

MAIN MEALS

Solve the “What’s for Dinner?” dilemma once and for all. The toughest part of satisfying a child’s appetite seems to occur during the dinner hour itself. Even with the least-finicky eater, it can be a challenge to come up with meals that are healthy and packed with vital nutrition.

Why not make dinnertime a real family affair? Have your kids participate in the entire process (assigning tasks depending on their age). Have them help plan the family meal, draw up the grocery list, go to the store, unpack the groceries, and then prepare the meal with you (or by themselves, if old enough). If your child is more aware of the effort that goes into preparing food, it increases the likelihood that he or she will appreciate the meal more.

Don’t underestimate your child’s taste. For example, there are a number of fish recipes in this chapter. If you don’t serve fish to your family because you believe your child won’t eat it, you will miss an opportunity to broaden your child’s sense of culinary adventure. It’s usually not the food itself that causes the dislike but the way it may be prepared. With these recipes, a child’s palate has been considered first and foremost. And even if he or she doesn’t take to a new recipe on the first try, give it time and try it again. It’s the only way to get your child’s view of food broadened to include a wide variety of foods. Before you know it, they’ll be anxiously digging in before the plate hits the table!

HERE'S THE BEEF—AND FRUIT—KEBABS

Sweet and succulent, these are great year-round kebabs. On the grill or under the broiler, they offer a taste of the Mediterranean any time of year.

Serves: 6 / **Serving size:** 1 kebab

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 6 to 8 minutes

32 ml (2 tablespoons) lime juice

2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

Salt and pepper to taste

500 g (16 oz) lean sirloin steak, trimmed of fat and cut into 1-inch cubes

12 dried apricots

240 ml (6 fl oz) boiling water

1. Preheat an oven broiler or outdoor grill.

2. In a small mixing bowl, stir together the lime juice, garlic, salt and pepper. Add the beef cubes and toss to coat. Set aside to marinate.

3. Meanwhile, put the apricots in a small bowl and pour the boiling water over them. Set aside to soften for 10 minutes then drain.

4. Alternately thread the beef and apricots onto 6 metal skewers or bamboo skewers that have been soaked in water for 30 minutes. Place the kebabs on a foil lined grill tray or directly on a well-oiled grill rack and cook 3 to 4 minutes per side or until desired doneness. Let rest 2 minutes then serve.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 270

Total Fat 9g

Saturated Fat 3g

Carbohydrate 11g

Fiber 1g

Protein 26g



BOLD, BRASSY AND BEEFY SKILLET PASTA

You can beef up almost any shaped pasta in this super skillet supper. It's a hearty, beefy flash in the pan.

Serves: 6 / Serving size: 1/2 cup

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

10 ml (2 teaspoons) olive oil

½ small onion, peeled and minced

1 medium-size carrot, peeled and diced

3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

500 g (2 ½ cups) chopped tomatoes, drained

16 ml (1 tablespoon) tomato paste

Salt and pepper to taste

500 g (16 oz) lean ground beef

230 g (8 oz) dry corkscrew pasta, cooked

according to package directions

25 g (¼ cup) Parmesan cheese

1. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrot, and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the beef and cook, breaking up any lumps, until no longer pink, about 5 minutes.

2. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste, salt and pepper. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes.

3. Add the cooked pasta and stir well to coat. Continue cooking until piping hot, about 2 minutes.

4. Top each serving with a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 281

Total Fat 6g

Saturated Fat 2g

Carbohydrate 35g

Fiber 3g

Protein 24g



OVER THE RAINBOW CREAMY BOW-TIES

Bow-ties are optional, but the multi-colored veggies are a feast for the eye and taste buds. There's nothing formal about this simple yet healthy dish, so any fun-shaped pasta can be used.

Serves: 6 / **Serving size:** 1 cup

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

For the vegetable mixture:

10 ml (2 teaspoons) olive oil

1 small red bell pepper, trimmed, cored, and sliced into thin strips

1 medium-size carrot, peeled and thinly sliced

1 cup small broccoli florets

For the cream sauce:

10 ml (2 teaspoons) canola oil

1 tablespoon all purpose flour

480 ml (16 fl oz) low fat milk

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

Salt and pepper to taste

75 g (¾ cup) shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese

2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese

230 g (8 oz) bow-tie pasta, cooked according to package directions and drained

1. Prepare the vegetable mixture: Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pepper and carrot and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the broccoli, cover with a lid, reduce the heat to low and allow to cook until the florets are crisp tender. Remove from the heat and set aside.

2. Prepare the cream sauce: Heat the canola oil in a medium-size saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the flour and cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture begins to bubble but not brown, about 3 minutes. Gradually whisk in the milk and continue whisking constantly until the sauce is smooth and somewhat thickened (is able to coat the back of a spoon.) Add the nutmeg, and salt and pepper to taste and remove from the heat. Immediately add the cheeses and whisk until smooth.

