



Is eating healthier one of your New Year's resolutions?

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New year, new you

Keeping that healthy eating resolution



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Start the new year on the right food!

The holidays have been a virtual gravy bowl of weight-inducing calories and fat. Now's the time to rein in the fatty feasting and, instead, fatten up your nutritional know-how — take tasty small steps for major health gains.

Eat up these tips on healthifying your diet fast and effectively, from Canadian professional home economists:

— MAIRLYN SMITH (mairlynsmith.com) of *Healthy Starts Here!: 140 Recipes That Will Make You Feel Great*:

Eat foods from a rainbow of colours.

Eat more beans: "Up your nutrient score by making a pot of chili often. Have hummus and cut up veggies for lunch."

Downsize your plate. We eat what we see, says Smith. "Smaller plates equal

smaller waistlines equal lower chance of developing Type 2 diabetes and heart disease."

— ELLIE TOPP, Ottawa-based cookbook author, *Fresh & Healthy, Cooking for Two*, recommends choosing whole grain products. Look for the term 'whole grain wheat' on bread products to reap the benefits of the germ and fibre in the grain.

"Eat a wide variety of foods.

The best way to take advantage of the nutrient mix found in the array of foods available is to choose from many different ones," says Topp, who suggests becoming a vegetarian for two or more meals each week. There are many tasty dishes featuring beans, lentils, tofu and quinoa.

"Eat fish, especially high-fat

fish such as salmon, at least once a week. Fish is high on omega-3 fatty acids which have many health benefits," says Topp. She also recommends adding variety to your meals and snacks with nuts and seeds — not only are they tasty, but

offer a healthy snack to stave off between-meal hunger.

"Eat a wide variety of foods. The best way to take advantage of the nutrient mix found in the array of foods available is to choose from many different ones."

Ellie Topp, Ottawa based cookbook author, *Fresh & Healthy, Cooking for Two*.

"Choose lower fat dairy products such as 1% or

2% milk and yogurt," says Topp. "Fat gives good flavour to foods such as cheese, so enjoy just a small taste of the best rather than low-fat varieties."

Limit the amount of tropical oils — coconut and palm — you consume, says Topp.

Plan your meals ahead, so that healthy foods are availa-

ble when hunger strikes and limit salt on your food and choose lower sodium products, she adds.

— ERIN MacGREGOR, PHEC and registered dietitian, says to get in the kitchen and cook! Use whole, unprocessed ingredients to create simple and healthful meals at home. "If you're a beginner in the kitchen, start by planning one homemade dinner per week and work your way up. You can find thousands of simple recipes online."

Switch to water. Containing zero calories and additives, water is the perfect way to hydrate — guilt free, says MacGregor. Add pizzaz with lemon, lime or orange slices.

And when snacking, think unprocessed. Choose whole fruits and vegetables, whole grain crackers or bread with natural nut butters or plain yogurt sweetened with fruit and a touch of honey. "Kale chips are all the rage for healthy snackers. They're simple to make and can be enjoyed in lieu of other crunchy savoury snacks — all while giving you a boost of fibre, vitamins and minerals."

MEXI MEATLESS SHEPHERD'S PIE



PHOTO SUPPLIED ONTARIO HOME ECONOMICS ASSOCIATION.

This great family-friendly casserole is a variation on a traditional shepherd's pie. Serve with a tossed green salad. Recipe from *The Vegetarian's Complete Quinoa Cookbook (Whitecap)* by the Ontario Home Economics Association.

2 lb. (1 kg) sweet potatoes, scrubbed well and pierced all over with a fork
 1 Tbsp. (15 ml) canola oil
 1 onion, chopped
 1 red pepper, diced
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 2 tsp. (10 ml) ground cumin
 1 can (540 ml) black beans, no salt added, well rinsed and drained
 1 cup (250 ml) cooked quinoa made with water
 1 cup (250 ml) frozen corn, no need to thaw
 1 cup (250 ml) mild or medium salsa, deli-style
 ¼ cup (60 ml) light sour cream
 ¼ cup (60 ml) finely chopped cilantro
 ¼ tsp. (1 ml) freshly ground black pepper
 ¼ cup (60 ml) thinly sliced green onion or cilantro for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 F (175 C). Bake sweet potatoes for 60 minutes, or until tender. Alternatively, microwave on high for 8 to 12 minutes. Cool until easy to handle.

Lightly grease an 8 cup (2 L) baking dish with canola oil or line with wet parchment paper. Set aside. In a large soup pot or Dutch oven, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion, red pepper, garlic and cumin. Cook - stirring often, for 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in black beans, cooked quinoa, corn and salsa until well combined. Remove from heat.

Pour into prepared pan. Meanwhile, cut cooled sweet potatoes in half and scrape out flesh. Discard skins. Mash sweet potato well with sour cream. Stir in cilantro. Season with pepper, if desired.

For a rustic look, spoon sweet potato mixture over quinoa mixture in heaping teaspoonfuls. Bake for 30 minutes, or until heated through and bubbly. Sprinkle top of the casserole with green onion or cilantro (if using) to garnish.

Makes 6 cups.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIN MACGREGOR, PHEC AND REGISTERED DIETITIAN.

KALE CHIPS

1 bunch of kale: stems removed, washed, thoroughly dried and cut or torn in to 3 (bite-sized) pieces
 2 Tbsp. (30 ml) extra virgin olive oil
 fine kosher or sea salt for sprinkling

Preheat oven to 300 F (150 C). Combine kale and olive oil in a bowl until leaves are evenly coated. Spread leaves over parchment-lined baking sheet in one layer — you will need 2-3 baking sheets per bunch. Sprinkle sparingly with salt.

Bake for 15 minutes until light and crispy, but not browned. Kale chips are best enjoyed when made and eaten the same day