Enjoy Nutrient-Rich Foods as the Foundation of a Healthy Diet

Nutrient-rich foods give you the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients for the fewest calories. To live well, build your daily eating plan with nutrient-rich foods first, including:

- Variety of colorful fruits and 100% fruit juices
- Variety of vibrantly colored vegetables, including dark green vegetables, starchy vegetables, red-orange vegetables, beans and peas, and other vegetables
- Whole, enriched and fiber-rich grain foods
- Low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese, and yogurt
- Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, nuts and seeds

### Smart Portion Size Guide

Comparing your portion sizes to everyday objects helps you choose the amounts that are right for you. Use the portion size guide below to gauge how much you’re eating.

To find your personal daily food plan with the amounts from each food group that are right for you, go to [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov).

#### Fruits

- 1 medium apple or orange = a baseball
- 1/2 cup raisins = a large egg
- 1 cup 100% fruit juice = 1 small (8 oz) carton

#### Vegetables

- 1 cup vegetables = a baseball
- 1 cup raw, leafy vegetables = a baseball
- 1 small baked potato = a computer mouse

#### Grains

- 1/2 cup cooked cereal, pasta or rice = a computer mouse
- 1 cup dry cereal = a baseball
- 1 bagel = a hockey puck
- 1 tortilla = a small salad plate (7-inch)
- 1 pancake or waffle = a music CD
- 4 small cookies such as vanilla wafers = 4 casino chips

#### Protein Foods

- 3 ounces cooked meat, poultry or fish = a deck of cards
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter = a golf ball
- 1/2 cup beans = a computer mouse
- 1/2 oz nuts = a ping pong ball

#### Dairy

- 1 cup milk = a small (8 oz) chug
- 1 cup yogurt = an 8-ounce yogurt container
- 1-1/2 ounces hard cheese = about 3, 1-inch cubes
- 2 ounces processed cheese (American) = pad of 3 x 3 inch sticky paper
The MyPlate Grains Group

- The Grains Group includes any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas and grits are examples of grain products. Grains are divided into two subgroups— whole grains such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal and brown rice—and nutrient-enriched refined grains such as white bread and white rice.
- Foods in the Grains Group provide important nutrients such as B vitamins, minerals and fiber. Whole grains may help reduce the risk for heart disease and some cancers and help with weight management. Enriched refined grains are fortified with the B vitamin folic acid to help prevent neural tube defects during pregnancy and possibly heart attacks and strokes. They can contain twice as much folic acid as whole grains.

The small steps to the right can help you make nutrient-rich choices from MyPlate’s Grains Group. This means getting the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients—but not too many calories—from the foods you choose.

Make at Least Half Your Grains Whole.

Eat at least 3 ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day.
- To get whole grains, choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients first on the label ingredient list: brown rice, bulgur, whole-grain barley, graham flour, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat, wild rice.

Make it Easy. Adding whole-grain foods to your eating plan is easy with quick ideas like these.
- Breakfast (or snack) on a whole-grain cereal.
- Try quick-cooking versions of oatmeal, barley and brown rice.
- Make sandwiches with whole-wheat or whole-rye bread.
- Use whole-wheat pasta in your favorite recipes. It comes in a variety of shapes.
- Snack on whole-grain crackers or “light” microwave popcorn.

Make Smart Calorie Choices.

Get the most nutrition for the fewest calories from foods in the Grains Group.
- Opt for breads made with little or no fat such as sandwich breads, pita bread, English muffins, small bagels and bread sticks.
- Combine unsweetened whole-grain/high-fiber cereals with your favorite regular enriched cereal.
- Buy baked tortilla chips and crackers.
- Prepare pasta salad with enriched pasta, lots of veggies and lowfat dressing.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the calories and fiber in grain foods such as breads, bagels, crackers, muffins and cereals.

Visit ChooseMyPlate.gov to learn more about the Grains Group and access tools to help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.
**The MyPlate Vegetable Group**
MyPlate recommends to make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- The Vegetable Group includes any vegetable or 100% vegetable juice whether fresh, frozen, canned or dried.
- Foods in this group provide important nutrients such as potassium, folate, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E and fiber and may help reduce the risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers.
- Beans and peas (legumes) are also included in this group for their fiber, vitamins and minerals. Beans and peas are unique because they are also part of the Protein Group. Count beans and peas as either a vegetable or a protein food in your daily food plan.

The small steps to the right can help you make nutrient-rich choices from MyPlate’s Vegetable Group. This means getting the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients—but not too many calories—from the foods you choose.

**Vary Your Veggies.** From asparagus to zucchini, you’ll reap a bounty of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients when you choose from a colorful variety of vegetables.
- Get lots of dark green veggies like broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce and collard greens.
- Pick plenty of orange veggies like carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin and butternut squash.
- Eat more beans and peas such as pinto beans, kidney beans, split peas and lentils.
- Mix it up even more with favorites like tomatoes, potatoes and corn and less familiar options like artichokes, eggplant and parsnips.

