

# NUTRITION GUIDE

MODULE 2 • BALANCED LIFE • WHOLE-PERSON PROGRAM



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## INTRODUCTION

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Eating nutritiously means making choices that support your health. While it's important to consider quality nutrients, personal preferences are also important. In short, eating should be both nourishing *and* enjoyable.

Whether you're cooking at home, ordering in, or eating out, you can empower yourself to learn some basics, get creative, and explore what aligns with your current preferences, circumstances, and health goals.

## COOKING AND MEAL PREP

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Nourishing yourself confidently in the kitchen can be a lot of fun. Cooking often requires some knowledge, creativity, and planning, but you don't need to spend hours making lengthy shopping lists, preparing complicated ingredients, and juggling multiple recipes.

## TIPS

### 1| Keep it simple and reduce stress.

Keeping it simple increases the odds that you'll find time to cook. Here are a few ideas for stress-free cooking:

- Use canned or frozen vegetables if you're short on chopping time.
- Shop for ready-to-go items during busy weeks – for example, pre-diced vegetables, steamable grain pouches, and rotisserie chicken.
- Look for recipes with five ingredients or less. Save gourmet dishes for special occasions.

## 2| Consider nutrients.

Include a variety of carbohydrates, proteins, and healthy fats on your weekly grocery list. Including these macronutrients, along with plenty of fiber, will provide health-supporting balance to meals. It will also help you stay full longer and prevent blood sugar spikes and crashes.

## 3| Learn what you like.

One barrier to healthful eating is that people claim they don't enjoy eating vegetables or other nutrient-rich foods. With a little creativity and flexible thinking, you can transform recipes to use the foods you do enjoy eating. For example, consider foods in the same general "food family." If a recipe calls for quinoa, but you prefer rice, swap it out! If you're not a fan of kale, try spinach instead.

## 4| Invest in kitchen tools over time.

You don't need to rush out and buy lots of fancy kitchen gadgets. Take note of what you have and what might simplify your cooking routine. For example, a food processor can save you time dicing veggies and can be used to blend sauces, dips, and soups.

## 5| Make it fun.

Think of meal prep as self-care time or an opportunity to bond with others. Listen to your favorite podcast while dicing vegetables or invite a family member to help you in the kitchen.

## 6| Prep ingredients instead of meals.

You're more likely to throw together a healthy meal when it's already been prepped and seasoned. For example, prepare for the week on Sunday by grilling a pound of chicken, cooking a box of quinoa, and roasting two pans of vegetables with one swirl of healthy oil, seasoned to taste. Store each component in separate glass food storage containers in the refrigerator. Now you have large containers of ingredients ready to mix and match throughout the week to keep things interesting!

Some options to spice things up: Add salsa and avocado for a Mexican twist or fresh basil with lemon juice and olive oil for something Italian. At the end of the week, take your leftover roasted vegetables and protein and add some broth to simmer for a delicious soup.

## 7| Reuse ingredients to make multiple meals.

Prepare more food than you think you'll need at once and repurpose the leftovers in different ways. Leftovers are more exciting – and might appeal to more people – with a few updates and additions.

## RECIPES

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### Recycled Recipes

Read on for a few examples of how you might reuse the same ingredients to make multiple meals.

**Note:** Feel free to swap proteins – try a plant-based protein, like beans or tempeh.

## Meal 1: Chickpea Pasta with Chicken, Asparagus, and Zucchini

Imagine you roasted chicken, asparagus, and zucchini and cooked a box of chickpea pasta for dinner one night. What could you do with the leftovers? Here are some ideas:

### ASPARAGUS PEA PASTA

 Serves: 2

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup plant-based pasta, such as chickpea or lentil
- 1 tablespoon butter or ghee
- 1/2 medium onion, minced
- 1 clove garlic
- 2 cups asparagus, sliced into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta
- 2 tablespoons chopped dill
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### Directions

1. Prepare pasta as directed.
2. While pasta is cooking, heat a large pan over medium heat. Add butter, onion, and garlic. Cook until onions are soft, about 3–4 minutes.
3. Add asparagus and cook for another 2 minutes.
4. Add peas and cook until they're warm, about 2 minutes. Set aside.
5. Drain pasta and add it to pan with vegetables. Add feta, dill, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Toss until well combined.

## ZUCCHINI SALAD WITH CHICKEN

 Serves: 2

### Ingredients

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon dill
- 2 zucchini, trimmed
- 1/2 medium red onion, sliced
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cup asparagus
- 4 ounces chicken
- 1/4 cup feta

### Directions

1. Prepare dressing by whisking together olive oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, mustard, lemon juice, and dill.
2. Use spiral cutter or vegetable peeler to create long, thin zucchini “noodles.” Pat dry with a clean towel.
3. Add zucchini, onion, tomatoes, and asparagus to bowl. Top with chicken and feta.
4. Pour dressing over top when ready to serve.

