry or grill.
- Tossed with pasta.
- Tossed with chopped tomatoes and cubed mozzarella.
- Added to cold pasta, chopped cooked chicken or turkey and chopped tomatoes for a wonderful pasta salad.

Per serving: Calories 190, Calories from Fat 180, Total Fat 20g (31% DV), Saturated Fat 3.5g (18% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 135mg (6% DV), Carbohydrates < 1g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Su

Whole-wheat Sponge Bread

Makes one loaf, about 14 slices

Serving size: 2-ounce slice

Active Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 2 hours 50 minutes (with rising and baking)

Yeast breads intimidate some, but this recipe is simpler than most. Rather than being kneaded, the batter is whisked vigorously. You can do this by hand if you're strong. Or, use a hand mixer or standing mixer. [Is that on the equipment list?] Rather than two rises, this bread rises only once. You don't have to worry about shaping the loaf. It rises in the baking pan.

This recipe yields a moist, satisfying bread. If you bake it in a loaf pan, you can slice this thin for sandwiches. Made in an 8-by-8 pan, and cut into squares, it's more like a hearty roll. This is sweet due to the honey; but ¼ cup for a whole loaf is nothing. Still, the whole-wheat flour is still flour. So eat this as a sandwich or an accompaniment to soup or salad, not as a snack, or the whole loaf will be gone before you know it.

4 cups whole-wheat flour

1 cup oatmeal

2 envelopes, or 4 teaspoons, Fleischmann's Rapid Rise Yeast

2 teaspoons salt

2 cups warm water

¼ cup honey

¼ cup vegetable oil, plus two tablespoons for oiling bread before baking

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Step 1: Generously oil or butter an 8-by-8-inch baking pan.

Step 2: Add hot water, about the temperature of a hot bath, honey, and oil. Mix well. Sprinkle the yeast on top and let sit for 10 minutes or until the mixture begins to bubble. (That means the yeast has woken up. If it doesn't bubble, either your yeast is old, or not working, or the water is too hot and killed the yeast.)

Step 3 Add oatmeal and 1 cup of flour, oil and salt. Mix until just combined. Add remaining flour. Mix until just combined. (The more you mix, the tougher the bread gets). Cover bowl with towel and let rise until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

Step 4: Oil your hands, push dough down and make a ball. Put dough into pan and bake 45 minutes, or until a cake tester or skewer inserted in the middle comes out cleanly. Or you can tap the top of the bread and hear a hollow sound and come out of pan easily. Let cool on a wire rack for 20 minutes, then cut and serve. Makes great toasted croutons

VARIATIONS:

- Substitute molasses for the honey.

GOES WELL WITH:

- A pat of butter.
- Low-sugar jam.
- Soups, chilis and stews.
- Salad.
- Sliced for sandwiches.

Per serving: Calories 220, Calories from Fat 70, Total Fat 7g (11% DV), Saturated Fat 0.5g (2% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 360mg (15% DV), Carbohydrates 36g (12% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 5g, **Added Sugars: 5g**, Protein 6g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 2%, Iron 8%.

CHAPTER 5

Breakfast

In high-income and middle-income countries, breakfast is probably the most sugar-saturated meal of the day. Just think about it: sugary cereals; donuts; pastries; pancakes or French toast or waffles and syrup; jam; bagels; rolls of all kinds. Our usual choices, the sugary ones, are quick. They're easy since they're usually processed and ready-made. They give us a jolt of energy, temporarily. Ever feel like you've hit a wall at 10 a.m.? It's probably because of that sugar fest we call breakfast.

I get it: Mornings are busy, even chaotic, especially in a household with kids. How many people do you know who actually take time to sit at the table for breakfast? Not many, I'll bet. In this chapter, you'll find healthy breakfast alternatives. Most of these dishes can be made ahead, so that you can just grab them in the morning. The things that need to be made fresh take only five to 10 minutes of active time.

Try these low-sugar, high-fiber breakfasts for a couple of weeks. I bet you'll find that you have energy all morning, no mid-morning crash. You probably won't be hungry until lunch. And that's the idea.

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Breakfast Grains – A Tutorial

We've got half of it right: We often eat grains at breakfast. Unfortunately, we eat grains that are usually over-processed and covered in sugar. Try whole grains instead. The fiber in them helps slow down the metabolism of nutrients, avoiding those insulin spikes that shunt calories to fat

Top breakfast grains with a few chopped nuts, some yogurt or milk, some berries, compote, applesauce or chopped fruit. That's a breakfast that will taste great, and keep you going until lunch.

Cold Breakfast Cereals

Whole-grain, low-sugar cold cereals exist but you need to really read the label! Packaged granola or muesli often has as much sugar as a candy bar. Avoid it. Make your own instead.

Choose high-fiber cereals that have no added sweeteners. Look in the healthy food section at the supermarket, or try your local health food store.

Here are cold cereals that I recommend:

- Generic shredded wheat.
- Post Shredded Wheat.
- Post Bran Flakes.
- Puffed kamut.
- Puffed barley.
- Puffed whole wheat.
- Homemade granola
- Homemade muesli

GOES WELL WITH:

- Milk, of course.
- ¼ cup berry compote or applesauce
- ¼ cup fresh berries, 2 tablespoons plain yogurt and 1 teaspoon chopped, toasted nuts.

Hot Breakfast Cereals

In America, we've got a very limited notion of what grains can be eaten for breakfast: We stick mostly to oatmeal (usually quick oatmeal packets, full of sugar), cream of wheat (over-processed) or, in the South, corn grits. Expand your horizons! Barley, quinoa, polenta, even leftover brown rice or farro can make excellent breakfast choices. Top with milk, fruit, compote, applesauce, or toasted nuts. After a while, your palate will change, and you'll begin to love the varied flavors and textures of these grains.

Whole grains do take longer to cook. See Chapter 2 for more information. You can cook the grains the night before, as you're making dinner. Soak them overnight to speed things up in the morning. Freeze in one-serving sizes for up to one month.

Steel-cut Oatmeal

Serves: 1 adult or 2 children

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients

½ cup steel cut oats

1 cup water

1 cup milk, or unsweetened non-dairy milk

Step 1: Boil 1 cup water in a small pot. Add steel-cut oats, and cover. Let the oats sit overnight in the pot.

Step 2: In the morning, add 1 cup milk, or milk alternative, and bring back to a boil. Cook for two to three minutes, until it is soft and creamy.

VARIATIONS:

- For quick cooking oatmeal, don't soak overnight. Use old-fashioned rolled oats, or quick oats, but make sure the quick oats are plain. The packets usually have loads of sugar.

Cook according to package directions.

- Remember: The ratio of liquid to oats is always 2:1.

Per serving: Calories 430, Calories from Fat 90, Total Fat 10g (15% DV), Saturated Fat 4g (20% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 20mg (7% DV), Sodium 125mg (5% DV), Carbohydrates 63g (21% DV), Dietary Fiber 8g (32% DV), Sugars 12g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 21g, Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 35%, Iron 20%.

Breakfast Corn Mush (Polenta)

Makes 4 cups, Serves 8

Serving Size: ½ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

In the southern United States, they call this “corn grits,” but in Italy, where Cindy’s mother’s parents were born, they call it “polenta.” It’s basically grain mush or porridge that’s been eaten since Roman times. Today it’s mostly commonly made with cornmeal, but barley and other grains were used in the past.

Polenta is still a carb, but because it’s ground coarsely, it maintains a lot of its original fiber. In other words it’s, not refined. It’s a much better choice than a standard refined carb like white rice or potatoes. If you buy the commercial versions instead of making it yourself, the sodium content will be significantly higher.

When served fresh, polenta has the homey consistency of mashed potatoes. Once it cools, polenta hardens into the shape of whatever holds it. Then it can be sliced or chopped and fried and used in endless ways.

1 cup corn grits or corn meal

4 cups water

Salt to taste

Step 1: Bring water or broth and salt to boil in a large pot over high heat.

Step 2: Once the liquid is boiling, slowly add the corn meal, stirring constantly with a whisk to keep lumps from forming.

Step 3: When the grain is mixed smoothly into the liquid, reduce the heat to low and simmer gently for 30 minutes until very thick. Stir occasionally to keep the polenta from sticking.

Per serving: Calories 60, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0.5g (1% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 45mg (2% DV), Carbohydrates 12g (4% DV), Dietary Fiber 1g (4% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 1g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 0%, Iron 2%.

Breakfast Barley

Makes 3 cups

Serving size: ½ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 50 minutes

Grains like barley take a while to cook. Trying cooking them ahead, and freezing in small quantities in freezer bags. They will keep one month in the freezer

1 cup hulled barley

3 cups water

Step 1: Combine barley and water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until tender, about 40 minutes.

Per serving: Calories 110, Calories from Fat 5, Total Fat 0.5g (1% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 23g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 2%, Iron 6%.

Breakfast Quinoa

Makes 3 cups

Serving Size: ½ cup

Active Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Quinoa is a staple grain in Peru and Bolivia. It has a springy, fine texture like couscous, and a nutty taste.

1 cup quinoa, rinsed
2 cups water

Step 1: Combine quinoa and water in a pot and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes

Per serving: Calories 100, Calories from Fat 15, Total Fat 1.5g (2% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 18g (6% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (8% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 2%, Iron 8%.

Homemade Granola

Makes 6 cups

Serving size: ¼ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Commercial granola is the biggest rip-off ever. Healthy? Try again. All sugar, no fiber. Whether it's honey, or brown sugar, or agave, or Maltose or "evaporated can juice," it's all sugar to your body and it all has the same bad effects on your metabolism.

Thankfully, granola is ridiculously easy, and cheaper, to make at home.

Homemade granola is low sugar, high fiber. Use rice bran oil or safflower oil to keep the omega-6's down.

6 cups oatmeal
½ cup rice bran oil or safflower oil
¼ cup honey
½ cup water
1 tablespoon cinnamon
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 cup raw nuts, whatever you like, almonds, walnuts, pecans, cashews

¼ cup raw seeds, whatever you like: sunflower seeds, pepitas, sesame seeds
½ cup unsweetened coconut (the wide strips, not the sugary shreds)
1-2 cups dried fruit, again, whatever you like: raisins, currants, mango, apple, figs, apricots, pears.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Step 1: Whisk oil, honey, water, cinnamon and vanilla extract together in a large bowl until mixed. Add oatmeal and toss with oil and spices until all the cereal is thoroughly coated.

Step 2: Add nuts, unsweetened coconut and seeds.

Step 3: Line a rimmed sheet pan with parchment paper. Spread granola evenly over pan. Bake about 25 minutes, stirring occasionally until brown and toasty.

Step 4: Add 1 to 2 cups of your favorite chopped dried fruit: apricots, raisins, figs, mango, pears, dates, or whatever! Don't add fruit until after baking or it will become as hard as rocks.

Let cool before serving. It will dry up as it cools.

Store in an airtight container at room temperature for as long as one month.

