

STELLA'S KITCHEN

Creative Cooking for Fun, Flavor and a Lean, Strong Body

By Stella C. Juarez

Foreword by
Dave Draper

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Aptos, California, USA

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Foreword by Dave Draper

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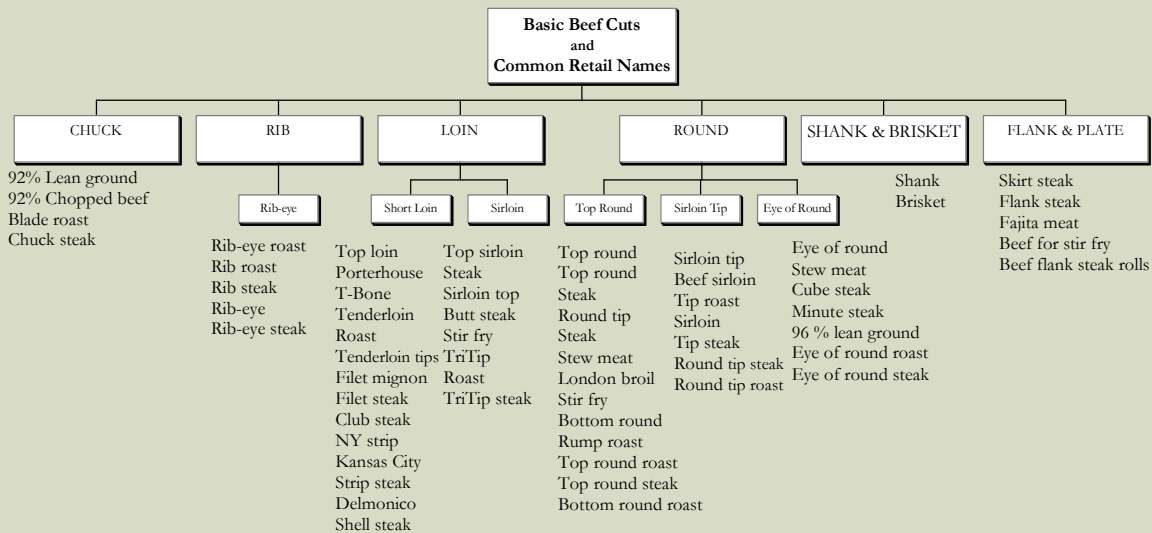
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What's in a Name?

Have you ever walked to the meat aisle of a grocery store intent on finding a particular cut of meat only to find they were out? Chances are—at least if you weren't born in Texas—this has happened at least once in your life simply because you didn't know the various names for the same piece of meat. In fact, you've probably passed up a great sale not realizing a sale package of meat was cut from the same part of the animal as the original cut you were planning to use. This butcher's block tip sheet will help you decipher beef cuts you purchase, and might even save you money.



2 Success Tips for Cooking Delicious Beef

Sear meat—Browning meat quickly over high heat before the inside is cooked will help seal the meat so that flavor is locked in. You should sear meat prior to any cooking method such as stewing, roasting or braising.

Rest meat—Allowing meat to rest five to six minutes per pound before serving will give the natural juices time to spread throughout the meat. This will result in more tender, succulent meat. For thinner steaks, the time it generally takes to prepare the remainder of the plate allows sufficient rest time.

4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 pound top round, cut in 1" cubes
- 1 large onion, cut in chunks
- 1 small red bell pepper, cubed
- 1 small green bell pepper, cubed
- 8 whole mushrooms
- 4-8 skewers
(soak wooden skewers overnight)

Marinade

- ½ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon white wine
or red wine vinegar
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 3 cloves of garlic finely chopped
- 3 ounces light beer
- 1 tablespoon onion powder

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—183

Carbohydrates—11g

Protein—27.1g

Fat— 3.4g

Fiber—2.5g

Brick House Beef Kabobs

Here's a delicious way of eating the protein blocks necessary for building muscle. These kabobs can be grilled on an indoor electric grill too. Be sure to turn them so all sides are cooked evenly.

Directions

Mx marinade ingredients in glass bowl well; set aside. Prick meat chunks with fork and soak in marinade overnight if possible. Place alternating pieces of meat and vegetables on the skewer sticks. Grill to desired temperature and serve.

Modifications

Pineapple chunks, cherry tomatoes, eggplant, corn or squash are also terrific vegetables to skewer onto kabobs.

