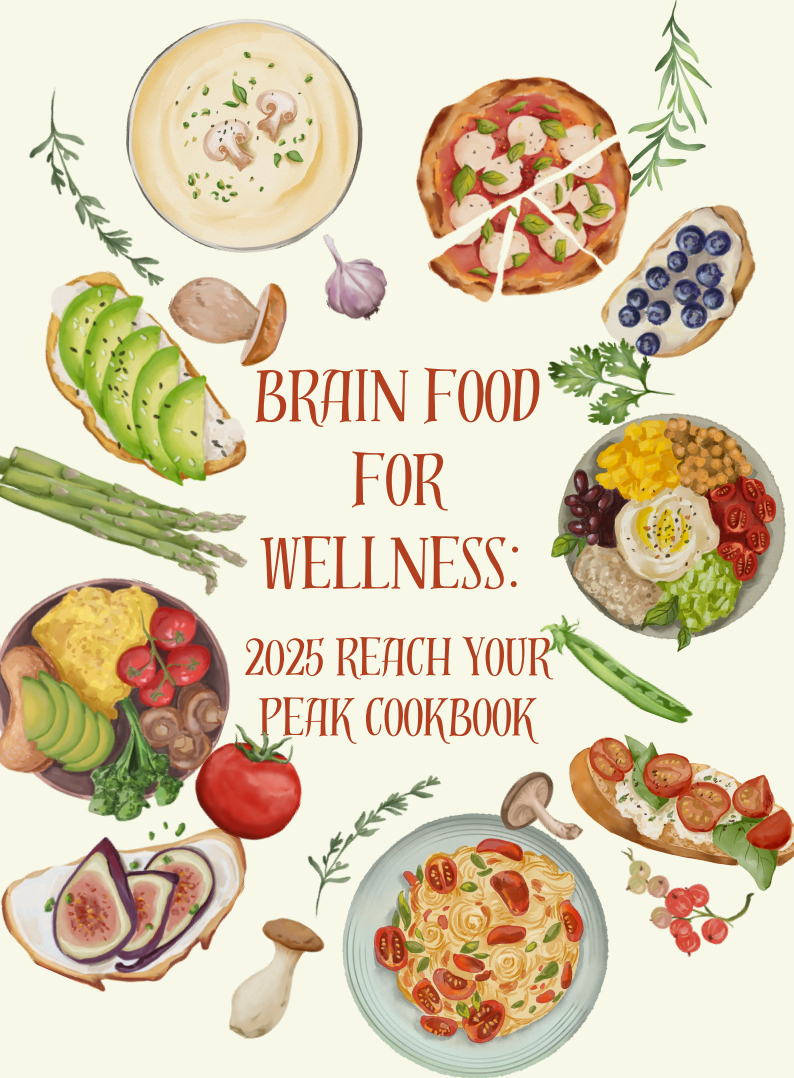




BRAIN FOOD FOR WELLNESS:

2025 REACH YOUR
PEAK COOKBOOK



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IN THIS COOKBOOK, YOU'LL FIND RECIPES INSPIRED BY MOUNT SINAI'S COMMITMENT TO WHOLE-PERSON WELLNESS—MEALS THAT SUPPORT ENERGY, MOOD, AND LONG-TERM BRAIN HEALTH THROUGH THE POWER OF GOOD FOOD.



THE GUT-BRAIN CONNECTION STARTS ON YOUR PLATE

The Gut-Brain Connection Explained

Eating well isn't just about looking a certain way, it's about nourishing your brain, your body, and your mood from the inside out. What you eat directly affects how you think, feel, focus, and sleep. That's because your gut and brain are in constant communication.

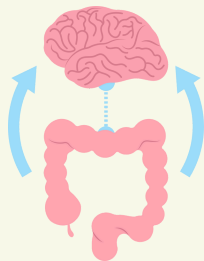
Macronutrients & the Gut-Brain Axis

Your gut-brain axis is the two-way communication system between your digestive system and your brain. It's powered by nerves, hormones, and gut bacteria. Here's how your food fits in:

Carbohydrates: fuel both your body and your brain. Your brain runs on glucose (the simplest form of carbohydrate). Complex carbs (like oats, quinoa, fruits, and vegetables) also feed beneficial gut bacteria, which in turn support brain function and mood.

Fats: essential for building brain cells and reducing inflammation. Healthy fats like omega-3s (from seeds, fish, and nuts) are linked to better memory, focus, and emotional balance.

Protein: provides the building blocks (amino acids) for neurotransmitters (the brain's chemical messengers like serotonin and dopamine). Without enough protein, your mood, motivation, and energy can suffer.



Gut Health = Brain Health

Your gut houses trillions of microbes that produce compounds affecting your brain, including a vast majority of your body's serotonin. A fiber-rich, nutrient-dense diet helps these microbes thrive, which can boost: mental clarity, emotional regulation, sleep quality, and stress resilience. On the other hand, consuming too many unhealthy fats (like saturated fats, deli meats, animal fats, etc) can lead to inflammation and can raise cholesterol levels.

Eat to Support the Gut-Brain Network

Balanced nutrition directly influences how your brain functions through the gut-brain axis. By consistently fueling your body with the macronutrients it needs, from slow-digesting carbohydrates to anti-inflammatory fats and amino acid-rich proteins, you're not just feeding your cells; you're modulating brain chemistry. Eating well is a daily investment in cognitive clarity, emotional regulation, and long-term brain health.



UNDERSTANDING NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION & MACRONUTRIENTS

A guide to eating well, not less.

When it comes to nourishing your body, knowing what's in your food isn't about tracking obsessively or counting every calorie. It's about building awareness, confidence, and a stronger connection with your body's needs.

What is Nutritional Information?

Nutritional information is a breakdown of what a food provides in terms of energy (calories), macronutrients. It's a helpful tool to help you understand what you're putting in your body, balance your meals to keep you energized and satisfied, and support your health goals.

Macronutrients Made Simple

Carbohydrates: Your body's main source of fuel. Found in grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes. Carbs help you think more clearly, move with energy, and recover well.

~***Dietary Fiber:*** A type of carb your body doesn't digest but plays a big role in your wellness. It helps support digestion, gut health, blood sugar balance, and keeps you full.

~***Sugar:*** Naturally occurring sugars in fruits and dairy come with nutrients and fiber. Added sugars (in processed foods) offer little benefit and are best enjoyed sparingly.

Fats: Essential for brain function, hormone balance, and absorbing nutrients. Found in oils, nuts, seeds, avocado, and fatty fish.

~***Saturated Fat:*** Found in animal products and some oils. Saturated fat isn't "bad" in small amounts but it's best balanced with unsaturated fats like olive oil and nuts.

~***Cholesterol:*** Often found in animal products like eggs and seafood, plays a key role in hormone production and brain structure. While your body makes its own cholesterol, dietary sources are not inherently harmful when consumed in minimal amounts.