VARIATIONS

Let your imagination go wild! Add whatever you like to this basic recipe:

- Add more vanilla.
- Substitute almond extract or maple extract for the vanilla, or add a bit of each.
- Add a teaspoon or so of ginger or cardamom.
- Add a ¼ teaspoon of nutmeg.
- Use a different kind of sweetener: maple syrup or agave or molasses.

GOES WELL WITH

- Milk
- Plain Yogurt
- Sliced seasonal fruit.

Per serving: Calories 120, Calories from Fat 45, Total Fat 5g (8% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 18g (6%

DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 3g, **Added Sugars: 3g**, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%.

Homemade Muesli

Makes 4 cups

Serving Size: 1/2 cup

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

2 cups old fashioned rolled oats
¼ cup sunflower seeds
¼ cup dried dates or apricots, chopped
¼ cup unsweetened coconut
¼ cup almonds, chopped
¼ raisins

Cold Cereal

Step 1: Mix all ingredients together. Store in an airtight container. Can last up to two months.

Hot Cereal

Step 1: Combine ½ cup of muesli with 1 to 1½ cups of milk, or unsweetened soy, almond, or coconut milk in a pot. Bring to boil, then lower to a simmer, cover and cook for 5 minutes. Turn off heat and let sit for 5 minutes before serving.

VARIATIONS:

- Use this mixture in oatmeal cookies
- Use other cold breakfast cereals along with rolled oats (Note: cracked grains and steel cut oats will not work; they are too hard.)
- Add ½ cup muesli and 1 cup cold milk or plain yogurt. (see Tutti Fruitti recipe TK)

GOES WELL WITH:

- Milk
- Plain yogurt
- Fruit compote or applesauce
- Fresh chopped fruit.

Per serving: Calories 160, Calories from Fat 50, Total Fat 6g (9% DV), Saturated Fat 1.5g (8% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 25g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 4g (16% DV), Sugars 6g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 2%, Iron 8%.

Nut Butter Bars

8 regular bars or 16 mini bars

Active Time: 15minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

These are great for a breakfast on the go. Feel free to use brown sugar instead of honey

1 cup old fashioned rolled oats
1 cup chopped almonds (walnuts, pecans)
¼ cup raw sunflower seeds
1 tablespoon ground flaxseed (optional)
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
1 cup unsweetened whole grain puff cereal
1/3 cup dried apricots, chopped
1/3 cup raisins
1 cup creamy almond butter
2 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon vanilla or almond extract

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Step 1: Spread oats, almonds, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds on a large-rimmed baking sheet. Bake until oats and nuts are lightly toasted, shaking pan about halfway through, about 10 minutes.

Step 2: While step 1 is baking, line an 8-inch square baking pan with wax or parchment paper. In a small pot, add nut butter, honey, vanilla and heat over medium until mixture bubbles lightly, 2-5 minutes. Pour the wet nut butter mixture over the dry ingredients in a bowl and mix with a spatula until no dry spots remain.

Step 3: Transfer to the prepared pan. Use parchment or wax paper to press the mixture down firmly to make an even layer. Refrigerate until firm, about 30 minutes. Cut into 8 bars or 16 minis.

Can store at room temperature for a day, but will be soft. Store in refrigerator for up to a week or freeze up to one month.

TIPS

- Use unsweetened puffed kamut or wheat found at natural food stores or large groceries
- Almond butter can be found at natural food stores or large grocery stores near the peanut butter

VARIATIONS:

- Substitute dried peaches, plums or apples for the dried apricots.
- Substitute peanut butter, or another creamy nut butter, for the almond butter.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Milk, or unsweetened milk alternative.
- Sliced apples

Per serving: Calories 400, Calories from Fat 230, Total Fat 28g (43% DV), Saturated Fat 2g (10% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 70mg (3% DV), Carbohydrates 32g (11% DV), Dietary Fiber 8g (32% DV), Sugars 13g, **Added Sugars: 3g**, Protein 13g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 15%, Iron 15%.

Tutti Frutti

Makes 1½ cups

Serves 1

Serving Size: 1½ cups

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

You will never find a dish that tastes sweeter but has less sugar than this one. All the sugar is in the fruit, not added. This is a party in a bowl.

½ cups plain yogurt

¼ cup muesli

¼ cup apples, diced
¼ cup banana, peeled and diced
½ cup berries, fresh, or thawed if frozen (unsweetened)

Step 1: Stir yogurt and muesli together in a bowl. Add chopped bananas and apples and stir.

Step 2: Gently stir in berries.

This recipe can be multiplied. It can also be made the night before and stored for two days in covered container.

If using frozen berries, add them just before you eat.

VARIATIONS:

- Vary the fruit, use fresh or frozen cherries, peaches, pears, even mangoes.
- Add sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, or green pumpkin seeds (also called pepitas) [I think they are always green when they are shelled, aren't they?].
- Stir ¼ teaspoon vanilla into the yogurt.

Per serving: Calories 230, Calories from Fat 30, Total Fat 3.5g (5% DV), Saturated Fat 1.5g (8% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 135mg (6% DV), Carbohydrates 44g (15% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 27g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 10g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 90%, Calcium 25%, Iron 15%.

Yogurt Parfait

Serves 1

Serving Size: [That's not a size]

Active Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

This is Cindy's "go-to" breakfast. Make it the night before, or even two to three days ahead of time. You can carry it on a plane. Children love it. It's a power meal. If you let it sit for at least 15 minutes, the yogurt softens the cereal. If you like it crunchy, then eat it right away.

1 cup of low or nonfat plain yogurt (Not Greek, it's too thick.)

1 cup of chopped fruit or berries

½ cup of shredded wheat or shredded wheat and bran (check label, no sweeteners added)

Step 2: Put shredded wheat on bottom of a small cereal bowl or plastic container. Spread yogurt over cereal. Top with fruit. That's it.

VARIATIONS:

- Use Greek yogurt instead of plain yogurt, eliminate the cereal.
- Make Cindy's Healthy Cheesecake: Spread shredded wheat on a large platter, cover with two inches of plain Greek yogurt. Top with mixed berries, chopped fruit, or fruit compote.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Salad, to make a lunch.

Per serving: Calories 210, Calories from Fat 40, Total Fat 4.5g (7% DV), Saturated Fat 2.5g (12% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 15mg (5% DV), Sodium 170mg (7% DV), Carbohydrates 30g (10% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 25g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 14g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 170%, Calcium 45%, Iron 4%.

Fruit Salad 12 Ways

Serves 6 to 8

Serving size:

Active Time: About 10 minutes for two to four pounds of fruit

Total Time: 10 minutes

If you have fruit with every meal, you'll satisfy your sweet tooth while also giving your body the fiber it needs to slow down the metabolism of fructose. This is REAL fruit. The key is fresh. You can buy a container of it at Trader Joe's or Safeway for \$6, or you can buy twice as much whole fruit for the same price or less. It will be fresher, cheaper, and better, just not as fast.

Obviously, any combination of berries and/or sliced fruit can be called "fruit salad." Let your imagination run wild. Here are some combinations that I like:

- Cubed watermelon, feta cheese, thinly sliced basil.

Per serving: Calories 160, Calories from Fat 110, Total Fat 12g (18% DV), Saturated Fat 2.5g (12% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 135mg (6% DV), Carbohydrates 12g (4% DV), Dietary Fiber 1g (4% DV), Sugars 9g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 45%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 6%, Iron 6%.

- Sliced apples with lemon juice or old fashioned nut butters for dipping.

1 cup apples, 1 tablespoon nut butter

Per serving: Calories 60, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 15g (5% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 11g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 8%, Calcium 0%, Iron 0%.

- Mexican papaya, peeled and tossed with lemon or lime juice. The citrus mutes the sometimes funky smell of papaya.

1 cup papaya

Per serving: Calories 60, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 10mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 16g (5% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (8% DV), Sugars 11g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 25%, Vitamin C 150%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

- Cantaloupe or Honeydew melon, peeled and cubed, tossed with chopped fresh mint.

1 cup serving

Per serving: Calories 60, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 25mg (1% DV), Carbohydrates 14g (5% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (8% DV), Sugars 13g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 1g, Vitamin A 110%, Vitamin C 110%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

- Berry Compote

TK serving

Per serving: Calories 80, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0.5g (1% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 19g (6% DV), Dietary Fiber 4g (16% DV), Sugars 13g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 45%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%.

- Warm or cold Applesauce

TK serving

Per serving: Calories 110, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 30g (10% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 22g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

- Fruit kebabs : Peeled and cubed pineapple, honeydew, watermelon, cantaloupe.

1 cup serving

Per serving: Calories 60, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 15mg (1% DV), Carbohydrates 15g (5% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (4% DV), Sugars 12g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 1g, Vitamin A 30%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

- Dried fruit and nuts.

1/4 cup dried fruit, 1 tablespoon nuts

Per serving: Calories 200, Calories from Fat 70, Total Fat 8g (12% DV), Saturated Fat 0.5g (2% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 32g (11% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 22g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 4g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 2%, Calcium 6%, Iron 6%.

- Grapes, cherries and strawberries.

1 cup serving

Per serving: Calories 70, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 17g (6% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (8% DV), Sugars 14g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 1g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 60%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

- Sliced and peeled oranges, grapefruit and avocado with chopped fresh mint.

- Grilled stone fruit: peaches, apricots, nectarines *

*Grilling fruit is quick: Cut fruit in bite-size pieces. Spray with olive oil. Grill in a heavy pan on the stove over high heat, or over a gas grill, 2 ½ minutes on each side, or until brown.

1 cup serving

Per serving: Calories 70, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 16g (5% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 13g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 30%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

- Grilled figs or pineapples served chilled or warm.

4 medium figs

Per serving: Calories 150, Calories from Fat 5, Total Fat 0.5g (1% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 38g (13% DV), Dietary Fiber 6g (24% DV), Sugars 33g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 2g, Vitamin A 6%, Vitamin C 6%, Calcium 8%, Iron 4%.

Berry Compote

Makes 2 cups

Serving Size: ½ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

This is wonderful cold or hot. Use cold over Greek yogurt, or hot over oatmeal or whole-grain pancakes.

1 pound mixed frozen berries, “individually quick frozen” or “IQF,” this means the fruit has been frozen individually, IQF fruit is generally higher quality

½ cup Applesauce

Step 1: Combine frozen berries and applesauce. Let sit in fridge for 15 minutes, serve warm or chilled.

Will keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to one week.

VARIATIONS:

- Use frozen peaches or apricots in place of berries
- Can use fresh berries or stone fruit in place of frozen

GOES WELL WITH:

- Warm it up and use it in place of pancake syrup
- Cold is great by itself or over yogurt or ice cream

Per serving: Calories 80, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0.5g (1% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 19g (6% DV), Dietary Fiber 4g (16% DV), Sugars 13g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 45%, Calcium 2%, Iron 4%.

Applesauce

Makes 3 cups

Serving size: ½ cup

Active time: 15 minutes

Total time: 30 minutes

Packaged applesauce usually has a lot of added sugar, and it never has the fresh, snappy taste of homemade applesauce. Luckily, making your own applesauce couldn't be simpler. Honestly, it takes about ten minutes.

