



LIFT Enrichment

Healthy Cooking 101



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Pasta Primavera with Spring Vegetables



“Primavera” means “spring,” and this pasta highlights any produce in season. Also, it’s loaded with vitamin-rich vegetables...and did we mention that it tastes absolutely delicious?

Active Time: 40 min

Ingredients:

1lb. farfalle (bowtie pasta)
½ onion, chopped.
4 zucchinis chopped into bite-sized pieces
1 cup frozen peas, defrosted
¼ bunch of Italian parsley, chopped
1 cup parmesan, grated
1.5 cups vegetable stock
Extra virgin olive oil
All-purpose Flour
Kosher Salt and pepper

Directions:

Bring 4 cups of water to a boil in a large pot and add 2 Tablespoons of salt. Cook the pasta until al dente in boiling water, then transfer it to a bowl.

Add 2 Tbs olive oil, bell peppers, and onion in a large pan over medium-high heat and cook for 3-4 minutes. Add zucchini and peas and cook for 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally to soften all the vegetables.

Make an open space in the middle of your pan. Add 2 Tablespoons oil and 2 Tablespoons flour and stir for 1 minute. Add the vegetable stock and mix all the vegetables for 1-2 minutes, until the sauce slightly thickens.

Add pasta, half the parsley, half the Parmesan, a pinch of salt, and mix well. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Serve immediately and toss with remaining Parsley and Parmesan! It also tastes great for lunch the next day as a pasta salad.

Black Bean & Spinach Quesadilla with Pico De Gallo



You can make a healthy quesadilla with spinach and black beans and serve it with a fresh Pico de Gallo for a quick dinner that's loaded with vitamins, fiber, and protein

Active Time: 30 min

Ingredients:

- 1 15-oz cans black beans, drained
- 1 15-oz can of corn, drained
- 2 cups fresh spinach (or 1 16 oz bag)
- 4 large tortillas
- 2 cups cheddar cheese, freshly grated
- 2 Roma tomatoes, chopped
- ½ red onion, chopped
- 3 tbs cilantro, chopped
- 2 limes
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

Directions:

Prepare Pico de Gallo: Add the tomatoes, red onion, cilantro, lime and 1 Tbs oil in a bowl and season with salt and pepper to taste.

In a pan, add 2 Tbs oil over medium-high heat. Add the spinach, salt, and pepper and sauté until wilted, about 3-4 minutes. Add to a bowl lined with paper towels. Carefully squeeze the water out of the spinach. Place spinach on a cutting board and give it a rough chop.

Prepare Quesadilla: In a tortilla, add cheese on half the tortilla, then top with an even layer of spinach, corn, and black beans, then top with cheese and close. Repeat with remaining tortillas. In a pan over medium heat, add 1 Tbs oil and sear 2-3 quesadillas at a time for about 4-5 minutes, flipping once. Season with a pinch of salt. Chop into triangles and serve with Pico de Gallo

Whole Wheat Grilled Cheese and Broccoli Slaw



Grilled cheese on whole wheat bread pairs perfectly with a healthy broccoli slaw and a fantastic Greek yogurt dressing!

Active time:10 mins

Ingredients:

8 whole wheat bread slices
6-8 slices of cheddar cheese (about 1.5 slices per sandwich)
4 tbs unsalted butter at room temperature
2 large bunches of broccoli
½ cup finely chopped red onion
½ cup Greek yogurt
¼ cup mayonnaise
1 lemon
Red wine vinegar
Sugar
Kosher salt and black pepper

Directions:

Prepare Grilled Cheese:

Generously butter one side of each slice of bread. Place a bread slice butter-side down, add 1.5-2 slices of cheddar cheese, top with a slice of bread butter-side up. Repeat to make 4 sandwiches.

Add the sandwich to a hot pan over medium-high heat and cook until lightly browned, about 2-3 minutes per side. Cook about 2-3 at a time. Remove from pan, cut in half diagonally, and serve warm. Keep sandwiches warm by covering them with foil.

Prepare Broccoli Slaw:

Cut the broccoli into florets, then chop the florets into smaller, bite-size pieces. Cut the stems into thin slices, about ¼" thick. Whisk together yogurt, mayo, lemon juice, 2 Tbs vinegar, 1 tsp sugar, 1 tsp salt, and pepper in a small bowl.