Wisconsin Pot Roast Packets

These meat and potato packets are similar in taste to a pot roast but much more convenient. These pot roast packets are easily prepared by those with limited kitchen skills.

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lay out large pieces of aluminum foil and place equal amount of all ingredients on one side of foil. Fold foil inward at all seams to form a packet, allowing foil to tent slightly on top to allow room for steam. Pinch all edges closed. You do not need to add liquid. Bake packets on cookie sheet or in shallow baking dish for 45 minutes.

IN STELLA'S KITCHEN

Packet purchases—You can purchase foil packets in several sizes at the grocery store for use in packet meals of all sizes. Try using them for chicken and shrimp dishes, or for mixed vegetable sidedishes, too.

4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 pound top round cut into 1" cubes
- 1 large baking potato (or sweet potato), cut into chunks
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, sliced into rings
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sliced carrots
- Seasoning of choice (salt-free steak seasoning or salt and pepper)

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—250

Carbohydrates—27.4g

Protein—27.7g

Fat—3.3g

Fiber—3.9g

Everyday Chicken Picks

While this cookbook provides a wealth of easy-to-prepare chicken dishes, there are times when even chopping up vegetables is too time consuming. These suggestions are suitable for everyday chicken and do not call for any special ingredients.

- Tabasco:*** Tabasco sauce, garlic powder, onion powder and black pepper
- Italian:*** Add a variety of Italian herbs (rosemary, basil, tarragon, arugula) and/or a few tablespoons of stewed tomatoes
- Lemon-Pepper:*** Use salt-free lemon-pepper seasoning or squeeze real lemon and pepper onto the chicken
- Lemon-Dill:*** Use salt-free lemon-pepper seasoning and dill or squeeze real lemon juice, dill and pepper onto the chicken
- Vinaigrette.*** Use a tablespoon Balsamic vinegar or Balsamic dressing per 4-ounce portion of chicken
- Spicy Tex-Mex.*** Use prepared salsa or chili powder
- Garlic-Pepper.*** Crushed garlic, garlic powder or minced garlic (from a jar) and fresh ground pepper
- Lemon-Rosemary.*** Lemon juice, rosemary and a bit of garlic powder

1 serving

Ingredients

4 ounces boneless, skinless breast

¼ cup onion, sliced

½ cup green pepper, sliced

3 cups dark leafy greens, washed
and torn into bite-size pieces

2 tablespoons salsa

½ tablespoon reduced-sodium soy,
liquid aminos or lemon juice

1 tablespoon fat-free sour cream
(optional)

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—206

Carbohydrates—13.6g

Protein—29.4g

Fat—3.8g

Fiber—3.9g

Fast Chicken Fajita Salad

There are two kinds of fajitas. The first are the kind you marinate overnight and serve with an extensive array of side items. There are many good fajita marinade recipes that are simply too cumbersome when you're only cooking for one, or when you're in a time crunch. Try this quick version, substituting the chicken with extra lean ground beef or strips of flank steak if you wish.

Directions

Preheat nonstick skillet over medium heat Sauté chicken in lemon juice, liquid aminos or soy sauce (you can use leftover chicken breast) until heated through. Increase heat to medium-high to high heat and add onions and peppers, allowing them to char only slightly. Serve over bed of lettuce and top with salsa and fat-free sour cream if desired.

IN STELLA'S KITCHEN

Too busy to cook chicken? The next time you cook chicken, make extra to cut into strips and seal in freezer bags. These can easily defrost and be re-heated while cooking in a new recipe—significantly cheaper than the sodium-loaded pre-packaged versions sold in grocery stores.

Turkey Triano

Now you have something other than turkey sandwiches to make with Thanksgiving leftovers! This is a lean, lightly-breaded turkey just right for chicken parmesan or chicken-fried steak aficionados. The turkey cutlets are served with a wonderful white wine and cream sauce, fresh mushrooms and diced roma tomatoes.

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine flour, ground pepper and half of the parsley in a medium bowl and mix well. Dip turkey cutlets in egg whites and then dip each side in the dry mixture until well coated. Spray both sides with nonstick cooking spray and bake cutlets for about 20–30 minutes or until coating is crisp and juices run clear. (Cooking time will vary; slices won't take as long.) While the turkey is cooking, heat a sauce pan or large skillet over medium-high heat. Bring white wine and onions to a simmer; add soup and remaining parsley. Reduce heat and cover. Allow sauce to simmer while turkey cooks. Serve turkey on a serving platter with sauce poured over the top. Garnish with tomato and mushroom slices.