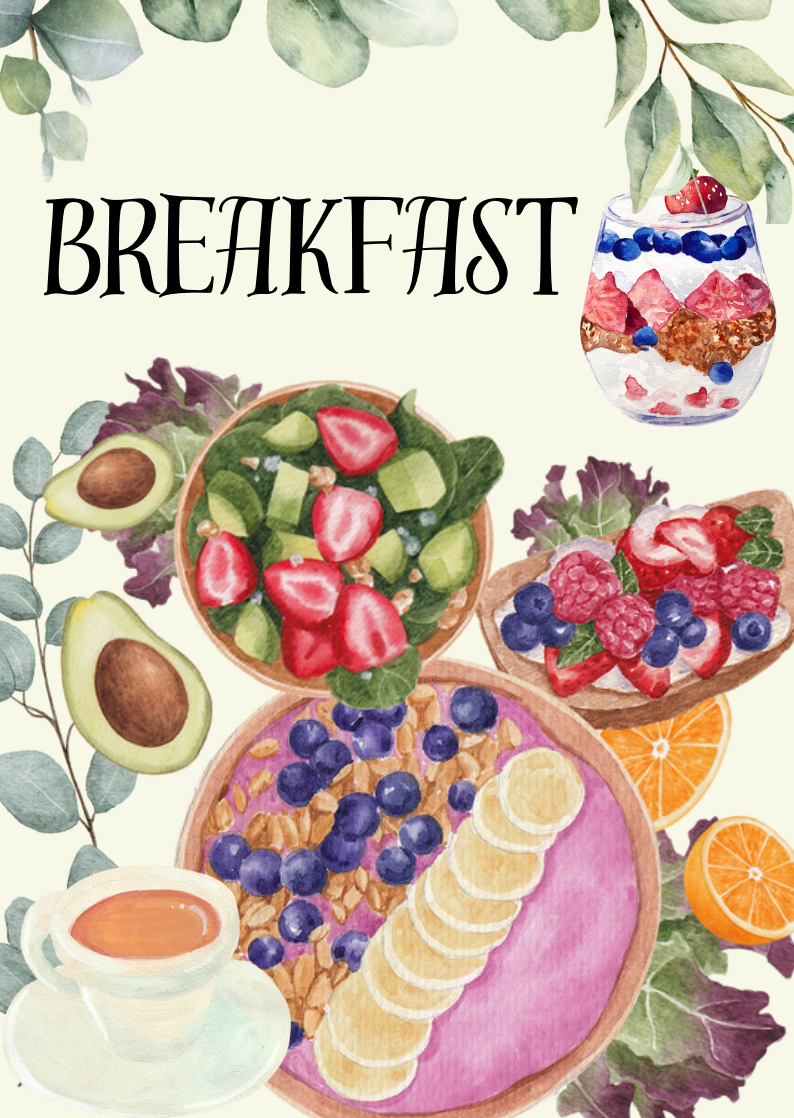
Protein: Important for muscle repair, immune health, and keeping you full. Found in meat, poultry, dairy, eggs, legumes, tofu, and more.

Eat with Awareness

A balanced plate includes all three. You don't need to avoid any macronutrient; they all serve a purpose in the body.

Tip ~ While macronutrients play a vital role in energy and structure, minerals like sodium also play an important role. Aim for whole foods and be mindful of excess sodium in packaged foods.

BREAKFAST



Protein Pancakes

With seasonal fruits



1 serving



15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 egg

1/2 banana (ripe)

1/4 cup oats

1 scoop chocolate protein powder

1/2 tsp baking powder

2 tbsp cottage cheese or Greek
yogurt

1/2 tsp peanut butter

1/2 tsp coconut oil

Optional: splash of milk or water
if batter is too thick

Toppings: 1/2 cup seasonal fruits

DIRECTIONS

1. Blend all ingredients or mash and mix well by hand.
2. Let the batter sit for 2–3 minutes (oats thicken it).
3. Heat a non-stick pan over medium and lightly grease.
4. Pour ~1/4 cup batter per pancake. Cook until bubbles form and edges set (2–3 min), flip and cook 1–2 more.
5. Serve warm with toppings!

Breakfast toast

With scrambled eggs & smoked salmon



1 serving



15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

2 slices whole grain or sourdough

bread

2 eggs

1 small avocado

1–2 tbsp Greek yogurt

2–3 tbsp cottage cheese

A few slices smoked salmon

Cherry tomatoes (optional, for
serving)

Salt & pepper

Sesame seeds or everything bagel
seasoning (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Toast the bread slices to your desired crispness.
2. In a bowl, mash the avocado with Greek yogurt and blended cottage cheese. Season with salt and pepper.
3. In a pan, scramble the eggs gently on medium-low heat until just set.
4. Spread the avocado-cottage cheese mixture over the toast.
5. Top one slice with scrambled eggs and the other with smoked salmon.
6. Sprinkle with sesame seeds or seasoning if using, and serve with cherry tomatoes on the side.

Scrambled oats yogurt bowl

With seasonal fruits



1 serving



10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

½ cup banana (ripe)
1 scoop protein powder
1 egg
½ cup oats
¾ cup Greek yogurt
1 tbsp chia seeds
1-2 tsp honey
½ tsp coconut oil
top with seasonal fruits

DIRECTIONS

1. In a mixing bowl, mash the banana and combine it with the protein powder, egg, and oats. Stir until smooth and fully blended.
2. Heat a non-stick pan over medium-high heat and lightly grease it with coconut oil or butter.
3. Pour the mixture into the pan. Using a spatula, cook and stir continuously, scrambling the mixture like you would eggs.
4. Once the oat scramble is fully cooked and slightly golden, remove from heat and let it cool slightly.
5. Spoon the scramble into a bowl, then top with Greek yogurt, chia seeds, honey, and fresh seasonal fruits.
6. Enjoy warm or chilled for a high-protein, naturally sweet breakfast or snack!

Overnight Chia Seed Pudding

With stewed apple & peaches



1 serving



Overnight

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp chia seeds

½ cup unsweetened almond milk

½ cup Greek yogurt

1 tbsp maple syrup

optional: splash vanilla extract

½ cup red apple, diced

1 tsp fresh lemon juice

¼ tsp cinnamon

1–2 tsp water

⅞ tsp grated fresh ginger

½ fresh peach

handful granola (optional)

DIRECTIONS

Make the Chia Pudding (Night Before):

1. In a small bowl or jar, combine chia seeds, almond milk, yogurt, maple syrup, and vanilla. Stir well, let sit for 5 minutes, stir again, then cover and refrigerate overnight.

Cook the Stewed Apple (Next Morning):

1. Heat a small nonstick pan over medium heat.
2. Add diced apple and sauté dry for 1–2 minutes to caramelize.
3. Add lemon juice, cinnamon, water, and optional ginger and salt. Stir.
4. Cover and simmer on low for 4–5 minutes. Uncover and cook 1 more minute if needed to reduce liquid.
5. Stir in vanilla extract if using. Let cool slightly.

Assemble the Bowl:

1. Stir the chia pudding, then top with stewed apple and fresh peach.
2. Add any optional toppings. Enjoy!



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION & MACRONUTRIENT BREAKDOWN

Protein Pancakes with Seasonal Fruits

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 443 kcal
- Protein: 39.5 g
- Carbohydrates: 41.4 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~5 g
 - Sugars: ~17 g
- Fat: 15.6 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~5 g
- Cholesterol: ~190 mg
- Sodium: ~300 mg

Breakfast Toast with Scrambled Eggs & Smoked Salmon

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 495 kcal
- Protein: 35 g
- Carbohydrates: 25 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~6 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: 28 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~7 g
- Cholesterol: ~370 mg
- Sodium: ~850 mg

Scrambled Oats Yogurt Bowl with Seasonal Fruits

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 510 kcal
- Protein: 38 g
- Carbohydrates: 42 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~8 g
 - Sugars: ~16 g (from banana, honey, fruit)
- Fat: 21 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~6 g
- Cholesterol: ~180 mg
- Sodium: ~220 mg

Overnight Chia Seed Pudding with Stewed Apple & Peaches

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 315 kcal
- Protein: 13 g
- Carbohydrates: 28 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~9 g
 - Sugars: ~14 g (fruit and maple syrup)
- Fat: 15 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~3 g
- Cholesterol: ~5 mg
- Sodium: ~60 mg

Values are estimated using standard ingredient data and may vary based on specific brands or substitutions.