Cindy serves this applesauce as a side dish in her restaurant, where she likes to make this recipe with fresh, tart apples. The quality and taste of the apples determines the flavor of the sauce. Fuji or Granny Smith apples make good choices here, or you can use a combination of your favorites. Don't peel the apples. If you slice the apples thinly, the peels are barely noticeable in the finished sauce, and they provide essential fiber

When apples get expensive in the late spring and summer, you can use frozen apples in this recipe. You can buy these at the store, or slice your own during the autumn apple harvest, and freeze them in plastic bags to use later.

6 large apples

Juice of one lemon

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

2 tablespoons water, apple juice, or cider

Step 1: Core and chop apples. Toss with lemon juice and cinnamon.

Step 2: Place a medium-sized pot over low heat. Add a couple of tablespoons of liquid to the pot. Heat until the water begins to steam.

Step 3: Add the sliced apple mixture to the pot, and cover. Steam apples over low heat until tender, about 15 minutes.

Step 4: Remove pot from heat when apples are mushy. Using a potato masher, mash apples to whatever texture you desire. Some people like smooth sauce, others prefer chunky. Cool. Serve.

This keeps for seven days, in a covered container in the refrigerator.

VARIATIONS:

- You can also make this in the microwave, on the high setting for 10 minutes.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Pork roast or pork chops.
- Yogurt.
- Pancakes.
- French toast.

Per serving: Calories 110, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 30g (10% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 22g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

Low-sugar Blackberry Jam

Makes 1 quart

Serving size:

Active Time: 5 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

You don't need to sterilize jars and go through a complicated canning process if you're going to use the jam quickly. This quick jam will keep two weeks in the fridge. It won't last that long.

It's about the fruit, not the sugar. Two tablespoons of sugar never killed anybody. And for 2 pounds of berries? This is a great way to re-set your palette without giving up taste. Make a batch, and give the rest away to friends. They'll love you for it

2 pounds blackberries or mixed berries, fresh or defrosted, if frozen
½ ounce pectin
2 tablespoons sugar

Step 1: Place berries in a 2-quart pot with lid. Bring to boil.

Step 2: Mix in pectin and sugar. Simmer for 10 minutes. Let cool. Pack in small containers and put in the fridge to chill.

Will keep for two weeks in refrigerator, or three months in the freezer. This recipe can be multiplied.

VARIATIONS:

- Use raspberries or strawberries.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Yogurt
- Toast
- Pancakes
- On a PBJ.

Per serving: Calories 20, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 0mg (0% DV), Carbohydrates 5g (2% DV), Dietary Fiber 1g (4% DV), Sugars 4g, **Added Sugars: >1g**, Protein 0g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 2%, Calcium 0%, Iron 2%.

Homemade "Sausage"

Serves 4 to 6

Serving size: 3 ounces

Active time: 10 minutes

Total time: 25 minutes (plus 12 hours, if chilling)

This isn't technically "sausage," because it does not have a casing. But it tastes like breakfast sausage. Even better, it has no "mystery meat," no preservatives, no added sugar, no chemicals. It's quick, simple and delicious. You can slice it, freeze the slices on a cookie sheet, then pop them into a plastic bag to fry up as needed.

Substituting turkey in savory foods is always a dicey proposition, because ground turkey doesn't have the fat of other meats, and therefore it has less flavor. So it's all about the seasoning. Season it right, and nobody cares: the more complex the flavors, the better. And fennel is a fantastic seasoning to extend a savory dish.

1 pound ground meat, beef, chicken or turkey
1 tablespoon red wine vinegar or vinegar of your choice
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cracked pepper
2 teaspoons fresh parsley, chopped
1 teaspoon dried basil, or fresh if available
1 teaspoon garlic powder
2 teaspoons onion powder, or 2 tablespoon fresh onions, peeled and chopped
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon dried pepper flakes or cayenne
½ teaspoon whole or ground fennel,
½ teaspoon ground oregano
Pinch thyme
2 tablespoons oil, if frying

Step 1: Place meat in a medium bowl and add seasonings.

Step 2: Knead meat and seasonings with your hands until well combined.

Step 3: Divide the meat into three portions, and roll them into logs an inch or two in diameter. Chill 1 hour.

Step 4: Cut the logs into ¼ inch-thick slices, fry with oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat. Or bake in a 350°F oven for 20 minutes. Serve.

VARIATIONS:

- If you don't want to wait, you can just crumble the mixture and fry it without having to chill it first to make the logs.
- Play with the herbs. Substitute cilantro and chili powder for the basil and paprika to make a Latin version.

- Add 1 or 2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped, or to taste.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Scrambled eggs
- Crumbled, fried and added to an omelet or breakfast burrito
- In a sandwich

Per serving: Calories 210, Calories from Fat 140, Total Fat 16g (25% DV), Saturated Fat 6g (30% DV), Trans Fat 1g, Cholesterol 55mg (18% DV), Sodium 460mg (19% DV), Carbohydrates 1g (0% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (2% DV), Sugars 0g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 14g, Vitamin A 8%, Vitamin C 2%, Calcium 2%, Iron 10%.

Almost Homemade Salsa

Makes 4 cups

Serving Size: ¼ cup

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 10 minutes

Check the prepared salsa label! Pace Picante or Ortega salsa brands have no sugar. To them, I add chopped tomatoes, cilantro, onions, cayenne pepper. This is a quick and healthy salsa.

Ingredients

2 cups prepared mild salsa
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
2 cups diced fresh tomatoes
½ cup red or yellow onion, peeled and chopped
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
A squeeze of lemon or lime

Step 1: Mix everything together in a medium bowl.

This recipe can be multiplied. It will keep in the refrigerator for up to a week.

VARIATIONS:

- Use a can of chopped fire-roasted stewed tomatoes in place of fresh.
- Add some chopped chipotle peppers in adobo, if you like it spicy.

- Add ½ teaspoon of dried cumin or coriander.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Eggs
- Use in place of dressing on salad
- Meats
- Heated and spread over polenta with Parmesan cheese

Per serving: Calories 15, Calories from Fat 0, Total Fat 0g (0% DV), Saturated Fat 0g (0% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 220mg (9% DV), Carbohydrates 3g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (4% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein < 1g, Vitamin A 6%, Vitamin C 6%, Calcium 2%, Iron 2%.

Power Muffins

Makes 20 muffins

Serving Size: 4 ounces

Total Time: 1 hour

Active Time: 20 minutes

These are a power breakfast. When I can't have a yogurt parfait, I like to have a scone. They freeze well and are great for a snack.

- 1 ½ cups rolled oats
- 2 ½ cups oat bran
- 1 ½ tablespoons baking powder
- 1 ½ tablespoons cinnamon
- 4 cups non-fat plain yogurt
- 2 red apples, grated
- ¾ cup egg whites
- 2 cups blueberries (fresh or frozen, unsweetened)

Preheat oven to 325°F.

Step 1: Mix all ingredients in bowl until well blended. Line sheet pan with parchment or wax paper.

Step 2: Spray a muffin pan with non-stick cooking spray. Scoop dough into pan and lightly press down. Top each muffin with 4 blueberries.

Step 3: Bake 25 to 35 minutes, or until muffins are firm and just slightly golden brown on top.

VARIATIONS:

- Substitute blueberries with dried fruit, almonds, raisins, peaches or other berries.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Salad or soup at lunch.
- Eggs at breakfast.
- As a mid-morning or afternoon snack.
- Low-sugar Blackberry Jam

Per serving: Calories 130, Calories from Fat 20, Total Fat 2.5g (4% DV), Saturated Fat 1g (5% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol < 5mg (1% DV), Sodium 50mg (2% DV), Carbohydrates 24g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 4g (16% DV), Sugars 6g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 8g, Vitamin A 0%, Vitamin C 4%, Calcium 15%, Iron 8%

Baked Fruit Oatmeal

Serves 10 to 12

Serving size: 4-ounce square

Active Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 55 to 60 minutes

Oatmeal is terrific for you. It has lots of fiber, that unsung nutrient that slows down your body's metabolism of sugar. But on some mornings, spending 15 minutes preparing rolled oats, or 60 minutes preparing steel cut oats seems a bridge too far. This recipe offers a solution: you can make it the night before. All you need to do in the morning is cut a slice, and enjoy!

- 3 cups old fashioned rolled oats
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 tablespoons honey or brown sugar (optional)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 ¼ cups unsweetened soy milk (2% milk also OK)
- 1 pound diced sweet apples
- 2 tablespoons oil

2 whole eggs, or 4 large egg whites (Save yolks for another use.)
1 tablespoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Step 1: Grease a 9-by-9-inch baking pan with cooking spray or butter.

Step 2: Combine dry ingredients in a medium bowl.

Step 3: Combine wet ingredients in a large bowl.

Step 4: Add dry ingredients to wet and mix well.

Step 5: Pour mixture into the prepared baking pan.

Step 6: Bake on the middle rack for 45 minutes, or until the center is set and firm to the touch. If making muffins, bake for 25 minutes.

VARIATIONS:

- Make muffins using a nonstick muffin pan that makes 12.
- Use fresh chopped peaches.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Scrambled eggs
- A glass of milk
- Great for a midmorning snack

Per serving(with added honey): Calories 170, Calories from Fat 40, Total Fat 4.5g (7% DV), Saturated Fat 1g (5% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 35mg (12% DV), Sodium 250mg (10% DV), Carbohydrates 28g (9% DV), Dietary Fiber 4g (16% DV), Sugars 9g, **Added Sugars: 3g**, Protein 5g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 4%, Calcium 10%, Iron 6%.

Whole Grain Yogurt Pancakes

Makes 12 to 16 pancakes

Serving Size: 2 medium-sized pancakes

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 25 minutes

These pancakes are light and fluffy, not heavy like regular pancakes. They also have more flavor than regular pancakes. Top with berry compote and you've got a power meal.

1½ cups oat bran
1½ cup whole-wheat flour
1 cup oatmeal
1½ tablespoon baking soda
1 cup egg whites
¼ cup prune paste*
½ cup unsweetened Applesauce
1 red apple, grated
2 ¼ cups non-fat plain yogurt
¼ cup non-fat milk

Step 1: Mix dry ingredients together in small bowl. Mix wet ingredients together in large bowl.

Step 2: Add dry ingredients to wet and mix into a batter (don't over mix). This batter will keep in the refrigerator for 2 days.

Step 3: Cook on lightly oiled, pre-heated griddle or frying pan.

Recipe can be multiplied.

Pancakes can be cooked and frozen for a quick breakfast. [How do we reheat? Stovetop, oven, microwave?]