Add broccoli and red onion in a large bowl and toss with dressing to coat. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Cover with plastic wrap and chill for 20-30 minutes for all the flavors to come together. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

Crispy Chicken (and Eggplant) with Mixed Green Salad



Who doesn't love chicken nuggets?! This is one of our most popular recipes because it's delicious, fresh, and features a healthy take on chicken nuggets. The real surprise of this dish is how DELICIOUS crispy eggplant can be!

Active Time: 20 min

Ingredients:

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Ingredients:

1.5 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts	3 Roma tomatoes, chopped
½ an eggplant chopped into bite-size pieces	1 large cucumber, chopped
4 large eggs, beaten	Extra-virgin olive oil
2 tbs Italian parsley, chopped,	Red-wine vinegar
2 cups Breadcrumbs	Sugar
1 cup All-Purpose Flour	Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
16-oz bag of mixed greens	

Directions:

Prepare Crispy Chicken & Eggplant:

Season each piece of eggplant with salt. Set up three large, shallow plates or dishes next to each other. In the first one, add 1 cup flour. In the second one, add the beaten eggs. In the third one, add 2 cups of breadcrumbs, 1 teaspoon salt, and Italian parsley.

Dip the eggplant into the flour and shake off any excess. Next, dip it into the eggs until it's completely coated, allowing any excess to drain. Finally, dip the eggplant into the breadcrumb mixture, shaking off any excess, and place it on a large plate as you continue breading. Don't stack the pieces on top of each other, which will moisten and ruin the bread coating. Repeat the same process with the chicken and place these on a separate plate.

In a large pan, add 3 Tbs oil over medium-high heat. Test the oil by flicking some flour into it; if it sizzles, it's ready. Carefully place the eggplant in the oil and cook for 5-6 minutes, flipping halfway through, until golden brown on both sides and cooked thoroughly. Remove to a paper-towel-lined plate and season with a pinch of salt. Continue with the remaining eggplant. Repeat the same process with the chicken, but keep these on a separate plate.

Prepare Mixed Green Salad:

For the dressing, whisk together 2 Tbs vinegar, 4 Tbs olive oil, 1 tsp salt, a bit of black pepper, and a small pinch of sugar. Taste with a lettuce leaf and add more salt or sugar if necessary. Place the lettuce, tomato, and cucumber in a bowl, and dress the salad with a spoonful of dressing right before serving. Enjoy! Serve in a bowl topped with some crispy eggplant and crispy chicken.

Black Bean Veggie Sliders with Cabbage Slaw



Sliders are an American diner classic, but can you get kids to eat vegetarian mini burgers? You bet!

Active Time: 15 min

Ingredients:

12 Hawaiian rolls
1 14-oz can chickpeas
1 14-oz can black beans
1 cup breadcrumbs
2 carrots, grated
1 egg
½ head green cabbage
3 tbs cilantro
3 green onions
3 garlic cloves
Extra-virgin olive oil
Red wine vinegar
Sugar
Kosher salt and black pepper

Directions:

Prepare the patties: Place the chickpeas and black beans in a bowl and smash them with the back of a fork until it's a rough paste.

Next, add breadcrumbs, egg, garlic, half the cilantro, carrot, 1 tsp salt, and pepper. Wet your hands with water and form into small patties.

Prepare the slaw: Combine the cabbage, green onion, cilantro, 4 Tablespoons olive oil, 2 Tablespoons red wine vinegar, 1 teaspoon salt, a bit of sugar, and black pepper, and mix. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.

Heat 3 Tablespoons olive oil in a large pan. Cook the patties for 6-8 minutes, flipping halfway, until nicely browned. Remove to a plate and continue with the remaining patties.

To serve: In each roll, add 1 patty, top with slaw, and enjoy!

Cauliflower Veggie Fried Rice



What's better than regular Fried rice? One that has cauliflower in it!

