



Spring Into Flavor

A GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING



Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Spring into heart health	4

Articles

The latest on heart-healthy eating is balance	5
What if diet wasn't a four-letter word?	6
5 easy ways to find healthier options while shopping	7

Recipes

Grilled Chicken with Mint Salsa	8
Quick Chicken Fajitas with Beans and Spanish Rice	9
Oaxacan Avocado Jicama Appetizer	10
Huevos Rancheros	11
Olive Oil Mashed Potatoes	12
Texas Caviar	13

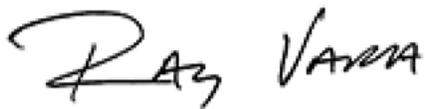
Welcome

I've always loved spring. After cold and dark winter months, spring brings warmer weather, blooming flowers, and some of my favorite fruits and vegetables!

We've created this guide to help you spring into nutritious, delicious eating. Inside you'll find great tips and tricks to create lasting heart-healthy habits with recipes that will delight your palate and nourish your body.

This special guide is our way of saying thank you for all you do to support our mission and help families, and communities live long, heart-healthy lives.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray Vara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Raymond P. Vara, Jr.
Chairman of the Board
Volunteer, 16 Years
American Heart Association



Spring into heart health

New seasons are a time of change, but instead of approaching a lifestyle change with an “all or nothing” mentality, keep in mind that small steps lead to big strides — especially when it comes to heart health.



The latest word on heart-healthy eating is **balance.**

A report in the AHA journal *Circulation* encourages people to think of broad eating habits instead of narrowly focusing on single foods. Rather than one-size-fits-all rules, it leaves room for personal preferences.

“The emphasis is on dietary patterns, not specific foods or nutrients,” said Alice H. Lichtenstein, who led the writing committee for the American Heart Association scientific statement. “And it’s not just about what people shouldn’t be eating. The focus is really on what people should be eating, so they can customize it to their personal preferences and lifestyles.”

As co-author Maya Vadiveloo explains: “You can eat what you enjoy.” But sometimes, you just have to choose “a little more carefully, consider frequency and adjust serving sizes... It’s not all of one thing and none of another. It’s the balance among your choices in terms of diet and, ultimately, lifestyle.”



What if **diet** wasn't a four-letter word?



Most of the time, the word “diet” implies weight loss and comes loaded with restrictions. Oftentimes the so-called diet plans aren't even very healthy. But recommendations released by our team of health experts refer to a balanced diet with a different goal in mind: **preventing heart disease and stroke.**

Developed by the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology, a new set of guidelines emphasize that a healthy, nutritious diet can play a tremendous role in lowering risk for heart attack and stroke.

“We see a lot about diets on the internet, with everyone commenting about which ones are good for you, but tell me, **good for what?**” said Dr. Amit Khera, one of the authors of the 2019 Guideline on the Primary Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease. “If it's weight loss, sure, some of these diets can help you lose weight, but that does not mean they're heart-healthy.”

The research-based, heart-healthy diet also can help in “reducing or reversing” obesity, high cholesterol, diabetes and high blood pressure—all considered risk factors for heart disease.

Specifically, the recommendations advise high consumption of fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, whole grains and “lean vegetable or animal protein (preferably fish).” Plant-based and Mediterranean diets, which embrace this type of pattern, are highlighted in the guidelines.

Learn more about the [**American Heart Association Diet and Lifestyle Recommendations**](#).

5 easy ways to find healthier options while shopping

1. Read **food nutrition labels**, even for so-called “healthier” foods.

Ingredients and nutrient content can vary a lot by brand and preparation. When there’s more than one choice, compare labels. Choose the item with the lowest amounts of sodium, saturated fat, trans fat and added sugars.

2. Beware of **sneaky ingredients**.

For example, sodium and added sugars go by many different names, making it harder to tell just how much is in there.

3. Choose **frozen, canned or dried produce** when fresh isn’t available or practical.

It can be just as nutritious as fresh, and will last longer. Choose canned fruit packed in water, light syrup or its own juice. With canned and frozen vegetables, choose the product with the lowest amount of sodium.