IN STELLA'S KITCHEN

Leftover turkey? Leftover cooked turkey can be stored in the refrigerator for 3–4 days. If wrapped well, it can be stored in the freezer for 3–4 months.

4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 pound boneless turkey breast cutlets or slices
- 4 tablespoons whole-wheat flour
- 2 egg whites, beaten
- ¼ teaspoon fresh ground pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley (or 1 teaspoon dried)
- 1 can reduced-sodium, low-fat cream of mushroom soup
- ½ cup white table wine
- 2 tablespoons onions, diced finely
- ½ cup roma tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- ½ cup fresh mushrooms, sliced

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—224

Carbohydrates—17.2g

Protein—31.4g

Fat—3.3g

Fiber—2.8g

It's Tuna Time!

Tuna has long been a favorite protein source for muscle builders, dieters and athletes. It's cheap, fast, portable and pre-portioned in convenient sizes. Did I mention it was cheap? The fact is, it *is* a great source of protein and omega-3 essential fats *and* it makes a great snack too. Solid white albacore can taste great all by itself if it fits your budget. If not, here are a few “straight outta the can” recipes you can use to bring a little life into your next can of chunk tuna, or even canned chicken. For variety, salmon may be used in these simple combinations.

Lemon-Pepper Tuna: Lemon juice and fresh ground pepper or sprinkle with lemon pepper seasoning

Balsamic Tuna: Balsamic vinegar and fresh ground pepper

Mustard-Dill Tuna: Dill, 1 tablespoon mustard and chopped celery

Southwest Tuna: 1 tablespoon nonfat mayo, ¼ of an Anaheim green chile, black pepper

Honey-Mustard Tuna: 1–2 tablespoons honey mustard

Tuna Fried Rice: Sauté cooked brown rice, chopped green or yellow onions and egg whites in pan sprayed with butter flavored nonstick spray. Mix in tuna and serve.

Tuna-Stuffed Tomato: Mix 1 tablespoon nonfat mayo, pepper and tuna and stuff inside a tomato. Top tomato with a slice of mozzarella cheese and bake in a toaster oven until the cheese melts.

Old El Paso Tuna: 1 heaping tablespoon salsa or 1 tablespoon chopped green chile peppers

Tuna Italiano: 1 tablespoon Italian dressing or olive oil vinaigrette, fresh ground pepper

Tuna Piccata: 1 teaspoon capers, lemon juice, ½ teaspoon parsley, fresh ground pepper

All-American Tuna: 1 tablespoon fat-free mayo, 1 chopped pickle, ½ stalk chopped celery or onion

Texas Tuna: 1 tablespoon BBQ sauce

Tuna Melt: 1 tablespoon fat-free mayo, 1 ounce cheese melted on top

Tuna Parmesan: Mix in 1 tablespoon catsup, tomato sauce or spaghetti sauce. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs or a crushed cracker, top with 1 ounce low-fat mozzarella cheese. Cook in microwave or toaster oven until cheese melts.

No-Time Tuna: 1 fork, 1 glass of water

Grilled Teriyaki Salmon

Sometimes it's the simplest dish that can win a life over to healthier eating. Indulge yourself with a special treat by allowing this teriyaki salmon dish to marinate overnight and toasting the sesame seeds in a pan prior to adding to the teriyaki.

Directions

Combine soy, garlic, juice, bourbon and ginger in a small bowl and whisk together. Marinate salmon in mixture for at least 20 minutes, overnight if possible. While the fish is marinating, prepare the rice or a salad sidedish if desired. Reserve leftover marinade for glazing in small saucepan. Stir in sesame seeds and green onions and cook over very low heat until just before ready to serve the salmon. Just before serving, bring marinade to a boil for a few minutes to allow it to reduce and thicken. Grill or bake salmon for five to seven minutes per side, grilling with the skin side up first (if filet has skin). Be sure to lay a small piece of foil down on the grilling surface if you're grilling outdoors. Serve salmon with a spoonful of hot teriyaki glaze drizzled over the top.

Modifications

No juice? The brown sugar or honey traditionally added to teriyaki for sweetness has been replaced by the natural fructose in apple juice. The light acidic nature of the apple juice doubles as a tenderizing agent as well. However, you can replace the apple juice with equal amounts of bourbon and reduced-sodium soy and two packets of artificial sweetener if you prefer.