Active time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2 cups Jasmine rice
- 1 large cauliflower
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 green onions, separated and chopped
- 6 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup frozen peas
- Olive or Vegetable Oil
- Red Wine Vinegar
- Soy sauce
- Sugar

Directions

Thoroughly clean the rice by adding it to a pot, rinsing it with water, and then draining off the water while using your hand to keep the rice in the pot. Repeat another time. Add 4 cups water to the rice, cover, boil, and then let simmer for 15-20 minutes. Turn off the heat and let rest for 5 minutes. Fluff the rice with a fork and remove it to a bowl.

In a large frying pan over medium heat, add 1-2 Tbs oil. Add the eggs and cook, while scrambling, for about 2-4 minutes. Remove to a plate and slice it into small pieces using a metal butter knife. Clean the pan with a paper towel.

Grate the cauliflower on the largest setting. In the same pan, add 2 Tbs oil over medium-high heat and add the cauliflower. Cook for about 5-6 minutes until the cauliflower is softened. Season with a pinch of salt and remove to a bowl.

Add 1 Tablespoon oil over medium-high heat. Add the carrot and bell pepper and cook for 4-5 minutes until softened. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Remove the veggies to a bowl.

Add 2 Tablespoons oil, garlic, and white parts of the green onions. Cook for 30 seconds, then add the cooked Jasmine rice and sauté for 3-4 minutes. Add the cooked vegetables, peas, and scrambled eggs. Season with 2 Tablespoons soy sauce, 1 Tablespoon vinegar, and some sugar. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Remove to a bowl, garnish with green onions, and enjoy!

Healthy Fettuccine Alfredo with Asparagus



Fettuccine Alfredo is a comforting plate of fettuccine pasta covered in a homemade cream sauce. Our version substitutes heavy cream and lots of butter with low-fat milk, vegetable broth, and Extra-virgin olive oil. Plus, we add some freshly sautéed asparagus for extra fiber and micronutrients.

Active Time: 30 min

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. fettuccine pasta
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 shallot, chopped
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup vegetable broth (Better than Bouillon is good!)
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- ½ cup Italian parsley, chopped
- 1 lb. asparagus
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- All-purpose flour
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper

Directions:

Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add a small handful of salt. Cook the pasta for 9-11 minutes until al dente. Remove to a colander and season with salt and olive oil.

Trim the tough ends off the asparagus and chop into 1" pieces.

In a large frying pan, add 2 Tablespoons oil and half the garlic over medium-high heat and cook for 30 seconds. Add the asparagus to the pan with 1 tablespoon salt and a pinch of pepper and cook until softened about 4-5 minutes. Remove to a bowl.

Add 3 Tbs oil to the skillet, add shallots and remaining garlic, and cook for 1-2 minutes, until softened. Add 4 Tbs flour and cook for 1 minute.

Add the stock and cook for 2 minutes while stirring constantly. Add the milk, season with 1 tsp salt and a pinch of pepper, and cook while stirring until the sauce has thickened, about 4-6 minutes. Add ½ cup of Parmesan, ¼ cup Italian parsley, asparagus and stir together. Add pasta and mix thoroughly, adding the pasta water to help thicken the sauce. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed.

Serve fettuccine alfredo topped with remaining Parmesan and parsley.

Healthy Taco Bell Crunch wrap with Lean Beef



A “crunch wrap” is an excellent burrito-like item from Taco Bell that’s typically loaded with unhealthy (but tasty) ingredients like nacho cheese sauce and sour cream. Here, we can make them at home, but they’re lighter and healthier with some unique substitutions that still pack a lot of flavors.

Active time: 25 min

Ingredients:

1.5 lb. lean ground beef (93% or 90%)
4 large “burrito” tortillas
1 cup reduced-fat mozzarella, freshly grated
3 Roma tomatoes, chopped
½ cup white onion, chopped
¼ cup cilantro
1 limes
1 Tbs chili powder
1 Tbs cumin
Extra-Virgin olive oil
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
Vegetarians: Can substitute the beef for 1 14-oz can of black beans

Directions

Combine chili powder, cumin, 1 tsp salt, and pepper in a small bowl and season beef. In a large pan over medium-high heat, add 2 Tbs oil and sear beef. Add the cumin, chili powder, 1 tsp salt, pepper, and a squeeze of lime and cook for 5-7 minutes until browned and in small pieces.

