

THE ESSENTIAL DIET for
FATTY LIVER

*Nutrition Guide and Recipes
to Heal Your Body*



ANDY DE SANTIS, RD, MPH



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Interior and Cover Designer: Monica Cheng

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Photography © Marija Vidal, cover and p. vi; Katerina Osa/Creative Market, pp. ii, x, 1, 36, 37, 39, 55, 83, 97; Nadine Greeff, pp. 11, 38, 54, 96; Shutterstock,

pp. 14, 25; Charlie Layton, p. 18;
Thomas J. Story, p. 23; Darren Muir, p.
63; Hélène Dujardin, pp. 82; 93; Andrew
Purcell, p. 108

Paperback ISBN: 978-1-63878-044-1
eBook ISBN: 978-1-63878-891-1
R0

*Mom and Dad,
there is no
number of book
dedications that
could repay your
love and support
over the years—
but here's
another one
anyway.*



Yogurt Berry Pancakes

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INTRODUCTION

My name is Andy De Santis, and I'm humbled to be your guide on the path toward better liver health. This book is all about teaching you the steps you can take to improve your quality of life while living with fatty liver disease.

I'm a registered dietitian from Toronto, Canada, with a passion for helping people utilize the power of nutrition to better their health, whether by working with them directly or on a larger scale via my writing. I've been fortunate enough to write ten books, and hundreds of blog posts and articles for various print and online platforms. But let's get into the topic you picked up this book for.

Hearing that you have a fatty liver from your doctor can sound scary, but know that you are not alone. “Fatty liver” is a generic term that often refers specifically to Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD), which is the most common liver condition in North America, affecting close to one in four adults.

There are different types of NAFLD that we will go through in the chapters ahead, and each of them range in severity and often build on one another if left unmanaged. As the name suggests, NAFLD describes an unexpected and undesirable accumulation of fat on the liver that is not caused by excessive alcohol intake or other specific condition.

According to the *World Journal of Gastroenterology*, fatty liver disease has become increasingly common globally; that also means it is gaining greater attention from the scientific research community, as dietary

and medical strategies to help prevent and manage NAFLD are becoming increasingly important.

I scoured the research on this topic to ensure no new scientific insights were left behind when I assembled this book. I want you to feel confident you are holding a very clear, very detailed look at the best available evidence on the role of diet and nutrition in managing and fighting back against NAFLD. You will also find 50 delicious recipes and a meal plan that combines and incorporates all of this information and helps you put it into action.

My goal with this book is to help you better understand your condition and how the choices you make about food, exercise, and other lifestyle factors influence the health of your liver. My hope is that you feel empowered to make meaningful but manageable changes and greatly improve

your health and quality of life for years to come.

With all of that said, thank you for choosing this book to accompany you on your journey to better liver health. Let's get started!



PART 1

GETTING STARTED

CHAPTER 1

Understanding Your Liver

The liver serves hundreds of unique and essential functions, which to me makes it one of the most fascinating organs in the human body. In this chapter, we will begin to explore this vital organ, including a deep dive into some of these various functions. I hope not only to inform and educate you on the role your liver plays in your body, but also to support you on your quest for a healthier liver.

The Liver's Role

Often known as the “detoxifying” organ, the reality is that the liver is responsible for quite a bit more than that. This is part of the reason why diet and lifestyle changes to manage fatty liver disease are so important—you depend on your liver to perform so many essential tasks.

Located around the upper portion of the torso and sitting on top of the digestive tract, the liver generally weighs only a few pounds, which belies its extreme importance to a healthy human body.

It’s estimated that the liver performs around 500 essential roles, which include detoxifying and processing various types of drugs, alcohol, and other compounds into forms that are easier for the human body to manage and excrete. The liver is uniquely positioned for this role because blood flow through the digestive tract, to which it is

attached, enters directly through the liver for processing.

Other very important liver functions include:

Carbohydrate metabolism—Your body stores a certain amount of carbohydrates as glycogen in the muscle cells and elsewhere for later use as energy, and the liver is responsible for managing this conversion in both directions.

Fat metabolism—In addition to breaking down fats for use as energy, the liver produces various forms of cholesterol and important proteins. They have an essential role in transporting different types of compounds throughout the body.

Iron metabolism—The liver stores a portion of the body's iron and can also process the iron-carrying protein hemoglobin to increase

iron availability if needed. The liver's role in iron metabolism explains why anemia is more likely in people with severe liver disease.

Digestion—The liver is responsible for producing a fluid compound known as bile. Bile stored in the gallbladder and helps break down fats so that they can be better absorbed in the small intestine.

Detoxification—Although “detoxify” is often passed off as a buzzword, the liver's detoxifying role simply cannot be understated. A great example of detoxification is its role in protein digestion. The human body breaks down the protein you eat into a compound called ammonia, which is dangerous if it accumulates in high amounts. Your liver, however, converts ammonia into something called *urea*, which you can easily get rid of via your urine.

FATTY LIVER FAQ

I heard that milk thistle and vitamin E supplements help with liver disease. Should I take these?

Not without consulting your health care team. Milk thistle extract, as it is sold in supplemental form, consists mostly of a bioactive antioxidant compound known as *silymarin*. It is thought to have antioxidant and liver protective properties, but the evidence for these claims is lacking.

Vitamin E supplements have generated a great deal of interest in the management of liver disease given their anti-inflammatory capacity—but not everyone with liver disease should take a vitamin E supplement. In both cases, consultation with your health

care team must be considered before acting.

How does the doctor determine what type of fatty liver disease I have?

Ultrasounds and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) may be used to help visualize fat deposits on the liver, but a liver biopsy is the most precise test available.

A biopsy involves taking a small tissue sample and reviewing it under a microscope to look for signs of inflammation and liver damage.

An NAFLD diagnosis usually occurs when there is fat accumulation, but not inflammation, whereas a NASH (nonalcoholic steatohepatitis) diagnosis usually occurs when there is fat with further visible damage and inflammation.

What are the biggest modifiable risk factors for fatty liver disease?

High cholesterol, triglycerides, blood sugar levels, and blood pressure are the big four risk factors that may increase one's susceptibility to not only liver disease, but other health complications like heart disease.

What are some other causes of fatty liver disease?

Individuals with hepatitis C, thyroid disorders, or celiac disease may be at higher risk of fatty liver disease as well.

How many people are affected by NAFLD?

Based on current estimates, there are over 100 million people in North America living with an NAFLD

diagnosis, and although most are middle-aged adults, the rates are increasing alarmingly in adolescents as well.

What's the difference between alcoholic and nonalcoholic fatty liver disease?

The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases suggest that when alcohol consumption is considered significant (>21 drinks weekly for men, >14 for women), then you may be considered to have alcoholic rather than nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

Only your health care provider can make decisions regarding the nature of your diagnosis.

Are there pharmaceutical treatment options?

There are no Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved medications for fatty liver disease. However, depending on the nature of your diagnosis and the assessment carried out by your health care team, you may be prescribed certain medications, such as Pioglitazone (often used in diabetes), although they are not proven to help everyone with a fatty liver.

Liver Disease: An Overview

In this section, we take a closer look at various aspects of fatty liver disease, including the different types and symptoms, as well as potential causes and complications associated with this common condition.

TYPES

There are two primary types of fatty liver disease, essentially associated with or not associated with alcohol. They are categorized as follows:

Alcoholic Liver Disease (ALD): This is caused by chronic excessive alcohol intake.

Nonalcoholic Fatty Liver Disease (NAFLD): This is the most common type of liver disease in the United States and the primary focus of this book. NAFLD exists in two forms:

Simple Fatty Liver: The vast majority (80 percent) of people with NAFLD have this form, which involves the accumulation of fat on the liver without significant inflammation or damage.

Nonalcoholic Steatohepatitis (NASH): The remaining 20 percent of individuals with NAFLD have the more serious form of

the condition. It is characterized by inflammation and damage to liver cells, which can progress to even more severe forms known as fibrosis and cirrhosis.

SYMPTOMS

Fatty liver disease is rarely a symptomatic condition and generally not characterized by obvious signs or signals.

In those for whom symptoms do appear, they may include:

- ❶ Pain or discomfort on the upper right side of the stomach (where the liver is located)
- ❷ Unexpected weight loss, weakness, or fatigue
- ❸ Jaundice or yellowing of the skin and eyes
- ❹ Swelling in the legs and torso
- ❺ Nausea and reduced appetite

NAFLD is more likely to land on your health care team's radar based on blood work (liver enzymes), imaging (such as an ultrasound), or by investigation of the area indicating concern.

Sometimes more extensive examinations and blood or imaging tests are required to narrow down your diagnosis. In short, diagnosis of NAFLD is one that only your doctor can make.

CAUSES

NAFLD is characterized by the excessive presence of stored fat in and around the liver, which occurs when the liver's ability to transport and utilize fatty acids in the body is compromised by factors other than alcohol consumption. Scientists are not 100 percent clear on the full causes of NAFLD, although the following are considered relevant considerations:

Insulin resistance: Insulin resistance is a key feature of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. It also changes the way your body interacts with fatty acids, thus increasing the risk they could accumulate within your liver.

High blood cholesterol and blood triglyceride levels: There is considerable evidence that these are major contributors to a fatty liver disease diagnosis.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS): Individuals living with PCOS are believed to be at elevated risk for NAFLD.

Hypothyroidism: Individuals with a history of hypothyroidism may also be at an increased risk.

Genetics and other personal factors: Family/genetic history and the use of certain medications may also play a role.

COMPLICATIONS

Depending on several factors, including lifestyle intervention, simple fatty liver can progress to NASH. With more time and increased liver damage, this could lead to severe inflammation (fibrosis) and eventually severe liver damage (cirrhosis).

Severe liver damage could warrant a liver transplant, and NAFLD, even if only moderate in severity, increases one's risk for cardiovascular disease—the number one cause of death in the United States.

Common Comorbidities

Because NAFLD is strongly associated with insulin resistance and elevated blood fat levels (cholesterol, triglycerides), it's not uncommon for those living with the condition to also be dealing with comorbidities such as

type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome, PCOS, and more.

Type 2 Diabetes: Type 2 diabetes is a condition characterized by blood sugar levels that remain above the optimal range in both the short and long term. Insulin resistance is one of several potential drivers for diabetes because insulin is the hormone that allows blood sugar to enter the cells for use. When our cells don't respond to insulin as they should, blood sugar levels can elevate.

Metabolic Syndrome: Metabolic syndrome speaks to multiple simultaneous abnormalities across important parameters such as blood sugar, blood pressure, cholesterol, and/or triglycerides. The elevation of one or more of these markers can increase one's risk for a variety of conditions including heart disease. Those with metabolic syndrome may be at higher risk for NAFLD

as compared to someone with these markers in check.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS):

PCOS is a multifactorial condition, and its diagnosis is based on the presence of specific criteria such as cysts on the ovaries, elevated androgen levels, and insulin resistance. Once again, insulin resistance is the factor that ties NAFLD and PCOS together on a physiological level.

Cardiovascular Disease: Individuals living with fatty liver disease may be at increased risk of cardiovascular disease, especially since some of the key dietary considerations for fatty liver (such as saturated fat intake—discussed in detail in [chapter 2](#)) are also strongly related to cardiovascular health.

Various Other Conditions: Sexual health issues, sleep apnea, and osteoporosis may

likely to occur in those living with NAFLD. The physiological abnormalities associated with liver disease affect multiple bodily systems, including the bones and reproductive organs.

WEIGHT AND LIVER HEALTH

I'm personally cautious about overemphasizing the value of weight loss above all other nutritional considerations, given that there are so many areas to focus on regarding the nutrient density of your diet that will have massive implications for your health going forward.

If you've been made to feel you need to lose a significant amount of weight in order to get better, I want

you to take a step back and instead spend your energy focusing on incorporating the nutrition principles and recipes in this book.

Studies have demonstrated that increased physical activity can improve liver health, even with the absence of weight loss. A decrease in weight as modest as 3 percent of your total body weight has the potential to improve liver health outcomes.

Working toward a goal of adopting the style of eating outlined in this book should be sufficient for most people to experience modest decreases in body weight without prioritizing that as a goal.

Key points, provided by the American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases, on the subject of weight loss include:

1. Weight loss of at least 3 to 5 percent of body weight helps improve fatty liver, and a greater loss (7 to 10 percent) has long-term potential to induce further benefit.
2. Exercise without weight loss has the potential to improve a number of important parameters of liver health, but the extent of the effect is not fully known.
3. An increase in physical activity and modest caloric reduction (-500 per day) is considered to provide the best effects.

The Role of Diet

There is little question that a strong dietary pattern, meaning what your food intake looks like over an extended period, plays a role in

both the prevention and management of fatty liver disease, especially as it relates to minimizing further risks to your health and quality of life after a diagnosis.

Insulin resistance and poorly regulated blood fat levels (especially triglycerides) have a role to play in the development and progression of fatty liver disease. Dietary modifications that fight back against these physiological concerns are of the utmost importance—as is the role of anti-inflammatory dietary components, given that inflammation advances the severity of fatty liver disease.

In [chapter 2](#), we'll take a deep dive into the nutrition principles that represent the most important dietary considerations for people living with fatty liver disease. These same principles, based on the best available evidence and research, were used to establish the criteria for the recipes in this book.

Principle #1: A Mediterranean-Style Diet

—This diet diversifies your protein intake away from traditional sources like red meat and higher-fat dairy, and incorporates many more plant and seafood sources, as well as legumes, nuts, and seeds.

Principle #2: Focusing on Healthier Fats

—The vast majority of the dietary fats we are looking to emphasize are found in foods such as nuts, seeds, fish, avocado, olives, and more —and much less so from various types of red meat and higher-fat dairy products like butter and cheese.

Principle #3: Minimizing Processed Foods, Fast Foods, and Fructose

—Good health comes from what you do, not from what you don't do. Yes, limiting things like processed foods, sweets, and soda is certainly part of optimal health with fatty liver, but let's focus

on the delicious and nourishing foods that
you *will* get to have.



CHAPTER 2

Liver Nutrition

As a dietitian and nutrition science enthusiast, I can safely say that it's now time to get to the good stuff.

In the pages to come, you can expect a comprehensive discussion on all things liver nutrition, including a conversation of the key foods and supplements you need to optimize your health following a fatty liver diagnosis.

The Building Blocks of a Liver-Friendly Diet

It's time to expand and elaborate on some of the broad nutrition principles noted at the end

of [chapter 1](#). This section will tell you which foods are going to be the most valuable or harmful to your liver health.

1. REDUCE SATURATED FAT AND ADDED FRUCTOSE

In February 2021, the *Frontiers in Nutrition* scientific journal released a paper discussing the most important nutrition considerations for the management of fatty liver disease. In it they identified saturated fat and excess fructose intake as the biggest contributors to worsening liver fat levels and insulin resistance. So, where is all the saturated fat and fructose coming from?

Large amounts of saturated fat are found in red and processed meats such as beef, sausages, ham, pork, and lamb. They are also abundant in higher-fat dairy products like butter, cream, most cheeses, and milk and yogurt that have a milk fat percentage higher

than 2 percent. Certain refined carbohydrates like cookies, cakes, and related products are often also high in saturated fat.