4. Choose **whole-grain foods**.

Lots of products claim to be, but there’s a simple way to know for sure. Look for the word “whole-grain” (or “whole” followed by the grain name) as the first item in the ingredients list. And we’re talking more than just bread. Include crackers, cereals, tortillas, pasta and other grain foods in your whole-grain quest.

5. Look for the **Heart-Check mark**.

Quickly and easily identify foods that can be part of an overall healthy eating plan. When it’s on the label, you know the product has been certified by the American Heart Association to meet specific science-based nutrition requirements.

Grilled Shrimp

with Mint Salsa Verde



A tiny dollop of yogurt gives a pleasant, unexpected creaminess to the piquant salsa that is drizzled over grilled shrimp in this attractive entrée.

Ingredients

- 1/2 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. and 1/2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice, divided use
- 1 tsp. and 1 Tbsp. olive oil, divided use
- 1 medium garlic clove (minced)
- 12 jumbo raw shrimp in shells (21 to 25 count), peeled, rinsed, and patted dry
- 2 medium green onions (chopped)
- 3 Tbsps. chopped, fresh mint
- 1 Tbsp. snipped, fresh cilantro
- 1/2 Tbsp. drained capers
- 1/2 Tbsp. minced fresh jalapeño, seeds and ribs discarded, or to taste
- 2 tsp.s fat-free, plain yogurt
- 1 tsp. water
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper

Directions

1. In a small glass baking dish, whisk together 1/2 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. lemon juice, 1 tsp. oil, and garlic. Add the shrimp, turning to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 10 minutes, turning once.
2. Meanwhile, in a mini food processor, process the green onions, mint, cilantro, capers, jalapeño, yogurt, water, salt, pepper, remaining 1/2 Tbsp. lemon juice, and remaining 1 Tbsp. oil for 30 seconds, or until smooth and creamy. Scrape the side once or twice during this process.
3. Preheat a grill pan on medium-high heat. Lightly spray with cooking spray. Remove the shrimp from the marinade. Discard the marinade. Grill the shrimp for 2 to 3 minutes on each side, or until pink and cooked through. Serve with the salsa verde drizzled on top.

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Quick Chicken Fajitas

with Beans and Spanish Rice



Simple Cooking with Heart brings you this healthy version of a Tex Mex favorite -- fajitas! These Quick Chicken Fajitas are served with Black Beans and Spanish Rice.

Beans and Rice Ingredients

- 16 oz. canned, fat-free, no-salt-added black beans (drained, rinsed)
- 1 cup brown rice (cooked to package instructions)

Chicken Fajitas Ingredients

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless chicken breasts or tenderloins (cut into 1-inch strips)
- 1 Tbsp. low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 medium bell pepper (sliced)
- 1 medium onion (sliced)
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- taco-sized tortillas, or corn tortillas (Choose tortillas with the lowest amount of saturated fat, trans fat and sodium.)
- 1 avocado (sliced)
- 1/2 cup jarred salsa (lowest sodium available)
- 1/2 cup fat-free sour cream

Beans and Rice Directions

1. Spray a small pot with cooking spray, heat beans over low-heat until warmed, stirring occasionally (approx. 10 minutes).
2. Combine cooked rice with 2 tablespoons salsa and stir.

Chicken Fajitas Directions

1. Spray a large skillet with cooking spray. Heat to medium-high and add chicken, cook for 3 minutes until browned.
2. Reduce heat to medium and add soy sauce, bell pepper, onions, pepper and cumin. Cover and cook for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Spoon evenly over tortillas and top with sliced avocado, salsa and/or sour cream (optional).

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Oaxacan Avocado Jicama Appetizer



Try this unique avocado appetizer recipe using jicama, a Mexican root vegetable, for a crispy and healthy alternative to crackers.

Ingredients

- 12 large very thin slices jicama
- 1 large slightly firm but ripe avocado, peeled, pitted, and coarsely grated
- 1/3 cup diced slightly firm but ripe mango
- 1 Tbsp. minced green onions
- 1 Tbsp. shelled, unsalted pumpkin seeds
- 1 Tbsp. chili verde (green salsa) (lowest sodium available)
- Grated lime zest (from 1 or 2 medium limes)

Directions

1. Using a round cookie cutter, cut a 2-inch round from each slice of jicama.
2. In a small bowl, stir together the avocado, mango, green onions, pumpkin seeds, and chile verde until well combined. Top the jicama slices with the avocado mixture. Sprinkle with the lime zest.