**Take Veggie Short Cuts.** Vegetables come in a variety of convenient options that need little or no preparation.
- Pick up pre-washed bags of salad greens and spinach.
- Choose no-chop veggies like baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, broccoli and cauliflower florettes, precut celery and sugar snap peas.
- Line your freezer with frozen vegetables—they go from microwave to table in minutes.
- Stock up on canned beans such as garbanzo beans and kidney beans. After a quick rinse with water, they’re ready to use in soups and salads.
- Store a variety of potatoes in your pantry. Bake, roast, boil or microwave for an easy side dish.

**Make Smart Calorie Choices.**
Get the most nutrition for the fewest calories from foods in the Vegetable Group.
- Shop for veggies that are fresh, plain frozen or canned in water.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label to check the calories and fat in vegetables prepared with butter or sauces.
- Prepare beans and peas without added fats.

Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) to learn more about the Vegetable Group and access tools to help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.

**The MyPlate Fruit Group**
MyPlate recommends to make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- The Fruit Group includes any fruit or 100% fruit juice. Fruits may be fresh, frozen, canned or dried.
- Foods in this group provide important nutrients such as potassium, folate, vitamin C and fiber and may help reduce the risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers.

The small steps to the right can help you make nutrient-rich choices from MyPlate’s Fruit Group. This means getting the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients—but not too many calories—from the foods you choose.

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**Focus on Fruits.** For maximum nutrient-richness and great taste, pick a variety of colorful fruits.
- Fill your cart with brightly-colored fruits such as blueberries, strawberries, oranges, apricots, kiwi, cantaloupe, watermelon and red, green and purple grapes.
- Choose fresh fruits in season when they’re less expensive and most flavorful. Ask produce department staff which fruits are in season now.
- Stock up on canned and frozen fruits when they’re on sale.
- Avocado is a fruit, too. Top your salad with a few slices or pair it with an exotic fruit such as mango for a refreshing fruit salsa.

**Get Your Fruit Fast.** Fruits come in a variety of convenient options that need little or no preparation.
- Select easy-to-eat fresh fruits such as apples, bananas, oranges, plums, peaches and grapes.
- Pick up pre-cut packages of melon, pineapple or fruit salad.
- Buy bags of frozen blueberries, strawberries, peaches and mangos to use in smoothies, muffins and desserts.
- For on-the-go options, stock up on dried fruits such as raisins, cranberries and apricots, unsweetened applesauce cups or single-serve fruits canned in water or 100% fruit juice.
- Buy single-serve containers of 100% fruit juice for lunches.
- Try frozen 100% fruit juice bars for a refreshing dessert.

**Make Smart Calorie Choices.** Get the most nutrition for the fewest calories from foods in the Fruit Group.
- Shop for fruits that are fresh, frozen without added sugar or canned in water.
- To reap the benefits of dietary fiber, choose whole or cut-up fruit most often.
- Select fruit juices labeled as 100% fruit juice, such as orange juice or grapefruit juice.
- Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the calories in fruits canned in water, 100% fruit juice, light syrup and heavy syrup and to check the serving size and calories for dried fruits.

Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](https://www.choosemyplate.gov) to learn more about the Fruit Group and access tools to help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.
The MyPlate Dairy Group
MyPlate recommends three cups of fat-free or lowfat milk or equivalents like yogurt and cheese daily for most people.

- The Dairy Group includes milk, yogurt and cheese as well as milk-based desserts such as ice cream, frozen yogurt and pudding made with milk. Milk, cheese and yogurt provide nine essential nutrients such as calcium, potassium, vitamin D and protein. These nutrients help build and maintain bone mass and may reduce risk for the bone-thinning disease, osteoporosis. Potassium also helps regulate the body’s fluid balance and maintain healthy blood pressure.

The small steps to the right can help you make nutrient-rich choices from MyPlate’s Dairy Group. This means getting the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients—but not too many calories—from the foods you choose.

Get Your Calcium-Rich Foods.
Choose fat-free or lowfat milk, yogurt and other milk products most often.
- Serve milk at meals and with snacks.
- Top pizza, casseroles and veggies with shredded cheese.
- Use plain yogurt as a base for dips or to dollop on baked potatoes.
- Slip cheese slices onto sandwiches.

Make it Quick. These tips can help you get your Dairy Group foods—fast.
- Order a latte made with fat-free or lowfat milk.
- Make oatmeal or tomato soup with milk instead of water.
- Stock up on cheese sticks, yogurt cups and yogurt drinks for calcium-rich snacks.
- Top fruit with your favorite yogurt for a homemade parfait dessert.

Make Smart Calorie Choices.
Try these tips to get the most nutrition for the fewest calories from Dairy Group foods.
- Choose fat-free or lowfat milk, yogurt and cheese.
- When you shop, use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the amount of calories and fat in different types of Dairy Group foods.
- If your family usually drinks whole milk, try stepping down to reduced-fat (2%), then lowfat (1%) and finally fat-free (skim) milk.
- Stock a few cans of evaporated fat-free milk to use in coffee and to replace cream in recipes.
- For a sweet treat, try “light” ice cream or frozen yogurt.

