

Chapter 8

IN THE KITCHEN

Is one method of cooking better than another?

What things should I always have in my kitchen?

What utensils do I need?

How can I modify my recipes to be healthier?

Can I eat out and still eat healthy food?





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Your body changes as you age, and so may your situation in life.

Some men suddenly find themselves cooking for the first time in their lives when they are seniors. Many senior women find they need to downsize their kitchens as they move to a smaller home.

In this chapter, we provide advice on how to cook healthy food as well as what to keep in your kitchen cupboards, fridge and drawers at all times to make sure you continue to eat well. Because we know everyone needs a break from the kitchen now and then, we've also included a section on healthy eating at restaurants.

Is one method of cooking better than another?

Frying food is really the only cooking method that is unhealthy.

Grilling, steaming, stir frying, baking, microwaving, broiling and roasting are all healthy ways to cook both meat and vegetables. Barbecuing is also a good way to maintain both flavour and nutrients.

If you boil your vegetables, use only a half inch of water, then use the leftover cooking water in a soup to "get back" the lost nutrients. Cooking with little or no fat is always the healthiest way to cook.

What things should I always have in my kitchen?

Every now and then, you may not feel well or the weather may be bad and you just cannot get out to the grocery store. It is a good idea to have some staples on hand, so you can always eat good, nutritious food.

To make sure you are able to cook healthy, tasty and simple meals and snacks at any time (including the recipes in Chapter 11), keep your cupboards, fridge and freezer stocked with healthy options.



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In your cupboards, keep:

- canned tuna and salmon, packed in water
- canned or dried kidney and black beans, lentils, chickpeas and peas
- peanut butter (buy a brand that has no added salt, sugar or fat)
- unsalted nuts (peanuts, almonds, walnuts, cashews, soy nuts)
- seeds (sunflower, sesame, pumpkin)
- whole grain pasta and noodles
- brown rice and brown rice noodles (vermicelli)
- whole grain cereals, including rolled oats and barley
- whole wheat and/or rye crackers (low-fat and low-salt)
- dried, canned or boxed low-fat milk
- canned or boxed fruit and vegetable juices, such as apple juice, low-salt tomato or V8® juice
- canned fruits in unsweetened juice
- dried fruit, such as prunes, raisins, cranberries, apples
- dried or canned soups (low-fat and low-salt)
- canned vegetables, such as tomatoes, pumpkin, corn
- low sodium vegetable bouillon
- olive, canola and/or sesame oil
- vinegar (red wine and balsamic are both good for salads)
- cornstarch
- flours (enriched white, whole wheat, besan, soy or millet)
- brown sugar
- honey
- condiments, such as salsa, mustard, low-sodium soy sauce
- herbs and spices, such as basil, chili powder, cinnamon, cloves, curry powder, dill, garlic powder, marjoram, nutmeg, oregano, pepper, red pepper flakes, thyme
- tea and coffee.

More salmon, less meat



Abe Koop now lives in Abbotsford, B.C., but he was brought up on a farm. “My folks liked their meat and potatoes,” he says, “which was no problem for them, because they worked really hard. But I became a teacher, which just isn’t the same.”

Abe thought he was eating pretty well, though, and even getting enough exercise, until one day in May 2002. He went out to mow the lawn for the first time since winter ended and found that he had to sit down after just two turns.

“I discovered that even with low cholesterol, you could have a heart condition,” says Abe, now 73. “One artery was 90 percent clogged and one was 50 percent clogged. They did an angioplasty, put me on some medications, I changed my diet, increased my exercise – and I haven’t had a symptom since.”

Today, Abe’s job is to grill salmon at least once a week. “My wife is a wonderful cook, so I don’t get into the kitchen much except to clean up. But I do use the barbecue all year round. In the winter, I just haul it out to the edge of the garage. We had fish very seldom before, but now we’ve gotten into the habit – and we love it.”



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In your freezer, keep:

- frozen vegetables
- frozen fruit, including blueberries and mixed berries
- frozen fish, turkey or chicken, and
- whole grain sliced bread, buns, bagels, flatbread, roti and pitas.

In your fridge, keep:

- low-fat milk, cheese and yogurt
- eggs
- ready-to-eat vegetables
- ready-to-eat salad greens
- low-fat, low-salt salad dressing, and
- tofu.

What utensils do I need?

It doesn't take a lot of fancy equipment to cook healthy meals, including all the recipes in Chapter 11. You just need:

- two cutting boards (see Chapter 9 on food safety for why you should have two boards)
- three pots: one 1/2-quart (or litre), one 1-quart (or litre) and one 3-quart (or litre)
- two non-stick frying pans: one small and one large
- a blender
- two mixing bowls: one small and one large
- two casserole dishes, oven proof and microwave proof: one small and one medium
- assorted containers that can go from fridge to freezer to microwave
- a 12-cup muffin tin
- a loaf pan
- a baking sheet or large metal cake tin

- a two-cup measuring container
- a strainer
- a vegetable peeler
- one set of small measuring cups
- one set of measuring spoons
- a whisk
- a grater
- a steamer that fits inside saucepans
- two spatulas: one rubber to clean out bowls, one egg turner
- a paring knife
- a small chopping knife
- a large cook's knife
- a can opener (an electric can opener can be easier on arthritic hands)
- a slotted spoon
- a mixing spoon
- a potato masher
- a pair of tongs, and
- two pot holders or oven gloves.

How can I modify my recipes to be healthier?