3. Add the vegetable mixture and cooked pasta to the sauce and stir well to combine.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 261

Total Fat 8g

Saturated Fat 3g

Carbohydrate 36g

Fiber 2g

Protein 13



ROTINI WITH VEGETABLE TOMATO SAUCE

When the cupboard seems bare, you need only a few ingredients to pull this saucy dish together. Serve with a tossed salad, and you have a quick and healthy weekday meal.

Serves: 4 / **Serving size:** 1 cup

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 50 minutes

10 ml (2 teaspoons) olive oil

1 medium-size onion, peeled and diced

2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

One medium size can crushed tomatoes

48 ml (3 tablespoons) tomato paste

½ tablespoon sugar

Salt and pepper to taste

1 small zucchini, trimmed and diced

1 medium-size carrot, peeled and diced

230 g (8 oz) rotini pasta, cooked according to package directions and drained

25 g (¼ cup) grated Parmesan cheese

1. Heat the oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste, sugar, salt and pepper and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes.

2. Add the zucchini and carrots and continue to simmer until the vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes.

3. Add the cooked pasta to the sauce and stir well to coat. Continue to heat a few minutes more, if necessary, and serve immediately, topped with a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 330

Total Fat 5g

Saturated Fat 1.5g

Carbohydrate 58g

Fiber 7g

Protein 13g



ZESTY PORK FAJITAS

The spice combination of these fajitas is fabulous. You can easily substitute strips of chicken or steak for the pork. Serve this with fat-free refried beans for a complete dinner that is high in protein.

Serves: 6 / **Serving size:** 1 fajita

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 15-20 minutes

10 ml (2 teaspoons) olive oil

340 g (12 oz) pork tenderloin, trimmed of fat and cut into ¼-inch strips

1 medium green bell pepper, trimmed, cored, and thinly sliced

1 large onion, peeled and thinly sliced

1 teaspoon chili powder

Salt and pepper to taste

120 ml (4 fl oz) canned diced tomatoes, drained

Six 15 cm (6-inch) whole wheat flour tortillas

60 ml (2 fl oz) mild or spicy salsa

60 ml (2 fl oz) reduced-fat sour cream

1. Preheat the oven to 180 C (350 F) degrees.
2. Heat the oil in a large heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pork and cook, stirring often, until lightly browned and no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Remove the pork with a slotted spoon and set aside on a warm plate.
3. Wrap the tortillas in foil and warm in the oven for 6 minutes.
4. Add the green pepper, onion, chili powder, and salt and pepper, to the skillet and cook over medium heat, stirring often, until the vegetables are softened, about 5 minutes. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, add back the cooked pork, and continue cooking a further minute.
5. To serve, spoon some of the pork mixture onto a warmed tortilla, add a dollop of salsa and sour cream, and fold up the bottom and sides to make a fajita. Repeat with the remaining tortillas.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 231

Total Fat 8g

Saturated Fat 2g

Carbohydrate 20g

Fiber 2g

Protein 19g



I MADE IT MYSELF CHICKEN FRIED RICE

This is the perfect alternative to high-sodium restaurant fried rice. You can easily substitute diced cooked pork or small shrimp for the chicken.

Serves: 5 / **Serving size:** about 1 cup

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

10 ml (2 teaspoons) peanut oil

2 spring onions, trimmed and sliced

½ medium-size celery stalk, trimmed and diced

½ medium-size red bell pepper, trimmed, cored, and diced

1 garlic clove, peeled and minced

150 g (1 cup) frozen peas, thawed

125 g (1 cup) cubed leftover cooked chicken

500 g (2 cups) cooked brown or white rice, chilled for at least 4 hours

48 ml (3 tablespoons) reduced-sodium soy sauce

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

Cooking spray

1 large egg, beaten

1. Heat the oil in a large wok or heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add the scallions, celery and red pepper and stir fry until crisp tender, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic, peas, chicken and rice and stir fry until heated through, about 5 minutes. Add the soy sauce and ground pepper and cook a further 2 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, in a small frying pan coated with cooking spray, scramble the egg over medium heat until cooked through. Immediately add to the fried rice, stir well, and serve.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 210

Total Fat 6g

Saturated Fat 1g

Carbohydrate 25g

Fiber 3g

Protein 14g



NUTTY PECAN CRUSTED FISH

Flake is so delicious that it's a great way to get everyone eating more lean fish. And who can resist that crunchy pecan crust?

