Your Weekly Meal Plan

Eat Well, Be Well and LOVE Every Bite!

Your refrigerator staple for healthy lunches and snacks:

Black Bean Hummus and Homemade Tortilla Chips

Your Weekly Meal Plan is:

Easy Spinach and Chickpeas over Quinoa

Fennel and Eggplant Pasta

Creamy Curried Red Lentil Soup

Food For Thought: Slooooow Down!

With the plethora of information out there about nutrition, it can be really confusing to figure out what in the world we should be eating.

I think that we spend too much time talking about <u>what</u> to eat and not enough time talking about <u>how</u> to eat—like how fast or slow we eat.

A recent study took two groups and gave each group the same quantity of ice cream. One group was instructed to eat it quickly (ie, normally for most) and the other group was instructed to eat it over 30 minutes.

Blood results showed that the group that took 30 minutes had higher levels of the hormones that tell the brain that it is time to stop eating. They reported higher satisfaction and fullness levels than the group that ate the ice cream quickly.

This holiday season, instead of worrying so much about WHAT to eat, simply try eating what you want…

…while slowing down and savoring each morsel. You just may find yourself eating less this holiday season and LOVING every bite!

Until Next Week, Eat Well, Be Well and LOVE Every Bite!
~Chef Jenny

Black Bean Hummus & Chips

This high protein spread is a favorite of mine--great for this time of year to make for parties and to bring to potlucks. I also love it because you can make it into a quick meal by heating it up and putting it in tortillas. You may even want to double this to be sure you have healthy food on hand through the holidays.

Black Bean Hummus
Makes 1 1/2 cups

1 clove garlic, minced
1 15-oz can black beans, drained, liquid reserved
1 Tablespoon tahini
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 Tablespoon olive oil
1/2 teaspoon cumin, ground
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (or to taste)
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1/2 cup fresh cilantro

Process all ingredients in a food processor until smooth, using reserved bean liquid to thin.

Homemade Corn Chips

I ♥ Tortilla Chips!! so I came up with an easy and healthier way to make them on my own. Also, preparing them this way helps me to be more conscious of what I am eating—much better than sitting down with an entire bag of chips….which has been known to happen often….

4 corn tortillas
olive oil
salt

Preheat oven to 400F. Cut tortillas into 6 wedges. Brush each wedge with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and any other desired spices and bake for 10 minutes or until crispy.

Spinach and Chickpeas

Serves 4-6
Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Cooking Time: 15 minutes
Equipment Needed: Saucepan or rice cooker, large skillet

Get this cooking first:

Quinoa (times two!)

Quinoa (pronounced keen-wa) is a whole grain that is an excellent source of complete protein (all essential amino acids) and minerals. It cooks in about 15 minutes so it can be easily substituted for refined grains, like white rice. **Quinoa Rocks!**

2 cups quinoa, rinsed
4 cups water
pinch salt

Stir quinoa, water and salt together, and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook 15 minutes, or until quinoa is tender and fluffy. Store leftover quinoa in the fridge to eat later this week.

1 Tablespoon unrefined coconut oil
1 medium red onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 red bell pepper, diced
1 jalepeno pepper, seeded and chopped
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon turmeric
1 28-oz can whole plum tomatoes
2 bunches fresh spinach, washed well, and cut
2 15-oz cans chickpeas, drained

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil and add onion, garlic and peppers and cook, stirring, about 5 minutes. Add spices and tomatoes, breaking them up with the back of a spoon. Add spinach and chickpeas, bring mixture to a simmer for 10 minutes. Serve hot over quinoa.

Fennel and Eggplant Pasta

Serves 4-6
Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Cooking Time: 15 minutes
Equipment Needed: Pasta pot, soup pot

Fennel is a seasonal vegetable with an anise like flavor and is a wonderful addition to pasta. To use, cut off the top stalks and fronds and chop up the bulb like celery.

Don't like Eggplant? You could substitute 1/2 lb mushrooms in the dish instead.