4 servings

Ingredients

- 1 pound salmon filets
- ¼ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1½ teaspoon crushed garlic (about 3 cloves)
- 3 tablespoons apple juice
- 3 tablespoons Kentucky bourbon (may substitute with lemon juice)
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- 3 tablespoons green onions, chopped
- 1 teaspoon sesame seeds (optional)

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—214.75

Carbohydrates—4g

Protein—25.5g

Fat—7.25g

Fiber—trace

4 servings

Ingredients

1 pound medium shrimp,
peeled and de-veined

½ cup onion, sliced

2 cups broccoli, chopped

1½ teaspoon minced garlic
(about 3 cloves)

¾ cup snow peas,
fresh or frozen and thawed

½ cup reduced-sodium
chicken broth

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—153

Carbohydrates—7g

Protein—26g

Fat—2.3g

Fiber—23g

Fresh Shrimp and Broccoli

No need to order out when you can prepare your own stir-fry dishes at home!

Directions

Sauté garlic in broth for one minute. Add shrimp and vegetables and continue simmering until shrimp is white, broccoli has softened and onions are translucent.

Modifications

Try adding drained, canned water chestnuts, bamboo shoots, or bean sprouts to this dish.

Eat Your Oatmeal

One of the best quick breakfasts you can prepare is a bowl of oatmeal. Not only is it economically priced and easy to make, it's also versatile. Instead of buying a box of 10 packets for twice the price of a large container, try some of these delicious and frugal ideas. These oatmeal variations pack more energy and flavor than pre-packaged oats without the 13 or more grams of refined sugar.

Apple-Cinnamon: Add chopped apple or a few teaspoons of natural, unsweetened applesauce to oatmeal and cook. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

Maple and Brown Sugar: Instead of real brown sugar, you can use sugar-free pancake syrup and a dash of cinnamon. There is also a brown sugar replacement newly available.

Fruit and Cream: Add a little milk or vanilla protein powder and a few strawberries or blueberries to oatmeal, or mix in a teaspoon of sugar-free preserves.

Maple-Walnut: Add 1 tablespoon sugar-free pancake syrup and a few chopped walnuts.

French Vanilla: Add 1 teaspoon vanilla, a splash of low-fat milk and a packet of Splenda.

Cinnamon-Raisin: Try using a few dashes of cinnamon, a splash of sugar-free maple syrup and a teaspoon of raisins instead of flavored packets.

Protein Boost: Stir in 1 scoop of your favorite protein powder.

Butter-Pecan: Add a drip of imitation butter flavor, teaspoon of butter substitute or a few sprinkles of Butter Buds and a teaspoon of chopped pecans.

Other Grains: Try a multi-grain hot cereal, 5- or 7-grain hot cereal, or oat bran for a little change of pace. Any of the flavor varieties listed above work well with these complex carbohydrate hot cereals.

Oatmeal on the go?

If you buy oatmeal in packets under the guise of convenience, remember they only contain a third of a cup of oatmeal. A snack-sized sandwich bag has just enough room for a true half-cup-sized serving of oatmeal. You can quickly pack a few with no need to measure, and store them in the pantry for days when you need to grab and go.

Omelet Supremo

Omelets are more than a Sunday morning pleasure, they're also a perfect way to consume protein when you're in a hurry. This particular omelet illustrates the common sense of learning to prepare breakfasts that are simple to make in a few minutes.

Directions

Beat eggs and egg whites together and cook in skillet sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Top with cheese and season with red pepper flakes.

IN STELLA'S KITCHEN

Did you know? The little stringy cords (chalazae) in egg whites are what anchor the yolk in the center of the egg? If the chalazae are bigger, it means the egg is fresher.

1 serving

Ingredients

2 whole eggs

4 egg whites

1 slice (1 ounce) low-fat
Muenster cheese

Red pepper flakes to taste

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—292

Carbohydrates—4g

Protein—33g

Fat—15g

Fiber—0g

Hearty Oatmeal Pancakes

Pancake mixes use just enough whole wheat flour to take advantage of an unsuspecting consumer who doesn't notice that "white flour" is one of the main ingredients. The recipe below is devoid of white flour and is actually cheaper to make because it can be made from ingredients you've already got in your cupboards. The oats in this recipe provide an extended source of energy and a special taste that comes only with the effort of cooking from scratch.