LOWER CARB SUBSTITUTES

Protein Pancakes:

- 1/2 banana » 2 tbsp Greek yogurt + a few drops of stevia/monk fruit (keeps creaminess and sweetness without the sugar)
- 1/4 cup oats » 3 tbsp almond flour or 2 tbsp coconut flour (both are low-carb, almond flour is milder, coconut flour absorbs more liquid so add a splash of milk if needed)
- toppings: 1/2 cup seasonal fruits » 1/4 cup berries (raspberries, blackberries, or strawberries) (lowest-carb fruit option instead of higher sugar fruits like kiwi, mango, or banana)
- optional splash of milk » use unsweetened almond milk or coconut milk (keeps carbs lower than dairy milk)

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~320 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Carbohydrates: ~11 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~4 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: ~18 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~5 g
- Cholesterol: ~190 mg
- Sodium: ~300 mg

Breakfast Toast:

- bread » use 1 slice instead of 2, or swap for low-calorie high-fiber bread (~40 kcal/slice vs ~120 kcal)
- eggs » keep 2 whole eggs, or do 1 whole egg + 1 egg white (cuts ~55 kcal)
- avocado » use 1/2 small avocado instead of the whole (~120 kcal » ~60 kcal)
- smoked salmon » stick to 1–2 slices (~30–40g) instead of more (cuts sodium & calories)
- greek yogurt & cottage cheese » choose non-fat versions (saves ~40–50 kcal)
- toppings (seeds) » sprinkle lightly (skip if you want to save another ~20–30 kcal)

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~310 kcal
- Protein: ~27 g
- Carbohydrates: ~18 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~6 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: ~14 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~3.5 g
- Cholesterol: ~190 mg
- Sodium: ~550 mg

LOWER CARB SUBSTITUTES

Scrambled Oats Yogurt Bowl:

- banana (1/2 cup) » replace with 2 tbsp greek yogurt + a few drops stevia/monk fruit
- oats (1/2 cup) » replace with 3 tbsp almond flour or 2 tbsp coconut flour
- honey (1–2 tsp) » replace with sugar-free syrup or stevia drops
- seasonal fruits (1/2 cup) » replace with 1/4 cup raspberries or blackberries
- greek yogurt » keep, but if you want even fewer carbs, use full-fat instead of low-fat (lower carb count)

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~320 kcal
- Protein: ~34 g
- Carbohydrates: ~12 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~5 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: ~17 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~5 g
- Cholesterol: ~190 mg
- Sodium: ~270 mg

Overnight Chia Seed Pudding:

- maple syrup (1 tbsp) » replace with liquid stevia or monk fruit drops
- red apple (1/2 cup diced) » replace with 1/4 cup raspberries or blackberries
- peach (1/2 fruit) » replace with a few strawberries
- granola (optional) » swap for unsweetened coconut flakes or chopped walnuts
- keep chia seeds, yogurt, almond milk, spices, lemon, and ginger (already low-carb friendly)

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~290 kcal
- Protein: ~16 g
- Carbohydrates: ~14 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~9 g
 - Sugars: ~5 g
- Fat: ~17 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~5 g
- Cholesterol: ~10 mg
- Sodium: ~120 mg

STANDOUT INGREDIENTS

Chia Seeds

Found in overnight chia seed pudding, scrambled oats yogurt bowl

Rich in soluble fiber and omega-3s, chia seeds support digestive health and help reduce inflammation. A strong gut environment can positively impact brain clarity and emotional balance.

Greek Yogurt

Found in all four recipes

Greek yogurt is rich in probiotics, the beneficial bacteria that help balance your gut. A healthy gut can improve digestion, support immunity, and positively affect mood and mental clarity while also providing protein to support brain function.

Banana

Found in protein pancakes, scrambled oats bowl

Bananas are a natural source of prebiotics, which feed the helpful bacteria in your gut. They're also high in vitamin B6, which helps your body produce serotonin, a brain chemical linked to mood, calm, and emotional balance.

Avocado

Found in breakfast toast

Avocados are full of healthy fats and fiber that support gut health and help regulate inflammation. They're also a source of magnesium, which plays a role in calming the nervous system and supporting overall brain function.

Apples (with skin)

Found in overnight chia pudding

Apples provide pectin, a type of fiber that supports digestion and feeds your gut microbes. The antioxidants in apples may also help lower inflammation, supporting clearer thinking and better overall well-being.

LUNCH & DINNER

Tuna lettuce wraps



1 serving



10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 3 mini lettuce leaves
- 1 can tuna (in oil - drained)
- 2-3 tbsp Greek yogurt
- 1-2 tbsp finely chopped red onion
- 1 tbsp chopped green onion (optional)
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- Salt & pepper (to taste)

DIRECTIONS

1. Drain the canned tuna and place it in a medium mixing bowl.
2. Add Greek yogurt, chopped red onion, a splash of milk (optional), salt, and pepper. Mix until well combined.
3. Wash and pat dry the lettuce leaves. Spoon the tuna mixture into the center of each leaf.
4. Sprinkle green onion over the top for garnish. Add lemon juice or herbs if desired.
5. Serve immediately with a side of fresh vegetables or whole grain crackers.

Homemade burrito bowl



2 servings



20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup cooked white rice (or brown rice)
100–150g ground beef or turkey (cooked and seasoned)
1/2 cup corn
1/4 cup sautéed bell peppers
1/4 cup guacamole or mashed avocado
1/4 cup shredded cheddar
a small handful of tortilla chips (crushed)
Optional: Greek yogurt or sour cream, lime wedge, salsa, jalapeños, or chopped cilantro

DIRECTIONS

1. Cook the ground meat in a pan over medium heat with your favorite taco seasoning. Set aside once fully browned and cooked through.
2. Prepare the rice according to package instructions, or reheat leftover rice.
3. Sauté the bell peppers in a small pan with a bit of oil until slightly softened and caramelized.

Assemble your bowl:

1. Start with a base of rice.
2. Add cooked beef, corn, and sautéed peppers.
3. Top with guacamole, shredded cheese, and crushed tortilla chips.
4. Finish with any extra toppings like salsa, Greek yogurt, or a squeeze of lime.

Chicken Caesar Sandwich



2 servings



15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp mayonnaise

2 tsp dijon mustard

salt & pepper to taste

fresh lime juice

1 tsp sour cream/yogurt

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese

2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup flour (all-purpose)

1 egg

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup breadcrumbs

Salt & pepper

toasted brioche/baguette

4 large romaine lettuce leaves

DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, mix together mayonnaise, Dijon mustard, lime juice, sour cream or yogurt, salt, and pepper until smooth. Stir in grated Parmesan cheese until fully combined. Set aside.
2. Preparing the chicken: Whisk the egg and pour it onto a plate. Pour the flour onto a separate plate. Pour the breadcrumbs onto a third plate.
3. Season the chicken breast with salt and pepper. Dredge the chicken in flour, then dip it in the egg, and coat it fully in breadcrumbs.
4. Heat oil in a skillet over medium heat. Cook the chicken on both sides until golden and crispy, and the internal temperature reaches 165°F (74°C).
5. Spread the prepared sauce on both slices of toasted bread. Add romaine lettuce to one slice, place the crispy chicken on top, then close the sandwich and serve.

Seafood Paella



2 servings



45 minutes

INGREDIENTS

3 cloves of garlic

½ onion

½ red bell pepper

12 raw jumbo shrimp

⅓ cup of olive oil

½ cup of tomato sauce

⅓ tsp of sweet smoked Spanish

paprika and saffron

1 cup of uncooked round rice

2 lemon wedges

2 ½ cups of fish broth

handful of finely chopped parsley

1 pack of tofu

sea salt and black pepper

DIRECTIONS

Prep:

1. Roughly chop 3 garlic cloves, finely dice ½ onion, chop ½ red bell pepper, and cube 1 pack tofu.

Sear Tofu:

1. Heat ⅓ cup olive oil in a paella pan over medium-high. Add sea salt and tofu, cook for 1½–2 minutes, then set aside.

Sauté Vegetables:

1. In the same pan, cook onion and garlic for 1 minute. Add bell pepper and sauté for 3 more minutes.

Build Flavor:

1. Add ½ cup tomato sauce, ⅓ tsp smoked paprika, salt, and pepper. Simmer 2 minutes until thickened. Return tofu, add 2½ cups fish broth and a pinch of saffron.

Cook Rice & Shrimp:

1. Bring to a boil, stir in 1 cup round rice. After 5–6 minutes, add shrimp. Cook 5 more minutes, then lower heat and simmer until broth is absorbed. Raise heat for 1–2 minutes to form a crispy bottom.

Finish:

1. Rest the dish for 5 minutes, then garnish with lemon wedges and chopped parsley.

Onion & goat cheese tart



3 servings



1 hour

INGREDIENTS

1 ready-made shortcrust pastry roll

5 yellow onions, thinly sliced

1 roll of goat cheese (about 200 g)

1–2 sprigs of fresh thyme (plus extra for garnish if desired)

2 tbsp olive oil or butter

1 tsp sugar (optional, to help caramelize)

Salt & pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Blind Bake the Crust

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Roll pastry into tart dish, trim edges, and prick the base. Line with baking paper and fill with beans or rice. Bake 15 min, remove weights, bake 5 more min. Set aside.