**Prune paste: Boil pitted prunes in water for approx 2 minutes. Drain and grind into paste in a blender or food processor. You can also sometimes find this in supermarkets, in the baking aisle labeled "Prune Lekvar."*

VARIATIONS:

- Use unsweetened nut or soy milk
- Use unsweetened soy yogurt

GOES WELL WITH:

- Berry compote
- Warm applesauce
- Roasted or grilled peaches

Per serving: Calories 170, Calories from Fat 20, Total Fat 2g (3% DV), Saturated Fat 0.5g (2% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol < 5mg (1% DV), Sodium 230mg (10% DV), Carbohydrates 35g (12% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 9g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 10g, Vitamin A 4%, Vitamin C 4%, Calcium 10%, Iron 10%.

Joe's Scramble and 3 Others

Makes one scramble

Serving Size: half of recipe

Total Time: 20 minutes

Active Time: 20 minutes

This is Cindy's son Joe's favorite meal.

3 large eggs, beaten
1 cup fresh spinach, chopped
½ cup mushrooms
3 ounce Almost Italian sausage
¼ cup green onions, chopped
1 ounce Parmesan cheese
2 tablespoons oil for cooking

Step 1: In a medium frying pan, sauté onion, mushroom, spinach and sausage. Add beaten eggs and cook until firm, scrambling.

Step 2: Remove scramble to a plate and top with parmesan cheese.

Three More Scramble Ideas:

- Ben's-green chilies, jack cheese, sour cream and fresh tomatoes
- Nana's-zucchini, broccoli, mushrooms and jack cheese
- Alex's-ham, jack cheese, guacamole and salsa

VARIATIONS:

- Scramble soft tofu instead of eggs
- Add zucchini and bell pepper
- Use bacon instead of sausage

GOES WELL WITH:

- Brown rice or sweet potatoes, grilled
- Fresh fruit
- Steamed or roasted vegetables

Per serving: Calories 400, Calories from Fat 290, Total Fat 33g (51% DV), Saturated Fat 10g (50% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 320mg (107% DV), Sodium 570mg (24% DV), Carbohydrates 4g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (4% DV), Sugars 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 23g, Vitamin A 50%, Vitamin C 10%, Calcium 25%, Iron 15%.

Polenta Patties with Sautéed Greens, Poached Egg, Roma Tomatoes and Basil Salsa

Serves 6 to 8

Serving size: 4 ounces cooked polenta, 1 egg, 1 ounce cheese, ½ cup vegetables, ¼ cup salsa

Active time: 30 minutes

Total time: 30 minutes

Again, polenta is corn, but coarse and unrefined. Team it with some vegetables, and you can get kids to eat veggies for breakfast. Everyone always thought Hollandaise sauce (egg yolk, butter, lemon juice) was a heart attack waiting to happen, but it is nothing of the sort. Remember, the fat hypothesis has been debunked! One suggestion; add three drops of Tabasco sauce to the Hollandaise to give it the kick that lemon juice can't.

This is a favorite brunch dish at Cindy's restaurant. The polenta and the salsa take a bit more time than most of the recipes in this book, but it's worth the trouble, and good enough to serve to guests.

1 batch leftover polenta, cooled in an oiled loaf pan until firm
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 4 to 6 cups soft, tender greens, washed
 6 eggs
 1 teaspoon white vinegar
 ½ cup Roma Tomato Basil Salsa

Step 1: Remove the cooled polenta from the pan, cut off 6 ¼-inch slices.

Step 2: Heat the olive oil in a large pan over medium-high heat. Add polenta patties, fry until golden brown on both sides, about three minutes per side. Remove to a plate and keep warm.

Step 3: Raise the heat to medium-high again, add 1 tablespoon of oil to the pan and sauté the greens until wilted and tender.

Step 3: Heat 2 inches of water just to a boil in a medium fry pan and add one teaspoon of white vinegar, then reduce heat to low. Crack eggs into the water and poach until desired doneness, about two to three minutes for soft yolks. Using slotted spoon, remove the eggs from water, being careful not to break the yolk.

Step 4: Place one polenta patty on each plate. Top with the greens, then the poached egg. Pour salsa over all. Serve the salsa warm or cold.

VARIATIONS:

- In place of polenta patties, use a Corn Cake and top with Almost Homemade Salsa.
- Top the polenta patties with tomato, basil, and mozzarella in a baking dish. Sprinkle parmesan cheese over all and bake in a 350° oven until warm.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Breakfast potatoes.
- Green Salad
- Fresh Fruit

Per serving: Calories 450, Calories from Fat 160, Total Fat 18g (28% DV), Saturated Fat 3.5g (18% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 165mg (55% DV), Sodium 330mg (14% DV), Carbohydrates 61g (20% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 14g, Vitamin A 90%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 8%, Iron 20%.

Lox & Egg Scramble

Total Servings: 1

Total Time: 15 minutes

This is so yummy. “Lox” is cured, un-smoked salmon. “Nova” is salt cured, lightly smoked salmon. “Gravlax” is salt and sugar-cured salmon with spices, especially dill. They all taste great in this recipe. Dill gives it a distinctive flavor.

1 ounce salmon lox, nova, or gravlax
2 eggs or ¼ cup egg whites
¼ cup chopped or thin sliced onions and bell pepper
¼ cup chopped tomatoes (I like Roma or cherry)
1 teaspoon olive oil
2 scallions, chopped (Green ends, too!)
Cracked black pepper, to taste

Step 1: Sauté salmon and vegetables in oil in a non-stick omelet pan for 3-4 minutes on high heat.

Step 2: Pour egg in scramble, add green onions and cook until firm.

Per serving: Calories 220, Calories from Fat 130, Total Fat 14g (22% DV), Saturated Fat 3.5g (18% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 335mg (112% DV), Sodium 700mg (29% DV), Carbohydrates 6g (2% DV), Dietary Fiber 1g (4% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 17g, Vitamin A 25%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 8%, Iron 15%.

Veggie Brown Rice Frittata

Serves 4 to 6

Serving Size:

Active Time:

Total Time:

Frittata is an Italian egg dish. Think of it as a quiche without the crust, or an omelet without the hassle. This Fat Chance version adds a bit of cooked whole grain. This increases the fiber content, and makes it a whole meal.

Like quiches or omelets, frittatas can be endlessly varied, using whatever ingredients you have at hand. This is also good cold, in a lunch box, or cut into squares for hors d'oeuvres.

1 to 2 tablespoons olive oil
10 eggs
3 cups chopped spinach, squeezed dry if frozen
3 cups cooked brown rice
2 tablespoons fresh dill, or 2 teaspoons dried
4 Roma tomatoes (This variety is best because they're not too watery.)

6 ounces crumbled goat cheese or feta cheese
Salt and pepper to taste
¼ cup grated Parmesan

Step 1: Preheat the oven to 400°. Generously grease a 10-inch cast-iron pan, or another oven-proof, 8-by-10-inch pan, with butter or olive oil.

Step 2: Mix all the remaining ingredients, except the cheeses and tomatoes, in a large bowl. Pour into the prepared pan and cook over medium-high heat until the bottom begins to brown and set.

Step 3: Toss chopped tomatoes with oil and layer on top of egg mixture. Then sprinkle the frittata with the cheeses. Transfer to the middle rack of the oven. Cook until the eggs have puffed up, and the top is brown, about 10 minutes. Remove from the oven, cut as desired and serve.

VARIATIONS:

- Change the vegetable: Shredded zucchini, sautéed diced bell peppers, cooked broccoli or cauliflower, cubed and sautéed eggplant, unpeeled, all work well here.
- Add a chopped yellow onion, or a couple cloves of garlic, minced.
- Change up the cheese: blue, Swiss, cheddar, or jack all work well.
- Vary the herbs: Substitute basil, parsley or cilantro for the dill.
- Use soft tofu instead of eggs.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Tossed salad
- Whole-wheat bread
- Sliced fruit.
- Brown rice.
- Homemade applesauce

Per serving: Calories 400, Calories from Fat 190, Total Fat 21g (32% DV), Saturated Fat 10g (50% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 300mg (100% DV), Sodium 400mg (17% DV), Carbohydrates 31g (10% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 4g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 23g, Vitamin A 210%, Vitamin C 25%, Calcium 30%, Iron 20%.

Breakfast Burritos or Tacos

Serves 8

Serving size: 1 burrito or 2 small tacos

Active Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

These are a great way to use up little bits of this and that. My kids won't eat leftovers. They have a religious objection. But disguise leftovers in these burritos, and voilà! A yummy breakfast. No sugar, and more importantly, no leftovers!

They're always different, and they're always delicious. Kids drop by Cindy's classroom in the morning and scoop these up.

If you have a lot of ingredients you need to use up, make extra burritos, cool, wrap individually in foil, and freeze. Then, on that morning when you're rushed, unwrap and microwave two minutes on high heat. You can do this for as many burritos as you need. That's fast food I can get behind!

8 eggs

2 cups of leftover veggies

2 cups beans, potatoes, rice, or a bit of all of them

1 cup or 8 ounces grated cheese, cheddar, jack or pepper jack work well

1 ½ teaspoons butter or vegetable oil

8 whole grain tortillas, the 10-inch size works best, or 16 corn tortillas

1 cup Almost Homemade Salsa

Salt and pepper to taste

Step 1: Heat a 10-inch skillet over medium heat. Meanwhile, crack eggs in a large bowl and stir with a whisk or a fork until completely combined.

Step 2: Chop the leftover veggies. Mix with the beans, potatoes and rice. Transfer to a large bowl and set aside. Grate cheese and add to the vegetable mixture.

Step 3: Preheat a large skillet, add butter or oil, and add the starch and vegetable mixture. Heat thoroughly. Add eggs to mixture, stirring using spatula. Cook until done.

Step 4:

Burrito: One warm 10-inch, whole-grain tortilla, put one cup of veggie scramble in center. Sprinkle with cheese, fold sides toward center and roll up.

Taco: Take ½ cup of veggie scramble and place in corn tortilla, sprinkle with cheese, fold over.

VARIATIONS:

- Add some chopped green onions or fresh, chopped cilantro to the vegetable mixture. ½ cup for every 8 servings works well. Use more if you want.
- Use leftover chili in place of the veggies.
- Add Mexican spices like oregano, cumin, coriander or chili powder to the veggies, a total of 1 tablespoon per 8 servings works well.
- Roll enough burritos to fill a baking pan, cover with tomato sauce or enchilada sauce, sprinkle with a little cheese and heat in a 400° oven for five minutes.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Salsa
- Fruit and yogurt
- Sliced radishes and jicama

Per serving(burrito): Calories 440, Calories from Fat 130, Total Fat 15g (23% DV), Saturated Fat 6g (30% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 180mg (60% DV), Sodium 640mg (27% DV), Carbohydrates 57g (19% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 17g, Vitamin A 120%, Vitamin C 6%, Calcium 20%, Iron 20%.

CHAPTER 6

Lunch: Soups, Salads and Sandwiches

Lunch can be another food minefield, especially because you can be so pressed for time. Do you accompany colleagues to the burger joint? Do you brave the school cafeteria? Do you try the sandwiches or bagels offered at the meeting or conference?

This chapter gives you some simple, easy-to-pack alternatives. Many of these recipes call for beans or legumes like lentils. See Chapter 7 for more information on how to prepare these healthy ingredients.