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Huevos Rancheros



Salsa Ingredients

- 1 tsp. canola oil OR 1 tsp. corn oil
- 1/2 cup diced yellow onion (1 small)
- 1/2 cup diced poblano pepper (1 large), seeds and ribs discarded
- 1 small fresh jalapeño pepper (seeds and ribs discarded, minced)
- 1 1/2 tsps. minced garlic
- 1 14.5-ounce can no-salt-added crushed tomatoes (fire-roasted preferred)
- 2 Tbsps. water
- 1/4 tsp. salt

Huevos Rancheros Ingredients

- 1 tsp. canola oil (or) 1 teaspoon corn oil
- 4 large eggs
- 4 6-inch corn tortillas (warm)
- 1 15.5-ounce can no-salt-added black beans (rinsed, drained)
- 1/4 cup shredded low-fat 4-cheese Mexican blend
- 1 small avocado (quartered, sliced)
- 2 Tbsps. chopped, fresh cilantro (optional)
- 1 medium lime (cut into 4 wedges, optional)

Directions

1. In a medium saucepan, heat 1 teaspoon oil over medium heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the onion for 2 minutes, or until almost soft, stirring frequently. Cook the poblano and jalapeño peppers for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in the garlic. Cook for 1 minute. Stir in the tomatoes, water, and salt. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low. Simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. Cover to keep warm.
2. In a medium nonstick skillet, heat the remaining 1 teaspoon oil over medium heat, swirling to coat the bottom. Cook the eggs for 3 to 4 minutes, or until the whites are set and the edges are fully cooked.
3. Place a tortilla on each plate. Top each tortilla with the beans and an egg. Being careful not to break the yolk, gently top each egg with the warm salsa, cheese, and avocado slices.
4. Sprinkle each serving with the cilantro. Serve with a lime wedge.

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Olive Oil Mashed Potatoes



Get your comfort from this creamy American side dish, which uses healthy olive oil instead of butter to add flavor and richness.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds small Yukon Gold potatoes, halved or cut into 2-inch pieces
- 6 medium garlic cloves
- 1/4 cup olive oil (extra virgin preferred)
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper (freshly ground)
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 cup chopped green onions

Directions

1. Put the potatoes, garlic, and salt in a large saucepan. Pour in enough water to cover the potatoes. Bring to a boil over high heat. Boil for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are soft. Transfer the potatoes and garlic to a colander. Drain well. Return them to the pan.
2. Using the tines of a fork, mash the potatoes and garlic, being sure to crush each piece of potato and each garlic clove.
3. Add the green onions, oil, and pepper, stirring until well combined..

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Texas Caviar



This recipe is a classic and traditional Southern-American black-eyed pea salad that's full of flavor and fresh vegetables.

Ingredients

- 30 ounces canned, reduced-sodium black-eyed peas (drained, rinsed)
- 2 green onions ((green part only), thinly sliced)
- 1 ear of corn (cut off cob) or 1 cup fresh, frozen corn (thawed)
- 1 small bell pepper, yellow or red, seeded, stems discarded, diced
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro (chopped)
- 3 fresh jalapeño peppers (seeded, diced)
- 2 cups tomatoes (diced) or 14.5 oz. canned, no-salt-added, diced tomatoes
- 3 clove fresh garlic (minced) or 3 teaspoons jarred, minced garlic
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 1/2 teaspoon lime zest
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin

Ingredients cont.

- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- fresh, ground black pepper (to taste)

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, combine the black-eyed peas, green onions, corn, bell pepper, cilantro, jalapenos, tomatoes, and garlic.
2. In a separate bowl whisk together the olive oil, lime juice, zest, and cumin. Pour over vegetables, add salt and pepper and toss together until vegetables are coated completely oil blend. Best if chilled for 2-3 hours.
3. Serve as a side dish or with whole grain pita chips.

Get nutrition information [here](#).

Thank you

heart.org/donate



American
Heart
Association.