Caramelize Onions

1. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil or butter in a pan. Add onions and a pinch of salt. Cook on low, stirring often, until golden and soft (about 25–30 min). (Optional: add 1 tsp sugar halfway through). Season with pepper.

Assemble & Bake

1. Spread onions over crust. Top with sliced goat cheese and 1–2 sprigs thyme. Bake at 180°C (350°F) for 15–20 min, until cheese is golden.

Serve

1. Remove thyme sprigs. Garnish with fresh thyme. Serve warm, optionally with a green salad.

Oven baked potatoes



4 servings



1 hour

INGREDIENTS

4 large potatoes, cut
into wedges

1 large onion, cut into
wedges

2–3 tbsp olive oil
salt, to taste

Herbes de Provence (or
dried herbs of choice),
to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F).

Prep the potatoes:

1. Prick the potato wedges lightly with a fork. In a large bowl, toss potatoes and onion wedges with olive oil, salt, and herbs until evenly coated.

Roast:

1. Spread the mixture in a single layer on a nonstick or parchment-lined baking tray. Roast for 40–50 minutes, flipping once halfway, until potatoes are golden and crisp and onions are caramelized.

2. Serve hot as a side or with a dip of your choice.

Vegan Tomato Kibbe



6 servings



1 hour 20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

spice mix

- 2 tsp ground allspice
- 1 1/2 ts ground cinnamon
- 1 ts ground black pepper
- 1/2 ts ground nutmeg
- 1/4 ts ground clove
- 1/2 ts cumin
- 1/2 ta coriander

kibbe

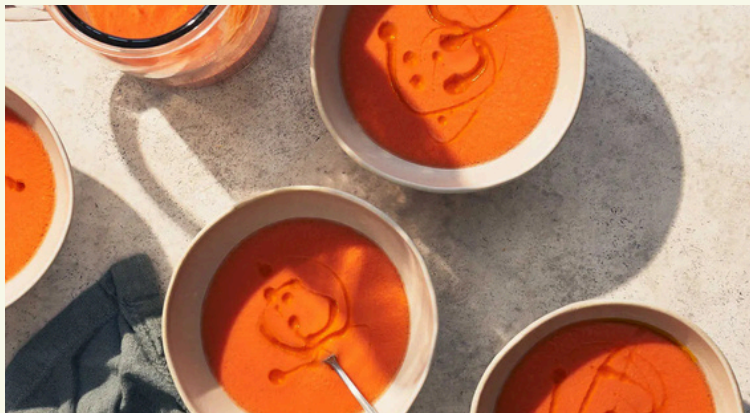
- 2.2 pounds grated tomatoes
- 1 large white onion
- 1/4 cup parsley
- 1/4 cup mint leaves and more to garnish
- 1 cup brown bulgar wheat
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- Salt to taste



DIRECTIONS

1. In a food processor, add onion, parsley, mint leaves, and borghol. Pulse until finely chopped. Add tomatoes and blend again until well combined. Transfer to a bowl, stir in the spice mix and olive oil, and season with salt to taste
2. Chill for at least 1 hour before serving. Drizzle with extra olive oil and garnish with mint leaves.
3. This keeps well in the fridge and tastes even better the next day
4. Top with olive oil and enjoy.

Gazpacho



10 servings



20 minutes
(+chill time)

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds red tomatoes, cut
into chunks

1 Italian frying pepper
(Peperone Friariello) or a
long, light green pepper, cut
into chunks

1 cucumber, cut into chunks

1 small mild onion, cut into
chunks

1 clove garlic

2 teaspoons vinegar

Salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup extra-virgin olive oil

DIRECTIONS

1. Combine tomatoes, pepper, cucumber, onion and garlic in a blender or, if using a hand blender, in a deep bowl. (If necessary, work in batches.) Blend at high speed until very smooth, at least 2 minutes, pausing occasionally to scrape down the sides with a rubber spatula.
2. With the motor running, add the vinegar and 2 teaspoons salt. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil. The mixture will turn bright orange or dark pink and become smooth and emulsified, like a salad dressing. If it still seems watery, drizzle in more olive oil until texture is creamy.
3. Strain the mixture through a strainer or a food mill, pushing all the liquid through with a spatula or the back of a ladle. Discard the solids. Transfer to a large pitcher (preferably glass) and chill until very cold, at least 6 hours or overnight.
4. Before serving, adjust the seasonings with salt and vinegar. If soup is very thick, stir in a few tablespoons ice water. Serve in glasses, over ice if desired, or in a bowl. A few drops of olive oil on top is a nice touch.

Rice with Chicken



7 servings 1.5 hours

INGREDIENTS

For the chicken and broth:

- 1 whole organic chicken (2.2–2.75 lb)
- 12 cups water
- 1 medium carrot, peeled
- 2 medium yellow onions, peeled
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 whole cloves
- 5 Tbsp vegetable oil
- Salt, to taste

For the rice:

- 8.8 oz ground beef
- 1½ cups long-grain rice, rinsed and soaked for 15 minutes
- 2 cups chicken broth (reserved)
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil

Spice mix:

- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- ½ tsp seven spice
- ½ tsp white pepper
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg

For garnish:

- Toasted almonds
- Toasted pine nuts

DIRECTIONS

Boil the Chicken:

1. In a large pot, heat 5 Tbsp oil and sear the whole chicken for 1 minute per side. Add water, carrot, onions, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, cloves, and salt. Bring to a boil, skim foam, then simmer until the chicken is fully cooked (about 45–60 minutes).
2. Remove chicken, cut into pieces, and set aside. Reserve 2 cups of broth.

Prepare the Rice and Beef:

1. In a separate pot, heat 1 Tbsp oil and cook ground beef for 6 minutes. Add rinsed rice and spice mix, stir well, and sauté for 2–3 minutes.
2. Add 2 cups of the reserved broth, bring to a boil, then reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes until rice is tender.

Assemble and Serve:

1. Fluff rice and transfer to a serving dish. Arrange chicken pieces on top and garnish with toasted almonds and pine nuts. Serve warm.

"Spicy" Potatoes



4 servings



25 minutes

INGREDIENTS

For the Potatoes:

- 4 large potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil or olive oil

For the Spicy Sauce:

- 1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp garlic, minced
- ½ tsp paprika
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes
- 4 Tbsp chopped cilantro
- 3 Tbsp lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

Air-Fry the Potatoes:

1. Toss the cubed potatoes with 1 tablespoon of oil. Place in an air fryer and cook at 390°F (200°C) for 10–15 minutes, shaking halfway through, until golden and crisp.

Make the Sauce:

1. In a small pan, heat 1 tablespoon olive oil over medium heat. Add garlic and sauté for 30 seconds. Stir in paprika, salt, tomato paste, red pepper flakes, cilantro, and lemon juice. Cook for 1 minute, then remove from heat.

Toss and Serve:

1. Add the cooked potatoes to a bowl and pour the sauce over. Toss well to coat. Serve immediately.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION & MACRONUTRIENT BREAKDOWN

Tuna Lettuce Wraps

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 180 kcal
- Protein: 27 g
- Carbohydrates: 2 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~1 g
 - Sugars: ~1 g
- Fat: 7 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~1 g
- Cholesterol: ~50 mg
- Sodium: ~350 mg

Homemade Burrito Bowl

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 470 kcal
- Protein: 29 g
- Carbohydrates: 32 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~5 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: 24 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~9 g
- Cholesterol: ~70 mg
- Sodium: ~500 mg

Chicken Caesar Sandwich

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 550 kcal
- Protein: 40 g
- Carbohydrates: 30 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~2 g
 - Sugars: ~2 g
- Fat: 30 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~6 g
- Cholesterol: ~120 mg
- Sodium: ~650 mg

Seafood Paella

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 395 kcal
- Protein: 28 g
- Carbohydrates: 30 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~3 g
 - Sugars: ~2 g
- Fat: 18 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~3 g
- Cholesterol: ~145 mg
- Sodium: ~480 mg



Onion & Goat Cheese tart

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 405 kcal
- Protein: 8.9 g
- Carbohydrates: 32.4 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~2.8 g
 - Sugars: ~8.3 g
- Fat: 27.5 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~13.1 g
- Cholesterol: ~42 mg
- Sodium: ~330 mg

Oven Baked Potatoes

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 210 kcal
- Protein: 3 g
- Carbohydrates: 26 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~3 g
 - Sugars: ~2 g
- Fat: 11 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~1.5 g
- Cholesterol: 0 mg
- Sodium: ~150 mg

Vegan Tomato Kibbe

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 260 kcal
- Protein: 5 g
- Carbohydrates: 24 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~4 g
 - Sugars: ~4 g
- Fat: 16 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~2 g
- Cholesterol: 0 mg
- Sodium: ~180 mg



Values are estimated using standard ingredient data and may vary based on specific brands or substitutions.