Serves: 4 / serving size: One 150 g (5 oz) fillet

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 10 to 12 minutes

Four 150 g (5 oz) flake or cod fillets

2 tablespoons all purpose flour

80 ml (3 fl oz) low-fat buttermilk

Dash of Tabasco® sauce

45 g (½ cup) dry plain breadcrumbs

3 tablespoons pecan pieces

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon garlic powder

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

10 ml (2 teaspoons) canola oil

Lemon wedges to serve

1. Place the flour on a sheet of waxed paper. In a shallow dish, combine the buttermilk and Tabasco. In another shallow dish, combine the breadcrumbs, pecans, salt, garlic powder and pepper and stir well.

2. Coat the fillets first in the flour, shaking off any excess, dip them in the buttermilk, then coat well with the breadcrumb mixture. Set the fillets aside on a clean plate.

3. Heat the oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Fry the fillets until golden, 5 to 6 minutes per side. Place on a paper towel to drain, then serve immediately with the lemon wedges.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 260

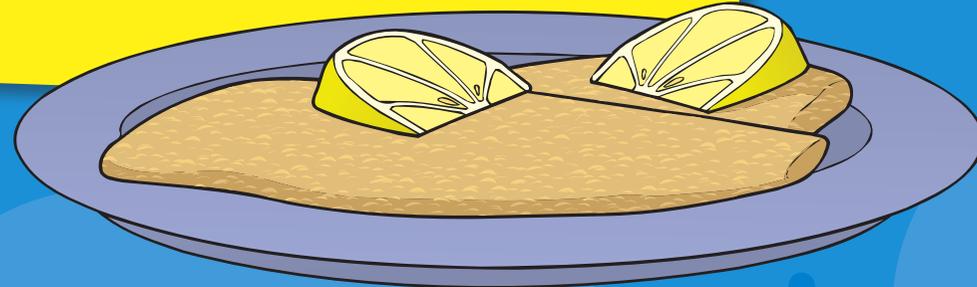
Total Fat 8g

Saturated Fat 1g

Carbohydrate 14g

Fiber 1g

Protein 32g



SWEET SHRIMP ON A STICK

When grilling time is at hand, reach for the skewers. These simple and savory kebabs are created with all fresh ingredients. It's time to plan a luau!

Serves: 4 / **Serving size:** 1 kebab

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 4 minutes

48 ml (3 tablespoons) fresh lime juice

16 ml (1 tablespoon) honey

5 ml (1 teaspoon) Dijon mustard

Salt and pepper to taste

500 g (16 oz) large shrimp, peeled and deveined, tails left on

½ medium-size fresh pineapple, peeled, cored, and cut into 1-inch cubes

1. In a medium-size mixing bowl, whisk together the lime juice, honey, mustard, salt and pepper. Add the shrimp and toss well to coat. Allow to marinate at room temperature for 15 minutes.

2. Preheat an oven broiler or outdoor grill. Alternatively thread the shrimp and pineapple onto 4 metal skewers or bamboo skewers that have been soaked in warm water for 20 minutes.

3. Place the skewers on a grill tray lined with foil or directly on a well-oiled grill rack and cook until the shrimp is pink and the pineapple slightly browned, about 2 minutes per side. Serve immediately.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 168

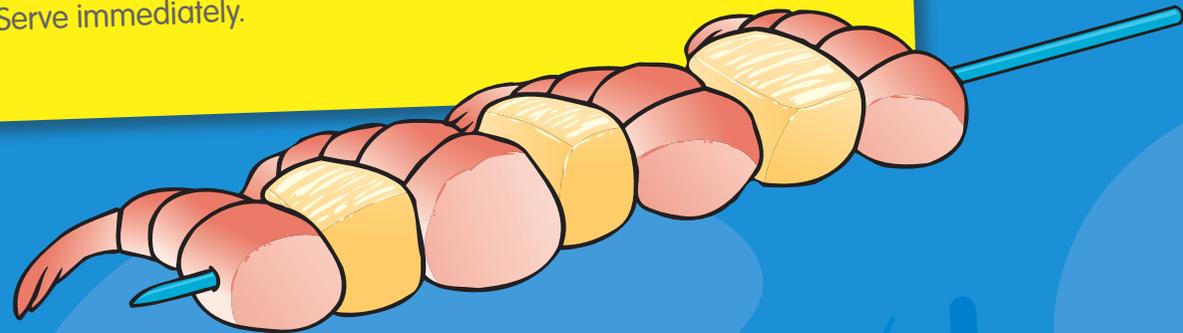
Total Fat 2g

Saturated Fat .5g

Carbohydrate 14g

Fiber 1g

Protein 23g



FRESH AND FLAVORFUL FISH AND CHIPS

Ahoy, mates — come on board with this healthful version of a famous fast food. Mild, sweet cod and crispy seasoned potatoes keep this meal anchored in flavor.