Paired with a salad, some of these soups and stews would make great weeknight dinners. Also, they freeze well, so make extra and freeze the leftovers for times when life gets frantic.

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Stock – A Tutorial

It's not hard to make stock. And it's the base for so many different dishes. Canned stock, stock packets, bouillon—They're full of sodium and sugar, and who knows what. Any place a savory recipe calls for water, you can use stock. Try it. You'll find it gives the dish a whole different flavor. All of the recipes below can be doubled.

Vegetable Stock

Makes 6 cups

Serving size: 1 cup

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

2 onions, peeled and chopped
2 carrots, scrubbed and chopped
4 celery ribs, chopped
1/2 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 cups button mushrooms, sliced
1 teaspoon black peppercorns
8 cups water
2 tablespoons rice bran oil
1 to 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste

Step 1: In a large pot, heat 2 tablespoons of oil over a medium heat. Add onion, celery, carrot and tomatoes. Cook covered, stirring occasionally until vegetables are soft and starting to brown just a bit.

Step 2: Add remaining ingredients and bring to a gentle simmer. Cook gently for about an hour or until the stock tastes rich and full. Strain stock through a sieve,, pushing on the veggies to extract as much flavor as possible. Discard vegetable solids, wipe out the stock pot and return the stock to the pot.

If saving for later, let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate for up to seven days. Can be frozen, in sealed containers or freezer bags, for up to three months.

Basic Chicken Stock

Makes 6 cups

Serving size:

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Step 1: Use a heavy knife to coarsely chop the bones from one chicken. Brown with vegetables and follow recipe, above.

Basic Beef Stock

Makes 6 cups

Serving size:

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Step 1: Add 1 pound of oxtail bones or beef marrow bones to vegetables while browning. Then continue with Vegetable Stock recipe, above.

VARIATIONS:

- Add 2 tablespoons parsley after browning vegetables
- Add one to two bay leaves to the water.
- Use water from cooking corn to make a sweeter broth

GOES WELL WITH:

- As a base for all soups.
- Instead of water when cooking grains.

NUTRITIONAL INFO:

TK

Spicy Yellow Split Pea Soup with Tempeh

Makes 8 cups

Serving size: 2 cups for a main meal, 1 cup as a starter

Active Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 5 minutes

This soup is substantial, warming, and delicious. It's also a fiber double-whammy, containing both yellow split peas and tempeh. Many non-vegetarians may not be familiar with "tempeh." Originally from Indonesia, it's a block of fermented whole soybeans, usually sold in the refrigerator sections of most supermarkets. It has a chewy, almost meaty texture, and a nutty flavor. It contains high-quality protein and more fiber in one serving than most people eat in a day. In this soup, the tempeh melds with the other ingredients, giving the soup more heft as the squash makes a nice thick broth. [Warn them that tempeh absorbs liquid? I love it but it handles rather differently from other proteins.]

¼ cup olive oil
1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 to 3 medium carrots, scrubbed and chopped
3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1½ cups diced winter squash (Butternut or kabocha varieties work well here.)
8 ounces tempeh, chopped
8 cups water
2 cups yellow split peas
1½ teaspoons ginger
1½ teaspoons hot, Madras curry powder
1½ teaspoons salt
1½ teaspoons black pepper

Step 1: Chop all the vegetables, and the tempeh.

Step 2: Heat the olive oil in a large stockpot over medium heat. Add the onion, celery, carrots and garlic, reduce heat to low, cover and sweat the vegetables for about 10 minutes.

Step 3: Uncover pot. Add diced winter squash and chopped tempeh. Sauté over medium heat until vegetables begin to brown, about 5 minutes.

Step 4: Add water, split peas and spices. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat. Simmer for about 45 minutes, until split peas are tender and flavors have married. Thin with additional water to desired consistency.

VARIATIONS:

- Substitute ham for the tempeh. You'll lose some of the fiber benefit, but you may win over picky eaters.
- Use regular curry powder if your family doesn't like spicy dishes.
- Serve topped with chopped cilantro and/or Greek yogurt.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Green salad.
- Warmed corn tortillas.
- Roti, (also called "chapatti" or "kolcha") Indian-style flatbread made from stoneground, whole-meal flour, available in some supermarkets and specialty stores.
- Sliced mangos.

Per serving: Calories 300, Calories from Fat 90, Total Fat 11g (17% DV), Saturated Fat 1.5g (8% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 480mg (20% DV), Carbohydrates 37g (12% DV), Dietary Fiber 14g (56% DV), Sugars 5g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 18g, Vitamin A 60%, Vitamin C 8%, Calcium 8%, Iron 20%.

Lentil Stew

Makes 10 cups

Serving Size: 2 cups as a main meal, 1 cup as a starter

Active Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 40 minutes

This is a very simple recipe that can be a base for many variations. It's filled with vegetables and lentils, a great source of fiber.

- 2 cups cooked lentils
- 4 cups chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup onion, peeled and diced
- 1 cup carrots, scrubbed and diced
- 1 cup celery, diced
- 4 cloves garlic or 1 large shallot, peeled and chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sage
- 2 teaspoons salt, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1 teaspoon cumin

Cayenne pepper, optional
3-4 cups vegetable broth, more if you want a soup, less for stew
1 cup chopped cilantro
4 cups kale or spinach

Step 1: In a large skillet, sauté onions, carrots, celery and olive oil until vegetables become tender. Add garlic and cook for an additional 3 minutes.

Step 2: Add chopped tomatoes and all spices. Stew until tomatoes and vegetables are soft and beginning to brown, about 10 minutes.

Step 3: Add vegetable broth and 2 cups lentils. Cook for 20 minutes on low heat, simmering. • Add 4 cups kale or spinach at the very end.

This can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 3 days or frozen in small packages. This recipe can be multiplied.

VARIATIONS:

- Add 2 cups cooked barley
- Add 1 pound ground turkey meat or ground beef, browned.
- Add chopped zucchini or butternut squash.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Tossed green salad.
- Sliced fresh fruit
- Poached or grilled fish

Per serving: Calories 310, Calories from Fat 100, Total Fat 11g (17% DV), Saturated Fat 2.5g (12% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol < 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 950mg (40% DV), Carbohydrates 40g (13% DV), Dietary Fiber 15g (60% DV), Sugars 9g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 15g, Vitamin A 100%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 15%, Iron 25%

Vegetarian Lentil or Split Pea Soup

Makes 3 quarts

Serve 6 as a meal

Serving size: 2 cups for a main course, 1 cup for a starter

Active Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Lentils are legumes, with amylose (slow-absorbing starch) and lots of fiber. This is my kids' favorite vegetarian soup! And mine too! This soup is vegetarian, but it's fine to substitute chicken or beef broth for the vegetable broth.

½ pound lentils (green, red or brown) or split peas (green or yellow)
2 cups chopped yellow onions, diced small
1 medium leek, rinsed, about one cup
(Substitute 4 scallions or 1 large shallots, if leeks aren't available.)
½ cup red bell pepper, diced small.
1 tablespoon garlic, peeled and minced
¼ cup good quality olive oil
1 tablespoon kosher salt or 1 ½ teaspoons table salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 teaspoon dried thyme, or 1 tablespoon fresh
1 cup celery, diced
1 cup carrots, diced
2 quarts water or vegetable stock
1 6-ounce can tomato paste
2 bay leaves
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
Parmesan cheese to garnish

Step 1: In a large bowl, cover the lentils with boiling water. Let sit for 15 minutes. Drain, and set aside. While the lentils are soaking, dice and chop all the vegetables.

Step 2: In a large stockpot, sauté the onions, leeks, red peppers and garlic in olive oil, salt, pepper, thyme and cumin over medium heat for 20 minutes, until the vegetables are translucent and browned.

Step 3: Add the celery and carrots to the stockpot and sauté for 10 more minutes.

Step 4: Add the vegetable stock, tomato paste, lentils and bay leaf. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer uncovered for 1 hour, or until the lentils are tender.

Step 5: Check seasonings. Add red wine vinegar. Serve hot and sprinkled with grated Parmesan cheese.

This recipe can be doubled. Can be frozen in containers for 3 months.

VARIATIONS:

- Add a couple tablespoons curry powder. At serving, sprinkle with chopped cilantro rather than Parmesan cheese.
- Add substitute lemon juice for red wine vinegar just before serving.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Tossed Salad
- Whole-wheat Sponge Bread
- Grilled cheese sandwiches on whole-wheat bread

Per serving: Calories 220, Calories from Fat 100, Total Fat 11g (17% DV), Saturated Fat 2.5g (12% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol < 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 950mg (40% DV), Carbohydrates 25g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 7g (28% DV), Sugars 9g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 8g, Vitamin A 100%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 15%, Iron 15%.

Vegetarian Bean Chili

Makes 8 cups

Serving size: 2 cups for a main course, 1 cup for a starter

Active time: 15 minutes

Total time: 30 minutes

¼ cup olive oil

2 cups chopped onions

2 medium red bell peppers, diced

6 garlic cloves, minced

2 tablespoons chili powder

2 teaspoons cayenne pepper

6 cups cooked beans*

1 cup reserved liquid from cooking beans

2 cups crushed tomatoes

2 cups cooked kale or spinach

For garnish:

Chopped cilantro, sour cream, grated cheese and chopped green onion

Step 1: Heat oil in a heavy, large bottom sauce pot over medium-high heat. Add onions, bell pepper and garlic. Sauté until soft, about five minutes.

Step 2: Add chili powder, oregano, cumin and cayenne and stir for about 2 more minutes.

Step 3: Mix in the crushed tomatoes and kale or spinach. Cook for 10 minutes.

Step 4: Add cooked beans and bring to a boil, stir, then reduce heat and simmer for 20 to 20 minutes, until flavors blend and chili thickens.

Step 5: Season according to taste with salt and pepper. Garnish and serve!

VARIATIONS:

- Add 1 ½ teaspoons cinnamon.
- Add 1 cup beer. [That's quite inspired.]

GOES WELL WITH:

- Brown Rice
- ^a Sliced Apples
- Sliced tomatoes
- Yogurt
- Avocado

Per serving: Calories 600, Calories from Fat 160, Total Fat 18g (28% DV), Saturated Fat 3g (15% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 1440mg (60% DV), Carbohydrates 94g (31% DV), Dietary Fiber 28g (112% DV), Sugars 9g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 26g, Vitamin A 480%, Vitamin C 230%, Calcium 35%, Iron 60%.

Roasted Chicken Soup with Vegetables

Makes 2 quarts

Serving size: 2 cups for a main dish, 1 cup for a side dish

Active Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour 10 minutes

Your grandmother knew about the healing powers of chicken soup. The peptones, amino acids, and micronutrients in chicken soup are as close to a magic elixir as modern medicine gets. But commercial chicken soup can sometimes have added sugar (to cut the acidity), and rarely has any vegetables (except for the occasional overdone celery). Another knock against canned soup: it's overloaded with salt. It is much easier to add salt than it is to take it away. The hardest part of this recipe is cutting up of the rotisserie chicken and the vegetables. After you've done that, the rest is as easy as soup. [It's also a very thrifty thing to do if you've roasted your own chicken.]