Fructose, specifically added fructose, is found in rich supply in sugary drinks of all types (ranging from soda and energy drinks to juices and fruit-flavored beverages), as well as candy, sweets, certain baked goods (as mentioned previously), and sauces and syrups. Look for “high fructose corn syrup” on a nutrition label if you are unsure.

2. INCREASE OMEGA-3 AND VITAMIN D INTAKE

Vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids are bound together by the fact they are both found in large supply in fatty fish such as salmon, sardines, trout, and mackerel.

A 2011 study out of *BMC Medicine* found that individuals living with nonalcoholic fatty liver disease were much more likely to have

low levels of vitamin D in their system. In comparison, a 2020 study out of the *Nutrients* journal found that omega-3 supplementation improves liver fat levels and other important indicators such as cholesterol and triglycerides.

This means that these two nutrients are extra important for those living with fatty liver, and thus eating more fish and seafood is a great dietary strategy.

The best thing about fish is that it can be such an easy swap for red meat in many recipes. In fact, a 2019 study published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* found that replacing saturated fat with the types of fat found in fish (and other healthy fat sources) reduced liver fat accumulation.

Other sources of omega-3 fatty acids include various type of nuts and seeds such as walnuts, flax, chia, and hemp, as well as soy-

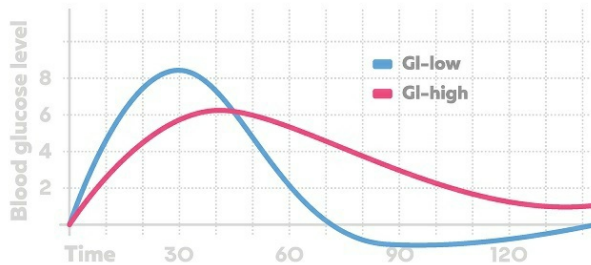
based products like tofu, tempeh, and edamame. These foods have additional value to those living with fatty liver because they can contribute to a reduction in blood cholesterol levels, which is a major risk factor not only for fatty liver but also heart disease.

3. CHOOSE LOW GLYCEMIC CARBOHYDRATES

The glycemic index of a food dictates the way it affects your blood sugar levels. Foods higher in glycemic index, or GI, tend to cause sharp, quick blood sugar spikes, whereas foods lower in glycemic index lead to more modest and manageable changes in blood sugar levels.

Because insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes are legitimate concerns for those living with fatty liver, an understanding of glycemic index and the foods that are better

aligned with a low GI style of eating is important.



Glycemic Index Example

4. EMPHASIZE PROBIOTIC/PREBIOTIC RICH FOODS

The human digestive tract plays a significant role in a number of conditions, and emerging evidence suggests that liver disease is among them. A 2016 paper out of *Molecular Metabolism* has suggested that an imbalance between good and bad bacteria in the human gut may contribute to the progression of fatty liver disease. This is in part because good

bacteria plays a very important anti-inflammatory role, and its absence can change the state of inflammation in the body.

We are learning more and more about how good gut health supports immune health, reduces inflammation, and generally serves to improve overall health by helping with a variety of conditions. Studies published in both *The World Journal of Gastroenterology* and *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that probiotic supplementation has a demonstrated capability to reduce inflammatory markers in those living with fatty liver disease, and may also contribute to improving liver enzyme levels and insulin resistance.

Consuming foods that are fermented, such as yogurt, kefir, kombucha, and vegetables like kimchi and sauerkraut, as well as foods that are high in fiber (especially prebiotic fiber that your gut bacteria thrive on), such as

apples, oatmeal, onions, garlic, bananas, flaxseed, artichoke, and asparagus can improve the state of your microbiome.

Microbiome is a fancy word for the types of bacteria in your digestive tract. When we talk about “improving” it, we are really talking about helping the good bacteria grow and flourish, which in turn improves your health and reduces the state of inflammation in the body.

A HEALTHY APPROACH FOR YOU

The nutrition guidance I’ve provided so far is based on the best available evidence of food’s and food components’ impact on fatty liver disease and its comorbidities. I’ve identified key principles based on this

evidence, which ultimately separates foods into different key groups. When looking at those key groups, you might notice that the dietary pattern is very similar to the Mediterranean diet principles.

The Mediterranean diet, in a nutshell, asks you to reconsider the role that red meat and dairy are playing in your daily life. It emphasizes reducing their frequency to accommodate the inclusion of components such as fish, seafood, nuts, seeds, legumes, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

A 2021 review out of the *Frontiers in Nutrition* journal found that utilizing the Mediterranean dietary pattern reduced fat accumulation within the liver. According to a 2013 clinical trial out of the *Hepatology* journal, the

Mediterranean diet may also contribute to reduced insulin resistance; and, a 2008 study out of *Diabetologia* found that it improved liver enzyme levels in patients living with type 2 diabetes. So, if you find comfort in bigger themes more than in specific details, the Mediterranean diet really is your best starting point from a nutrition perspective when it comes to fighting back against fatty liver disease.

A Closer Look at Your Plate

I know there's been quite a bit of scientific talk so far, but it's time to refocus on the practical aspects of bringing all of this guidance to your daily routine. Much of that comes down to how you think about your plate, so let's take a closer look at what

components your plate should consist of, and how they contribute to your overall health.

PROTEIN (10 TO 35 PERCENT OF TOTAL CALORIES)

Pursuing greater variety in your protein intake is one of the most important steps you can take to enhance your health with liver disease.

Sources of saturated fat from red (beef, pork) and processed meat (sausage, salami, hot dogs, and related foods) should be replaced as much as possible with leaner protein sources such as poultry and white fish (cod, haddock, tuna) and from various types of fatty fish (salmon, sardines, mackerel) and tofu-based products.

The primary justification for this shift is that liver disease is often characterized by high levels of unhealthy blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides), which tend to

be increased in the presence of saturated fat but decreased in the presence of other types of healthier fat.

CARBOHYDRATES (45 TO 65 PERCENT OF TOTAL CALORIES)

The type of carbohydrates you consume is very relevant because insulin resistance is a major factor in both type 2 diabetes and fatty liver disease. How your body interacts with insulin has a lot to do with dietary carb choices. Carbohydrate choices that are digested slowly and don't cause big blood sugar swings are preferable for this reason.

Foods in this category include all type of legumes (*lentils, chickpeas, other beans/peas*), fruit, whole grains (*steel-cut oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain bread, quinoa, whole grain pasta*) as well as certain starchy vegetables like sweet potato and butternut squash.

FATS (20 TO 35 PERCENT OF TOTAL CALORIES)

Although many types of fats are found within foods that are also deemed to be high protein, there is a subgroup of foods that are often referred to as “healthy fats” that are very important in managing the comorbidities of fatty liver disease.

Nuts, seeds, and avocados are rich in various types of healthy fats, as well as dietary fiber, which makes them optimal foods to support the management of blood cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

Within this category of healthy fats there is a subgroup (walnuts, chia seed, flaxseed, and hempseed) that is uniquely rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Studies have found positive beneficial effects for including more of these various types of “healthy” fats, both

as it relates to liver enzyme levels and also total liver fat.

VITAMINS AND MINERALS

Because the food choices discussed and emphasized thus far are naturally high in the important nutrients that your liver needs (such as vitamin D), you won't need to go out of your way to look at food from the perspective of vitamins and minerals, but instead can focus on the role they play as part of your diet as a whole.

BEVERAGES

Daily fluid recommendations can vary from person to person, but general recommendations for men (15.5 cups or 125 fluid ounces) and women (11.5 cups or 90 fluid ounces) do exist. Fluids come from food (about 20 percent) and beverages (80 percent).

Water is always the ideal choice and plays an important role in the body's natural detoxification processes and optimal organ functioning (the liver included!). Sugar-free and naturally carbonated water beverages may also be favored choices.

Alcohol and sugar-sweetened beverages such as fruit juices, soda, and energy drinks should be kept to a bare minimum, ideally no more than 1 to 2 servings per week in those who already consume them.

Per the American Institute for Cancer Research, coffee intake may be protective against liver cancer. Coffee and tea provide large amounts of antioxidants and are acceptable components of a healthy diet with liver disease, but you should limit or omit creamers and high-fat milk products, along with sweeteners.

PORTION CONTROL

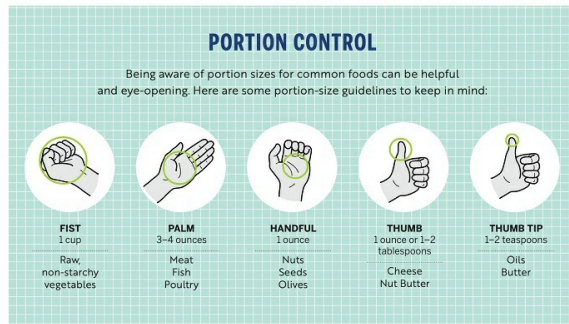
The concept of portion control is not only about keeping the amount of food you consume at each meal to a healthy level, but also about having a strategic combination of different nutrient-dense and truly satiating foods that will allow you to feel both full and satisfied and sustain you until your next meal.

Generally, your meals should consist of three primary components—each of which should comprise around one-third of your plate:

- 1. Low glycemic index starchy foods**
—such as any legume, sweet potato, brown rice, and quinoa.
- 2. Lean or non-red meat protein source**—such as most cuts of

poultry, seafood, and tofu to minimize saturated fat and maximize more useful types of dietary fat.

3. Non-starchy veggies—any vegetable from A to Z, quite literally asparagus to zucchini, and most of the other great options in between.



Foods to Enjoy, Avoid, and Eat in Moderation

In this section, you'll find an accessible list of the foods that should be playing the biggest

role in your diet going forward.

FOODS TO ENJOY FREELY

Legumes: Lentils, chickpeas, black beans, navy beans, pinto beans, kidney beans and their relatives are among the most effective foods at helping control blood sugar and blood fat levels. These are also truly filling foods thanks to their uniquely high protein and fiber contents.

Fruit: Fruits of all varieties are potent due to the large amount of anti-inflammatory polyphenol compounds they contain, as well as rich amounts of fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Berries, oranges, apples, and bananas may be particularly beneficial, but when it comes to fruit, you really don't need to pick sides.

Veggies: Owing to vegetables' incredible capacity to improve health via fiber, vitamin,

mineral, and antioxidant content, there is no question that vegetables must comprise an important part of your dietary strategy.

Non-starchy veggies: Zucchini, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, spinach, kale, bell peppers, carrots, asparagus, eggplant, Swiss chard, and cauliflower are among your many options.

Starchy veggies: Beets, sweet potatoes, and various types of squash are among the prime choices.

Lean meats (chicken, turkey—especially breast): Using very lean protein sources like chicken and turkey breast is a great way to provide protein without the saturated fat found in other meats.

Healthy fats (nuts, seeds, avocado, and certain oils): You can't go wrong in this category with foods containing healthy fats. Flax, chia, hemp seeds, and walnuts are

unique among this group for their high omega-3 fat content.

Avocado and olive oil are also uniquely high in what are known as monounsaturated fats, which help lower cholesterol levels and have essentially the opposite effect of saturated fat in this regard. Almonds, pistachios, and cashews are other examples of foods high in this fat, and they also contain large amounts of fat-soluble vitamin E, which may be uniquely useful for good liver health.

Eggs: Despite what some think, eggs can be consumed regularly. As part of a balanced style of eating, their cholesterol content won't have a negative effect on our health.

Low/medium glycemic index grains:

Choosing grains lower in glycemic index (GI) is a relevant consideration for those living with fatty liver, primarily due to the fact that insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes could

play a role in progression of the disease. Options in this category include steel-cut oatmeal, quinoa, whole grain breads/pastas, and brown rice.

Soy: Soy-based foods such as tofu, tempeh, soy milk, and edamame offer an alternative protein source to help you lessen your reliance on saturated fat-rich animal proteins, which in turn improves liver health. Soy-based foods also have a unique cholesterol lowering effect.

Low fat dairy: This includes products like kefir and yogurt that contain probiotics.

Seafood/fish: Fatty varieties such as salmon, mackerel, trout, tuna, and sardines are particularly high in one or both of vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids.

FOODS TO MODERATE

These foods should play a lesser role than the foods to enjoy freely, as it relates to your dietary pattern.

Refined carbohydrates: These are foods made primarily from white flour such as white bread/bagels, and most types of store-bought baked goods like pretzels, muffins, and cakes.

Although not technically considered “refined” carbohydrates, certain commonly available foods like various types of russet potatoes as well as instant oatmeal are high in glycemic index and may not be the best choices for regular consumption, especially in those with type 2 diabetes.

Saturated fats: Saturated fats are highest in all types of red meat, ranging from beef to lamb, and pork to darker-meat poultry. Saturated fats are also high in dairy-based products like mayonnaise, butter, cheese, and

high-fat yogurt. Coconut oil is also uniquely high in saturated fat among cooking oils and, although it acts differently in the body, it may be important to moderate for those with fatty liver disease.

FOODS TO AVOID

Although I would not tell you or one of my clients that they should NEVER eat a certain food, when pressed I could think of a few foods that you should certainly limit as much as possible.

Processed meat: Given the increased risk of cardiovascular disease associated with fatty liver and the negative role that saturated fat plays in potentially worsening the condition, this is a category of food to avoid. This includes: sausages, salami, hot dogs, ham, and bacon.

Sugary drinks: Sugar-sweetened beverages that are high in fructose, such as soft drinks and fruit-flavored drinks, should be avoided. Excessive fructose intake is not ideal for liver health.

How You Should Eat If You Have . . .

If you are living with fatty liver disease, it's likely you may also be dealing with either high blood sugar, cholesterol, triglyceride, or high blood pressure levels. Although the guidance provided so far will support you in managing the concerns that follow, in this section I offer up additional information for you to consider.

HIGH BLOOD SUGAR

Legumes such as lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, and related foods are the lowest

glycemic index starchy foods, and utilizing them more often in place of other foods in this category will likely contribute to improved blood sugar control.

HIGH BLOOD CHOLESTEROL

Soy-based foods like tofu, tempeh, edamame, and soy milk have unique cholesterol-lowering benefits, and help provide a low saturated-fat protein alternative for those trying to eat less red meat.

HIGH TRIGLYCERIDES

Reducing alcohol and sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, and at the same time emphasizing omega-3 rich foods like fish, walnuts, and flaxseeds, can contribute to lower triglyceride levels.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Foods high in potassium are effective in lowering blood pressure levels; some common examples include sweet potato, squash, pumpkin seeds, salmon, kidney beans, bananas, avocado, yogurt, dark chocolate, and leafy greens like spinach and chard.



CHAPTER 3

Putting Information into Practice

It's time to put everything you've learned so far about nutrition for liver disease into action.

This chapter is all about practical preparation and bridging the gap between the science and these recipes that help bring that science to life.