Visit ChooseMyPlate.gov to learn more about the Dairy Group and access tools to help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.
**The MyPlate Protein Group**

- The Protein Group includes meat, poultry, fish, beans and peas (legumes), eggs, nuts and seeds.

**Foods in this group provide important nutrients such as protein, B vitamins, iron and zinc needed to boost the immune system, build and repair muscle, fuel activity and help your brain function, as well as vitamin E and potassium for a healthy heart.**

- Beans and peas are unique because they are also part of the Vegetable Group. Count beans and peas as either a protein food or a vegetable in your daily food plan.

The small steps to the right can help you make nutrient-rich choices from MyPlate’s Protein Group. This means getting the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients—but not too many calories—from the foods you choose.

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**Go Lean with Protein.** Choose lean or lowfat meats and skinless poultry. Twice a week, make seafood the protein on your plate. Add variety with beans, eggs, nuts and seeds.

- For lean cuts of beef, look for the words “loin” or “round” in the name such as tenderloin, sirloin or round steak. Lean pork choices include pork loin, tenderloin, or lean ham. Lean lamb choices include leg, loin, and shank.
- Choose lean ground poultry and ground beef that’s at least 90% lean.
- Select fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout and herring.
- For sandwiches, go with lean roast beef, turkey or ham. Or try peanut butter, almond butter or soy nut butter.
- Vary your breakfast routine with eggs. Enjoy an egg-and-veggie scramble or an egg white omelet.

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**Try Time-Trimming Tips.** Save steps and get your protein-rich foods, too.

- Pick up recipe-ready meats such as lean beef strips for a stir-fry or cubes of lamb for stew.
- Buy quick-cooking fish filets or boneless, skinless chicken breasts or turkey cutlets.
- Stock your pantry with canned and pouch fish, and your freezer with frozen fish and shellfish.
- Prepare and refrigerate protein-rich hard-cooked eggs to tote in your lunch.
- Canned beans, such as black beans or pinto beans, are an easy way to add protein and fiber to soup and chili or on a salad.
- Keep nuts, seeds and soy nuts on hand for quick snacks.

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**Make Smart Calorie Choices.** Get the most nutrition for the fewest calories from foods in the Protein Group.

- Trim away visible fat from meat before cooking and remove poultry skin. Drain any fat that appears during cooking.
- Bake, broil or grill meat, poultry and fish.
- Flavor your meat, poultry and fish with herbs or use lowfat sauces.
- Prepare beans and peas without added fats.

Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) to learn more about the Protein Group and access tools to help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.
Did you know your body needs some fat for good health? Dietary fats help your body absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K, and carotenoids. They supply essential fatty acids that children need for proper growth. For all of us, fats help keep our skin healthy and brain and nervous system functioning smoothly.

MyPlate advice refers to two forms of fat in foods—oils and solid fats. Oils and solid fats are a mixture of saturated fatty acids and unsaturated fatty acids. Oils contain more monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Solid fats contain more saturated fats and/or trans fats than oils. Most foods contain varying amounts of the different types of fats. For instance, olive oil and salmon are rich sources of heart-healthy monounsaturated fats but also contain some saturated fats, while beef, pork and poultry are often thought of as only containing saturated fat but are also rich sources of monounsaturated fats.

MyPlate recommends choosing foods that contain monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, and cutting back on foods that contain saturated fats and trans fats. The important point to understand is that you can’t single out one food or type of fat, because all foods with fat contain a mixture of the different types of fats. The trick is to choose foods with oils and solid fats wisely and in the right amounts for you.

MyPlate meal plans include daily recommended amounts for oils because they provide essential fats, but oils are not pictured in the MyPlate symbol as they are not a food group.

### A Primer on Oils

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature. Oils include vegetable oils used in cooking, the oil found naturally in certain foods such as nuts, olives, avocados and some fish, and in foods made with oil such as mayonnaise, salad dressing and soft (tub or squeeze) margarine.

Most oils are high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats, and low in saturated fats. Most of the fats you eat should be the unsaturated types. They provide vitamin E, don’t raise LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels in the blood and contain essential fatty acids. Oils from plant sources (vegetable oils and nut oils) do not contain any cholesterol. A few plant oils, however, including coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil, are high in saturated fats and act like solid fats.

MyPlate gives you a daily allowance for oils depending on your daily calorie budget, which is based on your age, gender and physical activity level. For example, for someone who needs 2,000 calories a day, MyPlate recommends 6 teaspoons of oil a day. Check the chart below for the amount of oils in some common foods.