Want More Protein? Choose a high protein whole grain pasta, like Kamut or Quinoa (gluten free) OR add a 15-oz can white beans or do both!

If you have a crockpot--Prepare recipe according to directions, noting when to put sauce in the crockpot.

2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 yellow onion, chopped
1 fennel bulb, chopped
1 eggplant, peeled and chopped
1 red pepper, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon tarragon
3/4 cup dry white wine
1 28-oz can crushed tomatoes
Salt and pepper to taste
1 lb whole grain small shaped pasta

Heat oil over medium heat in a heavy bottom soup pot. Sauté onion, fennel, eggplant, pepper, garlic and tarragon until vegetables begin to brown. Add wine and simmer for 5 minutes or until veggies have absorbed some liquid. Add tomatoes, reduce heat and simmer, stirring frequently, until vegetables are tender and sauce is thickened, about 10 minutes (but the longer the better if you aren't in a hurry—in fact, put it in a crockpot and simmer on low all day—yum!). Season to taste with salt and pepper.

While sauce simmers, cook pasta in a pot of boiling salted water until al dente, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain and toss with sauce and serve.

Curried Red Lentil Soup

Serves 6
Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Cooking Time: 35 minutes
Equipment Needed: Soup pot

Like in most of my soups, this recipe calls for an entire bunch of greens. I suggest kale but you can use whatever kind of green you like.

1 Tablespoon coconut oil
1 yellow onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 1-inch piece ginger, minced
2 stalks celery, chopped
2 carrots, chopped
1 teaspoon curry powder
dash cayenne (or more if you like it spicy!)
2 cups dry red lentils
4 cups vegetable stock
2 cups water
1 15-oz can coconut milk
1 bunch lacinato kale, sliced
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, minced
juice from 1/2 lemon
salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large saucepan. Add onion, garlic, ginger, celery and carrots and sauté for 3-4 minutes. Add curry powder and cayenne and cook for one minute. Add lentils, stock and water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 25 minutes or until lentils are tender. At this point, stir in coconut milk, kale and cilantro and heat for 5 minutes or so until kale has wilted. Add juice from half a lemon and a sprinkle of salt and pepper and taste.

Now, the fun part--tasting! Does it need something?

If so, first, add more lemon juice, then and salt/pepper as needed and serve.

Shopping List

Remember to read through your recipes before shopping to see if there is anything you would like to double. Also, I don't have salt or pepper on here—I am assuming you have them in the kitchen already. **Have fun shopping!**

Store Section	**Black Bean Hummus & Homemade Chips**	**Easy Chickpeas over Quinoa**	**Fennel and Eggplant Pasta**	**Creamy Curried Red Lentil Soup**
Produce	1 clove garlic 2 lemons (for 1/4 cup juice) 1/2 cup fresh cilantro	1 red onion 4 cloves garlic 1 red bell pepper 1 jalepeno pepper 2 bunches fresh spinach	1 yellow onion 1 fennel bulb 1 eggplant 1 red pepper 3 cloves garlic 1 t tarragon	1 yellow onion 3 cloves garlic 1 1-inch piece ginger 2 stalks celery 2 carrots 1 bunch lacinato kale 1/2 cup fresh cilantro 1 lemon
Bulk/Refrig/ Frozen	4 corn tortillas	2 cups dry quinoa		2 cups dry red lentils
Grocery/ Canned	1 15-oz can black beans 1 T tahini 2 T olive oil	1 T coconut oil 1 28-oz can whole plum tomatoes 2 15-oz cans chickpeas	2 T olive oil 3/4 cup dry white wine 1 28-oz can crushed tomatoes 1 lb whole grain small shaped pasta	1 T coconut oil 4 cups vegetable stock 1 15-oz can coconut milk
Spices/Misc.	1/2 teaspoon cumin 1/4 t cayenne pepper (or to taste) 1/2 t paprika	1 t ground cumin 1/2 teaspoon turmeric		1 t curry powder dash cayenne