Gazpacho

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 120 kcal
- Protein: 2 g
- Carbohydrates: 8 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~2 g
 - Sugars: ~4 g
- Fat: 9 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~1.5 g
- Cholesterol: 0 mg
- Sodium: ~200 mg

Rice with Chicken

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 420 kcal
- Protein: 27 g
- Carbohydrates: 25 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~2 g
 - Sugars: ~2 g
- Fat: 22 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~5 g
- Cholesterol: ~95 mg
- Sodium: ~400 mg

“Spicy” Potatoes

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 215 kcal
- Protein: 3 g
- Carbohydrates: 30 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~4 g
 - Sugars: ~1.5 g
- Fat: 10 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~1.5 g
- Cholesterol: 0 mg
- Sodium: ~350 mg

LOWER CARB SUBSTITUTES

Homemade Burrito Bowl:

- rice (1/2 cup) » replace with cauliflower rice (cuts ~20 g carbs)
- corn (1/2 cup) » replace with extra bell peppers, zucchini, or mushrooms (corn is high in carbs)
- tortilla chips » swap for a sprinkle of crushed pork rinds, low-carb crackers, or just skip
- cheese, avocado, beef/turkey, Greek yogurt, and veggies » keep (already low-carb friendly)

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~420 kcal
- Protein: ~31 g
- Carbohydrates: ~14 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~7 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: ~25 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~9 g
- Cholesterol: ~95 mg
- Sodium: ~620 mg

Chicken Caesar Sandwich:

- flour (1/4 cup) » replace with almond flour
- breadcrumbs (1/2 cup) » replace with crushed pork rinds, almond flour, or Parmesan crisps
- brioche/baguette » swap for a low-carb tortilla, keto bread, or extra romaine lettuce wraps
- mayonnaise, mustard, Parmesan, sour cream/yogurt, chicken, lettuce » keep as is (already low-carb friendly)

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~480 kcal
- Protein: ~48 g
- Carbohydrates: ~8 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~3 g
 - Sugars: ~2 g
- Fat: ~28 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~8 g
- Cholesterol: ~195 mg
- Sodium: ~710 mg

LOWER CARB SUBSTITUTES

Seafood Paella:

- rice (1 cup uncooked) » replace with 2 1/2 cups cauliflower rice or shirataki rice (huge carb savings)
- onion (1/2) » reduce to 1/4 onion (onions add hidden carbs)
- tomato sauce (1/2 cup) » use unsweetened crushed tomatoes instead (lower sugar)
- olive oil, shrimp, tofu, broth, spices, garlic, parsley » keep (already low-carb friendly)

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~430 kcal
- Protein: ~40 g
- Carbohydrates: ~14 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~5 g
 - Sugars: ~5 g
- Fat: ~23 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~3.5 g
- Cholesterol: ~190 mg
- Sodium: ~770 mg

Rice with Chicken:

- rice (1.5 cups) » replace with cauliflower rice (cuts ~120 g carbs)
- vegetable oil (6 tbsp total) » swap for olive oil or avocado oil (healthier fat profile)
- onion (2 medium) » reduce to 1 onion (lowers carbs)
- keep chicken, ground beef, broth, spices, and nuts (all low-carb friendly)

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~390 kcal
- Protein: ~37 g
- Carbohydrates: ~10 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~3 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: ~21 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~5 g
- Cholesterol: ~125 mg
- Sodium: ~570 mg

STANDOUT INGREDIENTS

Tomatoes

Found in gazpacho, vegan tomato kibbe, seafood paella

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, an antioxidant that supports brain health and helps reduce inflammation. Their vitamin C and polyphenols also support the immune system and gut lining.

Olive Oil

Found in gazpacho, vegan tomato kibbe, spicy potatoes, seafood paella

High in monounsaturated fats and antioxidants, olive oil helps support heart health, brain function, and the gut lining. It's also known for reducing inflammation throughout the body.

Onions

Found in spicy potatoes, vegan tomato kibbe, rice with chicken, gazpacho

Onions are a great source of prebiotic fibers (like inulin), which feed the good bacteria in your gut. They also contain antioxidants that may help regulate mood and inflammation.

Potatoes

Found in oven-baked potatoes, spicy potatoes

Potatoes (especially with skin) are a solid source of resistant starch (dietary starch that 'resists' digestion in the small intestine), which supports gut bacteria and promotes better digestion. They're also high in potassium, which supports nervous system balance.

Chicken (Organic or Skinless)

Found in chicken caesar sandwich, rice with chicken

Lean chicken provides high-quality protein necessary for neurotransmitter production and tissue repair. It also contains B vitamins important for mood and cognitive function.



SNACKS

Crunchy Chickpeas



2 servings



15 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 can chickpeas (15 oz),
drained and rinsed
1–2 tbsp olive oil
2 tsp ground cumin
2–3 tsp za'atar
Salt, to taste
Black pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C). Drain and rinse a can of chickpeas, then pat them completely dry with a clean towel to help them crisp up.
2. Toss the chickpeas in olive oil, then season generously with cumin, za'atar, salt, and black pepper. Make sure they're fully coated in the seasoning.
3. Spread the chickpeas out in a single layer on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake until golden and crunchy (about 20–30 min), shaking the pan halfway through for even roasting.
4. Let them cool slightly before enjoying. They'll crisp up even more as they cool. Store in an airtight container once completely cooled.

Healthier Bread



4 servings



35 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 cup of flour
1 cup Greek yogurt
2 teaspoons baking
powder
1/3 tsp salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. In a bowl, combine the flour, Greek yogurt, baking powder, and salt. Mix until a soft dough forms.
3. Divide the dough into four equal portions, shape into balls, and gently flatten them. Place on a lined baking tray.
4. Bake for 25 minutes, or until golden brown and cooked through.

Chorizo a la Sidra



5 servings



20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

18 ounces chorizo fresh,
or semi-cured
1 tablespoon extra
virgin olive oil
1 ½ cups hard apple
cider preferably
Spanish sidra (if not,
apple cider vinegar +
water works well)
2 bay leaves
2 tablespoons chopped
parsley for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut the chorizo into 2 centimeter slices (just under an inch long).
2. Heat the olive oil in a skillet over a medium heat. Add the chorizo to the pan and cook until browned, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the hard cider and the bay leaves, and toss the chorizo to coat. Simmer until the liquid turns syrupy with streaks of red oil on top from the chorizo; about 5-8 minutes.
4. Serve the chorizo in bowls as a side dish, or enjoy as a main course with slices of hearty bread. Garnish with chopped parsley.