There are many easy ways to modify your favourite recipes to be lower in fat, salt and sugar. You can also easily increase the fibre. Experiment a bit to find what tastes best to you.

To reduce fat

- For baking, use about one-quarter less than the recipe calls for. For example, if a recipe calls for one-quarter cup of shortening or butter (four tablespoons), use three tablespoons of vegetable oil instead. (However, do not substitute oil for margarine or shortening when



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making cookies. Oil will make the cookies feel and taste greasy and is likely to change both texture and volume.) If your recipe tastes really flat, use a very small amount of butter for a flavour boost.

- Cut the liquid fat your recipe calls for by one-third. For example, if your recipe calls for one cup of oil, use two-thirds of a cup instead.
- Use skim milk instead of whole milk.
- Try steamed or boiled brown rice instead of fried rice, pilau or biryani.
- Use canned evaporated skim milk instead of either whipping cream or regular evaporated milk.
- Use low-fat sour cream, cheese, mayonnaise and yogurt instead of regular products. Or, instead of sour cream, substitute buttermilk or low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt.
- Make yogurt cheese by draining fat-free plain yogurt overnight. Use it in recipes calling for cream cheese.
- Replace the fat in your baking recipes with an equal amount of applesauce, mashed bananas, pureed prunes, pureed pumpkin or grated zucchini. (You may need to add a little water or skim milk to all of these but the applesauce.)
- Use two egg whites for one egg to reduce both saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Always choose lean red meats and trim off the excess fat. Trim the fat and skin from chicken and turkey.

Save 44 grams of fat!

1 cup sour cream = 495 calories = 48 grams total fat.

But:

1 cup low-fat yogurt = 145 calories = 4 grams total fat.

To reduce salt

- Use low-sodium or unsalted ingredients in your recipes or replace the salt with other interesting ingredients, such as herbs, dry mustard, spices, lemon juice, ginger or garlic. Also try the recipe for Universal Seasoning in Chapter 11.
- Choose fresh or frozen food to use in your recipes.
- Avoid using processed cheese and processed, cured or smoked meats, such as sausage, hot dogs, ham, bacon, pepperoni and smoked fish.
- Avoid using pickles, pickled foods, relishes, dips and olives and prepared salad dressings. Use salsa and oyster or soy sauce, even low-sodium soy sauce, in small amounts.

To reduce sugar

- Cut the sugar in your baked goods by one-quarter to one-third and replace the sugar with flour. Your cookies and muffins will still taste the same. However, do not decrease sugar in yeast breads because sugar feeds the yeast.
- Add spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg or vanilla to your recipes to make them taste sweeter.
- Avoid using sweet sauces in your recipes, such as sweet plum or hoisin sauce.
- Use fresh or frozen vegetables instead of preserved sweet and sour vegetables.

To increase fibre

- Choose whole grains, such as whole wheat pasta and brown rice, instead of white or refined products.
- Use whole wheat flour, oatmeal and whole cornmeal in your recipes. You can substitute whole wheat flour for up to one-half of all-purpose flour without changing the taste.



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Can I eat out and still eat healthy food?

You can eat a healthy meal no matter where you are. Don't hesitate to phone ahead and ask questions about what meals would be right for you or to ask your server about how the food is prepared. Also:

- To start your meal, choose vegetable soup or salad. Have the dressing on the side, so that you can add just a little bit.
- Instead of fries, ask for steamed rice, baked potato with sour cream on the side or extra vegetables.
- Look for entrées that are steamed, baked, broiled, braised, poached or grilled. Avoid anything sautéed, pan-fried or deep-fried.
- If you can't find what you want, tell your server how you would like your meat or fish cooked: grilled or broiled, for example, without added salt or high-fat sauces. Restaurants want your business and most chefs are very accommodating.
- To reduce the serving size, ask for a small or senior's portion, share your meal with a friend, or eat half and take the other half home for tomorrow.
- Choose tomato instead of cream sauce for your pasta and sauces without cream for your curry. If you're choosing pizza, avoid pepperoni, sausage and bacon. Consider asking for half the normal cheese, and extra vegetable toppings. Try a whole wheat crust.
- When at a salad bar, choose lots of vegetables and top with low-fat or non-fat dressing.
- Order fresh fruit, sorbet or frozen yogurt for dessert. Avoid ice cream, sherbet pie and dessert soups such as red bean. South Asian sweets, such as barfi, gulab jaman and jalabi are high calorie choices that you should avoid. Order your chai made with low-fat milk.
- Consider having your coffee or tea and dessert at home, where you know you have healthy choices available.

Healthy Eating

QUIZ #7

True or False?

1. Eating out is impossible if I'm watching fat and calories.

False. You can eat out and still eat a healthy meal, if you just follow a few simple rules: no fried foods, lots of vegetables, skip the butter and sauce, opt for small portions and take the extra home for another day.

2. My favourite recipes won't taste the same if I reduce the fat, salt and sugar.

False. We bet you will not even be able to taste the difference if you follow the tips in this chapter, or that you will come to like your recipes even more, because you know they are better for you.

3. I need lots and lots of equipment to make healthy meals, like a food processor and a juicer and all those other things they advertise on TV.

False. You can make great tasting, very healthy food with regular kitchen appliances and utensils and a few pots and pans. The only real "extra" we recommend here is a blender to make fruit smoothies. You may also want to consider a small countertop grill or a toaster oven to make cooking small items quick and easy.