



Healthy Lunches

Palmerston North, 31 March 2022

Levin, 21 May 2022

Stopping mid-day for a healthy lunch sets you up for the rest of the day. Think of sustaining foods – like whole grains, beans, eggs or tinned fish—to keep you fuelled throughout the afternoon.





Spinach Feta Lunch Muffins

Ingredients

- 200 g frozen, thawed spinach
- 180 g feta cheese, crumbled or cut into small chunks
- 1/4 cup red onion, chopped (optional)
- 125 g regular flour (about 1 cup)
- 125 g wholemeal flour (about 1 cup)
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 80 ml olive oil (1/3 cup)
- 300 ml low-fat milk

What to do:

1. Grease muffin tin cups and cut feta cheese into small chunks. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
2. In a bowl mix flour, baking powder and salt. In another bowl combine spinach, eggs, olive oil and milk.
3. Add in the flour mixture to the liquid mixture. Be sure not to overmix. Fold in the feta cheese cubes and onion.
4. Pour dough into the muffin pan and bake for about 20 minutes.

Nutrition per muffin: 611kj energy, 8.0 gm protein, 17gm carbohydrate, 3.2gm sat fat, 334mg sodium



Black Bean 'Meat'balls

Ingredients:

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 420 gram can black beans, drained
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil plus more for cooking
- 1 heaped tbsp tomato paste
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup onion, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh coriander or parsley, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp ground flax seeds
- 1 1/2 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp. hot sauce (optional)

What to do:

1. Add all the 'meatball' ingredients into a food processor and blend until everything is well combined (you want to make sure there's no loose flour from the oats).
2. Roll the balls using a tablespoon or small ice cream scoop. The meatballs will cook differently depending on the size of them.
3. Heat oil up in a pan for about a minute. Add your meatballs and cook for 1 minute on each side. Cook for 5 to 6 minutes. You know they're cooked when the middle is hot and steaming.

Use these meatballs in a variety of ways—add to a salad, cook in pasta sauce as an alternative to mince, use in a Mexican wrap with salsa, avocado and salad greens. Make a double batch and put the rest in the freezer to use at a later time.

Nutrition per serve (4 balls): 829kj energy, 8.8 gm protein, 17.2 gm carbohydrate, 1.2gm sat fat, 220 mg sodium

Source: <https://www.foodbymaria.com/vegan-black-bean-meatballs/>



Crunchy Thai Peanut & Quinoa Salad

Ingredients for the salad

- 3/4 cup uncooked quinoa or brown rice
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 2 cups grated purple cabbage
- 1 cup grated carrot
- 1 cup thinly sliced snow peas sugar snap peas or green peas
- 1/2 cup chopped coriander
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced green onion or chopped red onion
- 1/4 cup chopped roasted and salted peanuts

Ingredients for sauce

- 1/4 cup smooth peanut butter
- 3 tablespoons reduced sodium tamari or soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon honey or maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame oil
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 1/2 tablespoons lime juice (1/2 a lime)

What to do:

1. Cook the quinoa: first, rinse the quinoa in a fine mesh colander under running water. In a medium-sized pot, combine the rinsed quinoa and 1 1/2 cups water. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil over medium heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low and gently simmer the quinoa until it has absorbed all of the water. Remove the quinoa from heat, cover the pot and let it rest for 5 minutes. Uncover the pot and fluff the quinoa with a fork. Set it aside to cool.

2. Meanwhile, make the peanut sauce: whisk together the peanut butter and tamari/soy sauce until smooth (if this is difficult, microwave the mixture for up to 30 seconds to loosen it up). Add the remaining ingredients and whisk until smooth. If the mixture seems too thick to toss into the salad, whisk in a bit of water to loosen it up (I didn't need to do this).

3. In a large serving bowl, combine the cooked quinoa, shredded cabbage, carrot, snow peas, cilantro and green onion. Toss to combine, then pour in the peanut sauce. Toss again until everything is lightly coated in sauce. Taste, and if it doesn't taste quite amazing yet, add a pinch of salt and toss again. Divide into individual bowls and garnish with peanuts.

Nutrition per serve: 1350kj energy, 11.6 gm protein, 27 gm carbohydrate, 2.7gm sat fat, 392mg sodium

Source: <https://cookieandkate.com/thai-peanut-quinoa-salad-recipe/>



Herby Lentil & Haloumi Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 100g reduced-fat haloumi, cubed
- 400g can brown lentils, rinsed and drained
- 3 tomatoes, diced
- 1 handful each fresh mint, parsley and coriander, chopped (or fresh spinach or rocket)
- juice 1 lemon
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

What to do:

1. Heat the 1 teaspoon oil in a pan over a high heat. Add the halloumi and fry for 3–5 min.
- 2 In a bowl, toss the haloumi with all the other salad ingredients, then tip into lunch-boxes. Keep chilled until ready to eat.
- 3 Combine the dressing ingredients by shaking in a jar or container with a tight-fitting lid. Season with freshly ground black pepper.
- 4 To serve, pour the dressing over the salad and toss well.

Nutrition per serve (2): 1695 kJ, 23g protein, 7.8g saturated fat, 24g carbohydrate, 437 mg sodium

Source: <https://www.healthyfood.com/healthy-recipes/herby-lentil-and-haloumi-salad/>

Healthy Lunch Ideas

What makes a healthy lunch? A satisfying variety of foods from the different food groups.

Think about **plenty of vegetable + carbohydrate + protein + a little flavour**.

Use the plate model or hand portions to help guide your amounts.

Choose plenty of vegetables:

- Salad greens – lettuce, spinach, rocket, fresh herbs
- Grated cabbage or coleslaw
- Bean sprouts or sprouts of any kind
- Asparagus
- Sliced tomatoes or baby tomatoes
- Veggie or slices sticks – carrots, cucumber, capsicum, snap peas
- Leftover cooked vegetables
- Pickled or fermented vegetables



Choose some carbohydrate:

- Multigrain bread, wholemeal pita, or wraps
- Whole grain crackers or corn thins
- Leftover cooked brown rice, pasta, couscous or quinoa
- Leftover potato, kumara, yams or corn
- Baked beans, chickpeas, chili beans or kidney beans or lentils

Choose some protein:

- Tinned salmon, tuna or sardines
- Smoked salmon or smoked chicken
- Leftover meat, chicken or fish
- Sliced chicken, turkey or ham
- Marinated tofu
- Baked beans, chickpeas, chili beans or kidney beans or lentils
- Edamame beans
- Cheese – cottage, edam, tasty, haloumi
- Nuts and nut butters – almonds, peanuts or nut butter

Add a little flavour:

- Hummus, avocado
- Pesto, olives, olive oil, sesame oil, avocado oil
- Vinegar of any type, lemon juice, lime juice
- Capers, sun dried tomatoes
- Reduced fat mayo
- Chili or hot sauce
- Reduced fat cream cheese
- Toasted sunflower or sesame seeds
- Herbs and spices

MIX AND MATCH DEPENDING ON THE SEASON, YOUR PREFERENCE & BUDGET