


Recipe Makeover

It is common to have multiple recipe books on your bookshelf, binders filled with photocopied recipes and even recipe cue cards! Finding a recipe is as easy as typing a few ingredients into a search engine on the internet. But how do we transform these recipes into nutritious options for you and your dinner guests?



Photo from Unsplash.com

Follow the steps below to give your recipes an extra boost of nutrition.

Steps	Information
<p>Step 1: Choose unsaturated <u>fats</u> in moderation!</p>  <p><i>Photo from Unsplash.com</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose unsaturated fats like olive, canola, or safflower oil in place of saturated fats like lard, butter, ghee and shortening. • In baked goods like muffins, loaves or cookies replace half of the fat with a fruit puree like apple sauce, pumpkin/squash/prune/banana puree. • Choose low fat alternatives in place of full fat options like low-fat sour cream/Greek yogurt, 0-1% MF milk, and low-fat cheese. • Thicken soups with pureed vegetables, lentils, or tofu in place of full fat cream or sour cream. • Use parchment paper, silicone bakewear or non-stick pans to avoid having to add extra fat when cooking. • In marinades, use broth, fruit juice and vinegar to replace half of the oil. <p>Fun Fact: Typically, you can tell the difference between a saturated and unsaturated fat by the way it looks! Unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature (E.g., Olive oil, grapeseed oil, avocado oil) and saturated fats are solid at room temperature (E.g., Lard, butter, shortening)</p>

Step 2: Reduce the sugar!



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- Reduce the amount of sugar your recipe calls for by half and sweeten it naturally with pureed fruits like applesauce, mashed banana, or pumpkin/squash puree.
- Add extracts like vanilla, almond, maple or orange or warm spices like nutmeg, cinnamon, and ginger to provide a sweet flavour and aroma.
- Replace half or all the sugar in a recipe with sucralose, an artificial sweetener that does not increase your calorie or total added sugar intake.
- Replace $\frac{1}{4}$ of the sugar a recipe calls for with powdered milk, date/fig paste or flaxseed powder.

Fun Fact: All types of sugar such as white, brown, cane, raw, agave nectar, honey and maple syrup contribute to our total added sugar intake and should be limited. There is no health benefit to one form of sugar over another.

Step 3: Increase the fibre!



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- Replace refined flours such as white, all purpose or semolina flour with a whole grain alternative (whole grain whole wheat/quinoa/spelt/amaranth/buckwheat/oat flour, chickpea flour or lentil flour).
- Replace refined grains like white rice or white pasta with a whole grain alternative (quinoa, brown rice, whole grain, or lentil pasta).
- Add ground flax seeds, wheat bran, wheat germ or hemp hearts to provide an added source of fibre.
- In baked goods try adding seeds and nuts for texture, flavour, protein, and fibre.

Fun Fact: Fibre provides many health benefits including optimal blood sugar and cholesterol management, promotes satiety and regular bowel movements!



Step 4: Add a source of protein!



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- Add a source of protein to your baked goods like Greek yogurt, ricotta cheese, nuts, pureed lentils, soft tofu, and seeds.
- Aim to include a source of protein like lentils/beans, meat, fish, poultry, tofu, or eggs to your main course.
- Add pureed lentils or soft tofu to thicken soups.
- Use beans, lentils, or hard crumbled tofu to replace some of the potato and breadcrumbs in stuffing.
- Crumble hard tofu in pasta sauce in place of ground meat for a plant-based alternative protein source.
- Add a can of no salt added beans or lentils to your favourite soups or casseroles.

Fun Fact: You can replace egg in your baking with ground flaxseed and water. For each egg, use 1 tablespoon of ground flax seed with 3 tablespoons of water!

Step 5: Reduce the [salt](#)!



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- Replace salt with fresh or dried herbs or spices.
- Choose no salt added canned or dried beans and lentils.
- If using canned foods packed in brine, rinse them well prior to adding to your recipe.
- Use salt free non-hydrogenated margarine.
- Avoid adding salt to cooking water.
- For a different flavour use the zest or juice of citrus fruits or try different types of vinegar.
- Choose low salt soy sauce and condiments. Try making your own homemade ketchup or BBQ sauce and flavour them with non-salt seasonings.
- Look at the nutrition facts table and choose products with less than 15% daily value of sodium.
- Choose no salt-added broths or make your own and season with herbs and spices.
- **Fun Fact:** Sea salt, rock salt, sodium chloride, table salt, and Himalayan salt are all names for different types of salt. There is no health benefit from one type of salt to the another, and they all contribute to your total salt intake.



Step 6: Choose a Healthy Cooking Method!



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- Instead of frying or deep frying try a healthier cooking method like sautéing, roasting, barbequing, or baking. For more information see [Heart Healthy Cooking](#).
- Avoid charring foods (in particular animal-based proteins and starchy foods) as this has been shown to produce carcinogens that can increase your risk of developing cancer. Remove charred pieces of animal-based proteins prior to eating, and enjoy grilling foods like tofu, vegetables and plant-based proteins as these foods have a lower risk of producing carcinogens if charred.

Fun Fact: Olive oil can be used in cold foods like salad dressing and marinades, and in foods that are going to be cooked at low-medium heat. Its smoke point is between 375-400°F so avoid cooking at high heat or baking with olive oil.

Step 7: Include more vegetables!



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- Double the number of vegetables a recipe calls for. Add fresh or frozen vegetables to soups, casseroles, and stir-fries.
- Aim to include different colour vegetables to provide different phytonutrients and add visual appeal to your dish!
- Replace half of the breadcrumbs/potato with vegetables in stuffing or fillings for roti/dosa.

Fun Fact: Frozen vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh vegetables because they are picked at their peak and rapidly frozen to retain their nutritional value!

For more tips and tricks on giving your favorite recipes a healthy twist, see the resources linked below!

[Cookspiration](#) is a great one-stop-shop for meal planning. *Cookspiration* has a “My Menu Planner” feature which allows you to choose a goal (e.g., Nut Free or Budget Friendly) and develop a meal plan with the recipes listed on the *Cookspiration* website. Once you have completed your meal plan *Cookspiration* will generate a grocery list. You can download and print your menu planner, grocery list and recipes for the week!



- Recipe Modification <https://nutritionaustralia.org/app/uploads/2021/04/NA-Qld-FSS-Recipe-Modifications-.pdf>
- Tried and True Recipes <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Childrens-Nutrition/Cooking-and-Meal-Planning/A-collection-of-tried-and-true-recipes-shared-by-M.aspx>
- Award Winning Kid-Friendly Recipes <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Recipes/Kid-friendly-award-winning-recipes.aspx>
- Diabetes Recipe Booklets; Caribbean, China, South Asia and Latin America. <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Diabetes/Diabetes-Recipe-Booklets.aspx>
- Easy Meals for Great Leftovers <https://www.unlockfood.ca/EatRightOntario/media/PDFs-new-website/Easy-Meals-for-Great-Leftovers-Recipe-Book-EN-web.pdf>

References:

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