### Amount of Oils in Common Foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oils</th>
<th>Amount of Food</th>
<th>Amount of Oil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetable oils (canola, corn, cottonseed, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean and sunflower)</td>
<td>1 Tbsp</td>
<td>3 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foods rich in oils:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margarine, soft (trans fat free)</td>
<td>1 Tbsp</td>
<td>2½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayonnaise</td>
<td>1 Tbsp</td>
<td>2½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayonnaise-type salad dressing</td>
<td>1 Tbsp</td>
<td>1 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian dressing</td>
<td>2 Tbsp</td>
<td>2 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thousand Island dressing</td>
<td>2 Tbsp</td>
<td>2½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olives, ripe, canned</td>
<td>4 large</td>
<td>½ tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocado</td>
<td>½ med</td>
<td>3 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter</td>
<td>2 Tbsp</td>
<td>4 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts, cashews and almonds, dry roasted</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>3 tsp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunflower seeds</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>3 tsp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Avocados and olives are part of the Vegetable Group; nuts and seeds are part of the Protein Foods Group. Soft margarine, mayonnaise, and salad dressings are mainly oil and are not considered to be part of any food group.
Make Smart Oil Changes

- Choose a cooking oil that is high in unsaturated fats. Some good choices are canola, corn, cottonseed, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean and sunflower oil.
- Use soft (tub or squeeze) margarine with 0 grams of trans fat per serving. Check the Nutrition Facts label to be sure.
- Try a slice of mashed avocado as a sandwich spread.
- Add flair to your food with a dash of flavorful walnut or sesame oil.
- Get essential fatty acids called “omega-3s” from fatty fish, such as salmon, trout and herring. MyPlate advises including fish on the menu twice each week.
- Sprinkle a few sunflower seeds or chopped walnuts on your salad.

Get Savvy about Solid Fats

- Use vegetable oil or cooking spray instead of butter, stick margarine or shortening for cooking and baking.
- Choose lean meats and skinless poultry. Trim away visible fat from meat before cooking and remove poultry skin.
- When choosing milk, yogurt and cheese, go fat-free or lowfat.
- When you shop for baked goods such as cookies and crackers, check the Nutrition Facts label for products with 0 grams of trans fat per serving.

Fascinating Fat Facts

- Oils and solid fats both contain about 120 calories per tablespoon. So, although you need some oils for good health, don’t overdo it.
- Get to know heart healthy fats. While olive oil may be known for containing heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, the same holds true for beef and pork. In fact, about half the fat in pork and beef is monounsaturated. Likewise, milk, cheese and yogurt products contain this heart-healthy fat as well.
- Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) is a special type of trans fat that may promote health. Small amounts are found naturally in milk products, lamb and beef. Research is showing that CLA may play a role in preventing disease such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes.
- A few plant oils, including coconut oil, palm oil and palm kernel oil are high in saturated fats, so MyPlate classifies them as solid fats.

Visit ChooseMyPlate.gov to learn more about Oils and Solid Fats and access tools to help you plan, analyze, and track your diet and physical activity.
Eye-Opening Breakfast Ideas

• For a “fiber-full” breakfast, top a bowl of whole-grain or high-fiber cereal with blueberries, strawberries, sliced bananas or any favorite fruit.

• For a calcium boost, make oatmeal with fat-free milk instead of water. For extra fiber and nutrients, mix in some raisins, dried cranberries, cherries or blueberries, too.

• Customize fruit compote by mixing colorful favorites such as orange or grapefruit sections, kiwi slices, pineapple chunks and cantaloupe cubes. The more colors you mix, the more potassium, vitamin C and other nutrients you get.

• When you make pancakes, waffles and muffins, sneak in some whole grains by replacing one-half of the white flour with whole-wheat flour. Grains give you fiber and important minerals such as iron, magnesium and selenium.

• Order your cappuccino or latte made with fat-free milk. You’ll get all the calcium and other essential nutrients in milk without the fat.

• Start your day with veggies—and all the nutrients they provide. Whip up an omelet or scrambled eggs with chopped fresh spinach, avocado, tomatoes, peppers or any favorite vibrant veggie.

• For a breakfast-style burrito—and a protein and fiber boost—fold eggs, beans, shredded lowfat cheese and vegetables into a whole-wheat tortilla.

• Team your breakfast with a glass of 100% orange juice to up your intake of vitamin C, folate and potassium.

• For a veggie breakfast hash, sauté shredded carrots, zucchini, peppers, onions and uncooked hash browns in canola oil until tender. Mix in one egg and cook until egg is thickened and no visible liquid egg remains.

Are you looking for easy-to-make meals that taste great and are good for you? The selection below features delicious nutrient-rich meals you can mix and match to suit your taste buds and calorie budget.

BREAKFAST

200-300 Calorie Breakfasts

Trustworthy Traditional: Top 1 cup unsweetened cereal with 1/2 cup berries or a 6-inch banana and 1/2 cup fat-free or lowfat milk.

The Eye-Opener: Wrap 1/2 cup shredded lowfat mozzarella cheese, 1/2 cup roasted green and red pepper slices and 2 teaspoons horseradish mustard inside 2 ounces deli-sliced lean roast beef. Enjoy with 1/2 cup orange juice.