Directions

Heat milk (or water) until hot; stir in oats and set aside. Beat egg whites into a stiff foam with hand mixer or blender and reserve. Mix the remaining dry ingredients together and stir in oatmeal/milk mixture and oil (if used). Fold in egg whites until mixture is well blended. Spray pan with nonstick spray and cook pancakes until browned on both sides.

Chef's Note: Beating the egg whites into a stiff foam is what makes these pancakes so fluffy. If you do not have a hand mixer or blender, whisk the whites as best you can.

Modifications

Blueberry pancakes: Add ¼ cup blueberries (fresh or thawed) to recipe, omit cinnamon

Oat-nut pancakes: Add 1½ tablespoon diced pecans, walnuts or almonds to recipe.

Whole grain pancakes: Replace quick oats with multigrain hot cereal.

IN STELLA'S KITCHEN

Double do it—When preparing good food like these oatmeal pancakes, it's a smart idea to double the recipe and freeze the extra portions in individual measures. This saves money and time, and ensures you get optimum nutrition even when you're on the go.

2 servings

Ingredients

- 1 cup skim milk (or water)
- ¾ cup quick oats
- ¾ cup oat flour (store bought or made by grinding oatmeal in your blender)
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 packets Splenda or other sugar replacement
- 4 egg whites
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Nutritional Info

per serving—5 pancakes

Calories—307

Carbohydrates—47.5g

Protein—19.5g

Fat— 4.5g

Fiber—5.3g

Troubleshooting The Protein Shake

We've all got our own quirky taste and texture preferences, even for simple protein shakes. Here are a few tips you may find useful in preparing your favorite protein shakes.

If your shake

is too thin: Try adding a few ice cubes, frozen fruit, or a tablespoon of sugar-free instant pudding mix to thicken it.

is too thick: Some protein mixes have guar gum or other artificial thickeners in them. To use up less-favorable protein powders, you can make shakes using only a half-serving, mixing in a regular whey protein to cover the protein gap.

is not creamy enough: Try using a tablespoon of sugar-free pudding mix if you make your shakes with water or milk. If you use milk, you can try using milk with higher fat content (1 or 2% instead of skim). Low-carb dieters or those not concerned with low calorie counts can add some half and half—magic!

is not “foamy” or frothy enough: Extend the whip time in the blender to fluff the shake.

won't dissolve: Solubility are usually related to the the particular brand of protein. Your best option is to first blend your liquid and ice and slowly add the protein to the blender. Look for an “instantized” protein that blends easily to avoid the problem all together.

is not sweet enough: Add a packet or two of Splenda or a small piece of banana. Fructose (fruit sugar) is 70% sweeter than sucrose (table sugar); a small piece of banana or other fruit goes a long way in providing sweetness.

has weak vanilla flavor: A ½ teaspoon of imitation vanilla flavor or ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract will enhance the vanilla flavor without adding calories. Alternatively, you could add a tablespoon of sugar-free instant vanilla pudding.

has weak chocolate flavor: A teaspoon of real cocoa powder will give you a nice chocolate flavor without adding the sugar that comes with using chocolate syrup. This is a great idea for those who only purchase one flavor of protein at a time because you can add cocoa to vanilla protein to make rich chocolate shakes.

sticks to blender glass: Always add the liquid to your blender or shaker first. When blending thicker shakes, try pouring the protein into the blender as it whirls or lightly pushing the powder down with a spoon to ensure it mixes.

is “to go”: To cut down on dishes and make a handy “to go” shake, you may be able to use a pint or quart Mason jar in place of your blender pitcher. Simply remove the blending attachment from the pitcher; if it twists onto the jar (like a jar cap), it will work. Put your drink ingredients into the jar, twist on the blending assembly, turn the jar top-down onto the blender and hit the switch. Voila!

Protein Nutrition Bar

A nice snack at a mere fraction of the cost of packaged protein bars and none of the glycerin, preservatives or sugar, these low-fat bars are rich in fiber and taste great with a light spread of natural peanut butter. Served with a protein drink, they make a well-balanced meal.

Directions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Mix all dry ingredients in bowl and blend well. In separate bowl, combine egg whites, orange juice, applesauce and the sugar-free syrup. Blend well. Stir liquids into dry ingredients until mixed. The consistency will be thick and similar to cookie dough. Spread batter on baking sheet coated with nonstick spray, or use a 9x12 baking dish if you want a thicker serving. Bake until edges are crisp and browned. Cut into 10 bars and store in an airtight container or freeze.