Zaatar Manakeesh



 5 servings  1.5 hours

INGREDIENTS

2¼ tsp instant yeast

¾ cup warm water (about 100–110°F)

1½ tsp raw or granulated sugar

1 tsp fine sea salt

2½ cups all-purpose flour, plus extra
for kneading and shaping

1½ tbsp olive oil, plus more for
greasing the bowl

¼ cup za'atar spice blend

3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil

Optional: A squeeze of lemon juice or
a pinch of sumac for brightness

DIRECTIONS

1. In a mixing bowl, combine warm water, instant yeast, and sugar; let sit for 5–10 minutes until foamy.
2. Add salt, olive oil, and flour, then mix until a dough forms. Knead on a floured surface for 5–7 minutes until smooth and elastic. Place in an oiled bowl, cover, and let rise in a warm spot for 1 hour or until doubled in size.
3. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 450°F (230°C) with a baking sheet or stone inside. In a small bowl, mix za'atar with olive oil to form a paste, adding lemon juice or sumac if desired.
4. Once the dough has risen, divide it into 4–6 pieces and roll each into a thin round or oval. Spread a spoonful of the za'atar mixture over each, leaving a small border. Transfer to the hot baking surface and bake for 8–12 minutes, or until golden and puffed. Serve warm.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION & MACRONUTRIENT BREAKDOWN

Crunchy Chickpeas

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 210 kcal
- Protein: 7 g
- Carbohydrates: 18 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~6 g
 - Sugars: ~2 g
- Fat: 12 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~1.5 g
- Cholesterol: 0 mg
- Sodium: ~280 mg

Healthy Bread

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 130 kcal
- Protein: 6 g
- Carbohydrates: 17 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~1 g
 - Sugars: ~2 g
- Fat: 3 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~1.5 g
- Cholesterol: ~5 mg
- Sodium: ~240 mg

Chorizo a la Sidra

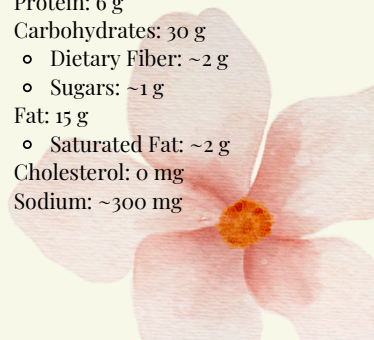
Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 310 kcal
- Protein: 12 g
- Carbohydrates: 6 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~0 g
 - Sugars: ~2 g
- Fat: 27 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~10 g
- Cholesterol: ~55 mg
- Sodium: ~720 mg

Zaatar Manakeesh

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 290 kcal
- Protein: 6 g
- Carbohydrates: 30 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~2 g
 - Sugars: ~1 g
- Fat: 15 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~2 g
- Cholesterol: 0 mg
- Sodium: ~300 mg



STANDOUT INGREDIENTS

Chickpeas

Found in crunchy chickpeas

Packed with fiber and plant-based protein, chickpeas help keep digestion regular and support gut health by feeding your good bacteria. They also help maintain steady energy and fullness.

Hard Apple Cider

Found in chorizo a la sidra

Hard apple cider, when cooked, contributes polyphenols, plant compounds with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits that support gut health and brain health. It also adds natural acidity and depth of flavor.

Za'atar (Spice Blend)

Found in zaatar manakeesh, crunchy chickpeas

A flavorful Middle Eastern blend often made with thyme, sumac, and sesame seeds. It's rich in antioxidants and healthy fats, and it supports digestion, immune function, and brain clarity.

Yeast

Found in zaatar manakeesh

Though used mostly for rising dough, yeast contains trace amounts of vitamins like B1 and B2, which support energy metabolism and nervous system health. Some varieties also provide selenium, a mineral linked to antioxidant protection and immune balance.



SALAD



Chicken Peanut Salad



3 servings ⌚ 30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup romaine lettuce, thinly sliced
- 1 cup green cabbage, thinly sliced
- ½ cup red cabbage, thinly sliced
- ½ cup cucumber shavings
- ½ cup corn (cooked or canned)
- 1 cup cooked egg noodles
- 1 cup shredded roasted chicken, skin and bones removed
- 1 spring onion, finely sliced
- ⅓ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- A handful of roasted unsalted peanuts
- 8 tbsp soy sauce
- 4 tbsp honey
- 3 tbsp rice vinegar (or white vinegar)
- 2 tsp sesame oil (optional but recommended)
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced or grated
- 2 tsp fresh ginger, grated (optional)
- Optional: chili flakes

DIRECTIONS

Make the dressing:

1. In a small bowl or jar, whisk together soy sauce, honey, vinegar, sesame oil (if using), olive oil, garlic, ginger, and chili (if desired). Set aside.

Assemble the salad:

1. In a large bowl, combine lettuce, cabbage, cucumber, corn, noodles, chicken, spring onion, coriander, and peanuts.

Dress and serve:

1. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss well to combine. Serve immediately for the freshest flavor and crunch.

Strawberry Balsamic Salad



4 servings



25 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups sliced strawberries (1 ½ cup)
- 1–2 tbsp good-quality balsamic vinegar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice (juice of ½ lemon)
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tbsp olive oil (for cooking or drizzling)
- 2–3 tbsp fresh basil leaves, loosely packed
- ½ cup cheese (choose one): sliced goat cheese log, halloumi, or fresh mozzarella
- 2–3 tbsp fresh mint leaves, loosely packed
- 2 cups mixed salad leaves, washed and spun dry
- Optional: 1–2 tbsp toasted pine nuts, for garnish



DIRECTIONS

Make the dressing:

1. In a small bowl or jar, whisk together the balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, extra virgin olive oil, salt, and pepper. Set aside.

Prepare the cheese:

1. If using goat cheese log or mozzarella, slice into rounds.
2. If using halloumi, slice and sear in a pan with a little olive oil over medium heat for 1–2 minutes per side, until golden.

Assemble the salad:

1. On a large serving platter or bowl, layer the salad leaves, strawberry slices, basil, and mint. Arrange the cheese slices over the top.

Dress and garnish:

1. Drizzle the dressing over the salad just before serving. Garnish with toasted pine nuts if using, and finish with an extra pinch of salt and pepper.

Tuna Nicoise Salad



4-6 servings



40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 can of tuna (5 oz in oil)

2 large potatoes cut into small
wedges

1 1/2 cherry tomatoes halved

1 cup of pitted olives

1 tbsp of capers

1 1/2 cups green beans

1 sliced red onion

4 boiled eggs

Dressing - Lemon vinaigrette

1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil

1/4 cup lemon juice

1 tbsp minced shallot

1 tbsp Dijon mustard

1 tbsp whole grain mustard

1/2 tsp kosher salt

1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper



DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the dressing: make the vinaigrette by adding all of the ingredients to a jar fitted with a lid, close tightly, shake well, and set aside.
2. The Salad: drizzle some olive oil on the potatoes and air fry or bake for 25 min or until golden brown.
3. Add the green beans to the pot of hot water and simmer for 1 minute or until the green beans turn bright green. Drain the water and set the beans aside to cool.
4. On a large platter, arrange the tuna, potatoes, green beans, halved cherry tomatoes, boiled eggs, olives, red onion, capers, and hard-boiled eggs. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper and drizzle the salad with the vinaigrette or serve it on the side.

Salmon Bowl



3 servings



45 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 salmon fillet

2 large potatoes cut into small
wedges

1 cup of pitted black olives

1 cup of artichokes (frozen or
fresh)

1 sliced red onion

1 cup of shredded red cabbage

1 cup of shredded romaine lettuce

4 boiled eggs

Provence herbs

Dressing - Lemon vinaigrette

½ cup extra virgin olive oil

¼ cup lemon juice

1 tbsp minced shallot

1 tbsp Dijon mustard

1 tbsp whole grain mustard

½ tsp kosher salt

½ tsp freshly ground black pepper



DIRECTIONS

1. Prepare the dressing: make the vinaigrette by adding all of the ingredients to a jar fitted with a lid, close tightly, shake well, and set aside.
2. The Salad: Drizzle some olive oil on the potatoes and air fry or bake (at 400°F) for 25 min or until golden brown.
3. Add the artichokes to a pot of boiling water and simmer for half an hour till they soften. Drain the water and set aside.
4. Drizzle the salmon fillet with some olive oil and sprinkle the Provence herbs on top. Airfry or bake (at 400°F) for around 12-15 min and set aside.
5. In a large platter, arrange the salmon steak, potatoes, boiled artichokes, olives, red onion, and hard-boiled eggs over a bed of shredded lettuce and red cabbage. Season with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper and drizzle the salad with the vinaigrette .