Smart Shopping

I think it's pretty safe to say that you can't prepare, cook, and eat what you don't have at home, so having a comfortable knowledge about your local grocery store is really going

to help you thrive on your path to a healthy liver diet. Let's go through some important topics that you'll want to consider when grocery shopping.

READING FOOD LABELS

I'm sure you've noticed that there is a definite emphasis on fresh, whole foods as a fundamental component of our strategy going forward, but I also fully appreciate that the average grocery store sells a wide range of convenient products. It's important for you to be able to navigate them to be successful.

Food labels are most useful for comparing similar products, and they allow you to pick a product that serves a specific purpose (cereals, sauces, and so on) but still consider your health goals. With liver disease, you want to choose products that are as low as possible in saturated fat (less than 5 percent of Daily Value) and as high as possible in

fiber (more than 15 percent of Daily Value)
—these two nutrients should be present on every food label. Choosing comparable products that are higher in potassium and lower in sodium is also advisable.



Nutrition Facts	
Oats, whole grain, raw	
Serving Size 45g/ 1/2cup dry	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 180	
Calories from Fat 30	
Total Fat 3 g	5%
Saturated Fat 0.5 g	3%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 0 mg	0%
Sodium 0 mg	0%
Carbohydrate 29 g	10%
Fiber 5 g	19%
Sugars 1 g	
Protein 7 g	
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	2%
Iron	10%

SOURCING QUALITY INGREDIENTS

Most packaged goods list their ingredients by weight, so the ingredients that contribute the most to the product are listed first. If, for example, a product claims to contain nuts or seeds (good for fatty liver), but the first time a nut or seed is mentioned on the ingredients

list isn't until much later on the list, the product isn't necessarily a good source of those foods.

Another common and important consideration when looking at the ingredients list for grain-based products is whether the product is made of whole grains. This is important in the context of fatty liver disease because whole grains are better choices than refined grains when it comes to combating the insulin resistance associated with NAFLD. Look for words like “whole grain,” “whole wheat,” or “stoneground whole (grain),” which all indicate the entirety of the grain is present in the product, and be mindful of products where the primary ingredients are enriched flour or wheat flour.

Tips for Success

I've given you quite a bit to digest so far, both literally and figuratively, and if you feel

at all overwhelmed, I want to put your mind at ease in this section with some practical tips that will make applying the information discussed so far as enjoyable as possible.

MEAL PLANNING AND PREPPING

I know from working with so many clients over the years that when it comes to meal planning and prepping, everybody likes to operate a little bit differently. There's no right or wrong here. When it comes to meal prep, some people enjoy cooking extra dinner servings and having those leftovers for lunch, whereas others will spend Sunday afternoon preparing lunch, dinner, or both for the entire week. What you choose to do should depend largely on what you can stick to, and the meal plans provided will help you make that determination because they have extra meal prep tips.

If you choose not to use your weekend to meal prep for the week ahead, you may benefit from meal planning, where at the very least you have a sense of the meals you will be cooking so that you can ensure you have the ingredients required.

COOKING SHORTCUTS

Batch cooking and freezing meals whenever possible will put you in a position to always have a plan B, and if all else fails, there's nothing wrong with having simple meals or "breakfast" for lunch or dinner. Whole grain toast with eggs and avocado, or a Greek yogurt parfait with nuts and fruit can be reasonable stopgaps.

Frozen meals from the grocery store, especially those that include veggies and lean protein sources like chicken, can be a helpful backup plan. I tell my clients that the frozen meals of today are not the frozen meals of a

decade ago. Although they contain above average amounts of sodium, there is still probably much less than with a meal you'd order out.

EATING OUT

My stance on eating out is simple—the less often you eat out, the less it matters what you choose to eat. By this point in the book, I've laid out the nutrition principles of eating for a healthier liver, and if you can follow those while eating out, all the better. Although I could say that fried foods, cheese-rich meals, red/processed meat, and desserts are generally dishes to be aware of for their saturated fat content, it's equally important to acknowledge that enjoying your favorite foods is an important component of long-term success and happiness—and you must leave room to do that to ensure lasting lifestyle changes.

CRAVINGS

Cravings tend to arise via some combination of hunger, stress, and restriction. Although hunger can vary significantly day to day, I've endeavored to include as many ingredients and ingredient combinations as possible, via the recipes, to ensure that your hunger will be better managed than it may have been previously. That's no guarantee you won't have cravings though, especially on particularly mentally/emotionally stressful days. There is nothing wrong with food being one in a repertoire of stress management techniques at your disposal, but you don't want it to be the only one.

Eating your favorite food, no matter what it is, can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience—but that doesn't mean you always want stress driving your decisions. I discuss stress management at great length later in this chapter, because there is an

undeniable connection between stress and food cravings, but more important, between stress and your mental and physical health, which you of course want to optimize.

That leaves restriction and deprivation, which essentially means too harshly imposing food rules on yourself such that you don’t allow yourself to enjoy your favorite foods. As mentioned in the “Eating Out” section, a “perfect” diet is not required to improve your health, and a too restrictive approach could backfire over the long haul.

SAMPLE 7-DAY MEAL PLAN			
	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack
MONDAY	Gingerbread Baked Oatmeal	Turmeric Berry Smoothie	1/2 c grapefruit 2 Malibu

			oral
TUESDAY	Zoodle Baked Egg Mug Casseroles	Leftover Black Bean Stuffed Tomatoes	Aln But Chi Ene Bar
WEDNESDAY	Leftover Gingerbread Baked Oatmeal	Leftover White Bean Chicken Minestrone	¼ c whc uns roas alm
THURSDAY	Zoodle Baked Egg Mug Casseroles	Leftover White Bean Chicken Minestrone	Cel wit alm butt
FRIDAY	Leftover Gingerbread Baked Oatmeal	Leftover Sheet Pan Pesto Meatballs and Green Beans	2 ha boil egg

SATURDAY	Greens and Herb Shakshuka	Leftover White Bean Chicken Minestrone	Leftover Almond Butter Chicken Enchilada Bar
SUNDAY	Leftover Greens and Herb Shakshuka	Leftover Chickpea Pumpkin Curry	Leftover Almond Butter Chicken Enchilada Bar

SHOPPING LIST

Produce

- o Bananas (2)
- o Basil (1 bunch)

- o Bell peppers, any color (2)
- o Bell pepper, red (1)
- o Carrots (2)
- o Celery (1 bunch)
- o Cilantro (1 bunch)
- o Fennel (1 bulb)
- o Garlic, minced (3 tablespoons)
- o Ginger, grated (1 tablespoon)
- o Grapes (1 bunch)
- o Green beans, (1½ pounds)
- o Lemon (1)
- o Lime (1)
- o Kale (or any dark leafy green) (17 ounces)
- o Onions (4)
- o Parsley (1 bunch)
- o Scallions (1 bunch)

- o Tomatoes, large (4)
- o Zucchini (4)

Dairy, Eggs, and Nondairy Alternatives

- o Cheese, mozzarella, low-fat, shredded ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
- o Cheese, Parmesan (6 tablespoons)
- o Eggs, large (9)
- o Milk, nondairy ($2\frac{1}{2}$ cups)
- o Yogurt, Greek, low-fat ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup)

Meat and Seafood

- o Beef, ground, 95 percent lean (1 pound)
- o Chicken, cooked (2 cups)

Frozen

- o Berries, frozen, mixed (1 cup)
- o Pumpkin, fresh or frozen, chopped (4 cups)

Herbs and Spices

- o Chili powder (1 teaspoon)
- o Cinnamon, ground ($\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon)
- o Cloves, ground ($\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon)
- o Coriander, ground ($\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon)
- o Cumin, ground ($1\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoons)
- o Ginger, ground (2 teaspoons)
- o Italian seasoning (1 tablespoon)
- o Pepper, black (2 teaspoons)
- o Sea salt (2 teaspoons)
- o Turmeric powder (1 teaspoon)

Pantry

- o Almond butter, natural, unsalted ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup)
- o Almonds, whole ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)
- o Beans, black, low-sodium, 1 (15-ounce) can
- o Beans, cannellini, low-sodium, 1 (15-ounce) can
- o Broth, chicken, low-sodium (4 cups)
- o Broth, vegetable, low-sodium (4 cups)
- o Chia seeds ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup)
- o Chickpeas, low-sodium 1 (15-ounce) can
- o Corn, no salt added, 1 (12-ounce) can
- o Flaxseed, ground (2 tablespoons)
- o Hemp hearts (2 tablespoons)
- o Honey (1 tablespoon)

- o Maple syrup (¼ cup)
- o Marinara sauce (1 cup)

Pantry

- o Molasses (¼ cup)
- o Nonstick cooking spray
- o Oats, rolled (2¼ cups)
- o Oil, olive (10 teaspoons)
- o Pecans, chopped (¼ cup)
- o Pesto (3 tablespoons)
- o Quinoa (12 cup)
- o Red curry paste (3 tablespoons)
- o Tomatoes, diced, low-sodium, 1 (28-ounce) can

PREP AHEAD

- o Make the [Almond Butter Chia Energy Bars](#).

- o Hard-boil two eggs for Friday's snack.
- o Prep the [Gingerbread Baked Oatmeal](#) entirely, cover the casserole dish, and place in the refrigerator. When baked, portion the casserole into three containers for the refrigerator and one for the freezer.
- o Prep the [Black Bean Stuffed Tomatoes](#) entirely and place covered in the refrigerator.
- o Cook the chicken for the [White Bean Chicken Minestrone](#) or strip the skin off a store-bought rotisserie chicken.
- o If desired, make White Bean Chicken Minestrone and portion the soup, placing two portions in the refrigerator and two in the freezer. Take one portion out of the freezer Wednesday night for Thursday

lunch, and the second portion out Friday night for Saturday lunch.

Lifestyle Recommendations

Finally, let's go over some other very important lifestyle considerations that you must take on your path to better liver and general health.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS

The concept of environmental toxins is one that is garnering some extra attention when it comes to liver health, owing partially to the fact that the liver is the “detoxifying” organ of the body. Although worthy of mention, there isn't yet high-quality human evidence to make strong claims one way or another about the role some of the compounds discussed next play on liver health.

A few to be aware of that were identified in a 2021 paper in *Frontiers in Public Health*, and that can be relatively easily avoided, include:

Bisphenol A (BPA): This is found primarily in reusable plastic containers and water bottles. It can be minimized by using glass, porcelain, and stainless-steel containers and water bottles instead.

Pesticides: Minimizing pesticide exposure is another area of emerging interest and can be achieved through simple steps like: always washing fruits and vegetables, purchasing organic if/when it makes sense, and making pesticide use at home (i.e., in the garden) a last resort for pest control instead of a standard practice.

Aflatoxins: These may be found in nuts and nut butters. Minimize your exposure by

avoiding any moldy, shriveled, expired, or discarded varieties of these products.

EXERCISE

Physical activity is important in the fight against fatty liver disease. As per a 2018 paper out of *Gene Expression*, fat accumulation on the liver, inflammation, and insulin resistance are three of the biggest concerns in those living with NAFLD. The incorporation of physical activity has the potential to reduce them all.

Both aerobic (running, biking, swimming, etc.) and resistance (weights, push-ups, sit-ups, etc.) types of activities have the potential to help with NAFLD. One of the very cool things to consider is that the associated benefits exist independent of weight loss. This means that, independent of any changes to your body weight, incorporating more

physical activity is very likely to improve your fatty liver.

According to the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*, the type of physical activity you pursue should be based on your current fitness level and preferences, with HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) suggested as a way of incorporating time-saving, moderately challenging workouts into your routine.

The general recommendations for weekly physical activity include 150 minutes of aerobic exercise with at least two to three resistance-style workouts. In total, this amounts to a minimum of four to six weekly workouts spanning 30 to 60 minutes. If your current physical output is low, something as simple as doubling your daily step count is a good place to start.

It may take up to six months for physical activity to lead to significant changes in your

liver health, so it's important to find a sustainable routine that works for you.

SLEEP

An observational 2013 study out of the *Journal of Hepatology* demonstrated that those with poor sleeping habits (poor quality, low duration) were at an increased risk of NAFLD. Given the important role of sleep to human health, this is not such a surprising finding.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that adults get a minimum of seven hours of sleep per night, with those who are over 60 potentially requiring closer to eight to nine hours. Per the CDC, some tips to improve your sleep include keeping consistent to-bed and wake-up times throughout the week; ensuring your room is dark and at an appropriate temperature (not too warm); refraining from

phone use before bedtime; avoiding caffeine for at least six hours before bed and food/alcohol for one to three hours prior; and, fatigue yourself with daily physical activity that will also benefit NAFLD in other ways.

STRESS

According to a 2020 paper in *Scientific Reports*, people living with fatty liver disease are more likely to perceive themselves as stressed. The relationship between stress and fatty liver disease is very much bidirectional because it is well known that chronic stress can contribute negatively to human health, and that a diagnosis of a health condition like fatty liver can also be stress inducing.

Activities such as meditation, deep breathing, and yoga (all of which can be supported through the use of smartphone apps or YouTube) are great starting points with those wanting to pursue more comprehensive

stress-management strategies. I encourage you to explore the availability of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programs (generally more intensive, multi-week programs) that may be provided either locally or online.



PART 2

THE RECIPES



Avocado and Raspberry Smoothie Bowl

CHAPTER 4

Breakfast and Beverages

Black Forest Cake Smoothie

Coconut Citrus Smoothie

Turmeric Berry Smoothie

Avocado and Raspberry Smoothie Bowl

Seeds and Blueberries Overnight Oats

Gingerbread Baked Oatmeal

Yogurt Berry Pancakes

Spanakopita Breakfast Pitass

Greek-Inspired Breakfast Bowl

Zoodle Baked Egg Mug Casseroles

Greens and Herb Shakshuka

Sheet Pan Breakfast Hash

Black Forest Cake Smoothie

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **MAKES:** 1 serving

All the decadent chocolate and cherry flavors from the popular layer cake are found in this filling smoothie. Skim milk—or almond milk—adds vitamin D and calcium, both important for preventing or reducing the advancement of fatty liver disease. The slightly nutty taste of hemp seeds complements the fudgy flavor, and the seeds provide an anti-inflammatory mix of omega-6 and omega-3 fats.

2 cups baby kale

1 cup skim or nondairy milk

1 cup frozen unsweetened cherries

½ banana

2 tablespoons maple syrup

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

1 tablespoon hemp seeds

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Place the kale, milk, cherries, banana, maple syrup, cocoa powder, hemp seeds, and vanilla in a blender and blend until very smooth.
2. Pour the smoothie into a glass and serve immediately.

TIP: Throw in a scoop of chocolate protein powder for an extra boost before a workout or as a quick, sustaining breakfast.

PER SERVING: Calories: 414; Protein: 16g;
Total Fat: 7g; Total Carbohydrates: 80g;
Fiber: 9g; Sugars: 59g; Sodium: 125mg; Iron:
4mg

Coconut Citrus Smoothie

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **MAKES:** 1 serving

The pale green color from ripe avocado and spinach looks like it belongs in a garden, so the refreshing citrus flavor is not what you would expect by looking at this smoothie.