300-400 Calorie Breakfasts

Good-to-Go Breakfast Sandwich: Place 1 poached egg, 1 ounce Canadian bacon and 1 ounce fat-free or lowfat cheese between two toasted whole-grain English muffin halves.

Power Pop-Up: Toast a 4-inch whole-grain toaster waffle and top with 1 cup lowfat or fat-free yogurt and 1/2 cup mixed berries.

Bountiful Burrito: Roll up 1 scrambled egg, 1/2 cup shredded lowfat cheddar cheese, 2 ounces cooked ground beef (at least 90% lean), 1/2 cup cooked diced potatoes and 2 tablespoons salsa in a 6-inch whole-wheat tortilla.

400-500 Calorie Breakfasts

Living Well Lift-Off: Smooth 2 tablespoons peanut butter on a 3-inch toasted whole-grain bagel. Serve with 1/2 cup orange juice.

Rainbow Fruit Parfait: Layer 1 cup fat-free or lowfat yogurt with 1/2 cup blueberries, 1/2 cup sliced strawberries and 1/2 cup sliced kiwi. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup lowfat granola.

Tip: To plan, analyze, and track your food and physical activity, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov/supertracker.
LUNCH
200-300 Calorie Lunches
Tuna on Toast: Mix 3 ounces water-packed tuna with 1-1/2 tablespoons light mayonnaise. Spread on 2 slices toasted whole-wheat bread and top with romaine lettuce and 2 slices tomato. Serve with a small orange.

Pita and Peanut Butter Surprise: Spread 1 tablespoon peanut butter inside a 4-inch whole-wheat pita pocket and stuff with 1/2 cup sliced strawberries. Serve with 1 cup fat-free milk.

300-400 Calorie Lunches
Delicate Delight: Toss 1-1/2 cups baby spinach leaves with 1/2 chopped hard-cooked egg, 1/2 cup strawberries and 1 tablespoon slivered almonds. Sprinkle with 1 ounce crumbled feta cheese and 2 tablespoons lowfat raspberry vinaigrette dressing. Serve with a small dinner roll.

The Comfort Zone: Spread 2 slices whole-wheat bread with 1-1/2 teaspoons butter. Make a sandwich with 2 ounces sliced lowfat cheese, such as smoked mozzarella, and grill. Serve with 1 cup tomato basil soup.

Dressed-Up Leftovers: Slice 3 ounces leftover grilled or roasted sirloin steak. Mix with 1 cup romaine lettuce, 1/2 cup cherry tomatoes and 2 tablespoons crumbled blue cheese. Drizzle with 2 tablespoons lowfat balsamic vinaigrette dressing.

400-500 Calorie Lunches
Decision-Free Favorite: Place 3 ounces lean ham and 2 ounces lowfat Swiss cheese on a whole-grain bun. Top with 2 tablespoons stone-ground mustard and romaine lettuce. Accompany with a small sliced apple.

Bistro Bite: Layer 3 ounces sliced lean roast beef on a sourdough roll and top with spicy arugula leaves and 2 tablespoons mashed avocado. Serve with 1 ounce sweet potato chips (about 10 chips).

Tip: To plan, analyze, and track your food and physical activity, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov/supertracker.
Nutrient-Rich Dinner Hints

- Use lean ground beef that is at least 90% lean in tacos, chili and spaghetti sauce. Protein-rich intake of beef boosts your vitamin B₁₂, zinc and iron.
- Toss a multi-hued salad of dark greens such as spinach or romaine lettuce, cherry tomatoes, orange or yellow peppers and purple onion. The more colors, the wider variety of nutrients you get. Top with chopped hard-cooked egg for high-quality protein, B vitamins, vitamin E and iron.
- Try whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese—a tasty way to enjoy a whole-grain food and calcium-rich dairy.
- Shred carrots or zucchini into meatloaf, casseroles, quick breads and muffins to add nutrients and fiber.
- Slip a whole grain into stuffed peppers or tomatoes by using bulgur, brown rice or whole-wheat couscous in the filling.
- Pork is loaded with the B-vitamin thiamin. Savor a stir-fry made with lean pork strips, shredded cabbage and crunchy water chestnuts. Serve over enriched white rice for B vitamins and iron.
- Add extra chopped tomatoes, peppers, zucchini, mushrooms and onions to soup, chili, pasta sauce or lasagna.
- For a sizzling salad, grill lean beef or lamb steak with a variety of veggies such as Portobello mushrooms, zucchini, peppers, tomatoes and onions. Slice and place atop colorful salad greens.
- For a tangy taste and boost of potassium, top a baked potato with avocado or plain lowfat yogurt and fresh herbs.
- Feature fruit for dessert—and get vitamin C and fiber, too—by serving a slice of angel food cake smothered with strawberries or blueberries.
- Oven roast sliced potatoes with chicken pieces, rosemary and garlic. For a vegetarian version, roast sliced potatoes, red, green and yellow peppers, onion and garlic tossed with olive oil and a dash of balsamic vinegar.