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION & MACRONUTRIENT BREAKDOWN

Chicken Peanut Salad

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 475 kcal
- Protein: 29 g
- Carbohydrates: 36 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~5 g
 - Sugars: ~9 g
- Fat: 24 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~4 g
- Cholesterol: ~65 mg
- Sodium: ~900 mg

Strawberry Balsamic Salad

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 230 kcal
- Protein: 7 g
- Carbohydrates: 15 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~3 g
 - Sugars: ~9 g
- Fat: 15 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~3 g
- Cholesterol: ~15 mg (varies by cheese)
- Sodium: ~180 mg

Tuna Nicoise Salad

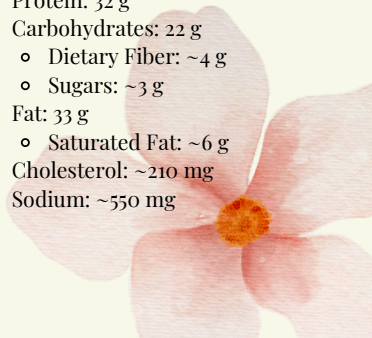
Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 370 kcal
- Protein: 22 g
- Carbohydrates: 20 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~3.5 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: 24 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~4.5 g
- Cholesterol: ~190 mg
- Sodium: ~600 mg

Salmon Bowl

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 520 kcal
- Protein: 32 g
- Carbohydrates: 22 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~4 g
 - Sugars: ~3 g
- Fat: 33 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~6 g
- Cholesterol: ~210 mg
- Sodium: ~550 mg



STANDOUT INGREDIENTS

Cabbage

Found in chicken peanut salad, salmon bowl

Cabbage is rich in fiber and naturally occurring prebiotics, which support gut health by feeding beneficial bacteria. Its anti-inflammatory compounds can also help support overall immune and brain function.

Strawberries

Found in strawberry balsamic salad

Strawberries are loaded with antioxidants like vitamin C and polyphenols. These nutrients protect brain cells from stress and support a healthy gut lining by reducing inflammation.

Eggs

Found in tuna nicoise salad, salmon bowl

Eggs are an excellent source of choline, which plays a key role in brain function and memory. They also provide high-quality protein and healthy fats that support hormone balance and neurotransmitter production.

Salmon

Found in salmon bowl

Salmon is rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential for brain health, mood regulation, and reducing inflammation in both the brain and gut. It's also a great source of protein and vitamin D.

Fresh Herbs

Found in strawberry balsamic salad, chicken peanut salad

Fresh herbs contain natural oils and antioxidants that help calm inflammation, support digestion, and even positively influence gut bacteria, all of which benefit mental clarity and focus.

PASTA



Tomato Gnocchi



2 servings



20 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package (about 16 oz) potato gnocchi
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 ½ cups crushed tomatoes
- ¼ cup reserved pasta water (from cooking gnocchi)
- ¼ cup cream (heavy or half-and-half)
- handful of fresh basil leaves, torn
- salt, to taste
- optional: grated parmesan, for serving

DIRECTIONS

Cook the gnocchi

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add gnocchi and cook according to package instructions — usually 2–3 minutes, or until they float. Reserve ¼ cup of the pasta water, then drain and set aside.

Make the sauce

1. In a pan over medium heat, warm 1 tbsp olive oil. Add the minced garlic and sauté for about 30 seconds until fragrant. Pour in the crushed tomatoes and bring to a boil. Add the reserved pasta water, stir, and let it boil again.

Finish the sauce

1. Lower the heat and stir in the cream and fresh basil. Simmer for 1–2 minutes. Season with salt to taste.

Combine

1. Add the cooked gnocchi to the sauce and toss gently to coat.

Serve

1. Plate warm, optionally topped with grated parmesan or extra basil.

Spinach Ravioli



2 servings



30 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 pack spinach & ricotta ravioli
(or tortellini)

4 fresh tomatoes, chopped

1 cup tomato sauce (passata or
canned puree)

2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tbsp olive oil

salt & pepper, to taste

fresh basil or parsley (optional,
for garnish)

grated Parmesan or Pecorino
(optional, for serving)

DIRECTIONS

Cook the Ravioli

1. Bring salted water to a boil. Add spinach ravioli and cook according to package (3–5 min), until they float. Drain and set aside.

Make the Tomato Sauce

1. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a pan. Sauté minced garlic for 1 min, then add chopped tomatoes and cook for 5–7 min. Stir in passata, season with salt and pepper, and simmer for 10 min.

Combine & Serve

1. Toss ravioli in the sauce. Serve hot with fresh basil or parsley, and grated Parmesan if desired.

Optional Add-In

1. Add fresh spinach during the last 2–3 min of simmering to boost flavor and nutrition.

Zoodles Bolognese



4 servings



1 hour 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 medium carrot, finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
- 1.1 lbs (500 g) ground beef
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 can (14.5 oz) crushed tomatoes
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried basil
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- grated Parmesan cheese, for serving
- 3½ cups spiralized zucchini



DIRECTIONS

Make the Sauce

1. Heat olive oil in a pot over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, carrot, and celery. Cook for 7–8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened.
2. Add ground beef and cook for 10 minutes, breaking it up as it browns.
3. Pour in milk and simmer for about 5 minutes, until mostly evaporated.
4. Stir in tomatoes, oregano, basil, bay leaf, salt, and pepper. Simmer covered on low for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaf and adjust seasoning.

Prepare the Zoodles

1. Wash, dry, and trim zucchini. Spiralize into noodles.
2. Heat a little olive oil in a pan and sauté zoodles over high heat for 1 minute.

Assemble

1. Serve zoodles with Bolognese sauce. Top with grated Parmesan and chopped parsley if desired.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION & MACRONUTRIENT BREAKDOWN

Tomato Gnocchi

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 420 kcal
- Protein: 8 g
- Carbohydrates: 48 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~4 g
 - Sugars: ~4 g
- Fat: 20 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~7 g
- Cholesterol: ~30 mg
- Sodium: ~450 mg

Spinach Ravioli

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 475 kcal
- Protein: 15 g
- Carbohydrates: 42 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~4 g
 - Sugars: ~6 g
- Fat: 27 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~7 g
- Cholesterol: ~50 mg
- Sodium: ~500 mg

Zoodles Bolognese

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: 420 kcal
- Protein: 31 g
- Carbohydrates: 15 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~4 g
 - Sugars: ~8 g
- Fat: 28 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~10 g
- Cholesterol: ~90 mg
- Sodium: ~500 mg



STANDOUT INGREDIENTS

Basil

Found in spinach ravioli, tomato gnocchi

Basil is rich in antioxidants and essential oils that help reduce oxidative stress and support immune health. Its anti-inflammatory compounds may also aid digestion and promote a healthy gut lining.

Garlic

Found in tomato gnocchi, spinach ravioli, zoodle bolognese

Garlic contains allicin, a powerful compound known for its antimicrobial and immune-boosting properties. It also supports heart health and can promote a healthy gut microbiome.

Carrots

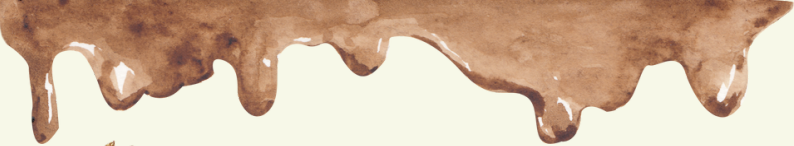
Found in zoodle bolognese

Carrots are high in beta-carotene, a precursor to vitamin A, which supports vision, skin, and immune health. They also contain fiber and antioxidants that benefit digestion and inflammation.

Zucchini (Zoodles)

Found in zoodle bolognese

Zucchini is a low-calorie vegetable packed with water and fiber, supporting hydration and digestion. It's also a source of vitamin C and manganese, which help reduce oxidative stress in the body.



DESSERT



Sugar free chocolate cake

Recipe credits to Home Cooking Adventure



10 servings



1 hour

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup + 1 1/2 tbsp honey
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2/3 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp instant coffee powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- for the frosting:**
- 14 oz cream cheese
- 3 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 3 tbsp honey

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (160°C). Grease and line an 8-inch (20 cm) round pan with parchment.
2. In a bowl, whisk together dry ingredients: flour, cocoa powder, salt, baking powder, baking soda, and instant coffee.
3. In another bowl, beat butter and honey until creamy. Add eggs one at a time, then mix in buttermilk and vanilla.
4. Gradually mix dry ingredients into wet until just combined.
5. Pour batter into the prepared pan. Bake for 40–50 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool completely.
6. For the frosting, mix cream cheese with honey, cocoa powder, and vanilla until smooth.
7. Carefully trim the cake top if needed, invert onto a plate, and spread frosting on top. Slice and enjoy.