1 cooked rotisserie chicken
2 carrots, chopped
2 ribs celery, chopped
1-2 tablespoons vegetable oil or olive oil
10 cups water
2 cups assorted chopped vegetables:
 spinach, chard, zucchini, green beans, butternut squash,
 kabocha squash, carrots
1 ½ to 2 cups cooked barley, cooked noodles, or raw cubed potatoes
Salt and pepper to taste

Make a quick broth:

Step 1: Remove the meat from the chicken, dice and set aside. Using a cleaver, or kitchen knife, chop the bones of the chicken carcass into 1-inch pieces. Coarsely chop the carrots and celery.

Step 2: Add bones and veggies to a large soup pot with the oil and brown. Then turn heat to low, cover and sweat everything for 20 minutes. Add boiling water, bring back to the boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 20 minutes, skimming any foam that may rise to the top.

Step 3: Strain the broth through a fine mesh strainer, pushing on the bones and veggies to extract as much of their flavor as possible. Discard the remains in the strainer, wipe out the soup pot and return the stock to the pot.

Finish the soup:

Step 3: Chop the assorted vegetables: Cut greens in narrow strips, green beans in 1-inch pieces, dice hard squashes or zucchini.

Step 4: Add chopped vegetables and the starch of your choice to the stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 45 minutes.

Step 5: Add reserved, diced chicken to the broth, and simmer until just warmed through, 3 to 5 minutes. Serve.

VARIATIONS:

- Toss a few cloves of smashed garlic, or unpeeled, coarsely chopped onion to the bones, when you start the broth.
- Add a pinch of cayenne, or 1 teaspoon of dried thyme when you add the boiling water to the bones.
- Toss in finely chopped parsley, or chopped fresh thyme leaves, or a couple squirts of Tabasco sauce or Sriracha sauce just before serving.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Whole grain bread
- Salad

Per serving: Calories 410, Calories from Fat 90, Total Fat 10g (15% DV), Saturated Fat 2g (10% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 155mg (52% DV), Sodium 290mg (12% DV), Carbohydrates 25g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 6g (24% DV), Sugars 3g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 51g, Vitamin A 270%, Vitamin C 8%, Calcium 8%, Iron 20%.

Summer Garden and Bean Soup

Makes 1 gallon

Serving Size: 2 cups for a main dish, 1 cup for a side dish

Active Time: 30 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

I love a summer garden: zucchini, green beans, tomato, basil and swiss chard. There's nothing like fresh picked vegetables that you've grown yourself. Cindy, who lives in a warmer micro-climate than I, shares her garden vegetables with friends and neighbors along with recipes and containers of soup. This makes for a great meal and freezes well.

¼ cup olive oil

4 slices bacon, cut into ½ inch strips (optional)

3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced

3 cups yellow onion, peeled and chopped
Cracked black pepper
2 cups celery, including tops, chopped
4 cups Swiss chard, including leaves and stalks
½ cup parsley, chopped
2 cups zucchini or yellow squash, diced
2 cups green beans, cut in thirds
¼ cup fresh basil
2 cups cabbage, shredded and then chopped
2 cups Tomato Sauce
2 cups carrots, sliced
4 cups pureed white beans (any variety, cannellini, navy or white northern) or 1
28-ounce can drained and pureed white cannellini beans
8 cups chicken or vegetable broth
Fresh parsley, chopped
Freshly grated Parmesan

Step 1: Chop all vegetables. In a large stock pot, sauté bacon until just browned. Drain off bacon fat and replace with olive oil.

Step 2: Add garlic, onion and celery and sauté over medium high heat until tender. Add fresh pepper and stir in the rest of the vegetables and herbs. Cook for about 5 minutes, then add tomatoes, chicken broth and beans.

Step 3: Simmer for 30 minutes or until all flavors have come together. Serve hot garnished with chopped fresh parsley and a sprinkle of freshly grated Parmesan.

This recipe can be doubled. It will keep in the refrigerator for one week, or in the freezer for three months.

VARIATIONS:

- Add 2 cups cooked barley or brown rice in the last 10 minutes of cooking
- Add spinach or kale in place of swiss chard or cabbage
- Add 2 cups cooked chopped chicken or turkey
- Add ½ pound Italian sausage

GOES WELL WITH:

- Watermelon and feta salad
- Polenta croutons

- Whole grain pizza dough, spread with Basil Pesto and dotted with Marinated Olives

Per serving: Calories 350, Calories from Fat 110, Total Fat 13g (20% DV), Saturated Fat 2g (10% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol < 5mg (1% DV), Sodium 680mg (28% DV), Carbohydrates 49g (16% DV), Dietary Fiber 13g (52% DV), Sugars 10g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 15g, Vitamin A 200%, Vitamin C 90%, Calcium 25%, Iron 30%.

Split Pea and Vegetable Soup

Makes 1 gallon

Serving Size: 2 cups for a main dish, 1 cup for a side dish

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

This is one of those recipes where “mise en place,” getting everything ready before you cook, really saves time. This soup will get thick as it cools and you can always add the leftovers to this wonderful soup base. Be creative.

16 cups water

3 cups dried split peas (yellow or green), rinsed and picked over

1 ½ lbs russet potatoes (about 3 medium), scrub and cut into ½ inch pieces

2 cups carrots, scrubbed and diced

1 cup celery, diced

1 cup onion, peeled and diced

¼ cup olive oil or safflower oil

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 teaspoon dried thyme

Salt and pepper, to taste

Step 1: Chop carrots, celery and onion in a large stock pot (1 ½ gallon). Place pot on medium heat. Add oil. Add carrots, celery and onion and sauté until tender. Add garlic. Cook for 2 minutes.

Step 2: Add potatoes and split peas. Cook for 3 minutes. Add salt, pepper and thyme.

Step 3: Add 16 cups, 1 gallon, water. Bring to boil, uncovered.

Step 4: Reduce heat to medium. Cover and cook for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until split peas are tender and flavors have blended. Adjust seasoning.

This recipe can be multiplied. Freezes well, for up to three months.

VARIATIONS:

- Add more water if you want it to be thinner
- Use sweet potatoes in place of russet potatoes
- Add 2 cups diced butternut squash
- Add 2 tablespoons fresh chopped sage when sautéing vegetables

GOES WELL WITH:

- Roasted pork loin
- A green salad
- Applesauce or sliced apples

Per serving: Calories 400, Calories from Fat 70, Total Fat 8g (12% DV), Saturated Fat 1g (5% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 85mg (4% DV), Carbohydrates 66g (22% DV), Dietary Fiber 21g (84% DV), Sugars 9g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 21g, Vitamin A 110%, Vitamin C 15%, Calcium 8%, Iron 25%.

Italian Wedding Soup

Makes 20 cups

Serving Size: 2 cups for a main course, 1 cup for a side

Active Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

This recipe makes soup for a crowd, like the crowd at a wedding. It was a comforting staple in Cindy's grandmother's kitchen. It's perfect as a starter to a dinner party. No sugar, loads of fiber, even in a soup. Just takes a while. Soups are better with chicken broth or stock instead of water: richer, more flavorful. The more seasonings you add, the less salt you need!

Turkey bones from a small turkey, about 10 to 12 pounds

3 cups chopped turkey meat

1 large onion, peeled and chopped

4 cloves garlic, peeled and minced

4 medium-sized carrots, scrubbed and chopped

1 stalks celery, chopped
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
1 gallon (16 cups) water
1 pounds fresh spinach or kale, chopped
4 cups of chopped zucchini

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Step 1: First, roast the turkey. Save the bones from the roasted turkey. Rub the skin with a mixture of salt and sage. Place in a roasting rack set in a roasting pan. Bake 3 ½ hours (or until a meat thermometer registers 165°F.) Remove, and let rest until cool enough to handle.

Step 2: Transfer the bones to a 2-gallon stockpot. Fill the pot with water until it's two-thirds full. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for two hours.

Step 3: Remove turkey bones from the stock with a slotted spoon. In a 2-quart pot, sauté onions, carrots, celery until tender. Add garlic and cook for an additional 2 minutes. Add to stockpot. Cook for 20 minutes so all the flavors can get into the broth.

Step 4: Add the fresh greens and chopped zucchini. Bring the soup back to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the greens have wilted and the zucchini is tender. Cook for an additional 20 minutes.

Step 5: Add breast meat pieces back to the soup. Simmer until the breast meat is just warm, three to five minutes. Serve.

This soup can be frozen for up to three months.

VARIATIONS:

- Use chicken stock
- Add sweet potatoes, rice, or barley
- If you want to make a smaller batch, halve all the vegetable amounts and use a turkey or chicken leg. Reserve the meat, as in the main recipe.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Tossed green salad

- **Whole Grain Flatbread Pizza**

Per serving: Calories 350, Calories from Fat 190, Total Fat 21g (32% DV), Saturated Fat 8g (40% DV), Trans Fat 0.5g, Cholesterol 110mg (37% DV), Sodium 760mg (32% DV), Carbohydrates 11g (4% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (8% DV), Sugars < 1g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 28g, Vitamin A 35%, Vitamin C 6%, Calcium 20%, Iron 20%.

Tossed Salad 23 Ways

So you're on the run and want to pack something the night before for lunch. Gotta be healthy; gotta be tasty; gotta be filling. Fill me with energy and keep me from snacking!

1. Melon, Berry and Chicken Salad

2 cups of mixed greens
1 cup cubed or sliced cantaloupe (or other melon)
½ fresh berries
½ cup grilled or roasted chicken
½ cup Cracked Wheat Salad
2 tablespoons Italian Dressing

Per serving: Calories 540, Calories from Fat 360, Total Fat 41g (63% DV), Saturated Fat 6g (30% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 40mg (13% DV), Sodium 780mg (32% DV), Carbohydrates 32g (11% DV), Dietary Fiber 7g (28% DV), Sugars 18g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 15g, Vitamin A 210%, Vitamin C 200%, Calcium 8%, Iron 15%.

2. Cantaloupe Stuffed Chicken Salad

½ cantaloupe, seeded
½ cup Chicken Salad
1 slice Whole-grain Veggie Banana Bread

Per serving: Calories 660, Calories from Fat 290, Total Fat 33g (51% DV), Saturated Fat 4.5g (22% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 45mg (15% DV), Sodium 920mg (38% DV), Carbohydrates 71g (24% DV), Dietary Fiber 9g (36% DV), Sugars 34g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 25g, Vitamin A 210%, Vitamin C 180%, Calcium 10%, Iron 20%.