Are you looking for easy-to-make meals that taste great and are good for you? The selection below features delicious nutrient-rich meals you can mix and match to suit your taste buds and calorie budget.

DINNER

300-400 Calorie Dinners

- **Good-for-You Grill:** Marinate 3 ounces salmon in orange juice. Grill with 1/2 cup baby red potatoes, 1/2 cup onions and 6 asparagus spears tossed with 1 teaspoon olive oil. Serve with a crusty whole-grain roll.
- **Mex to the Max:** Fill a 6-inch taco shell with 3 ounces cooked shredded chuck shoulder pot roast, 2 tablespoons chopped tomatoes, 1/4 cup shredded spinach leaves, 2 tablespoons shredded lowfat Cheddar cheese and 2 tablespoons avocado salsa. Enjoy with 1/2 cup fat-free refried beans on the side.
- **Palate-Pleasing Primavera:** Sauté 2 teaspoons garlic in 1 tablespoon olive oil. Toss in 1/2 cup chopped tomatoes, 1/2 cup broccoli, 1/2 cup asparagus, 1/2 cup mushrooms and 2 tablespoons shredded carrots. Cook until the vegetables are tender. Mix with 1 cup cooked penne pasta and top with 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese.

400-500 Calorie Dinners

- **The Well-Dressed Burger:** Place a cooked 3-ounce ground beef patty (at least 90% lean) on a whole-grain bun. Top with romaine lettuce, 2 slices tomato and 2 slices red onion. Serve with 1/2 cup three-bean salad.
- **Very Veggie Pizza:** Spread a 3-ounce whole-grain pizza crust with 1/2 cup marinara sauce. Layer with thin slices of the following: 1/2 cup roasted potatoes, 1/2 cup broccoli, 1/2 cup asparagus, 1/2 cup mushrooms and 2 tablespoons shredded carrots. Cook until the vegetables are tender. Mix with 1 cup cooked penne pasta and top with 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese.

Tip: To plan, analyze, and track your food and physical activity, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov/supertracker.
It’s easy to eat the nutrient-rich way—even when you’re in a time crunch. This means getting the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients—but not too many calories—from the foods you choose. Try these ideas the next time hunger strikes when you’re on the go.

**Fast Snacks on the Home Front**
- Whole-grain cereal mixed into fruit-flavored lowfat yogurt.
- Lean roast beef, ham or turkey rolled up in a whole-wheat tortilla plus a handful of cherry tomatoes.
- Baked tortilla chips and black bean or avocado dip.
- A scoop of lowfat or fat-free cottage cheese with sliced strawberries or cantaloupe cubes.
- Whole-grain pita bread triangles and flavored hummus (chick pea dip) such as sun-dried tomatoes and basil, roasted red pepper, extra garlic—even jalapeno!
- A refreshing frozen 100% fruit juice bar. Try strawberry, raspberry, orange or pineapple.
- “Trail mix” made with bite-size shredded wheat squares, peanuts and dried berries or raisins—or custom-create a mix with your own favorite ingredients.
- 100% orange juice in a single-serve container.
- Potatoes sliced into sticks or rounds and baked at 450 degrees for 25 minutes (turn once). Serve with salsa.

**Quick Picks from the Vending Machine or Convenience Store**
- Calcium-rich fat-free or lowfat yogurt or yogurt drinks.
- Protein-packed beef jerky.
- Lower sodium vegetable or tomato soup and whole-grain crackers.
- Fresh vegetable salads with low-calorie dressing.
- Packages of baby carrots, broccoli florets or celery sticks.
- Part-skim mozzarella cheese sticks.
- Whole-grain cereal bars.
- Packets of nuts, sunflower seeds or trail mix.
- Bags of baked chips or lowfat popcorn.
- Fresh fruit, fruit salads, dried fruit or fruit cups.
- Fat-free or lowfat regular or flavored milks.
- 100% fruit or vegetable juices.

**Make-it-through-the-Day Desk Drawer Stashes**
- Instant oatmeal packets in flavors such as cinnamon, apple, banana and blueberry.
- Vegetable, bean, split pea or lentil soups in heat-and-serve cans or instant dry soup cups.
- Small packs or cans of water-packed tuna and small cans of veggies (don’t forget the can opener!).
- A jar of peanut butter, almond butter or cashew butter and crackers. Snack size bags of nuts or trail mix.
- Light microwave popcorn. Bonus: popcorn is a whole-grain food.
- Raisins, dried apricots and single-serve shelf-stable containers of peaches or pears packed in water or juice.
- Single-serve containers of 100% fruit juice such as orange juice.
Many people purchase and eat at least one meal away from home each day. Whether you’re at the drive-through window, the office cafeteria or a fine dining restaurant, you can eat the nutrient-rich way. This means getting the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients—but not too many calories—from the foods you choose. It’s easy to do when you make choices like these.