Serves: 4 / **Serving size:** 115 g (4 oz) fish and 4 chips

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 40 minutes

For the chips:

2 teaspoons each paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder

Salt and pepper to taste

16 ml (1 tablespoon) olive oil

2 medium-size Idaho or russet potatoes, unpeeled and cut into 8 wedges each

Cooking spray

For the fish:

500 g (16 oz) fresh cod, cut into 3-x-1-inch strips

25 g (¼ cup) all-purpose flour

120 ml (4 fl oz) low-fat buttermilk

90 g (1 cup) dry plain breadcrumbs

Salt and pepper to taste

16 ml (1 tablespoon) olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 220 C (425 F) degrees.
2. In a medium-size bowl whisk together the paprika, garlic and onion powders, salt, pepper and oil. Add the potato wedges and toss to coat. Place the potatoes in a single layer on a baking sheet coated lightly with cooking spray, and bake, turning once, until fork tender and crispy brown, 35 to 40 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, place the flour in a large ziploc bag, pour the buttermilk into a shallow bowl, and in another shallow bowl, combine the breadcrumbs, salt and pepper. Working with a few fish strips at a time, toss them in the flour, shake off any excess, dip in the buttermilk, and coat with the breadcrumbs. Set the strips on a clean plate and place in the refrigerator for 20 minutes.
4. Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Fry the fish strips in a single layer until golden brown, about 3 minutes per side, then set to drain on a paper towel.
5. When the potatoes are done, serve immediately with the fish strips.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 370

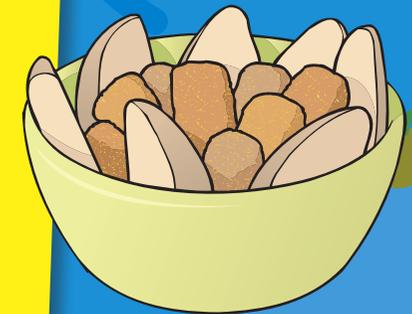
Total Fat 9g

Saturated Fat 2g

Carbohydrate 43g

Fiber 4g

Protein 27g



"NOT-SO-SLOPPY" SLOPPY JOES

These open-faced Joes, made with chicken, are the best things going since the original beef-based ones. They're simple and delicious, not to mention healthy. Do keep a few napkins on hand, however, just in case!

Serves: 4 / **Serving size:** ½ a bun

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

500 g (16 oz) lean ground chicken

1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

1 teaspoon chili powder

½ teaspoon paprika

Salt and pepper to taste

1 medium-size red or green bell pepper, trimmed, cored, and finely diced

1 medium-size zucchini, trimmed and finely diced

One medium size can diced tomatoes, drained

120 ml (4 fl oz) purchased reduced-sugar BBQ sauce

3 whole wheat hamburger buns, split and toasted

1. In a large heavy skillet over medium-high heat, cook the chicken with the onion, garlic, chili powder, paprika, salt and pepper, stirring often and breaking up any lumps, until the meat is browned, 5 to 6 minutes.

2. Stir in the bell pepper and zucchini and continue to cook over medium-low heat until vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes more. Add the diced tomatoes and BBQ sauce, reduce the heat to low, and simmer, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes.

3. Spoon some of the mixture over a toasted bun half and serve immediately.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 202

Total Fat 8g

Saturated Fat 2g

Carbohydrate 20g

Fiber 4g

Protein 15g



ZIPPY ZAPATA MEXICAN TURKEY BURGERS

When you can't decide whether you want chili, tortillas or burgers, make it easy on yourself and have them all at once! Forming the patties into oblong shapes helps them fit easily into the tortillas for little hands to manage.

Serves: 4 / **Serving size:** One 115 g (4 oz) burge

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

For the burgers:

340 g (12 oz) lean ground turkey

115 g (4 oz) lean ground beef

80 ml (3 fl oz) mild salsa

2 tablespoons dry breadcrumbs

1 teaspoon dried oregano

¼ teaspoon dried cumin

Salt and pepper

Four 15 cm (6-inch) flour tortillas

Handful shredded lettuce

60 ml (2 fl oz) mild salsa

1. Preheat the grill setting of an oven or outdoor grill. Preheat the oven to 180 C (350 F) degrees.

2. In a medium-size mixing bowl, stir together the burger ingredients until very well combined. Form into four oblong-shaped patties and set aside.

3. Place the burgers on a grill tray or directly on a well-oiled grill rack and cook, turning once, until browned and well cooked, about 15 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, wrap the tortillas in foil and heat in the oven 8 to 10 minutes.

4. To serve, place a burger in the middle of a tortilla, top with some lettuce and salsa, and roll up tightly.

Nutrition Per Serving

Calories 308

Total Fat 12g

Saturated Fat 3.5g

Carbohydrate 22g

Fiber 2g

Protein 27g