*If you find you want a more moist consistency, add a little more applesauce to the recipe for softness.

**The brand of protein used in this recipe contains 200 calories, 4 g carb, 44 g protein, 2 g fat and 2 g fiber.

IN STELLA'S KITCHEN

Baking with applesauce—Did you know you can replace the oil in a recipe with an equal measure of applesauce? Applesauce will add the same moisture but not the added fat, and it won't alter the flavor.

10 servings

Ingredients

3½ cups quick oats

1½ cups powdered nonfat milk

1 cup sugar-free pancake syrup

2 egg whites, beaten

¼ cup orange juice

1 teaspoon vanilla

¼ cup natural applesauce*

4 scoops chocolate protein powder**

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—140

Carbohydrates—23g

Protein—15g

Fat—.5g

Fiber—4g

20 servings

Ingredients

3 pounds flank steak
½ cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
3 tablespoons liquid smoke
3 teaspoons fresh cracked
black pepper
3 teaspoons garlic powder
3 teaspoons onion powder

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—113

Carbohydrates—<1g

Protein—19g

Fat—3.6g

Fiber—0g

Homemade Oven Beef Jerky

This recipe is for a basic jerky you can make even if you don't own a smoker—it bakes right into your oven. This isn't a cost-saving recipe—it can wind up costing the same as store-bought jerky—but it's better tasting, natural and won't have any of the added preservatives. You can also control the sodium level by reducing the amount in the marinade.

Directions

Remove all fat from beef. Cut beef into thin slices (quarter-inch or less) by slicing against the grain. (For a tougher, chewier jerky, slice with the grain, opposite the butcher's normal recommendations.) Combine all ingredients in a covered dish and marinate overnight in refrigerator. After marinating, preheat oven to 150 degrees and place a cookie sheet lined with paper towels on the bottom rack. Insert toothpicks into the ends of the beef strips and hang them from the top grill rack. Keep the oven door cracked slightly open so water vapor can escape. Cook for six to eight hours.

Modifications

For spicy jerky: Add three or four teaspoons of red pepper flakes to the marinade.

For teriyaki jerky: Use reduced-sodium teriyaki marinade instead of soy; add a quarter cup of brown sugar or brown sugar replacement to marinade.

IN STELLA'S KITCHEN

Affordable jerky—Wait to make this recipe until you find a large cut of flank steak, London broil or top round on sale or priced for quick clearance. These meats are perfect for making into jerky. It never hurts to ask the butcher if he's about to mark down any meat.

Peanut Brittle Shake

I discovered this delicious favorite quite by accident as I sat staring at my “boring” vanilla protein powder, wanting something sweet. It mimics peanut brittle only in taste; it won’t send your blood sugar soaring, and it’s a fun way to get some healthy unsaturated fat.

Directions

Add all ingredients to blender, blend and serve. I like to add the peanut butter last so it stays chunky; others prefer to blend it sooner for a smoother consistency.

1 serving

Ingredients

2 scoops vanilla protein

1 tablespoon sugar-free instant
butterscotch pudding mix, dry

1 tablespoon natural peanut butter,
chunky

8 ounces cold water or lowfat milk

3–6 ice cubes

Nutritional Info

for added ingredients (excludes
milk and protein powder)

Calories—108

Carbohydrates—6g

Protein—4g

Fat—8g

Fiber—1g

Eggnog Shake

This is a unique substitution for the traditional fat-laden eggnog served during the holidays. The extracts and spices mimic the taste of eggnog, and the sugar-free instant pudding captures the rich creaminess without adding the buttermilk fat in the traditional recipe for eggnog.

Directions

Add all ingredients to blender, blend and serve. This one really works best with milk and the use of sugar-free pudding to help duplicate the consistency of real eggnog.

If you wish to exclude the raw egg, subtract 75 calories, 5 grams fat, 1 gram carb, and 6 grams protein from the nutritional totals; most health experts advise against raw egg consumption, while many athletes continue the practice.

1 serving

Ingredients

- 2 scoops vanilla protein
- 1 raw egg (optional)
- 2 tablespoons sugar-free vanilla pudding mix (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon rum extract
- 2 dashes cinnamon
- 2 dashes nutmeg
- 1 dash Butter Buds or ½ teaspoon artificial butter flavor
- 8 ounces lowfat milk or cold water
- 3 ice cubes

Nutritional Info

for added ingredients (excludes milk and protein powder)

Calories—100

Carbohydrates—7g

Protein—6g

Fat—5g

Fiber—0g

Fresh Salad 101

Selecting greens

Iceberg lettuce contains little nutritional value because it consists mainly of water. Select greens that are dark and leafy, like green leaf, red leaf, romaine or mixed baby greens for your salads instead. Leafy greens offer valuable fiber, which many of our diets are lacking.