**At the Fast Food Place...**
- Small burgers or grilled chicken sandwiches topped with lettuce, tomato and onion (hold the mayo or special sauce).
- Roasted veggie wraps.
- Entrée salads with grilled chicken and low-calorie dressing.
- Bean burritos or grilled steak tacos with avocado and lots of lettuce and tomato.
- Thin-crust pizzas made with tomatoes, spinach, mushrooms and onions.
- Baked potatoes topped with broccoli or beef chili and a sprinkling of shredded cheese.
- Yogurt parfaits made with strawberries and blueberries.
- Bags of sliced apples or cups of fresh fruit or Mandarin oranges.
- Fat-free or lowfat regular or flavored milk or 100% orange juice.

**In the Office Cafeteria...**
- Oatmeal, shredded wheat or raisin bran cereal.
- Whole-grain bagel or English muffin with peanut butter or a slice of lowfat cheese.
- Omelet filled with tomatoes, mushrooms and spinach (or any veggie) paired with toast.
- Vegetable, bean, split pea or lentil soup.
- Lean roast beef, ham or turkey sandwich piled high with veggies on whole-grain bread. Add zing, but almost no calories, with horseradish or spicy mustard.
- Steamed veggies sprinkled with shredded cheese or sliced almonds.
- A salad bar creation of dark greens and other colorful veggies, avocado slices, sunflower seeds and fruit. Top with lowfat dressing.
- Fat-free or lowfat regular or flavored milk or 100% orange juice.

**When Dining Out...**
- Minestrone soup, gazpacho or crudités (raw veggies).
- Salads made with deep greens such as spinach, arugula and romaine lettuce.
- Lean entrees such as beef sirloin, pork tenderloin, skinless turkey breast, fish or seafood. Ask for sauces on the side.
- Baked potatoes topped with salsa, avocado or grilled veggies.
- Kabobs made with chunks of lean beef, lean pork, lean lamb or chicken breast and zucchini, tomato, peppers and onions.
- Stir fries loaded with broccoli, carrots, cabbage and peppers plus lean beef, lean pork, chicken breast or tofu.
- Pasta dishes made with tomato-based sauces.
- Dishes made with brown rice, wild rice or whole-wheat pasta.
- Enriched and whole-grain breads, rolls and crackers.
- Sweet endings such as fruit cups, berries, melon slices, fruit sorbet or biscotti.
- Fat-free or lowfat regular or flavored milk or 100% fruit or vegetable juice.

Fitting in “Fun” Foods

Eating the nutrient-rich way doesn’t mean that “fun” foods such as favorite snacks, desserts—or even indulgent meals—are off-limits. Here’s why:

Everyone has a daily calorie budget based on their age, gender and physical activity level. In a healthy eating plan, most of that calorie budget is spent first on nutrient-rich foods, which give you the most vitamins, minerals and other nutrients for the fewest calories.

USDA’s MyPlate refers to the calories from solid fats and added sugars as “empty calories” because they add calories to the food but few or no nutrients, including vitamins, minerals, protein or fiber. When nutrient-rich forms of foods are chosen first, there may be a small amount of extra calories left to spend on “fun” foods. The extra calories can also be used for foods within food groups that contain solid fats or added sugars, such as cuts of meat marbled with fat, vegetables topped with butter or margarine, or sweetened cereals.

To help you maintain a balanced lifestyle, remember to keep empty calories low, get your quota of nutrient-rich foods and be active. Follow the tips here to eat the nutrient-rich way and fit in fun favorites, too.

Build your daily eating plan on a variety of nutrient-rich foods first, including:
- Variety of colorful fruits and 100% fruit juices
- Variety of vibrantly colored vegetables, including dark green vegetables, starchy vegetables, red-orange vegetables, beans and peas, and other vegetables
- Whole, enriched and fiber-rich grain foods
- Low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese, and yogurt
- Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, nuts and seeds

Be wise about portion size. Trimming portion sizes of foods with extra fats and sugars helps you enjoy them without overdoing it.
- When dining out, savor a serving of prime rib that’s about the size of a deck of cards. Share the rest or take it home for another meal.
- Eat one less slice of pizza than usual.
- Enjoy a single scoop of ice cream instead of a double.
- Slice a skinnier piece of cake or pie.
- Use one pat of butter or margarine instead of two.

Use simple swaps to save calories. Saving some calories from extra fats and sugars lets you spend them on favorite foods elsewhere in your eating plan.
- Top salads with low-calorie salad dressing instead of regular salad dressing.
- Try light versions of cream cheese and sour cream or swap for plain fat-free or lowfat yogurt.
- Exchange a sweetened soft drink for a no-calorie version.
- Use a sugar substitute on cereal and in coffee.