Baby spinach is high in liver-supporting polyphenols like nitrate, which is most effective when eaten raw and fresh. For a festive finish, sprinkle the smoothie with toasted shredded coconut and a lemon slice.

2 cups baby spinach

1 cup unsweetened coconut milk (carton)

½ cup shredded unsweetened coconut

½ avocado

Juice and zest of 1 lemon

Juice and zest of 1 lime

2 tablespoons honey

2 ice cubes

1. Place the spinach, coconut milk, shredded coconut, avocado, lemon juice, lemon zest, lime juice, lime zest, honey, and ice cubes in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Pour the smoothie into a glass and enjoy.

TIP: I use the coconut milk carton product rather than canned. *Silk* is one of the easiest brands of coconut milk to find in the grocery store.

PER SERVING: Calories: 531; Protein: 10g;
Total Fat: 30g; Total Carbohydrates: 66g;
Fiber: 13g; Sugars: 44g; Sodium: 127mg;
Iron: 4mg

Turmeric Berry Smoothie

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **MAKES:** 1 serving

If you are unfamiliar with turmeric, it is the warm spice used to color mustard, curry, butter, and cheeses. So, don't be surprised if this smoothie has a yellowish hue. Turmeric contains medicinal compounds like curcumin, a powerful antioxidant, and anti-inflammatory benefits that might reduce the markers of liver damage when eaten in high doses.

2 cups dark leafy greens (spinach, kale, Swiss chard)

1 cup nondairy milk

1 cup frozen mixed berries (raspberries, strawberries, blueberries)

1 tablespoon grated fresh turmeric or 1 teaspoon turmeric powder

2 tablespoons ground flaxseed

1 tablespoon honey

1. Place the greens, milk, berries, turmeric, flaxseed, and honey in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Pour the smoothie into a glass and serve immediately.

TIP: If you want a vegan smoothie, swap in maple syrup or agave nectar for the honey. Try hemp hearts instead of flaxseed for a slightly nutty flavor.

PER SERVING: Calories: 266; Protein: 10g; Total Fat: 9g; Total Carbohydrates: 42g; Fiber: 14g; Sugars: 23g; Sodium: 97mg; Iron: 6mg

Avocado and Raspberry Smoothie Bowl

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **MAKES:** 2 servings

Who knew eating a smoothie with a spoon rather than drinking it was so much fun? Start your day off with this delicious powerhouse breakfast. Both the base and topping include raspberries, a sweet, dark berry, rich in polyphenols, and an antioxidant that may help prevent liver damage. Walnuts are also an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which reduce triglycerides, lipids, and inflammation.

1½ cups baby spinach

1½ cups baby kale (or Swiss chard)

2 cups nondairy milk
1 avocado, peeled and pitted
1 ripe banana (frozen)
1 cup frozen raspberries
2 tablespoons chia seeds
2 tablespoons maple syrup
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ cup chopped walnuts
½ cup fresh raspberries

1. Place the spinach, kale, milk, avocado, banana, raspberries, chia seeds, maple syrup, and cinnamon in a blender and blend until very smooth.
2. Evenly divide the smoothie mixture into two bowls and top with walnuts and raspberries.

TIP: Create freezer packets for easy smoothie bowls by placing the spinach, kale,

avocado, raspberries, chia seeds, and cinnamon in a sealable freezer bag and freezing it. Take the bag out and blend with the milk and maple syrup to serve.

PER SERVING: Calories: 626; Protein: 15g;
Total Fat: 41g; Total Carbohydrates: 60g;
Fiber: 23g; Sugars: 25g; Sodium: 79mg; Iron:
5mg

Seeds and Blueberries Overnight Oats

PREP TIME: 10 minutes, plus soaking
overnight / **MAKES:** 2 servings

Overnight oats are a culinary revelation! Just mix everything and throw it in the refrigerator overnight for a nutritious, delicious breakfast—no sweating over the stovetop required. The three types of seeds added to the oats boost the healthy fats and protein in this recipe, and the sweet blueberries add a pretty pop of color and fiber, antioxidants, and vitamin C.

1 banana, mashed

1 cup water

½ cup almond milk, plus extra if needed

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup rolled oats
2 tablespoons hemp seeds
2 tablespoons chia seeds
2 tablespoons ground flaxseed
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ cup blueberries

1. In a sealable container, mix the mashed banana, water, almond milk, and vanilla until combined. Add the oats, hemp seeds, chia seeds, flaxseed, and cinnamon, and stir well. Add the blueberries and carefully stir them in.
2. Cover and refrigerate overnight. The next day, stir the oats, add more almond milk if desired, and serve.

TIP: This is a fabulous choice for meal planning. Double the recipe and store the

individual portions of the oats in the refrigerator for 4 easy breakfasts.

PER SERVING: Calories: 344; Protein: 12g;
Total Fat: 13g; Total Carbohydrates: 50g;
Fiber: 13g; Sugars: 11g; Sodium: 17mg; Iron:
4mg

Gingerbread Baked Oatmeal

PREP TIME: 5 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 50 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

The scent of warm spices will waft through your house as this golden banana and pecan-studded dish bakes, calling you to the kitchen. Quinoa, which we're using in place of oats in this variation on oatmeal, is a pseudograin high-fiber food that may reduce triglyceride levels and the risk of diseases associated with NAFLD. Add 1 to 2 cups of chopped apple or berries to boost the fiber and add a lovely flavor to the baked dish.

1¼ cups almond or preferred nondairy milk
2 medium bananas, mashed

¼ cup molasses
2 teaspoons ground ginger
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
⅛ teaspoon sea salt
½ cup quinoa, rinsed
¼ cup chopped pecans

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. In a 1½-quart casserole dish, stir the milk, banana, molasses, ginger, vanilla, cinnamon, cloves, and salt until well combined. Add the quinoa and pecans and stir until it is evenly distributed in the milk mixture.
3. Cover the casserole dish and bake until the liquid is absorbed, and quinoa is tender, about 50 minutes. Let cool for 10 minutes and serve.

4. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days or freeze for up to 2 months.

TIP: You can prepare this dish the night before. Put all the ingredients together in the casserole dish and refrigerate overnight. Bake it for 50 minutes and serve!

PER SERVING (2½-INCH-SQUARE PIECE):

Calories: 264; Protein: 6g; Total Fat: 7g;
Total Carbohydrates: 46g; Fiber: 4g; Sugars:
23g; Sodium: 73mg; Iron: 3mg

Yogurt Berry Pancakes

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 15
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings (12 pancakes)

Enjoy these protein-packed pancakes any day of the week, because they are on the table in less than 30 minutes. Low-fat Greek yogurt is high in probiotics, vitamin D, and calcium, supporting a healthy gut and reducing inflammation. This batter makes wonderful waffles, too!

1½ cups whole wheat flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1¼ teaspoons baking soda

¼ teaspoon sea salt

1½ cups low-fat plain Greek yogurt

¾ cup unsweetened almond milk

3 large eggs

2 tablespoons honey

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¾ cup mixed berries (sliced strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries)

Nonstick cooking spray (butter-flavored, if possible)

1. In a large bowl, whisk the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk the yogurt, milk, eggs, honey, and vanilla until blended.
3. Whisk the wet ingredients into the dry ingredients until smooth, then fold in the berries.
4. Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and spray it with cooking spray. Working in batches, pour ¼ cup of batter per pancake into the skillet.

5. Cook until the edges of the pancakes are firm and the bubbles on the surface pop, about 3 minutes. Flip the pancakes and cook the other side for 2 minutes. Transfer the pancakes to a plate and repeat with the remaining batter. Serve with a drizzle of maple syrup.
6. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days.

PER SERVING (3 PANCAKES): Calories: 317;
Protein: 16g; Total Fat: 7g; Total
Carbohydrates: 51g; Fiber: 6g; Sugars: 17g;
Sodium: 750mg; Iron: 3mg

Spanakopita Breakfast Pitas

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 5 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Spanakopita is a beloved Greek dish featuring spinach, feta cheese, and layers of buttery phyllo pastry folded into tempting packets. This healthy version skips the pastry for fiber-rich pita bread and adds fluffy scrambled eggs. You can also use chopped hard-boiled eggs instead and mix up the filling—eggs, sautéed spinach, and parsley—a couple of days in advance.

8 large eggs, beaten

6 cups baby spinach, chopped

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

2 ounces feta cheese, crumbled

4 (6-inch) whole wheat pitas, halved

1. In a large bowl, whisk the eggs, spinach, and parsley until combined.
2. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat and pour in the egg mixture. Scramble the eggs until they are large, fluffy, fully cooked curds, about 5 minutes. Season the scrambled eggs with salt and pepper.
3. Evenly divide the egg mixture and feta cheese between the pita halves and serve.

TIP: This can be made with a 14-ounce package of extra-firm tofu instead of eggs. Crumble the tofu into the skillet and sauté until heated through, about 5 minutes.

Assemble the recipe the same way as the egg version.

PER SERVING (2 PITA HALVES): Calories: 392;
Protein: 22g; Total Fat: 18g; Total
Carbohydrates: 38g; Fiber: 6g; Sugars: 2g;
Sodium: 632mg; Iron: 5mg

Greek-Inspired Breakfast Bowl

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 8 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Quinoa provides a nutty-tasting, complex carb base for this veggie and egg-topped bowl. Quinoa is not a grain—it is a seed—but provides all the nutritional benefits of whole grains such as fiber, protein, antioxidants, and B vitamins. The assorted vegetables, dark leafy greens, whole eggs, and avocado round out this filling, nutrient-packed meal.

4 large eggs

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

8 cups baby kale

2 cups cooked quinoa, cooled

2 large tomatoes, cut into eighths and halved widthwise

2 yellow or orange bell peppers, seeded and chopped

1 avocado, peeled, pitted, and chopped

¼ cup chopped marinated artichoke hearts

2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano

Extra-virgin olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. To soft-boil the eggs, fill a saucepan three-quarters full of water, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low so the water simmers gently. Set a medium bowl half-filled with water and ice to the side. Lower the eggs into the hot water with a spoon and let simmer for 6 minutes. Remove the eggs from the water and

transfer them to the ice bath for 5 to 10 minutes.

2. While the eggs are cooking and cooling, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and sauté the kale until tender, about 6 minutes. Push the kale to the side of the skillet and add the quinoa. Cook until heated through, about 2 minutes.
3. Evenly divide the greens and quinoa among 4 bowls. Use a spoon to tap each egg to crack the shell and remove about half. Carefully slide a small spoon between the egg and shell to loosen and remove it intact. Place a soft-boiled egg in each bowl.
4. Arrange the tomatoes, bell peppers, avocado, and artichoke hearts around the egg, and sprinkle each with ½ tablespoon of oregano. Drizzle each with olive oil and

lemon juice, season lightly with salt and pepper, and serve.

5. The various components (other than eggs) can be refrigerated in separate containers for up to 4 days.

TIP: You can make the soft-boiled eggs up to 3 days ahead and store them in the refrigerator in the shell. Reheat the eggs in simmering water for 1 minute if you want them warm.

PER SERVING (1 BOWL): Calories: 359;
Protein: 15g; Total Fat: 18g; Total
Carbohydrates: 39g; Fiber: 10g; Sugars: 5g;
Sodium: 148mg; Iron: 4mg

Zoodle Baked Egg Mug Casseroles

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 2½
minutes / **MAKES:** 2 servings

You might be familiar with mug cakes—scrumptious desserts made in minutes—so why not cross over into a ready-in-minutes full breakfast? This mini egg casserole cradles festive zucchini noodles, bell pepper, and scallion, and is topped in low-fat Parmesan cheese. You can even mix these mugs up the night before, refrigerate, and microwave in the morning.

Nonstick cooking spray

2 cups spiralized zucchini (zoodles), cut
into 3- to 4-inch strands

4 large eggs

¼ cup skim or nondairy milk

¼ red bell pepper, chopped

1 scallion, both white and green parts,
thinly sliced

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese or
low-fat mozzarella

1. Spray the inside of 2 large (12-ounce) mugs with cooking spray. Place 1 cup of zoodles in each mug and microwave each on high for 1 minute to soften.
2. Evenly divide the eggs, milk, bell pepper, scallion, salt, and pepper between the mugs, whisking with a fork to combine. Sprinkle each evenly with cheese.
3. Working one at a time, microwave in 30-second increments until the eggs are puffy

and set, about 1½ minutes in total, and serve.

TIP: Any chopped veggie can be used instead of the zucchini and bell pepper. Try asparagus, broccoli, spinach, and even cooked peameal bacon, for a meaty breakfast mug.

PER SERVING (1 MUG): Calories: 202; Protein: 17g; Total Fat: 12g; Total Carbohydrates: 8g; Fiber: 2g; Sugars: 6g; Sodium: 337mg; Iron: 2mg

Greens and Herb Shakshuka

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 15
minutes / **MAKES:** 2 servings

Shakshuka is a traditional North African dish of eggs poached in a flavorful vegetable, spice, and herb sauce. This version features a cruciferous vegetable base that is high in detoxifying sulfur. Eggs are a high-quality protein (with all 8 essential amino acids) and choline, which supports the liver during the detoxifying process. This dish is an ideal culinary marriage.

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 onion, chopped

2 teaspoons minced garlic

6 cups chopped kale or Swiss chard

½ cup chopped fresh parsley

½ cup chopped fresh basil

1½ teaspoons ground cumin

½ teaspoon ground coriander

¼ teaspoon sea salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Juice of ½ lemon

4 large eggs

¼ cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt

Chopped fresh parsley or basil for garnish

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and sauté the onion and garlic until softened, about 3 minutes. Add the greens, parsley, basil, cumin, coriander, salt, and pepper, and sauté until wilted, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle with lemon juice and toss for 30 seconds.

2. Create 4 wells in the greens with the back of a large spoon. Crack 1 egg into each well, cover with a lid, and cook until the egg whites are set, about 5 minutes.
3. Serve each person two eggs and a generous scoop of greens, topped with yogurt and parsley.

TIP: For a traditional shakshuka, swap one (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes with juices for the greens and simmer for an extra 5 minutes before adding the eggs.

PER SERVING (2 EGGS AND ½ OF THE GREENS):
Calories: 284; Protein: 18g; Total Fat: 17g;
Total Carbohydrates: 16g; Fiber: 4g; Sugars:
6g; Sodium: 563mg; Iron: 6mg

Sheet Pan Breakfast Hash

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 40 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Sheet pan meals are the ultimate in convenience—all the ingredients cook at once, and there is minimal cleanup. Root veggies sweeten and mellow as they roast, and the cauliflower caramelizes lightly on the edges to create a deep, satisfying taste. You can use any vegetable you have in your refrigerator or pantry, so experiment and create your own favorite combinations.

2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks

2 parsnips, peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks
2 carrots, peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks
1 cauliflower head, cut into small florets
1 red onion, cut into 1-inch chunks
1 teaspoon minced garlic
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
8 large eggs
1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Toss the sweet potato, parsnip, carrots, cauliflower, onion, and garlic with olive oil on the baking sheet. Spread the veggies out evenly and season with salt and pepper. Roast until the veggies are lightly

caramelized and tender, tossing halfway through, about 30 minutes.