### Meal 2: Steak with Southwestern Salad

Imagine you prepared a skillet steak and served it with a Southwestern salad (featuring avocado, bell peppers, corn, and Roma tomatoes) and homemade baked tortilla chips (using store-bought tortillas). You planned ahead to buy and prepare more than was needed for this special meal, so you could use it for lunch the next day.



## EASY BEEF FAJITAS

 Serves: 2

### Ingredients

- 1/2 pound sliced beef round or sirloin steaks
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon olive oil
- 1/2 medium red onion, sliced
- 2 large bell peppers
- 2 Roma tomatoes
- 3/4 cup Mexican blend cheese
- Sliced avocado to top

### *For fajita seasoning:*

- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

1. Mix ingredients for fajita seasoning in bowl. Stir until well combined and set aside.
2. Slice beef into thin strips. Season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
3. Heat large skillet to high. Coat with cooking spray.
4. Add half the beef and half the fajita seasoning. Cook for 1 minute. Flip beef and cook for an additional minute. Repeat until beef is cooked and seasoned. Set beef aside.
5. Return skillet to heat and add oil. Add onions, bell peppers, salt, and pepper. Cook until soft, about 5–7 minutes.
6. Return beef to pan, add tomatoes, and toss. Cook for 2–3 minutes. Sprinkle cheese over top. Cover and cook for 5–7 minutes, or until cheese melts. Top with avocado.



## Go-To Recipes

Expanding culinary creativity doesn't have to be difficult. In fact, there are many healthy and simple strategies for preparing a variety of foods.

## VEGETABLES

### SIMPLE VEGETABLE STEAM

#### Directions

1. Dice vegetables.
2. Heat 2–3 tablespoons of broth per pound of vegetables in a skillet over medium-high heat.
3. Once broth begins to steam, add vegetables (along with garlic or any spices you wish), cover, and cook for 5–7 minutes. Remove from heat.
4. Add flavor to your vegetables any way you wish! Try a drizzle of olive oil, fresh lemon or lime juice, tamari, nutritional yeast, or parmesan.

**Tip:** This option works well for most vegetables, although heartier choices (such as beets and potatoes) may need to steam much longer to achieve tenderness. You'll likely need to add more broth as well.

## ROASTED VEGETABLES

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Uniformly dice vegetables and toss with oil and spices.
3. Place mixture in single layer on rimmed baking sheet. (You may want to line it with parchment paper.)
4. Roast for 30–45 minutes. (Some vegetables will cook more quickly than others – e.g., broccoli roasts faster than beets – so take the faster-cooking vegetables out of the oven earlier.)

**Tip:** Roasting is an easy way to bring out the natural sweetness of vegetables.

## EASY GREENS PESTO

### Ingredients

- 4–5 cups of raw greens (any combination of kale, spinach, and herbs)
- 3/4 cup nuts (walnuts, pecans, cashews, etc.)
- 1 cup shredded cheese or nutritional yeast
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 clove garlic
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- Other spices of your choice

### Directions

1. Blend in large food processor until uniform.

**Tip:** Pesto is delicious as a dip or a pizza, pasta, or sandwich topping.

## GRAINS AND LEGUMES

### GRAIN PILAF

#### Directions

1. Rinse grains well until water runs clear.
2. In a pan, bring broth to a boil.
3. Add grains plus your favorite spices and return to a boil.
4. Reduce heat, cover with tight-fitting lid, and let simmer as indicated.
5. Once water is absorbed, remove from heat, let sit for five minutes, then fluff grains with fork.
6. Mix and match your favorite ingredients to create an interesting pilaf. Try diced herbs, diced carrots, dried fruit, nuts, peas, or sautéed onions.

**Tip:** The grain-to-water ratio and cooking time may vary depending on the grain. Here are the ratios and cooking times for barley, brown rice, and millet:

- Barley (pearled): 2 cups liquid per 1 cup grain; simmer 40–50 minutes
- Brown rice: 2.5 cups liquid per 1 cup grain; simmer 40–50 minutes
- Millet: 2 cups liquid per 1 cup grain; simmer 20–25 minutes

## GUT-FRIENDLY BEANS

### Directions

1. Rinse beans well and soak in water overnight.
2. The next day, drain soaking water. Add beans and fresh water or broth (3 cups liquid to 1 cup beans) to a large pot.
3. Before boiling, add digestion boosters – a strip of kombu seaweed, bay leaves, fresh ginger slices, fennel seeds, and/or cumin seeds – to pot.
4. Cover and bring beans to a boil.
5. Reduce to a simmer and tilt lid to allow steam to escape.
6. Cook beans until tender (1–1.5 hours).
7. Cool beans in cooking liquid and transfer, along with liquid, to storage container.