3. Burrito Bowl Salad

1 large whole grain, 10-inch tortilla

2 cups mixed greens
1 cup Black Bean and Quinoa Burrito Bowl
2 tablespoons Almost Homemade Salsa
1 tablespoon shredded cheddar cheese, or Monterey jack cheese

Per serving: Calories 600, Calories from Fat 120, Total Fat 14g (22% DV), Saturated Fat 3.5g (18% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 1150mg (48% DV), Carbohydrates 95g (32% DV), Dietary Fiber 15g (60% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 24g, Vitamin A 150%, Vitamin C 25%, Calcium 15%, Iron 40%.

4. Roasted Veggie and Grilled Chicken Salad

1 Whole-grain tortilla
2 cups mixed greens
1 cup Roasted Veggies
½ cup chopped chicken or turkey
2 tablespoons Italian Dressing

Per serving: Calories 660, Calories from Fat 330, Total Fat 38g (58% DV), Saturated Fat 5g (25% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 60mg (20% DV), Sodium 860mg (36% DV), Carbohydrates 50g (17% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 3g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 31g, Vitamin A 110%, Vitamin C 200%, Calcium 8%, Iron 25%.

5. Steak Salad

2 cups mixed greens
¼ cup tomatoes, chopped
¼ cup cucumber, chopped
4 ounces cooked steak, sliced
1 ounce blue cheese, crumbled
½ cup roasted sweet potato or russet potato wedges
2 tablespoons Ranch Dressing

Per serving: Calories 520, Calories from Fat 260, Total Fat 29g (45% DV), Saturated Fat 11g (55% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 115mg (38% DV), Sodium 740mg (31% DV), Carbohydrates 25g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 4g (16% DV), Sugars 4g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 41g, Vitamin A 120%, Vitamin C 35%, Calcium 25%, Iron 20%.

6. Barbecued Chicken Salad

2 cups mixed greens

½ cup tomatoes, chopped
½ cup jicama, peeled and chopped
½ cup leftover barbecued chicken, chopped
1 Corn Cake
2 tablespoons Ranch Dressing

Per serving: Calories 570, Calories from Fat 160, Total Fat 18g (28% DV), Saturated Fat 3.5g (18% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 105mg (35% DV), Sodium 600mg (25% DV), Carbohydrates 69g (23% DV), Dietary Fiber 10g (40% DV), Sugars 7g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 34g, Vitamin A 130%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 15%, Iron 25%.

7. Salad Sampler

2 cups mixed greens
¼ cup Pickled Beets
½ cup roasted vegetables
½ cup chopped tomatoes
1 hard boiled egg, halved
½ cup Cracked Wheat Salad
1 ounce cheese, such as sharp cheddar or mozzarella, shredded
2 tablespoons Italian Dressing

Per serving: Calories 630, Calories from Fat 440, Total Fat 50g (77% DV), Saturated Fat 12g (60% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 215mg (72% DV), Sodium 1190mg (50% DV), Carbohydrates 30g (10% DV), Dietary Fiber 8g (32% DV), Sugars 11g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 20g, Vitamin A 150%, Vitamin C 180%, Calcium 30%, Iron 20%.

8. Another Salad Sampler

2 cups mixed greens
¼ cup Newel Dual
¼ Edamame Spread
6 Triscuits (Whole grain crackers, these have no added sugar, and lots of fiber.),

Per serving: Calories 500, Calories from Fat 300, Total Fat 34g (52% DV), Saturated Fat 5g (25% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 115mg (38% DV), Sodium 310mg (13% DV), Carbohydrates 31g (10% DV), Dietary Fiber 7g (28% DV), Sugars 6g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 23g, Vitamin A 130%, Vitamin C 45%, Calcium 10%, Iron 20%.

9. Chopped Marinated Vegetable Salad (Vegan)

2 cups mixed greens
¼ cup each: diced or chopped (choose any four)
Carrots, scrubbed
Jicama, peeled
Celery
Cucumbers
Broccoli
Cauliflower
Red onion, peeled
Cabbage
3 tablespoons Italian Dressing (marinate veggies overnight)
½ cup cooked chickpeas
½ cup cooked cracked wheat or barley
¼ chopped fresh parsley, cilantro or basil
1 teaspoon fresh oregano (optional)
A pinch of cayenne (optional)

Per serving: Calories 630, Calories from Fat 400, Total Fat 45g (69% DV), Saturated Fat 5g (25% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 770mg (32% DV), Carbohydrates 49g (16% DV), Dietary Fiber 12g (48% DV), Sugars 5g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 10g, Vitamin A 250%, Vitamin C 90%, Calcium 15%, Iron 25%.

10. Salmon, Roasted Tomato and Polenta Squares Salad

2 cups mixed greens
4 ounces leftover grilled or poached salmon
¼ cup tomatoes, chopped
4 ounces cold polenta, cubed, pan-toasted if desired
2 tablespoons Italian Dressing or Balsamic Dressing

Per serving: Calories 640, Calories from Fat 310, Total Fat 35g (54% DV), Saturated Fat 4g (20% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 80mg (27% DV), Sodium 270mg (11% DV), Carbohydrates 46g (15% DV), Dietary Fiber 3g (12% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 35g, Vitamin A 120%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 6%, Iron 20%.

11. Flank Steak, Grilled Onion and Stone Fruit Salad

2 cups mixed greens
½ cup grilled onions
½ cup grilled stone fruit, plums, peaches or nectarines
4 ounces leftover grilled flank steak

2 tablespoons Italian Dressing

Per serving: Calories 500, Calories from Fat 280, Total Fat 32g (49% DV), Saturated Fat 6g (30% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 90mg (30% DV), Sodium 180mg (8% DV), Carbohydrates 19g (6% DV), Dietary Fiber 4g (16% DV), Sugars 12g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 34g, Vitamin A 110%, Vitamin C 35%, Calcium 8%, Iron 15%

12. Healthy Chef's Salad

2 cups butter lettuce, shredded
¼ avocado, peeled diced
¼ cup carrot slices
¼ cup radish slices
¼ cup tomatoes, chopped
2 tablespoons Monterey jack or Swiss cheese
4 ounces leftover turkey or chicken
1 hard-boiled egg, peeled and chopped
2 tablespoons Ranch Dressing

Per serving: Calories 470, Calories from Fat 290, Total Fat 33g (51% DV), Saturated Fat 8g (40% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 250mg (83% DV), Sodium 460mg (19% DV), Carbohydrates 14g (5% DV), Dietary Fiber 6g (24% DV), Sugars 6g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 30g, Vitamin A 190%, Vitamin C 35%, Calcium 25%, Iron 20%.

13. Caprese Salad

Grilled eggplant, marinated, sliced in ½-inch slices and grilled
2 ounces buffalo mozzarella
2 slices tomato
Fresh basil leaves
1 cup Pesto and Barley Pilaf

Per serving: Calories 460, Calories from Fat 220, Total Fat 24g (37% DV), Saturated Fat 4.5g (22% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 710mg (30% DV), Carbohydrates 52g (17% DV), Dietary Fiber 10g (40% DV), Sugars 22g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 12g, Vitamin A 30%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 40%, Iron 10%.

14. Grilled Chicken Salad with Steamed Green Beans and Slivered Almonds

2 cups mixed herbs and greens (baby greens, basil leaf, parsley, cilantro)
½ cup steamed green beans

2 tablespoons Marinated Olives
½ Herb-roasted Potato
4 ounces grilled, herbed chicken breast, sliced thin or shredded
½ cup Roma Tomato-Basil Salsa
2 tablespoons slivered almonds

Per serving: Calories 630, Calories from Fat 250, Total Fat 29g (45% DV), Saturated Fat 4g (20% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 95mg (32% DV), Sodium 740mg (31% DV), Carbohydrates 49g (16% DV), Dietary Fiber 11g (44% DV), Sugars 6g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 46g, Vitamin A 150%, Vitamin C 140%, Calcium 25%, Iron 45%.

15. Chicken or Salmon Caesar Salad

2 cups: baby romaine and radicchio
4 ounces grilled chicken or salmon, cubed
1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
½ cup croutons (made from Whole Wheat Sponge Bread)
2 tablespoons Caesar Dressing

Per serving: Calories 560, Calories from Fat 310, Total Fat 35g (54% DV), Saturated Fat 6g (30% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 100mg (33% DV), Sodium 490mg (20% DV), Carbohydrates 19g (6% DV), Dietary Fiber 4g (16% DV), Sugars 3g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 42g, Vitamin A 170%, Vitamin C 8%, Calcium 15%, Iron 20%.

16. Mediterranean Baby Spinach and Quinoa Salad

2 cups baby spinach
½ cup cooked quinoa
2 ounces feta cheese
¼ cup Marinated Olives
½ cup Roma Basil Tomato Salsa

Per serving: Calories 410, Calories from Fat 230, Total Fat 26g (40% DV), Saturated Fat 10g (50% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 50mg (17% DV), Sodium 1080mg (45% DV), Carbohydrates 29g (10% DV), Dietary Fiber 5g (20% DV), Sugars 5g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 15g, Vitamin A 130%, Vitamin C 40%, Calcium 40%, Iron 25%.

17. Chicken Fajita Taco Salad

1/2 cup leftover Fajita Chicken
1 cup sautéed bell peppers and onions
1/2 cup cabbage, shredded

½ cup carrots, shredded
½ cup jicama, shredded
¼ cup Almost Homemade Salsa

Per serving: Calories 260, Calories from Fat 70, Total Fat 8g (12% DV), Saturated Fat 1.5g (8% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 60mg (20% DV), Sodium 600mg (25% DV), Carbohydrates 23g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 8g (32% DV), Sugars 10g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 25g, Vitamin A 230%, Vitamin C 120%, Calcium 10%, Iron 15%.

18. Spinach Salad with Grilled Fish, Cherry Tomatoes and Toasted Herb Nuts

2 cups baby spinach
4 ounces leftover grilled salmon, swordfish, or tuna
½ cherry tomatoes, halved or chopped ripe fresh tomatoes
¼ cup toasted nuts
¼ cup Homemade Croutons
2 tablespoons Balsamic Vinaigrette

Per serving: Calories 740, Calories from Fat 490, Total Fat 57g (88% DV), Saturated Fat 8g (40% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 80mg (27% DV), Sodium 510mg (21% DV), Carbohydrates 24g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 6g (24% DV), Sugars 5g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 39g, Vitamin A 130%, Vitamin C 45%, Calcium 15%, Iron 25%.

19. Braised Greens and Roasted Chicken Over Pesto Barley Pilaf

1 cup leftover braised greens
½ cup leftover roasted chicken, chopped
½ cup leftover pesto barley pilaf
½ cup Roma Tomato Basil Salsa

Per serving: Calories 460, Calories from Fat 210, Total Fat 23g (35% DV), Saturated Fat 4g (20% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 60mg (20% DV), Sodium 680mg (28% DV), Carbohydrates 34g (11% DV), Dietary Fiber 10g (40% DV), Sugars 3g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 31g, Vitamin A 240%, Vitamin C 70%, Calcium 25%, Iron 30%.