3. Remove the baking sheet from the oven and create 8 wells for the eggs. Crack 1 egg into each well and bake for 5 to 8 minutes to set the whites and yolks to the desired consistency.
4. Serve topped with thyme.
5. Refrigerate hash leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days.

TIP: The hash can be made in a skillet instead of a sheet pan to cut the cooking time by about 15 minutes. Cook the eggs separately in another large skillet.

PER SERVING (2 EGGS AND ¼ OF THE VEGGIES):
Calories: 350; Protein: 16g; Total Fat: 17g;
Total Carbohydrates: 35g; Fiber: 8g; Sugars:
10g; Sodium: 265mg; Iron: 3mg



Chicken Fajitas with Mango Salsa

CHAPTER 5

Mains

Power Greens Vegetable Soup

Harvest Butternut Squash Soup

White Bean Chicken Minestrone

Crispy Tofu Barley Salad

Juicy Turkey Sliders

Bulgur Tabbouleh

Mushroom Bok Choy Lo Mein

Chickpea Pumpkin Curry

Trout, Lentil, and Asparagus Packets

Salmon Tacos with Fresh Veggie Salsa

Lemony Shrimp Scampi with Whole Grain
Spaghetti

Pork Tenderloin, Quinoa, and

Mediterranean Veggie Bake

Salmon Souvlaki with Whole Grain

Couscous

Chicken Fajitas with Mango Salsa

Sheet Pan Pesto Meatballs and Green Beans

Turkey, Wild Rice, Brussels Sprout

Casserole

Chicken Cacciatore with Artichokes

Black Bean Stuffed Tomatoes

Power Greens Vegetable Soup

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 15
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

This soup is spring in a bowl—green, fresh, and light on the palate. A dollop of yogurt is a gorgeous contrast to the soup color, and the tartness plays up the herbal flavor. You can substitute frozen veggies for fresh with no effect on the texture or quality of the dish.

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

3 celery stalks, chopped

1 onion, chopped

2 teaspoons minced garlic

1 bunch (about 5 cups) baby kale or collard greens, roughly chopped

2 cups chopped broccoli
1 cup chopped cabbage
1 cup frozen peas
6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth, divided
¼ cup roughly chopped fresh parsley
¼ cup roughly chopped fresh basil
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup low-fat Greek yogurt, for garnish

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat and sauté the celery, onion, and garlic until softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the kale, broccoli, cabbage, peas, and enough broth to cover the veggies by ½ inch. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, and simmer until the veggies are just tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the parsley and basil.

3. Let the soup stand for 5 minutes and puree with an immersion blender or in batches in a blender. Add more broth if needed to thin the soup out.
4. Season the soup with salt and pepper and serve topped with a dollop of yogurt.
5. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.

PER SERVING (3 CUPS): Calories: 109; Protein: 6g; Total Fat: 3g; Total Carbohydrates: 17g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 7g; Sodium: 105mg; Iron: 2mg

Harvest Butternut Squash Soup

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 30
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

You will be reminded of a vibrant sunrise when this soup is ladled into bowls. The scent is reminiscent of a freshly baked pumpkin pie. Fresh ginger adds a unique flavor, and its health benefits have been extolled for centuries. Ginger contains the antioxidant gingerol, which is antiviral, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and detoxifying. You can substitute about 1 teaspoon ground ginger if fresh is unavailable.

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 onion, chopped

1 tablespoon peeled and grated fresh ginger

1 teaspoon minced garlic

1 large butternut squash, peeled, seeded,
and cut into ½-inch chunks

4 to 6 cups vegetable broth

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Pinch ground cloves

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat and sauté the onion, ginger, and garlic until softened, about 4 minutes.
2. Add the butternut squash and enough broth to cover it by 2 inches. Add the cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, partially cover, and simmer until the squash is very tender, 24 to 26 minutes.

3. Remove the pot from the heat and use an immersion blender or regular blender to puree the soup until silky smooth. Season with salt and pepper and serve.
4. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.

PER SERVING (3 CUPS): Calories: 140; Protein: 3g; Total Fat: 4g; Total Carbohydrates: 28g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 6g; Sodium: 49mg; Iron: 2mg

White Bean Chicken Minestrone

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 20
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 to 6 servings

Minestrone means “big soup.” An appropriate translation for a hearty veggie, bean, and, in this version, chicken-packed meal. Legumes like cannellini beans support a healthy gut and are nutritionally dense with heaps of resistant starch, which may help lower triglycerides. The shredded fennel adds a lovely hint of licorice flavor and can help lower digestive inflammation so nutrients are absorbed effectively.

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ fennel bulb, shredded

3 celery stalks, chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic
4 cups sodium-free chicken broth
1 (28-ounce) can low-sodium diced tomatoes, undrained
1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
2 cups chopped cooked chicken
½ cup baby spinach
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Sauté the fennel, celery, onion, and garlic until softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the broth, tomatoes, and beans, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, and simmer until the veggies are tender, about

10 minutes. Add the chicken and spinach and simmer until heated through, about 5 minutes.

3. Season with salt and pepper and serve topped with Parmesan cheese.
4. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.

TIP: Omit the chicken and cheese for a vegan soup that will give you an energy boost.

PER SERVING (3 CUPS): Calories: 305; Protein: 29g; Total Fat: 8g; Total Carbohydrates: 31g; Fiber: 13g; Sugars: 8g; Sodium: 243mg; Iron: 4mg

Crispy Tofu Barley Salad

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 12 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Tofu is a high-protein, low-fat choice that contains β -conglycinin, a protein thought to protect against visceral (fat around the organs) fat buildup. The added sunflower seed topping is high in antioxidants, particularly vitamin E, which supports liver function.

FOR THE BARLEY

1½ cups water

1 cup pearly barley

Pinch sea salt

FOR THE SALAD

1 (14-ounce) block extra-firm tofu, pressed
and cut into ½-inch cubes

1 tablespoon Italian seasoning or
[Mediterranean Spice Rub](#)

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 English cucumber, chopped

¼ cup sliced sun-dried tomatoes

1 avocado, peeled, pitted, and chopped

Juice of 1 lemon

¼ cup roasted, unsalted sunflower seeds

2 tablespoons low-fat feta cheese, crumbled

2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint

TO MAKE THE BARLEY

1. Combine the water, barley, and salt in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low, and simmer until the water has absorbed, about 12 minutes. Remove the saucepan from the heat.

TO MAKE THE SALAD

2. While the barley is cooking, in a small bowl toss the tofu with the seasoning.
3. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and sauté the tofu until crispy and browned on all sides, about 10 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and set it aside.
4. In a large bowl, mix the barley, cucumber, sun-dried tomatoes, avocado, and lemon juice. Top with the crispy tofu, sunflower seeds, feta, and mint, and serve.
5. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days.

TIP: Sliced cooked chicken, pork tenderloin, or fish can replace the tofu here. You can strip a store-bought rotisserie chicken, and portion it into sealable bags to use for recipes like this one.

PER SERVING (1 BOWL): Calories: 465;
Protein: 19g; Total Fat: 23g; Total
Carbohydrates: 52g; Fiber: 13g; Sugars: 5g;
Sodium: 92mg; Iron: 4mg

Juicy Turkey Sliders

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 15 minutes / **MAKES:** 8 sliders

These mini burgers pack all the flavor of a full-size patty. Look for extra-lean ground turkey made from white meat to keep the fat content low. This version is baked in the oven, but if you prefer a smoky flavor, fire up your grill and cook the burgers for five minutes per side.

1 pound extra-lean ground turkey

½ cup almond flour

1 large egg, beaten

3 tablespoons grated onion

2 teaspoons Italian seasoning

½ teaspoon minced garlic

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

¼ cup [Smoky Barbecue Sauce](#) or store-bought

8 whole-grain slider buns

8 small tomato slices

8 small lettuce leaves

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, mix the turkey, almond flour, egg, onion, Italian seasoning, and garlic until well combined. Season the mixture with salt and pepper.
3. Separate the mixture into 8 equal slider patties, flattening each slightly.
4. Place the patties on the baking sheet, and bake them until they are golden, about 15 minutes, and the internal temperature

reaches 165°F. Turn them halfway through for best results.

5. Brush the patties with the barbecue sauce and serve them on the buns with tomato slices and lettuce.
6. Refrigerate leftover patties in a sealed container for up to 4 days or freeze for up to 2 months.

TIP: You can also use ground chicken for these burgers and form them into 4 full-size patties. If making big burgers, increase the cooking time to 20 minutes, turning halfway through.

PER SERVING (3 SLIDERS): Calories: 373;
Protein: 36g; Total Fat: 12g; Total
Carbohydrates: 33g; Fiber: 6g; Sugars: 7g;
Sodium: 309mg; Iron: 3mg

Bulgur Tabbouleh

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 10 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Tabbouleh is a classic Middle Eastern-inspired salad that comes together quickly—and you can cook the bulgur up to 4 days in advance. Bulgur is low on the glycemic index and high in fiber, minerals, and vitamins.

FOR THE DRESSING

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Juice of 1 lemon

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE TABBOULEH

1¾ cups water

1 cup bulgur

3 large tomatoes, chopped

1 cup chopped eggplant

½ orange bell pepper, seeded and chopped

½ cup chopped onion

1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint, plus extra leaves for garnish

TO MAKE THE DRESSING

1. In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil and lemon juice, season with sea salt and pepper, and set aside.

TO MAKE THE TABBOULEH

2. Combine the water and bulgur in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a simmer, reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the liquid is absorbed and the bulgur is tender, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and let stand for 5 minutes. Pour the grains into a fine-mesh strainer and cool with running cold water.
3. Transfer the bulgur to a large bowl, and pat it dry with paper towels. Add the tomatoes,

eggplant, bell pepper, onion, mint, and dressing. Toss to combine and garnish with mint leaves.

4. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days.

PER SERVING (2½ CUPS): Calories: 286;
Protein: 6g; Total Fat: 14g; Total
Carbohydrates: 37g; Fiber: 7g; Sugars: 6g;
Sodium: 15mg; Iron: 2mg



Mushroom Bok Choy Lo Mein

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 12
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Lo mein is a popular street food and menu item in restaurants worldwide because it is positively addictive! This recipe showcases flavorful shiitake mushrooms and tender bok choy as its base. Shiitake mushrooms contain L-ergothioneine, an antioxidant that supports immune system health. You can substitute any kind of mushroom, but shiitakes' robust and earthy flavor is lovely with a rich, umami-flavored sauce.

FOR THE SAUCE

¼ cup low-sodium vegetable broth

2 tablespoons low-sodium tamari sauce or

coconut aminos
2 teaspoons sesame oil
2 teaspoons honey
1 teaspoon peeled and grated fresh ginger
Pinch red pepper flakes

FOR THE LO MEIN

1 (8-ounce) package whole grain lo mein
noodles
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
3 cups sliced shiitake mushrooms
2 teaspoons minced garlic
8 baby bok choy, trimmed and shredded
1 red bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
1 carrot, halved lengthwise and thinly
sliced
1 scallion, white and green parts, thinly
sliced, for garnish
2 teaspoons sesame seeds, for garnish

TO MAKE THE SAUCE

1. In a small bowl, mix the broth, tamari, sesame oil, honey, ginger, and red pepper flakes until well combined. Set aside.

TO MAKE THE LO MEIN

2. Cook the noodles according to package directions.
3. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and sauté the mushrooms and garlic until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Add the bok choy, red bell pepper, and carrot, and sauté until tender-crisp, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the sauce and noodles and toss to coat and heat through, about 2 minutes.
5. Serve topped with scallion and sesame seeds.
6. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 2 days.

TIP: Try zoodles instead of lo mein noodles if you want a gluten-free version. You can also add cooked shrimp or cooked chicken to this dish for a protein boost.

PER SERVING (4 CUPS): Calories: 377; Protein: 7g; Total Fat: 14g; Total Carbohydrates: 54g; Fiber: 6g; Sugars: 10g; Sodium: 623mg; Iron: 5mg

Chickpea Pumpkin Curry

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 20 minutes, plus 10 minutes resting time /

MAKES: 4 servings

Pumpkin is a beautiful fruit for sweet and savory recipes. If you can get your hands on a fresh pumpkin, save the seeds and roast them; they are an excellent source of liver-supporting vitamins and minerals. Pumpkin flesh is high in fiber and beta-carotene and will soak up all the warm spices in this flavorful dish.

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 onion, chopped

1 bell pepper, any color, seeded and
chopped

1 tablespoon peeled and grated fresh ginger

2 teaspoons minced garlic

4 cups chopped pumpkin, fresh or frozen
(thawed)

1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium chickpeas,
drained and rinsed

2 or 3 tablespoons red curry paste

3 or 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth

2 cups chopped green beans (cut into 1-inch
pieces)

½ cup low-fat Greek yogurt

Juice of 1 lime

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat and sauté the onion, bell pepper, ginger, and garlic until softened, about 4

minutes. Add the pumpkin, chickpeas, and curry paste and stir to combine. Pour in enough broth to cover everything by ½ inch and bring to a boil.

2. Reduce the heat to low, partially cover, and simmer until the flavors mellow, and the veggies are tender, about 15 minutes.
3. Remove from the heat and stir in the green beans, yogurt, and lime juice, and let the curry stand for 10 minutes so the beans cook. Season with salt and pepper and serve.
4. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days, or freeze for up to 2 months. Freeze without the yogurt and add it when reheating.

PER SERVING (3½ CUPS): Calories: 210;
Protein: 9g; Total Fat: 6g; Total
Carbohydrates: 34g; Fiber: 8g; Sugars: 12g;
Sodium: 151mg; Iron: 3mg

Trout, Lentil, and Asparagus Packets

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 15 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Packet cooking is just as convenient as sheet pan meals; no extra cleanup and, bonus, all the delicious juices and flavor stay in the packet with your meal. If you want to try the traditional method—called *en papillote* (in paper)—swap out the aluminum foil for parchment paper. Fold the paper the same way as the foil but tuck the sides under the bottom to create a good seal.

Nonstick cooking spray

1 pound asparagus, trimmed and cut into 3-inch pieces

1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium lentils,
drained and rinsed

4 (6-ounce) skinless trout fillets

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

Juice of 1 lime

2 teaspoons chopped fresh dill

1. Preheat the oven to 450°F.
2. Cut 4 (12-by-18-inch) sheets of aluminum foil, place them on your work surface and spray them with cooking spray. Evenly divide the asparagus and lentils among the foil pieces, placing the ingredients in the middle.
3. Place a fish fillet on top of each, season with salt and pepper, drizzle with lime juice, and sprinkle with dill.
4. Fold the foil edges together to create a sealed package and place them on a baking

sheet. Bake for 15 minutes until the vegetables are tender and the fish is cooked through. Place the packets on plates, open them carefully, and serve.

5. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 2 days.

TIP: Swap the trout for salmon, halibut, shrimp, scallops, or a combination and use the same cook time.