Storing greens

Make a big base salad to use all week. When you get home from the store, wash, dry and tear the leaves. Place a damp paper towel on top of the greens and store them in a covered bowl so they will stay fresh. Use this as a base and add various items to it as your desire and schedule permits.

Make a meal

Add chicken, tuna, beef, egg whites, favorite vegetables, lean ground beef and salsa, leftover fajitas or other items to your green salad base throughout the week for an easy meal.

Best dressed

Heaviness can overtake a great meal when the greens are drenched in ranch dressing. You can easily make your own olive oil and vinegar dressing, or even a vinaigrette.

To make basic vinaigrette

Whisk one tablespoon Dijon mustard, one-half tablespoon olive oil, and three tablespoons Balsamic vinegar and season to taste with pepper.

To make flavored vinaigrette

Simply substitute different types of vinegars or add herbs to the basic recipe. Red wine and raspberry vinegars, finely minced garlic or shallots, basil, rosemary, thyme or oregano are just a few options you can try in your own vinaigrette.

4 servings

Ingredients

5 cups fresh broccoli, cut
2 lemons, cut into wedges
3 cloves minced garlic
(or 2 teaspoons of water-packed
minced garlic)
1 teaspoon toasted sesame seeds
(optional)
Fresh ground pepper to taste

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—166
Carbohydrates—22g
Protein—11g
Fat—3.4g
Fiber—1.25g

Steamed Broccoli with Lemon and Garlic

Fresh broccoli was not eaten in my home as a child. When I started to eat healthy, I made an adult decision to try it... without cheese sauce. I had a dish similar to this in a restaurant and was disappointed to discover I'd missed out on 23 years of eating this amazing vegetable. It's since become a favorite.

Directions

Steam or microwave broccoli a few minutes before meal-time. Squeeze lemon juice over broccoli, add garlic and toss. Sprinkle with sesame seeds if desired.

Modifications

You can pan toast the sesame seeds for a tasty flavor addition. Try toasting a cup to store in the cupboard for several months of use.

IN STELLA'S KITCHEN

Broccoli...vegetable extraordinaire—If you could only eat a single vegetable, broccoli would be a wise choice. Just a single 25-calorie cup of broccoli is loaded with almost three grams of fiber, 137% of the minimum daily Vitamin C requirements, and a little calcium!

Papa Bear's Sweet Potato "Fries"

The sweet potato is lower on the glycemic index than the regular potato. This makes the sweet potato a good choice of carbohydrate for those who monitor their blood sugar levels. While baked sweet potatoes are great too, this provides an interesting variation with more fiber to keep you full.

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray sweet potatoes with cooking spray. Bake for 30–35 minutes, flipping them once during cooking. Sprinkle with garlic powder.

Modifications

Instead of garlic powder, sprinkle cooked sweet potato fries with cinnamon and Splenda for a sweet treat.

4 servings

Ingredients

1 pound sweet potatoes,
cut into fry wedges

Garlic powder

Nonstick cooking spray

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—121

Carbohydrates—27.5g

Protein—1.9g

Fat—.3g

Fiber—3.4g

Cooking Lean: Substitution and Replacements

Instead of using...

Try...

Beef—70-85% lean ground or chuck

92% or leaner ground beef
or 92% lean ground turkey or buffalo

Bread crumbs, as breading or to mix with meat

Unprocessed bran flakes and mixed with
oat flour, crushed all bran cereal flakes,
oat flour or oatmeal

Butter

Butter replacement product, Butter Buds,
imitation butter flavor extract

Cheese

Reduce amount and use part-skim
mozzarella or reduced fat or nonfat cheese

Chicken—whole bird or dark meat

Equal amount boneless, skinless breast or
whole breasts with skin removed

Egg—1 whole

2 egg whites or 1 tablespoon cornstarch
dissolved in 3 tablespoon of water

Flour—white

Oat flour, 100% whole wheat flour, soy
flour

Gravy

Omit or thin with water to aus jus
consistency

Kool-aid or juice

Crystal Light

Milk—in cereal

Vanilla or strawberry protein powder
mixed with water

Milk—whole, in cooking or baking

Nonfat or low-fat milk or just water

Instead of using...