20. Chicken, Spanish Rice and Black Bean Salad

2 cups mixed greens
½ cup leftover chicken, shredded
½ cup leftover Spanish Brown Rice
½ cup cooked black beans, rinsed and drained
¼ cup Almost Homemade Salsa

Per serving: Calories 370, Calories from Fat 70, Total Fat 7g (11% DV), Saturated Fat 1.5g (8% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 60mg (20% DV), Sodium 570mg (24% DV), Carbohydrates 43g (14% DV), Dietary Fiber 12g (48% DV), Sugars 4g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 33g, Vitamin A 130%, Vitamin C 60%, Calcium 10%, Iron 25%

21. Cracked Wheat Salad with Roasted Veggies and Chickpeas

2 cups baby spinach
1 cup leftover Cracked Wheat Salad
1 cup leftover Roasted Vegetables
½ cup Toasted Chickpeas
¼ Roma Basil Tomato salsa

22. Light Cobb Salad

2 cups butter lettuce, shredded
½ cup tomatoes, chopped
¼ avocado, peeled and chopped
½ cup roasted zucchini
½ cup leftover chicken, chopped
2 slices turkey bacon, chopped
1 egg, hardboiled, peeled and chopped
2 tablespoons Ranch Dressing
1 slice Whole-grain Sponge Bread

Per serving: Calories 430, Calories from Fat 250, Total Fat 28g (43% DV), Saturated Fat 4g (20% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg (0% DV), Sodium 920mg (38% DV), Carbohydrates 40g (13% DV), Dietary Fiber 10g (40% DV), Sugars 4g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 9g, Vitamin A 140%, Vitamin C 80%, Calcium 10%, Iron 25%.

23. Tuna Niçoise

2 cups mixed greens, shredded
½ cup leftover roasted potatoes, cubed
½ cup steamed green beans
1 can tuna (4- or 6-ounce, packed in water)
½ cup Roma tomatoes, chopped
2 tablespoons Niçoise olives (or Marinated Olives)
2 tablespoons Italian Dressing

Per serving: Calories 460, Calories from Fat 230, Total Fat 26g (40% DV), Saturated Fat 3g (15% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 35mg (12% DV), Sodium 630mg (26% DV), Carbohydrates 25g (8% DV), Dietary Fiber 6g (24% DV), Sugars 5g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 34g, Vitamin A 130%, Vitamin C 50%, Calcium 10%, Iron 25%.

Sesame Ginger Cabbage with Carrots and Chicken

Serves 4

Serving Size: 1/4 recipe

Active time: 15 minutes

Total time: 45 minutes (less if you use leftover cooked chicken)

I'm a sucker for ginger. The ginger and apple cider really brings this dish out. Plus the cabbage delivers the requisite fiber. This crunchy salad, dressed lightly with cider vinegar and sesame oil, has Asian overtones. Served with brown rice, it makes a whole meal.

2 cups shredded chicken, about 1 pound
2 tablespoons canola oil
1/2 medium onion, yellow or white, peeled and finely diced
Pinch kosher salt
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
1/2 teaspoon fresh ginger, peeled and finely grated
1 large carrot, scrubbed and cut into julienne strips
1/2 head green cabbage, thinly sliced
Fresh ground black pepper, to taste
1/2 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
1/4 teaspoon sesame oil
Pinch crushed red pepper

Step 1: Poach the chicken. Place in a large saucepan. Cover with water, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for 10 minutes. Turn off heat, cover, and let sit for 30 minutes. Remove chicken from the water, then remove the skin and bones. Shred the meat and set aside.

Step 2: In a large sauté pan or skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add onions and salt, cook for five minutes until the onions soften and begin to brown. Reduce the heat to medium. Stir in garlic, ginger and carrot. Sauté for one minute.

Step 3: Add all the cabbage to the pan. Cook for five more minutes, until cabbage is tender-crisp. Add shredded chicken, season with black pepper and another pinch of salt, apple cider vinegar, sesame oil and red pepper flakes.

Step 4: Toss everything together until combined. Taste, and adjust seasonings. Serve immediately.

Recipe can be doubled.

VARIATIONS:

- Add chopped fresh scallions and cilantro.
- Add chopped kimchi (spicy Korean fermented cabbage).
- Mix a couple tablespoons crunchy, no sugar peanut butter with the vinegar and sesame oil before tossing.
- Toast $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sesame seeds and toss with spices at the end.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Brown rice
- Sliced apples, mango or watermelon

Per serving: Calories 180, Calories from Fat 50, Total Fat 6g (9% DV), Saturated Fat 1g (5% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 75mg (25% DV), Sodium 200mg (8% DV), Carbohydrates 7g (2% DV), Dietary Fiber 2g (8% DV), Sugars 3g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 25g, Vitamin A 160%, Vitamin C 80%, Calcium 15%, Iron 10%.

Savory Watermelon and Feta Salad

Makes 9 cups

Serving Size: 1 cup plus lettuce leaf

Active Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Italian Dressing
- 8 cups seedless watermelon, cubed and chilled
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh basil, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 heads butter lettuce, cleaned and whole leaf

Step 1: Peel and chop cold watermelon into 1 inch cubes.

Step 2: Clean lettuce and dry and chop fresh herbs.

Step 3: Assembly

Individual serving:

On a salad plate, place two large lettuce leaves. Take one cup of watermelon, put on top of lettuce leaves. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon Italian Dressing over watermelon. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoons feta cheese. Top with 1 tablespoon fresh chopped herbs.

On a large platter:

Place all lettuce leaves on platter. Top with 8 cups of watermelon. Drizzle with ½ cup of Italian dressing. Sprinkle with feta cheese and top with fresh chopped herbs.

VARIATIONS:

- Add a pinch cayenne pepper and a squeeze of lime juice instead of Italian dressing.
- Use fresh mint in place of basil.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Chili
- Enchiladas
- Grilled Steak

Per serving: Calories 160, Calories from Fat 110, Total Fat 12g (18% DV), Saturated Fat 2.5g (12% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 5mg (2% DV), Sodium 135mg (6% DV), Carbohydrates 12g (4% DV), Dietary Fiber 1g (4% DV), Sugars 9g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 3g, Vitamin A 45%, Vitamin C 20%, Calcium 6%, Iron 6%.

Chicken Salad

Makes 5 cups

Serves 8-10

Serving size: ½ cup

Active time: 20 minutes

Total time: 1 hour

It goes against decades of anti-fat conditioning, but the mayonnaise in this recipe won't kill you. This is a variation of the famous Waldorf Salad, and it has ample protein and fiber. If you don't go nuts with the mayo, this dish has what your body really needs. Store-bought chicken salad always has way too much mayo. [I'm also guessing it has the wrong fat.]

I personally like my chicken savory, not sweet. But this dish is a staple at Cindy's restaurant. It's great for school lunches and for picnics. If you're in a rush use "Just Chicken" from Trader Joe's.

2 pounds chicken breast or 3 cups leftover cooked chicken, diced
1 cup diced celery
1 cup diced crisp red apples, such as Fuji or Macintosh
½ cup raw cashews, toasted
Mayonnaise to taste, about 1 cup
Salt and pepper, to taste, about 1 teaspoon of each

Step 1: If starting with raw chicken, poach or roast for about 30 minutes, until firm yet still moist. See Sesame Ginger Chicken for poaching directions.

Step 2: Put the cashews in a small baking pan and toast in a 350°F oven for about 8 minutes or until lightly browned. Check every couple minutes; nuts burn quickly. Remove and let cool to room temperature.

Step 3: Cool chicken. Dice the meat. You should have three cups (freeze whatever is leftover).

Step 4: Dice apples and celery. Transfer to a bowl and add the diced chicken and cashews.

Step 5: Add mayonnaise to taste. Don't use low-fat mayonnaise, it will taste thin and won't be able to bind the salad. Start with ½ cup mayo. Mix well. Add more mayonnaise to your taste. Add salt and pepper to taste. Chill for 30 minutes. Ready to go.

This lasts 3 days in a covered container in the refrigerator. Recipe can be multiplied.

VARIATIONS:

- Add ½ cup dried raisins or ¾ cup fresh grapes, sliced in half.

- Add a tablespoon or so of lemon or lime juice to give it some kick.
- Double the amount of celery. Some people like this extra crunchy.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Whole wheat bread and lettuce to make an awesome sandwich.
- Wrapped in a whole wheat tortilla or Middle Eastern lavash bread.
- On top of mixed greens to make a salad.

Per serving: Calories 270, Calories from Fat 200, Total Fat 22g (34% DV), Saturated Fat 3.5g (18% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 45mg (15% DV), Sodium 430mg (18% DV), Carbohydrates 4g (1% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (3% DV), Sugars 2g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 14g, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 2%, Calcium 2%, Iron 6%.

Newel Dual

Makes 1 cup, serves 2

Serving size: ½ cup

Active time: 10 minutes

Total time: 20 minutes

Cindy opened her first café on Newel Street in Walnut Creek. This tuna salad/egg salad mash-up may sound a bit odd, but it became a bestseller in her restaurant. Try it. It's a great way to make a little tuna go a long way. It's also the best way to get the highest quality protein with the least fat or sugar, even sneaking in a bit of fiber, and yet still delivering the most taste. This is a winner for school lunches. Put this on whole grain bread with some lettuce, and you can be sure this is one lunch your kids will look forward to at school.

- 1 6-ounce can of tuna packed in water, drained
- 2 hard boiled eggs, grated
- ½ cup celery, diced
- 2 tablespoons red onion, peeled and minced
- 1 tablespoons lemon juice, or to taste
- ¼ cup mayonnaise, or to taste

Step 1: Drain tuna.

Step 2: Grate eggs, chop celery and red onion.

Step 3: Put all ingredients in a bowl and mix well. Chill at least 30 minutes before using.

Will last up to three days in the refrigerator. Recipe can be multiplied.

VARIATIONS:

- If you prefer tuna packed in oil, use a little less mayonnaise.
- Use canned salmon in place of tuna.

GOES WELL WITH:

- Whole wheat bread, in a sandwich
- Over greens to make a salad

Per serving: Calories 260, Calories from Fat 120, Total Fat 13g (20% DV), Saturated Fat 3g (15% DV), Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 230mg (77% DV), Sodium 160mg (7% DV), Carbohydrates 7g (2% DV), Dietary Fiber < 1g (2% DV), Sugars 3g, **Added Sugars: 0g**, Protein 27g, Vitamin A 8%, Vitamin C 6%, Calcium 6%, Iron 8%.

Cracked Wheat Salad

Makes 6 cups

Serving Size: 1 cup for a main meal, ¼ cup for a side

Total Time: 50 minutes

Active Time: 20 minutes

This dish is excellent source of whole grains and vegetables. I love chewy grains and the wheat berries add a great texture. Add toasted chickpeas or tofu to this dish and make it a complete meal.

- 1 cup cracked bulgur wheat
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 cup fresh tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup cucumber, chopped
- 1 cup parsley, chopped
- ½ cup red onion, peeled and chopped
- ¼ cup toasted walnuts, chopped (optional)
- 1 avocado chopped (optional)
- ½ cup pitted olives (optional)
- ½ cup feta cheese (optional)