PER SERVING (1 PACKET): Calories: 364;
Protein: 44g; Total Fat: 12g; Total
Carbohydrates: 20g; Fiber: 8g; Sugars: 4g;
Sodium: 131mg; Iron: 7mg

Salmon Tacos with Fresh Veggie Salsa

PREP TIME: 20 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 9 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Fish tacos are a favorite fixture in the West Coast culinary scene because they highlight the region's healthy, fresh-caught bounty and plentiful produce. Salmon is a fabulous choice for these tacos because the omega-3 content boosts HDL (good) cholesterol and reduces liver fat. The glutathione—an antioxidant—in the avocado topping further supports liver health.

FOR THE VEGGIE SALSA

2 large tomatoes, seeded and chopped

½ jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped

¼ red onion, chopped

Juice and zest of 1 lime

2 tablespoons chopped cilantro

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE TACOS

1 teaspoon blackening spice

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

½ pound skinless salmon fillets

8 (6-inch) whole wheat tortillas, at room temperature

1 large carrot, cut into matchsticks

1 cup shredded red cabbage

1 avocado, peeled, pitted, and chopped

Lemon slices, for garnish

TO MAKE THE VEGGIE SALSA

1. In a medium bowl, stir together the tomatoes, jalapeño, onion, lime juice, lime

zest, and cilantro until well mixed. Season with salt and pepper.

TO MAKE THE TACOS

- 2.** Rub the blackening spice all over the salmon.
- 3.** Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and pan-fry the salmon until just cooked through, about 4 minutes per side. Remove the fish to a plate with a spatula, let stand for 5 minutes, and use a fork to break the fish into large chunks.
- 4.** Assemble the tacos by topping each tortilla with carrots, cabbage, salmon chunks, a spoon of veggie salsa, avocado, and a squeeze of lemon.
- 5.** Refrigerate leftovers separately (salmon and veggie salsa) in sealed containers for up to 2 days.

TIP: Try pita bread, hard taco shells, or lettuce leaves to hold the delicious filling.

PER SERVING (2 TACOS): Calories: 477;
Protein: 23g; Total Fat: 21g; Total
Carbohydrates: 51g; Fiber: 14g; Sugars: 7g;
Sodium: 512mg; Iron: 3mg

Lemony Shrimp Scampi with Whole Grain Spaghetti

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 20
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

The complexity of flavors in this dish is fabulous enough for company or a special event. Lemon juice and zest provide a clean, tart flavor that is perfect with sweet shrimp, earthy spinach, and a hint of heat. Citrus is very high in detoxifying vitamin C, which can help prevent fat buildup in the liver.

8 ounces whole grain spaghetti

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 pound large shrimp, peeled, deveined, and tail off

1 tablespoon minced garlic

2 cups shredded spinach

Juice and zest of 1 lemon

¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes

¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese

Chopped fresh parsley

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat and add a generous pinch of salt. Cook the spaghetti according to the package directions. Drain the spaghetti, reserving 1 cup of pasta water.
2. While the pasta is cooking, heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shrimp and garlic and sauté until opaque, about 5 minutes. Transfer the shrimp to a plate.

3. Add the spinach, lemon juice, lemon zest, and red pepper flakes to the skillet and sauté until wilted, scraping up any bits in the skillet, about 4 minutes. Add ½ cup of the reserved pasta water and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Add the spaghetti, reserved shrimp, and Parmesan cheese to the skillet and toss to coat. Add more reserved pasta water by tablespoons if needed to create a creamy sauce. Serve topped with parsley.
5. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 2 days.

PER SERVING (8 TO 10 SHRIMP, ¼ OF THE PASTA AND SAUCE): Calories: 373; Protein: 26g; Total Fat: 11g; Total Carbohydrates: 46g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 0g; Sodium: 672mg; Iron: 3mg

Pork Tenderloin, Quinoa, and Mediterranean Veggie Bake

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 45
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 to 6 servings

Including high-quality protein in your meal planning can help lower the fat content in the liver and the risk of diabetes in people with NAFLD. The 3 ounces of pork per serving in this recipe is packed with protein, and when combined with the quinoa, there is even more protein per portion.

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus
extra for greasing the dish

¾ pound pork tenderloin, cut into ½-inch chunks

1 zucchini, chopped

1 yellow summer squash, chopped

1 bell pepper, any color, seeded and chopped

½ red onion, chopped

2 teaspoons minced garlic

2 cups low-sodium chicken broth

1 cup quinoa, rinsed

2 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F and lightly grease a 2½-quart casserole dish with oil.
2. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and sauté the pork until just cooked through, about 7 minutes. Transfer

the pork to a plate with a slotted spoon and set it aside.

3. Add the zucchini, summer squash, bell pepper, onion, and garlic, and sauté until softened, about 6 minutes.
4. Transfer the veggies to the casserole dish with the pork, broth, quinoa, oregano, salt, and pepper. Cover and bake until the quinoa and veggies are tender, about 30 minutes.
5. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days.

PER SERVING (3 OUNCES PORK, $\frac{3}{4}$ CUP QUINOA, AND $\frac{1}{4}$ OF THE VEGGIES): Calories: 323; Protein: 25g; Total Fat: 9g; Total Carbohydrates: 34g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 4g; Sodium: 92mg; Iron: 4mg

Salmon Souvlaki with Whole Grain Couscous

PREP TIME: 20 minutes, plus 15 minutes
marinating time / **COOK TIME:** 6 minutes /
MAKES: 4 servings

Traditional souvlaki skewers inspire the seasoning in this dish, but the preparation is simplified on a baking sheet instead of grilling. Salmon is an excellent choice for marinating and broiling because this fatty fish holds up well in high heat. It's rich in omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin D, and protein; these reduce the risk of many NAFLD risk factor diseases and conditions such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

FOR THE MARINADE

¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons minced garlic
2 teaspoons smoked paprika
2 teaspoons fresh oregano
1 teaspoon chopped fresh dill
¼ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 pound skinless salmon fillet, cut into 1½-inch chunks

FOR THE BOWLS

1 cup whole grain couscous
1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
1 yellow bell pepper, seeded and chopped
1 scallion, white and green parts, chopped
Juice of 1 lemon
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

½ cup [Tzatziki Sauce](#) or store-bought

TO MAKE THE MARINADE:

1. In a medium bowl, whisk the lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, paprika, oregano, dill, salt, and pepper. Add the salmon and turn to coat and marinate at room temperature for 15 minutes.

TO MAKE THE BOWLS:

2. While the salmon is marinating, cook the couscous according to the package instructions and set it aside.
3. Preheat the oven to broil and line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Spread the salmon chunks on the baking sheet and broil until they are lightly charred and cooked through, turning halfway through about 3 minutes per side.
4. Evenly divide the couscous, tomatoes, bell pepper, and scallion among 4 bowls. Drizzle the bowls with lemon juice and

lightly season with salt and pepper. Top each bowl with salmon chunks and tzatziki sauce and serve.

5. Refrigerate leftovers separately (fish and couscous/veggies) in sealed containers for up to 3 days.

TIP: You can thread the salmon chunks on skewers and grill them over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes per side for a fun and authentic presentation.

PER SERVING (1 BOWL): Calories: 403;
Protein: 31g; Total Fat: 12g; Total
Carbohydrates: 43g; Fiber: 4g; Sugars: 4g;
Sodium: 158mg; Iron: 2mg

Chicken Fajitas with Mango Salsa

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 12 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Fajitas are often grilled, but preparing all the filling components on a baking sheet saves time. Although this version uses chicken breast, you can also try lean beef, shrimp, or pork. Fajitas are ideal for meal prep because you can easily pack the filling, salsa, and tortillas in containers, and they taste good warm or cold.

FOR THE MANGO SALSA

1 mango, peeled and diced

¼ red onion, finely diced

Juice and zest of 1 lime

1 tablespoon chopped fresh cilantro

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE FAJITAS

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound boneless, skinless chicken breast,
thinly sliced

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided

1 teaspoon chili powder, divided

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

3 bell peppers, any color, sliced thinly

1 red onion, sliced thinly

2 teaspoons minced garlic

8 (6-inch) corn tortillas

TO MAKE THE MANGO SALSA

1. In a small bowl, mix the mango, onion, lime juice, lime zest, and cilantro until combined. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.

TO MAKE THE FAJITAS

2. Preheat the oven to broil. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil.
3. Toss the chicken with 1 teaspoon oil, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon chili powder, salt, and pepper, and spread it on one third of the baking sheet.
4. Place the bell peppers, onion, and garlic on the empty part of the baking sheet. Add the remaining olive oil and chili powder and toss to coat. Spread the veggies out and season with salt and pepper.
5. Broil until the chicken is cooked through and the veggies are lightly caramelized and tender, tossing halfway through, about 6 minutes per side.
6. Serve the fajita mixture in the tortillas with a generous scoop of mango salsa.
7. Refrigerate leftovers separately (fajita mixture and mango salsa) in sealed

containers for up to 4 days.

TIP: Double the mango salsa and use it to top grilled fish or pork, crab cakes, or as a healthy scoopable for baked tortilla chips.

PER SERVING ($\frac{1}{4}$ OF THE FAJITA MIXTURE, 2 TORTILLAS, AND $\frac{1}{4}$ CUP MANGO SALSA):

Calories: 333; Protein: 24g; Total Fat: 7g;
Total Carbohydrates: 46g; Fiber: 7g; Sugars:
17g; Sodium: 113mg; Iron: 2mg

Sheet Pan Pesto Meatballs and Green Beans

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 20
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

A foolproof meatball recipe is culinary gold because these tasty morsels can be added to soups, pasta, sandwiches, and eaten as a main course like in this beef-based recipe. Lean ground beef is lower in saturated fat and calories and still provides high-quality protein. The green beans are a pretty contrast to the sauce and meatballs, but you can swap in any veggie in your refrigerator.

Nonstick cooking spray

1 pound 95 percent lean ground beef
¼ cup rolled oats or almond flour
3 tablespoons store-bought or [Basil Spinach Pesto](#)
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
1 large egg
1 scallion, white part only, chopped
¼ teaspoon sea salt, plus extra for seasoning
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus extra for seasoning
1 pound green beans, trimmed
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 cup store-bought or homemade marinara sauce

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spray it with cooking spray.

2. In a medium bowl, mix the ground beef, oats, pesto, Italian seasoning, egg, scallion, salt, and pepper until well combined. Roll the meat mixture into 1½-inch meatballs and transfer them to one half of the baking sheet, spacing them slightly apart.
3. Bake the meatballs for 10 minutes, remove them from the oven, and turn them. Spread the green beans on the remaining half of the sheet, toss them with oil, and season with salt and pepper. Bake until the meatballs are cooked through and golden, and the green beans tender, about 10 minutes.
4. Heat the marinara sauce in a small saucepan over medium heat until warm.
5. Serve the meatballs on the green beans topped with a couple of spoons of marinara sauce.

6. Refrigerate the meatballs in a sealed container for up to 4 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.

TIP: Try lean ground turkey or chicken for a delicious alternative. Poultry is lower in saturated fat than beef and about as high in protein.

PER SERVING (6 TO 8 MEATBALLS, ¼ CUP SAUCE, AND ¼ OF THE GREEN BEANS): Calories: 347; Protein: 31g; Total Fat: 20g; Total Carbohydrates: 13g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 6g; Sodium: 293mg; Iron: 5mg

Turkey, Wild Rice, Brussels Sprout Casserole

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 50
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 to 6 servings

Turkey is an often overlooked protein choice, only highlighted during holidays and roasted whole as a centerpiece to a feast. Wild rice, an aquatic grass, protects against developing fatty liver disease by improving gut health—increasing good gut bacteria and reducing bad gut bacteria.

1½ cups wild rice or wild rice blend

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus
extra for greasing the dish

1 pound boneless, skinless turkey breast or leg

1 onion, chopped

1 carrot, peeled and chopped

2 teaspoons minced garlic

½ pound Brussels sprouts, quartered

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

1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme leaves

¼ cup low-sodium chicken or veggie broth

¼ cup dried cranberries

¼ cup chopped hazelnuts

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Combine 3 cups of water and the rice in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Cover, reduce the heat to low and simmer until the liquid is absorbed and the rice is tender, about 30

minutes. This can be done up to 3 days ahead and is better when made in advance.

2. Preheat the oven to 350°F and lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish.
3. While the rice is cooking, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and sauté the turkey until just cooked through, about 7 minutes. Transfer the turkey to a plate and set it aside.
4. Add the onion, carrot, and garlic to the skillet and sauté until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the Brussels sprouts, sweet potato, and thyme and sauté for 3 minutes.
5. Transfer the veggies, turkey, rice, broth, cranberries, and hazelnuts to the baking dish and stir to combine, seasoning the mixture with salt and pepper.
6. Cover the dish with foil and bake until the veggies are tender and the casserole is heated through, about 20 minutes.

7. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.

TIP: To save time, pick up a precooked wild rice package and prepare it as directed. Look for a “healthy choice” or “blue menu” rice with low sodium and minimal ingredients.

PER SERVING (3 CUPS): Calories: 522; Protein: 40g; Total Fat: 12g; Total Carbohydrates: 68g; Fiber: 9g; Sugars: 11g; Sodium: 171mg; Iron: 4mg

Chicken Cacciatore with Artichokes

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 35
minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Cacciatore means “hunter-style” sauce—and is sometimes made with rabbit instead of chicken. This version adds artichokes along with the other low-calorie, fiber-rich veggies. The oligofructose (a subgroup of insulin) in artichokes may decrease glucose levels and triglycerides.

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts,
cut into ½-inch slices

¼ cup whole wheat flour

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
2 celery stalks, chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 (28-ounce) can no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
½ cup low-sodium chicken stock
¼ cup no-salt-added tomato paste
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried basil
Pinch red pepper flakes
1 (14-ounce) can water-packed artichoke hearts, quartered

1. In a medium bowl, toss the chicken, flour, salt, and pepper.

2. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Shake the excess flour off the chicken and add the pieces to the skillet. Cook the chicken, turning, until browned, about 6 minutes. Transfer the chicken to a plate with tongs.
3. Add the carrots, celery, onion, and garlic to the skillet and sauté until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the tomatoes, chicken stock, tomato paste, vinegar, basil, and red pepper flakes to the skillet and bring to a boil.
4. Add the chicken and artichokes to the skillet, reduce the heat to low, partially cover, and simmer until the chicken is cooked through and tender, about 25 minutes. Serve hot.
5. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days, or freeze for up to 2 months.

PER SERVING (2 CUPS): Calories: 301; Protein:
32g; Total Fat: 6g; Total Carbohydrates: 33g;
Fiber: 14g; Sugars: 12g; Sodium: 374mg;
Iron: 4mg

Black Bean Stuffed Tomatoes

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 30 minutes / **MAKES:** 2 servings

There's something charming about hollowed-out veggies serving as vessels for the remaining ingredients in a meal, and it makes cleanup easier, too! Tomatoes pair beautifully with the Southwestern flavors in this dish.

Try adding a chopped jalapeño or a scoop of fat-free sour cream as a garnish.

