

Good Taste

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RECIPE ROUNDUP TO KEEP HUNGER PANGS AT BAY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

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BREAKFAST: VEGETABLE OMELET

Eggs are naturally high in cholesterol, but that doesn't mean they need to be banished from breakfast. In fact, there's evidence that eating up to seven eggs a week may help lower the risk of stroke and macular degeneration, which can result in blindness. But if cholesterol and calories are a concern, forgo the yolk and use only egg whites — you'll still get the protein but just a fraction of the calories and none of the cholesterol. A veggie-stuffed omelet is a simple, hearty meal. Whisk eggs in a bowl and bring a nonstick pan to medium-high heat. Saute chopped vegetables for a few minutes — spinach, tomatoes, mushrooms, onions and bell peppers are all filling, low-calorie options — then pour the whisked eggs over them and cook until the omelet has set, about 5 or 6 minutes. Sprinkle with cheese if desired and gently fold in half.



LUNCH: CHICKEN AND AVOCADO WRAP

While deli meat on bread is a quick and easy go-to, there are plenty of reasons to give lunch a reboot. Besides being the source of several recent outbreaks of food-borne illnesses, deli meat is highly processed and loaded with preservatives, sodium and nitrates, which are linked to an increased risk of heart disease. This wrap is a far better option: The chicken brings lean protein, the avocado is filled with good fat, and the tortilla is higher in fiber and lower in sugar than most store-bought bread. Begin by mashing the avocado with lime juice, salt and pepper. Spread the avocado mixture on a tortilla, then layer with sliced chicken, lettuce, tomatoes and red onion. Roll the tortilla into a wrap.



DINNER: GRILLED SALMON WITH ASPARAGUS

Human bodies can carry out incredibly complex functions, but making omega-3 fatty acids isn't one of them. Omega-3s are essential fats that come exclusively from food (or supplements), and they're vitally important when it comes to heart health: They lower triglyceride levels, boost "good" cholesterol and slow the formation of plaque inside arteries. Salmon is one of the very best sources of omega-3s. It's a cinch to prepare and goes especially well with asparagus. Preheat a grill, then season the salmon and asparagus with olive oil, salt and pepper. Grill salmon for about 6 to 8 minutes on each side until fully cooked. Grill asparagus until tender, about 5 minutes. Serve both with a squeeze of lemon juice.



SNACK: GREEK YOGURT AND BERRY PARFAIT

To get the most nutritional oomph from every meal, doctors and dietitians advocate "eating the rainbow" — that is, to incorporate as many colors as possible to get the biggest range of vitamins and nutrients. This colorful Greek yogurt and berry parfait does precisely that. The yogurt is brimming with beneficial bacteria that keep the gut microbiome functioning at its best, and it's full of fiber, which is great for satiety and curbs the urge to snack. To prepare, layer Greek yogurt in a bowl or glass, then top with strawberries, blueberries and raspberries, and a drizzle of honey. Finish with a sprinkle of granola for added crunch and fiber.

YOUR HEALTH TIPS

The weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day can be a blur of catered events and parties, all piled high with decadent food and festive cocktails. Calendars usually quiet down in January, making it an excellent time to refocus on healthier eating habits — and there's no better way to do that than by cooking at home.

While turning to prepackaged or carry-out meals can be a time saver, it comes at a nutritional cost. Unless you prepare meals yourself, there's no way to know exactly what you're getting with their ingredients or portions, said Adetunji T. Toriola, M.D., Ph.D., Washington University School of Medicine professor of surgery. "When you cook at home, you have full control over the ingredients you use. This allows you to choose fresh, whole foods and avoid additives, preservatives and unhealthy fats that are often found in restaurant food. It also enables you to manage portion sizes more effectively. Large portion sizes can lead to overeating."

Restaurants can rely heavily on butter, sugar, salt and cream, all of which can add hundreds of calories to meals. In particular, Toriola warned, consuming too much salt and sugar can lead to hypertension, diabetes and heart disease. At home, you can reach for herbs and spices to enhance a meal's flavor rather than using additives that can be detrimental to good health.

Technique is important, too. An otherwise healthy piece of chicken or fish becomes far less so if it's breaded and deep fried in a restaurant's kitchen. "Grilling, steaming, baking and sauteing help retain the nutritional value of the food and can reduce the intake of unhealthy fats," Toriola said. Better yet, these preparations are generally simple and require only a few steps.

When you've put care into meal preparation, you're more likely to notice the interplay of textures and flavors, and truly appreciate each



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bite. "This mindfulness can lead to better digestion and satisfaction from your meals, reducing the likelihood of overeating," Toriola said. Getting more enjoyment from food and improving overall health — not a bad way to start a new year.

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