Prepare Pico De Gallo:

In a bowl, add the chopped tomatoes, cilantro, and onion. Season with 1 tsp salt, pepper, and the juice of 1 lime and mix.

Prepare crunch wrap:

Add each tortilla to a dry pan over low heat and cook for about 30 seconds on each side to soften them. Place a spoonful of beef in the center of each tortilla, top with 2 spoonfuls of Pico de Gallo, and top with the cheese. Carefully fold each side of the tortilla to form a hexagon. Flip the crunch wraps upside down as you continue with the other wraps.

In a large pan over medium-high heat, add 1 tsp oil and carefully add 2 or 3 (depending on how many can fit) seam-side down so it becomes sealed in about 2 minutes. Flip and cook for 2 minutes. Remove to a bowl and continue with the remaining crunch wraps. Enjoy the crunch wraps with your favorite hot sauce!

Mexican Crispy Tortilla Salad with Beans, Corn & Honey-Lime Vinaigrette



This healthy salad features popular staples: corn and black beans. The honey-lime dressing adds a great kick, and the crunch of the tortilla strips makes this salad a kid's favorite!

Active Time: 20 min

Ingredients:

6 corn tortillas, sliced into strips
2 heads romaine lettuce, chopped
2 limes, juiced
2 red bell peppers, chopped
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 can (14 oz) whole kernel yellow corn, rinsed and drained
1 can (14 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained
¼ bunch cilantro, chopped
Olive or Vegetable Oil
Sugar
Honey
Kosher salt and black pepper

Directions:

Prepare the Tortilla:

In a large pan over medium heat, add 2-3 Tbs oil, add the tortilla strips, and cook for 2-4 minutes, flipping halfway until nicely browned on both sides. Remove to a paper-towel-lined plate and season with a pinch of salt

Prepare the dressing:

In a small bowl, add freshly squeezed limes, 1-2 Tbs sugar, 1/3 cup oil, 1 tsp salt, black pepper and whisk together. Taste with a piece of lettuce and adjust seasoning as needed. If it's too acidic, add honey.

Assemble Salad:

In a large bowl, combine lettuce, bell peppers, carrots, tomatoes, corn, and beans. Add a few spoonful's of the dressing and toss. Taste and add more dressing as needed. Serve salad in bowls topped with a crispy tortilla.

Healthy Panda Express Orange Chicken (& Orange Tofu) with Jasmine Rice



This dish is a Chinese favorite made of juicy chicken pieces (and tofu!) coated with a flavorful orange sauce. Our version is lighter because we substitute chicken breast for chicken thighs and lightly cook the chicken in oil rather than deep frying. Plus, our sauce is super fresh and tasty!

Active Time: 15 min

Ingredients:

- 2 cups of Jasmine rice (cooked in advance)
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 eggs, whisked
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 1.5 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breast cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 tofu block (firm)
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, sliced thin
- 2 cups orange juice
- 2 Tbs sugar
- 2 Tbs soy sauce
- 1 Tbs cornstarch
- Vegetable oil
- Kosher salt

Directions:

Place the flour, eggs, and breadcrumbs into three separate bowls. Season the tofu with salt on all sides, then add flour and eggs to the breadcrumbs. Put it on a plate. Repeat the same process with chicken (season it raw with salt FIRST) and remove to another plate. Mix the orange juice, sugar, soy sauce, and cornstarch in a bowl.

Heat 4-6 Tbs oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the tofu pieces in 1 or 2 large batches for 6-8 minutes, flipping halfway until golden. Remove to a paper-towel-lined plate and season with a tiny pinch of salt (this is key!) Do the same with the chicken pieces in small batches and fry until golden brown on both sides, about 6-8 minutes, flipping halfway. Remove to a paper towel-lined plate and repeat until the chicken is cooked.

Clean the pan with paper towels and add 2 Tbs oil over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the orange juice mixture and cook for 3-4 minutes until it is reduced and slightly thickened. In one bowl, add the tofu and 1/3 of the sauce, then in another bowl, add the chicken and the rest of the sauce and top with green onions. Serve some orange tofu and chicken over a scoop of Jasmine rice.