4 large tomatoes

1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 bell pepper (any color), seeded and chopped

½ onion, chopped

2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained and rinsed
1 (12-ounce) can no-salt-added corn
1 teaspoon chili powder
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
½ cup low-fat mozzarella cheese
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Cut the tops off the tomatoes and carefully scoop out the insides, leaving the shell intact. Place the hollow tomatoes in a 9-inch-square baking dish. Chop the tomato insides and set them aside.
3. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat and sauté the bell pepper, onion, and garlic until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the chopped tomato, black beans, corn, chili powder, and cumin, and sauté

until well combined and heated through, about 5 minutes.

4. Spoon the bean mixture into the tomatoes and sprinkle with cheese. Bake until the tomatoes are very soft, and the cheese is melted, about 20 minutes. Serve topped with cilantro.
5. Refrigerate leftovers in a sealed container for up to 4 days.

TIP: Try zucchini or bell peppers instead of tomatoes.

PER SERVING (2 STUFFED TOMATOES): Calories: 456; Protein: 29g; Total Fat: 6g; Total Carbohydrates: 80g; Fiber: 22g; Sugars: 18g; Sodium: 294mg; Iron: 5mg



Assorted Veggie Chips

CHAPTER 6

Snacks and Treats

Almond Butter Chia Energy Bars

Barbecue Roasted Chickpeas

Spiced Pear Oatmeal Cookies

Loaded Nut and Hemp Trail Mix

Cherry Coconut Truffles

Double Chocolate Brownies

Apple Almond Cake

Assorted Veggie Chips

Luscious Chocolate Mousse

Banana Chia Pudding

Almond Butter Chia Energy Bars

PREP TIME: 10 minutes, plus 1 hour cooling time / **COOK TIME:** 10 minutes / **MAKES:** 16 bars

Store-bought granola bars are often very high in sugar, fat, and preservatives, so making your own is the best option for a grab-and-go snack. Fiber-packed whole grain oats, chia seeds, and hemp hearts provide a triglyceride-reducing base. Creamy almond butter holds these delicious bars together, and maple syrup adds just the right amount of sweetness.

¾ cup unsalted natural almond butter

¼ cup maple syrup or honey

2 cups rolled oats

¼ cup chia seeds

2 tablespoons hemp hearts

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a 9-by-13-inch baking pan with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk the almond butter and maple syrup until smooth. Stir in the oats, chia seeds, and hemp hearts until well mixed.
3. Press the mixture into the baking dish very firmly and evenly. Bake for 10 minutes and remove from the oven. Place a piece of parchment on top and press the bars firmly again. Refrigerate for 1 hour.
4. Remove the bars from the baking dish using the edges of the parchment paper and cut it into 16 bars.
5. Refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 1 week, or freeze for 1 month.

TIP: Drizzle the cooled bars with dark

chocolate after cutting them for an extra special treat.

PER SERVING (1 BAR): Calories: 170; Protein: 6g; Total Fat: 9g; Total Carbohydrates: 18g; Fiber: 4g; Sugars: 4g; Sodium: 3mg; Iron: 2mg

Barbecue Roasted Chickpeas

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 25 minutes / **MAKES:** 2 servings

Chickpeas become addictively crunchy when roasted, and the barbecue seasoning adds a hint of heat, perfect for sharing with friends and family. You can change the seasoning to include cumin, chili powder, and cayenne, or create a sweet version with cinnamon, nutmeg, and a hint of honey. They are best eaten the same day to enjoy the crunch but can also be stored for later.

1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium chickpeas,
drained and rinsed

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

¼ teaspoon celery salt

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

¼ teaspoon dry mustard

Sea salt

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Place the chickpeas on a layer of paper towels and place another layer of paper towels on top of the chickpeas. Dry them completely, removing any loose skins.
3. Transfer the chickpeas to a large bowl and toss with the olive oil, smoked paprika, celery salt, garlic powder, and mustard until well coated. Season lightly with salt and spread them on the baking sheet.
4. Roast until crispy and golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool completely on the baking

sheet and store at room temperature in a sealed container for up to 5 days.

TIP: Eat these alone as a snack or as a fiber-rich topping for salads and soups.

PER SERVING ($\frac{3}{4}$ CUP): Calories: 222; Protein: 8g; Total Fat: 10g; Total Carbohydrates: 27g; Fiber: 8g; Sugars: 5g; Sodium: 126mg; Iron: 1mg

Spiced Pear Oatmeal Cookies

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 15 minutes / **MAKES:** 16 cookies

Who doesn't like a tender, nutty cookie to stave off hunger or to satiate a craving for something sweet? Pears, hazelnuts, and warm spices taste like a festive holiday, and these gluten-free beauties freeze beautifully, so double the batch to store or give away as a gift. Almond flour is low-carb, nutrient-packed, and high in healthy fats and fiber. It is also sweet tasting, is gluten-free, and may help reduce LDL (bad) cholesterol.

1 cup rolled oats

½ cup almond flour

¼ cup brown rice flour
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
⅓ cup honey or maple syrup
2 tablespoons coconut oil
1 large egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup peeled and chopped pears
¼ cup chopped hazelnuts or almonds

1. In a large bowl, whisk the oats, almond flour, brown rice flour, cinnamon, and nutmeg until combined.
2. In a small bowl, whisk the honey, coconut oil, egg, and vanilla until blended.
3. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and mix until just combined. Fold in the pears and hazelnuts until well distributed, and refrigerate the batter for 30 minutes to firm it up.

4. Preheat the oven to 325°F, and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
5. Drop the batter onto the baking sheet using heaped tablespoons and flatten slightly with the back of a spoon.
6. Bake the cookies until lightly browned and firm, for 12 to 15 minutes. Cool the cookies on the baking sheet for 10 minutes, then transfer them to a wire rack to cool completely.
7. Refrigerate the cookies in a sealed container for up to 1 week, or freeze for up to 1 month.

PER SERVING (1 COOKIE): Calories: 102;
Protein: 3g; Total Fat: 5g; Total
Carbohydrates: 13g; Fiber: 2g; Sugars: 5g;
Sodium: 6mg; Iron: 1mg

Loaded Nut and Hemp Trail Mix

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 30 minutes / **MAKES:** 8 servings

Trail mix can be a flavorful snack, or you can eat it as a filling breakfast with a splash of milk and a sprinkle of fresh berries. Nuts and seeds can boost the immune system and reduce inflammation and the risk of insulin resistance. If you prefer a less sweet trail mix, you can omit or reduce the maple syrup.

1 cup whole almonds

1 cup raw walnut halves

1 cup unsweetened large flake coconut

½ cup pumpkin seeds

½ cup hemp hearts

¼ cup maple syrup

1 tablespoon avocado oil

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

Pinch sea salt

½ cup mini dark chocolate chips (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, toss the almonds, walnuts, coconut, pumpkin seeds, hemp hearts, maple syrup, oil, cinnamon, and salt until well coated.
3. Spread the mixture on the baking sheet and bake, tossing frequently, until golden brown and crunchy, about 30 minutes.
4. Let the trail mix cool on the baking tray, break it into chunks, add the chocolate chips (if using). Store in a sealed container at room temperature for up to 1 week, or freeze for up to 1 month.

TIP: Jazz up the trail mix with dried fruit like apples, cranberries, and blueberries for added fiber and a hint of tartness or sweetness.

PER SERVING (½ CUP): Calories: 332; Protein: 9g; Total Fat: 28g; Total Carbohydrates: 16g; Fiber: 6g; Sugars: 8g; Sodium: 26mg; Iron: 2mg

Cherry Coconut Truffles

PREP TIME: 20 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 5 minutes / **MAKES:** about 40 truffles

When considering truffles, you probably think of chocolate balls rolled in chocolate or cocoa, but these fruit-studded treats are a fabulous healthy alternative. The combination of cherry and coconut is decadent and festive, and the almond butter adds richness and holds everything together. Add ¼ teaspoon of coconut extract to boost the tropical flavor.

1 cup rolled oats

¼ cup finely shredded unsweetened coconut

¼ cup almond flour

2 tablespoons chia seeds

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Pinch sea salt

⅓ cup almond butter

¼ cup honey or maple syrup

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

¼ cup dried cherries

1. In a large bowl, mix the oats, coconut, almond flour, chia seeds, nutmeg, and salt.
2. In a small saucepan over low heat, mix the almond butter, honey, and vanilla until very smooth and melted, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the almond butter mixture to the oat mixture and stir until well combined. Add the dried cherries and mix until incorporated. Use a tablespoon to scoop out the mixture and roll it into balls. Repeat until all the batter is used up (it should make about 40 balls).

4. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week, or freeze for up to 1 month.

TIP: For an authentic truffle appearance, dip these in melted dark chocolate and let it harden in a smooth coating before storing these beauties.

PER SERVING (2 TRUFFLES): Calories: 79;
Protein: 2g; Total Fat: 4g; Total
Carbohydrates: 9g; Fiber: 2g; Sugars: 4g;
Sodium: 9mg; Iron: 1mg

Double Chocolate Brownies

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 20 minutes / **MAKES:** 16 brownies

Brownies are the ultimate in decadent desserts, so this fiber-rich version is a welcome addition to your liver health repertoire. Black beans are the secret ingredient here; they add moisture, fiber, nutrients, protein, and enhance the chocolaty goodness. The hint of coffee also boosts the flavor and the caffeine in coffee can help lower abnormal liver enzymes, so it's a win-win!

Nonstick cooking spray

1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium black beans,
drained and rinsed
½ cup almond flour
⅓ cup maple syrup
¼ cup avocado or coconut oil
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
¾ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon sea salt
¼ teaspoon espresso powder
½ cup dark chocolate chips

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line an 8-inch cake pan with parchment, spray lightly with cooking spray, and set aside.
2. Place the black beans, almond flour, maple syrup, oil, cocoa powder, vanilla, baking powder, salt, and espresso powder in a blender and blend until smooth. Stir in the chocolate chips.

3. Pour the batter into the baking dish and bake for 20 minutes until the edges are firm.
4. Cool the brownies in the baking dish and cut them into 16 (2-inch) squares.
5. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 5 days, or freeze for up to 1 month.

TIP: Add ½ cup of chopped pecans to the brownies along with the chocolate chips for some added healthy fat and a wonderful crunch.

PER SERVING (1 BROWNIE): Calories: 119;
Protein: 3g; Total Fat: 7g; Total
Carbohydrates: 12g; Fiber: 3g; Sugars: 5g;
Sodium: 22mg; Iron: 1mg

Apple Almond Cake

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 40 minutes / **MAKES:** 9 servings

This tender creation is inspired by coffee cakes ribboned with spices and enhanced with fruit. Apples are an inspired choice because they are sweet, tart, and can almost keep the doctor away with their wonderful vitamins, fiber, and antioxidants. Choose firm apples like Granny Smith, Honeycrisp, and Braeburn, so the chunks keep their structure, providing a burst of flavor.

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup unsweetened applesauce

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup mashed banana

4 large eggs, beaten

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup natural almond butter

¼ cup avocado or coconut oil
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
¾ cup almond flour
1½ teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
1 cup chopped apple (about 1 small)

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a 9-inch cake pan with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, whisk the applesauce, banana, eggs, almond butter, oil, and vanilla until well blended.
3. In a small bowl, combine the almond flour, baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Add the dry ingredients to the wet and stir until combined. Stir in the apple.

4. Pour the batter into the cake pan and bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 40 minutes.
5. Let the cake cool for 15 minutes in the pan, invert onto a cooling rack, and cool to room temperature. Refrigerate leftover cake in an airtight container for up to 5 days, or freeze for up to 1 month.

TIP: Serve this warm with a dairy-free, sugar-free vanilla ice cream like the So Delicious brand.

PER SERVING (3-BY-3-INCH PIECE): Calories: 249; Protein: 8g; Total Fat: 20g; Total Carbohydrates: 13g; Fiber: 4g; Sugars: 6g; Sodium: 244mg; Iron: 1mg

Assorted Veggie Chips

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 20 minutes / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Chips often fall into the never-eat column because store-bought, deep-fried products are high in fat and preservatives. These baked, crisp vegetables provide the appealing crunchy texture along with a wonderful assortment of flavors. The trick to perfect veggie chips is making sure the vegetable slices are completely dry and have a light, even coating of oil.

1 large sweet potato, very thinly sliced

1 large zucchini, very thinly sliced

1 large carrot, peeled and thinly sliced

2 beets, peeled and very thinly sliced
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, divided
½ teaspoon sea salt

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Dry the veggie slices using paper towels and transfer the sweet potato, zucchini, and carrot to the baking sheet. Add 2½ teaspoons of olive oil and toss until the chips are uniformly coated. Spread the chips on three quarters of the baking sheet in a single layer.
3. Toss the beet chips with the remaining ½ teaspoon of oil and spread them on the empty quarter of the baking sheet in a single layer. Separating the beet chips from the other chips will prevent staining. Sprinkle all the chips with salt.

4. Bake for 10 minutes, flip the chips, and bake 5 to 10 minutes more until crisped and lightly browned. Allow to cool for 5 minutes and serve with your favorite dip.
5. These are best eaten fresh but can be stored in a sealed container at room temperature for 3 days.

TIP: The best method of creating thin, even slices is a kitchen tool called a mandoline, which has sharp parallel blades. It is worth the modest investment.

PER SERVING (¼ RECIPE): Calories: 97;
Protein: 2g; Total Fat: 4g; Total
Carbohydrates: 15g; Fiber: 3g; Sugars: 7g;
Sodium: 214mg; Iron: 1mg

Luscious Chocolate Mousse

PREP TIME: 15 minutes, plus 2½ hours

chilling time / **COOK TIME:** 5 minutes /

MAKES: 4 servings

Chocolate mousse is a popular dessert because it is luscious, thick, and has an assertive fudgy flavor. In a typical mousse recipe, you would whip egg yolks and egg whites laboriously to get the signature airy texture. This version uses tofu instead to produce a very similar result effortlessly. Tofu is a stellar plant-based protein, and can help reduce fat buildup in the body, which takes the pressure off the liver.

6 ounces good-quality dark chocolate,
chopped finely

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup nondairy milk

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 tablespoons honey

$\frac{1}{2}$ (14-ounce) package silken tofu, drained

Pinch sea salt

1. Place the chocolate in a medium bowl and set it aside.
2. In a small saucepan, bring the milk and vanilla to a simmer over medium heat. Pour the milk over the chocolate and let stand for 10 minutes before whisking the mixture until very smooth. Whisk in the honey and let cool until room temperature, about 15 minutes.
3. Place the tofu into a blender and blend until smooth, about 30 seconds.

4. Add the chocolate mixture and salt to the blender and blend until well combined.
5. Spoon the mousse into serving bowls and refrigerate for about 2 hours until firm.

TIP: Serve the mousse with fresh berries or a sprinkle of chopped nuts.