Be physically active each day. The more you move, the bigger your calorie budget and the more likely you are to maintain a healthy weight. For good health and to burn calories, total at least 30 minutes of moderate or vigorous physical activity each day. More is even better!
- Walk, bike or skate everywhere you can—to work, to the store, to a friend’s house—or around the block.
- Volunteer for household jobs like vacuuming, washing windows, gardening, raking leaves or shoveling snow.
- Take an aerobics, spinning, weight-lifting or Pilates class.
- Join the office softball or bowling team or go out dancing.
- Schedule family “activity time.” Walk after dinner, enjoy the neighborhood playground or play a game in your own backyard.

Tip: To plan, analyze, and track your food and physical activity, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov/supertracker.
The Nutrition Facts label is your guide to making the most nutrient-rich food choices while staying within your daily calorie budget. You’ll find it on most packaged foods in the supermarket and frequently on posters and in brochures for fresh foods such as produce, fish and meat.

Here’s what the Nutrition Facts label shows you:

**Serving Size**
The serving size for this food is one package. All the nutrition numbers listed are based on this amount. Compare the serving size to the amount you eat and adjust the numbers as needed. For example, if you ate only half the package of this food, you’d divide the numbers shown by two (e.g., 130 calories).

**Servings Per Container**
Note carefully! This package contains one serving, but sometimes even small packages contain more than one serving.

**Nutrition Numbers**
The label lists the number of Calories and the number of Calories from Fat in one serving. Also listed are the grams of Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Total Carbohydrate, Dietary Fiber, Sugars, Protein and milligrams of Cholesterol and Sodium. Sometimes labels list extra information. For example, this label lists the grams of Monounsaturated Fat and Polyunsaturated Fat and milligrams of Potassium.

**Percent Daily Values**
These percentages show how much of each nutrient one serving provides in a 2,000-calorie diet. For this label, one serving of food provides 11% of the Total Fat and 15% of the Calcium recommended for the day.

**Hit Your Targets...Not Too High**
For nutrients we sometimes get too much of (Fat, Saturated Fat, Cholesterol and Sodium), your daily goal is to total 100% or less of the Daily Value. There is no Daily Value for Trans Fat, but experts recommend keeping intake as low as possible.

**Hit Your Targets...Not Too Low**
For nutrients such as Potassium, Dietary Fiber, Calcium, Iron, Vitamin A and Vitamin C, your daily goal is to reach 100% of the Daily Value. Look for foods that are good sources (10-19% of the Daily Value) or excellent sources (20% or more of the Daily Value) of nutrients like these. This label shows that one serving of the food is an excellent source of Dietary Fiber and Vitamin A and a good source of Potassium, Calcium and Iron.

**Did You Know?**
Some important vitamins and minerals are not required to appear on the Nutrition Facts Label (although the manufacturer sometimes chooses to list them). For example, a serving of beef stew is an excellent source of vitamin B₁₂ and zinc, but the amounts and % Daily Value may not be on the label. To learn about the nutrients in each of MyPlate’s food groups, go to ChooseMyPlate.gov
**Grains**
- Bagels
- Brown rice
- Bulgur/Cracked wheat
- Corn flakes
- Couscous
- Enriched white bread
- Flour tortillas
- Oatmeal
- Pasta noodles
- Popcorn
- Pretzels
- Wheat cereal
- White rice
- Whole-grain barley
- Whole-wheat bread
- Whole-wheat crackers
- Whole-wheat cereal
- Whole-wheat sandwich buns and rolls

**Fruits**
- Avocados
- Apricots
- Bananas
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Cranberries
- Dried plums
- Figs
- Grapes
- Grapefruit
- Kiwifruit
- Mangoes
- Oranges
- Peaches
- Pineapples
- Plums
- Raisins
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Watermelon
- 100% fruit juice

**Dairy**
- Fat-free or lowfat cheese
  - American
  - Cheddar
  - Cottage Cheese
  - Mozzarella
  - Parmesan
  - Ricotta
  - Swiss
  - Fat-free or lowfat milk
  - Fat-free or lowfat yogurt
  - Lactose free milk
  - Lactose reduced milk

**Oils**
- Avocado oil
- Canola oil
- Olive oil
- Safflower oil
- Soybean oil
- Sunflower oil

**Protein Foods**
- Beans and Seeds
  - Almonds
  - Black beans
  - Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
  - Kidney beans
  - Lentils
  - Peanut butter
  - Peanuts
  - Pinto beans
  - Pumpkin seeds
  - Soy beans
  - Sunflower seeds
  - Tofu
  - Walnuts

**Beef**
- 90-95% lean ground beef
- Bottom round roast or steak
- Brisket, flat half
- Eye round roast or steak
- T-Bone steak
- Top sirloin steak

**Chicken**
- Skinless chicken breast
- Skinless chicken thigh
- Skinless ground chicken breast
- Eggs

**Fish and Shellfish**
- Cod
- Flounder
- Halibut
- Mussels
- Salmon
- Shrimp
- Tilapia
- Tuna, canned in water

**Pork**
- Tenderloin
- Boneless loin roast
- Boneless loin chops

**Turkey**
- Skinless ground turkey breast
- Skinless turkey breast
- Skinless turkey thigh

**Lamb**
- Leg
- Shank
- Loin

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