Oatmeal—flavored packets

Oil—in baking

Oil—in cooking

Oil—when sautéing

Salt

Sour cream

Soy sauce

Sugar—brown

Sugar—white

Syrup—pancake or maple syrup

Syrup—chocolate

Syrups—flavored (such as that used in coffee)

Try...

Natural oats and chopped fruit or sugar-free preserves (see “Eat Your Oatmeal,” page 91)

Equal amount of unsweetened applesauce

Omit or try reducing by half or two-thirds

Wine, broth, lemon, apple or orange juice

Garlic, chile, onion or lemon

Fat-free plain yogurt or nonfat sour cream

Reduced-sodium soy or reduced-sodium chicken or beef broth

Diabetic pancake syrup

Sucralose (Splenda) or other artificial sweetener of choice, or 1 teaspoon mashed banana per tablespoon of sugar being replaced

Sugar-free (diabetic) pancake syrup. In cereal, try artificial sweetener and a few drops of maple extract

Cocoa powder and sucralose to taste

Sugar-free syrup or sucralose and a few drops vanilla extract or other extract of choice

6 servings

Ingredients

- 1 8-ounce can reduced-sodium tomato sauce
- 2 cups water
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- ½ medium yellow onion, finely minced
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 3 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon fresh ground pepper

Nutritional Info

per ¼-cup serving

Calories—20

Carbohydrates—5g

Protein—.5g

Fat—0g

Fiber—0g

Sugar-Free BBQ Sauce

Barbeque sauce is a wonderful marinade for grilling or serving over chicken, beef and shrimp. However, a mere two tablespoons can cost you nine grams of sugar and 20% of your daily sodium allotment. This homemade barbeque sauce can be made quickly from common kitchen ingredients and does not contain the added sugar or high sodium of store-bought sauces.

Directions

Combine all ingredients in saucepan and bring to a full boil. Cover and simmer for at least 20 minutes. Allow to cook uncovered until reduced to desired thickness. Remove from heat and store in covered container until ready to use.

Suggested uses

Marinade, grilling sauce or sauce base

For sandwiches: Use slices of high-fiber, whole grain bread to make the following homestyle sandwiches.

Sloppy Joes: Mix with one pound extra lean ground beef

BBQ Chicken: Mix with shredded chicken breast

BBQ Beef: Mix with shredded top round beef

Guacamole Lijera (Lean Guacamole)

One of the more interesting parts of cooking healthy is the discovery of substitutions that allow us to continue enjoying our favorite foods. This is one of those strange ideas that really works! The fat in the avocado is not necessarily unhealthy except in excess. This recipe stretches out the guacamole and has just 3.3 grams of fat per serving, allowing the enjoyment without the guilt.

Directions

Puree avocado, green beans, sour cream, garlic and lemon juice in blender or food processor. Transfer guacamole base to bowl and stir in the salsa and chopped tomato. Season to taste with fresh cracked pepper and salt.

Modifications

You can add finely diced red or yellow onion to the guacamole for added flavor.

8 servings

Ingredients

1 medium avocado,
peeled and cubed
1¼ cup frozen green beans, thawed
¼ cup fat-free sour cream
3 tablespoons chunky salsa
1 small tomato, diced
2 cloves garlic, pressed or minced
Juice of one lemon
Fresh ground pepper to taste

Nutritional Info

per serving

Calories—52

Carbohydrates—5.9g

Protein—1.1g

Fat—3.3g

Fiber—1g

STELLA JUAREZ

Stella Juarez, B.A., is a single mother, athlete and freelance writer. She has applied and developed her artistic and technical skills in a variety of professions, but her expression is best displayed in her cooking expertise. She contributes cooking and fitness material to various exercise and food magazines and websites, and she excels in teaching others the skills of healthy food preparation.

Stella is a bodybuilding enthusiast whose fitness adventures began far from the dumbbell rack—she started walking in her early efforts to shed 50 pounds. Walking led to recreational running and eventually she completed a marathon, raising money for a leukemia patient in the Vancouver International, 2000. Along the way she grabbed a barbell, learned how to squat, press and curl, and embarked on a lifelong love affair with muscle and the iron.

Ms. Juarez is About.com's Guide for bodybuilding; her information-packed About.com website can be found at www.bodybuilding.about.com.

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