PER SERVING (¼ CUP): Calories: 335; Protein: 8g; Total Fat: 20g; Total Carbohydrates: 31g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 22g; Sodium: 71mg; Iron: 6mg



Banana Chia Pudding

PREP TIME: 10 minutes, plus overnight
chilling time / **MAKES:** 4 servings

Chia seeds have a superpower; they can absorb up to 27 times their weight in liquid. They are an excellent source of essential fatty acids and fiber, and if eaten regularly, can reduce bad cholesterol and increase good cholesterol. Make sure you stir this pudding a few times while it thickens to avoid lumps or unpalatable skin on top.

2 cups skim or nondairy milk

1 large banana, mashed

1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

Pinch sea salt

½ cup chia seeds

¼ cup chopped pecans

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together the milk, banana, vanilla, and salt until combined.
2. Stir in the chia seeds, cover, and refrigerate until the pudding is thick, stirring occasionally, for at least 4 hours or overnight.
3. When ready to serve, stir well and top with pecans.

TIP: Stir in ¼ cup of natural peanut butter or almond butter for a scrumptious variation.

PER SERVING (¾ CUP): Calories: 263; Protein: 10g; Total Fat: 14g; Total Carbohydrates: 27g; Fiber: 11g; Sugars: 11g; Sodium: 108mg; Iron: 3mg



Basil Spinach Pesto

CHAPTER 7

Homemade Staples

Pickled Red Cabbage

Creamy Caesar Dressing

Balsamic Honey Dressing

Smoky Barbecue Sauce

Tzatziki Sauce

Basil Spinach Pesto

Eggplant Tomato Sauce

Mediterranean Spice Rub

Sweet Potato Hummus

Applesauce with Warm Spices

Pickled Red Cabbage

PREP TIME: 15 minutes, plus 2 or more hours pickling time / **MAKES:** 8 servings

Pickling cabbage is a super quick, easy process, so there is never a reason not to have this tangy condiment or side on hand. It is ideal for salads, pork, poultry, and is great on a tasty platter of dips, veggies, and olives. Cabbage is a cruciferous vegetable, low calorie, and high in vitamins, fiber, and inflammation-busting phytonutrients. Healthy and delicious!

1 small head red cabbage, shredded

¼ cup apple cider vinegar

Juice of 1 lime

1 tablespoon maple syrup or honey

½ teaspoon sea salt

1. Place the cabbage, vinegar, lime juice, maple syrup, and salt in a large container and toss to coat.
2. Cover and refrigerate until the cabbage softens, tossing occasionally, about 2 hours.
3. Refrigerate in the container for up to 1 week.

TIP: You can use green cabbage instead of red for a more sauerkraut-like appearance.

PER SERVING (½ CUP): Calories: 31; Protein: 1g; Total Fat: 0g; Total Carbohydrates: 7g; Fiber: 2g; Sugars: 4g; Sodium: 93mg; Iron: 1mg

Creamy Caesar Dressing

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **MAKES:** about 1½ cups

“Real” Caesar dressing is made with egg yolks and a ton of oil to create its thick texture; so, although it’s delicious, it’s generally not the healthiest choice to top your salad. Isn’t it lucky you can duplicate the taste with nutritious ingredients? This version is a vegetarian recipe, but you can add ½ mashed anchovy for a more classic preparation.

1 cup plain low-fat Greek yogurt

Juice of 1 lemon

3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
2 teaspoons minced garlic
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper

1. In a small container, combine the yogurt, lemon juice, Parmesan cheese, oil, Worcestershire sauce, garlic, salt, and pepper until blended.
2. Refrigerate for up to 1 week.

TIP: If you need a vegan variation, swap out the yogurt and Parmesan cheese for nondairy products.

PER SERVING (¼ CUP): Calories: 61; Protein: 3g; Total Fat: 4g; Total Carbohydrates: 5g; Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 3g; Sodium: 128mg; Iron: 0mg

Balsamic Honey Dressing

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **MAKES:** about 1 cup

This never-fail dressing can be used in many dishes and can transform a simple tossed green salad into a four-star meal or side dish. Balsamic vinegar is accented by sweet honey and hot mustard in this emulsion, creating the ideal flavor balance. Mix everything up in a decorative bottle and leave it on the dinner table for a pretty presentation.

¼ cup balsamic vinegar

1 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. In a small bowl, whisk the vinegar, honey, mustard, and thyme until blended.
2. Whisk in the oil in a thin stream until the dressing is emulsified. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 1 week.

TIP: The basic ingredients here can be swapped for your preferences. These include apple cider vinegar or white wine vinegar for balsamic, or oregano, basil, or dill for the fresh thyme.

PER SERVING (2 TABLESPOONS): Calories: 136; Protein: 0g; Total Fat: 14g; Total Carbohydrates: 4g; Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 3g; Sodium: 43mg; Iron: 0mg

Smoky Barbecue Sauce

PREP TIME: 5 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 15 minutes / **MAKES:** about 2 cups

Store-bought barbecue sauce is one of those products with heaps of added sugar and ingredients you cannot pronounce that are not beneficial for your health. Homemade sauce is the solution to this condiment problem, and this smoky mixture is lovely on just about anything. If you prefer a sauce with a bit of kick, add cayenne powder or chipotle chili powder.

1 cup water

1 (12-ounce) can no-salt-added tomato paste

1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons maple syrup or honey
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon smoked paprika
1/2 tablespoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
1/2 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon sea salt

1. In a medium saucepan, whisk the water, tomato paste, vinegar, maple syrup, Worcestershire sauce, paprika, garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, and salt until blended.
2. Bring the mixture to a low boil on medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low, and simmer, stirring frequently until slightly thickened, about 15 minutes.
3. Cool and refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 1 week.

TIP: The maple syrup can be omitted, but it adds a nice caramelization to meats and poultry when grilling or broiling.

PER SERVING (¼ CUP): Calories: 59; Protein: 2g; Total Fat: 0g; Total Carbohydrates: 13g; Fiber: 2g; Sugars: 9g; Sodium: 147mg; Iron: 2mg

Tzatziki Sauce

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **MAKES:** 8 servings

This Middle Eastern sauce is fresh, tart, and simple to make in a pinch. This version features fresh dill as the accent, but parsley or mint are equally delicious. Try it on grilled fish, as a tasty dip for cut veggies and, of course, the traditional topping for falafel. You can use finely chopped cucumber, instead of grating it, if you enjoy more texture and crunch.

1 large English cucumber

2 cups low-fat plain Greek yogurt or
nondairy yogurt

2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill

Juice of ½ lemon

1½ teaspoons minced garlic

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Using the small hole side of a box grater, grate the cucumber onto a clean kitchen cloth. Wring the grated cucumber until as much liquid is removed as possible, and transfer it to a medium bowl.
2. Add the yogurt, dill, lemon juice, and garlic, and stir until combined. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 5 days.

TIP: If you can only find a regular cucumber, peel it and scoop the seeds out before grating because they can be bitter.

PER SERVING (¼ CUP): Calories: 46; Protein: 4g; Total Fat: 1g; Total Carbohydrates: 6g; Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 5g; Sodium: 63mg; Iron: 0mg

Basil Spinach Pesto

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **MAKES:** about 2 cups

Earthy spinach pairs well with sweet, licorice-flavored basil creating a robust pesto brimming with vibrant color. Leafy dark greens contain polyphenols and nitrates that can help fight NAFLD, so add this tasty pesto to soups, stews, and toss it with your favorite whole grain or gluten-free pasta.

2 cups fresh basil leaves

1 cup baby spinach

4 garlic cloves, smashed

¼ cup pine nuts

¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Place the basil, spinach, garlic, pine nuts, and Parmesan cheese (if using) in a blender and pulse until the mixture is pureed, scraping down the sides once.
2. While the blender is running, add the olive oil in a thin stream and process until the pesto is smooth. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 2 weeks.

TIP: Swap in cilantro, oregano, kale, or even carrot greens for the spinach to create a unique pesto for any occasion.

PER SERVING (2 TABLESPOONS): Calories: 83;
Protein: 1g; Total Fat: 9g; Total
Carbohydrates: 1g; Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 0g;
Sodium: 40mg; Iron: 0mg

Eggplant Tomato Sauce

PREP TIME: 10 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 30 minutes / **MAKES:** 6 servings

Eggplant can be an acquired taste because it can be slightly bitter and has a strange, porous texture. It becomes almost meaty when cooked into a sauce, and it soaks up all the other flavors in the recipe. Eggplant contains an antioxidant called chlorogenic acid that may decrease “bad” LDL cholesterol levels, so it is a lovely addition to this versatile sauce.

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 small eggplant, peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks (about 3 cups)

1 onion, chopped

1 tablespoon minced garlic

1 (28-ounce) can low-sodium diced tomatoes, undrained

1 (6-ounce) can no-salt-added tomato paste

¼ cup vegetable broth or water

¼ cup chopped fresh basil

3 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Sea salt

Freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat and sauté the eggplant, onion, and garlic until softened and lightly browned, about 10 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, and broth, and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, partially cover, and simmer for about 15 minutes until the veggies are very tender.

3. Add the basil and parsley and simmer for 5 minutes. Remove the sauce from the heat and season with salt and pepper.
4. Serve immediately or cool and refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 1 week.

TIP: If you can only find an enormous eggplant and don't want to use it all in this sauce, freeze the excess. Cut the eggplant into chunks, freeze them on a baking sheet, and transfer the chunks to a sealable plastic bag for up to 1 month.

PER SERVING (1 CUP): Calories: 117; Protein: 4g; Total Fat: 5g; Total Carbohydrates: 18g; Fiber: 7g; Sugars: 11g; Sodium: 60mg; Iron: 2mg

Mediterranean Spice Rub

PREP TIME: 5 minutes / **MAKES:** about ¼ cup

Spice blends are all the rage now; the complex flavor combinations enhance almost any protein, veggie, soup, or stew. Making your own rub allows for creativity and uses spices and herbs you might have in the pantry. This blend is a guideline for making your own combinations; just remember the spice used in the largest amount is usually the base flavor.

2 tablespoons dried oregano

2 teaspoons dried basil

½ tablespoon dried thyme

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon paprika

½ teaspoon ground black pepper

½ teaspoon cumin

Mix the oregano, basil, thyme, garlic powder, paprika, pepper, and cumin in a small container and store at room temperature for up to 1 month.

TIP: Remember to check the “Best before” labels on spices and herbs when buying them at the grocery store. Spices can lose their potency over time and if stored in bright environments.

PER SERVING (1 TEASPOON): Calories: 4;
Protein: 0g; Total Fat: 0g; Total
Carbohydrates: 1g; Fiber: 0g; Sugars: 0g;
Sodium: 1mg; Iron: 0mg

Sweet Potato Hummus

PREP TIME: 15 minutes / **MAKES:** 6 servings

Hummus is not just a delicious dip; it has many culinary uses. It is a wonderful topping for baked chicken or salmon and adds flavor and color, like in this brightly-hued recipe, to soups. Legumes are a recommended diet addition for NAFLD, and sweet potato is fiber- and antioxidant-rich, improving gut health and reducing inflammation. The tahini is packed with fatty acids, and the toasty sesame flavor entices you back for seconds.

1 cup mashed, cooked sweet potato

1 cup canned chickpeas

¼ cup tahini

Juice of 1 lemon

1 teaspoon minced garlic

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

½ teaspoon ground cumin

Sea salt

1. Place the sweet potato, chickpeas, tahini, lemon juice, and garlic in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Add the olive oil and cumin and blend until combined. Season with salt and pepper and serve, or refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 1 week.

TIP: Swap in cooked yams, beets, pumpkin, or any winter squash for the sweet potato.

PER SERVING (½ CUP): Calories: 188; Protein: 5g; Total Fat: 11g; Total Carbohydrates: 20g; Fiber: 4g; Sugars: 4g; Sodium: 71mg; Iron: 2mg

Applesauce with Warm Spices

PREP TIME: 5 minutes / **COOK TIME:** 15 minutes / **MAKES:** 3 servings

Applesauce serves so many purposes and is a staple for people with NAFLD. You can enjoy this flavorful recipe as a dessert or snack, top grilled or baked pork with it, and use it in baked goods to replace butter or oil. Try customizing the recipe for your needs by changing the texture, omitting the spices, or adding a couple of pears to the apples.

4 large apples, peeled, cored, and roughly chopped

¼ cup unsweetened apple juice or water

Juice of ½ lemon

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon ground nutmeg

¼ teaspoon ground cloves

1. Place the apples, apple juice, lemon juice, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a simmer, reduce the heat to low, partially cover, and simmer until the apples are very tender, about 15 minutes.
2. Remove the apples from the heat and use a potato masher to create the desired texture, or if you prefer very smooth applesauce, you can blend the mixture.
3. Cool and refrigerate in a sealed container for up to 5 days.

TIP: You can leave the skin on the apples for added texture and fiber. If you do, be sure to scrub the apple well to remove any pesticides or contaminants.

PER SERVING (1 CUP): Calories: 156; Protein: 1g; Total Fat: 1g; Total Carbohydrates: 41g; Fiber: 5g; Sugars: 31g; Sodium: 2mg; Iron: 0mg



MEASUREMENT CONVERSIONS

VOLUME EQUIVALENTS

	U.S. STANDARD	U.S. STANDARD (ounces)	METRIC (approximate)
LIQUID	2 tablespoons	1 fl. oz.	30 mL
	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	2 fl. oz.	60 mL
	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	4 fl. oz.	120 mL
	1 cup	8 fl. oz.	240 mL
	$1\frac{1}{2}$ cups	12 fl. oz.	355 mL
	2 cups or 1 pint	16 fl. oz.	475 mL
	4 cups or 1 quart	32 fl. oz.	1 L
	1 gallon	128 fl. oz.	4 L
DRY	$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon	—	0.5 mL
	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon	—	1 mL
	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon	—	2 mL
	$\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon	—	4 mL
	1 teaspoon	—	5 mL
	1 tablespoon	—	15 mL
	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	—	59 mL
	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	—	79 mL
	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	—	118 mL
	$\frac{2}{3}$ cup	—	156 mL
	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	—	177 mL
	1 cup	—	235 mL
	2 cups or 1 pint	—	475 mL
	3 cups	—	700 mL
	4 cups or 1 quart	—	1 L
	$\frac{1}{2}$ gallon	—	2 L
	1 gallon	—	4 L

OVEN TEMPERATURES

FAHRENHEIT	CELSIUS (approximate)
250°F	120°C
300°F	150°C
325°F	165°C
350°F	180°C
375°F	190°C
400°F	200°C
425°F	220°C
450°F	230°C

WEIGHT EQUIVALENTS

U.S. STANDARD	METRIC (approximate)
½ ounce	15 g
1 ounce	30 g
2 ounces	60 g
4 ounces	115 g
8 ounces	225 g
12 ounces	340 g
16 ounces or 1 pound	455 g

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Andy De Santis, RD, MPH, is a private practice dietitian and published author from Toronto. He graduated in 2014 from the University of Toronto School of Public Health with a master's degree. Andy has gone on to write nine books and hundreds of blog posts, and has worked with individuals to tailor a nutrition strategy to fit their personal goals. He brings a wealth of nutrition science knowledge and tailored nutrition solutions to

this book, eliminating guesswork so that readers can clearly pursue their fitness goals.