Flourless chocolate cake

Recipe credits to *Two Peas and Their Pod*



16 servings ⌚ 1 hour 40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

or chopped chocolate

1/2 cup unsalted butter

3/4 cup granulated sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

3 large eggs slightly beaten

1/2 cup cocoa powder

for the chocolate ganache:

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips

or chopped chocolate

1/2 cup heavy cream

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Grease an 8-inch round cake pan, line the bottom with parchment paper, and spray again.
2. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt chocolate and butter until smooth. Stir until fully combined.
3. Mix in sugar, salt, and vanilla. Add eggs and stir until smooth. Stir in cocoa powder until just combined.
4. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake for about 25 minutes, until a thin crust forms on top or a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
5. Let the cake cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then loosen edges, invert onto a plate, and cool completely.
6. To make ganache, microwave chocolate and cream until hot, then stir until smooth and let it cool for 5 min.
7. Spread ganache over cooled cake. Let glaze set for a few hours (or refrigerate to speed up).
8. Slice and serve with raspberries, whipped cream, or ice cream if desired.

Gluten Free Chocolate Cake



16 servings ⌚ 50 minutes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups 1-to-1 gluten free flour
- 2 cups white sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cocoa powder
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp baking soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt
- 1 cup milk of choice
- 1 cup oil
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla

Toppings & buttercream of
choice

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 355°F (180°C)
2. In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
3. Add the milk and oil, and mix until the batter is smooth and well combined.
4. Add the eggs and vanilla, mixing gently until just incorporated — avoid overmixing.
5. Pour the batter into a greased or lined pan and bake for about 35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
6. Let cool completely, then top with buttercream and garnish with fresh fruit.

Arroz con Leche (Rice Pudding)



4 servings



40 minutes

INGREDIENTS

1 cup long grain white rice

2 cups water

2 cinnamon sticks

3 cups milk

$\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar sweeten to taste

optional sweetener of choice (to
taste)

DIRECTIONS

1. Place saucepan over medium low heat and add rice, water, and cinnamon sticks.
2. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cover and cook until rice is tender and water is absorbed, about 15–20 minutes. Add milk and sugar, stir to combine, cover and cook for additional 15 minutes.
3. Cook longer for a thicker arroz con leche resembling rice pudding. Add more sugar or sweetener of choice if needed.



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION & MACRONUTRIENT BREAKDOWN

Sugar Free Chocolate Cake

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~275 kcal
- Protein: ~5 g
- Carbohydrates: ~26 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~2 g
 - Sugars: ~14 g
- Fat: ~17 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~10 g
- Cholesterol: ~75 mg
- Sodium: ~200 mg

Flourless Chocolate Cake

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~320 kcal
- Protein: ~5 g
- Carbohydrates: ~26 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~3 g
 - Sugars: ~21 g
- Fat: ~22 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~13 g
- Cholesterol: ~80 mg
- Sodium: ~120 mg

Gluten Free Chocolate Cake

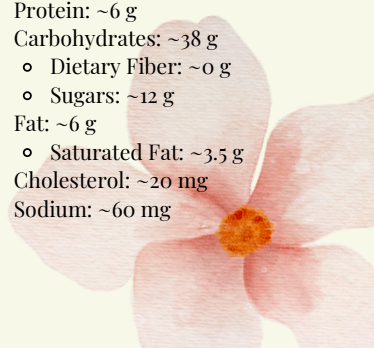
Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~360 kcal
- Protein: ~4 g
- Carbohydrates: ~40 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~2 g
 - Sugars: ~25 g
- Fat: ~20 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~4 g
- Cholesterol: ~40 mg
- Sodium: ~280 mg

Arroz con Leche

Nutrition Facts (Per Serving)

- Calories: ~230 kcal
- Protein: ~6 g
- Carbohydrates: ~38 g
 - Dietary Fiber: ~0 g
 - Sugars: ~12 g
- Fat: ~6 g
 - Saturated Fat: ~3.5 g
- Cholesterol: ~20 mg
- Sodium: ~60 mg



STANDOUT INGREDIENTS

Instant Coffee Powder

Found in sugar-free chocolate cake

Beyond enhancing the chocolate flavors, instant coffee provides a small natural dose of caffeine, which can improve mental alertness, focus, and mood. Even in small amounts used for baking, it can give a subtle energy lift and help sharpen senses.

Cream Cheese

Found in sugar-free chocolate cake (frosting)

Cream cheese adds creaminess and richness while offering some protein and fat that help support satiety and blood sugar balance. It also contains small amounts of vitamin A, which is important for immune health and skin.

Semisweet Chocolate Chips

Found in flourless chocolate cake

These chips provide a concentrated source of cocoa flavonoids, which are antioxidants linked to improved blood flow to the brain and reduced inflammation. They also satisfy sweet cravings in a richer, more nutrient-dense way compared to milk chocolate.

Cinnamon Sticks

Found in arroz con leche

Cinnamon is naturally warming and has been shown to help regulate blood sugar and support gut health by reducing inflammation. It's also linked to enhanced memory and brain function in some studies.

Cocoa Powder

Found in all three chocolate cakes

Cocoa powder is rich in antioxidants called flavonoids, which help fight inflammation and support brain health by improving blood flow. It also contains a small amount of magnesium, a mineral that supports mood and nervous system function.

YOU DESERVE TO FEEL GOOD

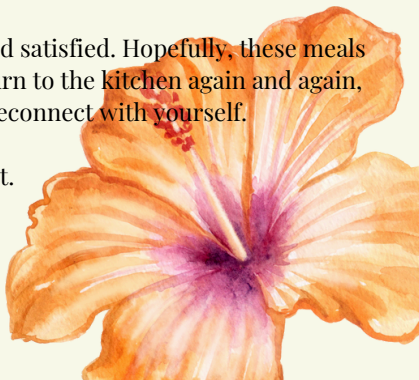
The recipes and related information in this cookbook are designed to guide you towards finding a healthy balance as you nourish your body with healthy and delicious food. This isn't about restriction, perfection, or chasing the next wellness trend. It's about tuning into your body, choosing real ingredients, and eating in a way that supports your energy, mood, and well-being.

Here are a few simple practices that complement everything you've cooked so far:

- Start your morning with warm lemon water to gently support digestion and hydration.
- Include fiber, color, and variety in your meals to keep your gut (and brain) thriving.
- Eat slowly and with intention. Give your body time to digest and enjoy.
- Move your body daily — a walk, a stretch, or a few minutes of sunlight can reset your nervous system.
- Protect your rest. Deep nourishment happens when you're sleeping, too.

You deserve to feel nourished and satisfied. Hopefully, these meals and moments inspire you to return to the kitchen again and again, not just to feed yourself, but to reconnect with yourself.

Thank you for cooking with heart.



THE HEART OF COOKING



Food has been the thread that weaves societies together since the beginning of time. It is a foundation of civilization, a connection between cultures, and a way to bring people together. Unlike language, food transcends boundaries. It is our universal tongue that enables us to understand diverse cultures and express our heritage. In cooking our cultural dishes, we are representing the memories of our ancestors and preserving their stories. Food tells stories.

The universal power of food also shaped my own story. From a young age, I've sat in the kitchen and watched my family connect through cooking, sharing spices, and editing recipes all without uttering a word. It was then that I truly understood that my story wasn't one that had to be told; it was one I could cook. I filled up notebooks with recipes of my aunts' pastas, my grandpa's sandwiches, and my great-grandma's chocolate cake. When she passed, her recipes carried her love forward, reminding us of her presence at every bite. That is the beauty of cooking.

Cooking is never just about food — it is about memory and traditions and carrying our past into the present.

Elissar Haidar

Wellness Volunteer, *Mount Sinai Fit* (2025)

One Mount Sinai Reach Your Peak Steps Challenge 2025