**Tip:** While tasty, beans aren't always friendly to the digestive tract. Soaking them overnight will help eliminate the chemical that can cause bloating or gas.

## HOMEMADE HUMMUS

### Ingredients

- 1 can beans (or 1.5 cups cooked beans/lentils)
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/2 cup tahini (sesame seed paste) (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- Spices (such as black pepper, cumin, paprika, turmeric, etc.)

### Directions

1. Blend all ingredients in food processor until creamy.
2. Add a few tablespoons of water to thin out if needed.

**Tip:** Hummus makes a delicious pizza or sandwich topping and can be made into a “sauce” by adding extra olive oil or water. While traditionally made with garbanzo beans, you can add variety by using any type of bean or lentil you like. You can also add nuts.

## OVERNIGHT OATS

### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup instant oats
- 1/2 cup milk of your choice
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- 1/2 cup fruit
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon (and other spices you enjoy)

### Directions

1. Add oats to large Tupperware or mason jar.
2. Add milk and chia seeds and mix well.
3. Add fruit and spices and mix again.
4. Place mixture in fridge and enjoy the next morning. You can heat up the oats or eat them cold. Consider varying the fruit and top with your favorite nut butter.

**Tip:** This idea lets your breakfast “cook” overnight.



## ANIMAL-BASED PROTEIN

### BROILED CHICKEN BREASTS

#### Directions

1. Season chicken with fresh lemon juice and spices of your choice.
2. Preheat broiler on high and put a stainless-steel skillet or cast-iron pan six inches away from the heat.
3. Add chicken to hot pan (skin side up) and cook until internal temperature reaches 165°F–175°F, approximately 7 minutes. (Larger pieces may take longer.)
4. Remove from heat and add extra flavor with fresh herbs, salsa, or sauce.

**Tip:** Keeping the skin on will maintain moisture.

## FISH BAKE

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. On a sheet of parchment paper (about 18 inches), add one fish fillet and seasonings of your choice (fresh herbs, orange slices, spices, and/or small diced vegetables).
3. Fold paper over fish and seasonings and crimp edges together to seal.
4. Bake for 15 minutes per inch of fish thickness, until internal temperature reaches a minimum of 145°F.
5. Remove fish from oven and serve in or out of packet.

**Tip:** Baking fish in parchment paper steams it in its own juices and prevents overcooking.

## STOVETOP FRITTATA

### Ingredients

- 2 cups diced vegetables of your choice
- 8 eggs
- 2 teaspoons oil (avocado or coconut are good options for higher-heat cooking)
- Broth
- Spices of your choice (sea salt, pepper, cayenne, turmeric, garlic)

### Directions

1. In an 8-inch nonstick skillet or well-seasoned cast-iron pan, sauté vegetables in oil. Set aside.
2. In a bowl, beat eggs, broth, and spices together quickly.  
*Note: If you wish to add cheese, herbs, or greens, stir them into the egg mixture now.*
3. Add a little oil to pan. Pour eggs onto hot skillet and spread cooked vegetables evenly on top.
4. Cook for about 8 minutes, until eggs are almost set.
5. Cover skillet and cook for another 5 minutes or so, until eggs are firm.
6. Cool and cut into triangles.

**Tip:** Frittatas are a classic and creative way to enjoy eggs.

## EATING OUT AND ORDERING IN

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Whether you forgot to meal prep, aren't a confident or motivated chef, or are too exhausted to cook after a long day, rest assured it's possible to enjoy eating out or ordering in while making choices that support health. Though restaurants often sneak extra fat, salt, and sugar into meals, you can empower yourself to make menu selections that don't sacrifice taste or nutrition.

Your wellness goals are unique to you, and circumstances continually change, so choose ideas that work for you right now.

### TIPS

#### 1| Look closely at menu wording. Here are some helpful guidelines:

- Richer menu items, such as those fried and/or higher in salt or unhealthy fat, are often associated with words like *alfredo*, *au gratin*, *battered*, *breaded*, *creamy*, *crispy*, *crunchy*, *fried*, *fritters*, *loaded*, *pan-fried*, *smothered*, or *tempura*.
- Menu items high in added sugar are often described as *barbecue*, *glazed*, *honey-dipped*, *maple*, *sticky*, or *teriyaki*.
- Lighter and leaner menu items might be featured as *baked*, *broiled*, *broth-based*, *grilled*, *poached*, *sautéed*, or *steamed*.

#### 2| Fill up on non-starchy vegetables.

- Aim to fill half your order with brightly colored, non-starchy vegetables, including broccoli, beets, bell peppers, carrots, leafy greens, and zucchini. These vegetables are lower in carbohydrates and rich in fiber, vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients.

### 3| Keep animal-based protein portions in check.

- Take a peek at the size of your palm – it’s about the same size as one protein serving (three ounces). Use this visual to estimate the number of servings provided in your meal.

### 4| Opt for high-fiber starches. Here are some ideas:

- Choose whole-grain bread over refined white bread for sandwiches. Whole-grain or whole-wheat pastas, pizza crusts, tortillas, or wraps may be available, too.
- Try brown rice instead of white rice.
- Consider nutrient-dense grains, such as barley, quinoa, or millet, if available.
- Include starchy vegetables instead of refined grains at your meal. Examples include potatoes, sweet potatoes, or winter squash.

### 5| Don’t be afraid to make requests and substitutions. Here are some suggestions:

- Swap out your meal’s listed sides for nutrient-dense or lighter options (e.g., roasted vegetables instead of macaroni and cheese). “Off-menu” items might be available, too – just ask!
- Opt for lighter sauces rather than creamy ones, or leave them off altogether. Add extra herbs or spices for flavor.
- Ask for butter, dressings, and sauces on the side so you can more easily monitor how much you’re eating.
- Ask if your dish can be prepared using an alternate cooking method, such as grilled or sautéed instead of fried.

## 6| Portion your meal.

- Eating out and ordering in healthfully doesn't mean completely depriving yourself. However, being mindful and listening to your body's fullness cues can leave you satisfied rather than uncomfortably stuffed.

### Here are some tips:

- If you choose a heavier meal at a restaurant, plan to take home leftovers.
- If you order takeout, put half the meal into a different container to save for another time.
- Split a dish with someone.
- Order two appetizers instead of an entrée.

## NUTRITION GUIDE BY CUISINE

Check out the chart below for nutrition considerations by cuisine.

Cuisine	Nutrition Tips
American	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add extra vegetables to burgers and sandwiches.</li> <li>• Choose broth-based over cream-based soups.</li> <li>• Swap out French fries for fruit, a side salad, or another veggie.</li> <li>• Try a heart-healthy fatty fish, such as salmon or tuna.</li> </ul>

Cuisine	Nutrition Tips
<b>Chinese</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use low-sodium soy sauce instead of full-sodium soy sauce, duck sauce, or fish sauce.</li><li>• Limit foods made with monosodium glutamate (MSG), a flavor enhancer.</li><li>• Consider brown rice instead of white rice and/or steamed rice over fried rice.</li><li>• Sidestep fried meats and tofu – select baked or steamed options instead.</li><li>• Choose fresh summer rolls in lieu of egg or spring rolls.</li><li>• Ask for extra vegetables and health-boosting spices and herbs (such as ginger or lemongrass).</li></ul>
<b>Fast Food</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you're eating on the run, keep nutritious snacks (e.g., fruit and nuts) on hand to round out your fast food entrée.</li><li>• Keep portions in check by ordering off the kid's menu.</li><li>• Ask for extra lettuce and tomato on burgers and sandwiches.</li><li>• Select side options that include a fruit or vegetable.</li><li>• Remember, even if upsizing is a deal, it's probably not the best bargain for your health.</li></ul>



Cuisine	Nutrition Tips
<b>Indian</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Choose meats that are grilled or cooked in a tandoor rather than fried.</li><li>• Consider roti instead of naan – it’s usually made with whole wheat.</li><li>• Balance carbohydrate-rich breads, lentils, and rice with extra vegetables or a side salad.</li><li>• Limit fried appetizers, such as samosas or pakora.</li><li>• Ask for sauces on the side to control intake.</li><li>• Try dishes with health-boosting spices, such as ginger, cumin, and coriander.</li></ul>
<b>Italian</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Select tomato-based instead of cream-based sauces.</li><li>• Request extra vegetables in pasta dishes or add a side salad.</li><li>• Choose whole-wheat or bean-based pastas or polenta over refined white noodles.</li><li>• Pile on health-boosting herbs, such as basil, oregano, and thyme.</li><li>• Opt for dishes that include heart-healthy fatty fish, such as salmon, sardines, and tuna.</li><li>• Load vegetables on pizza and limit highly processed meats (e.g., pepperoni).</li></ul>

Cuisine	Nutrition Tips
<b>Latin American or Mexican</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Pile on the vegetables and go easy on the cheese.</li><li>● Opt for avocado, guacamole, or pico de gallo instead of queso or sour cream.</li><li>● Try black or pinto beans instead of refried beans.</li><li>● Skip fried meat and tortilla shells. Look for baked or grilled meat selections and fresh tortillas.</li></ul>
<b>Mediterranean</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Balance out pita with lots of vegetables.</li><li>● Choose grilled meats and seafood instead of fried or opt for fiber-rich lentils.</li><li>● Ask for extra health-boosting herbs, such as coriander, mint, and parsley.</li></ul>