

Tallahassee Democrat

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Change your recipes and change your life

By Amanda Barz for Gannett

The key, according to many health and nutrition experts, is to make over your meals to increase protein, fiber and nutrients while reducing unhealthy fats and blood sugar-spiking starches.

These changes not only reduce overall calorie intake, they also provide more energy to stay active, more protein to build lean muscles and burn fat, and a more consistent blood sugar level to help keep your appetite in check.

Here are three recipes—one for breakfast, lunch and dinner—to help you get started. In each recipe, a local Tallahassee chef exchanged unhealthy fats and starchier vegetables for healthier fats and nutrient and fiber-packed vegetables.

Favorite Breakfast Wrap

“This nutritious, flavor-filled wrap is easy to prepare and your family members can easily grab one on the way out the door.” —**Valerie Martin, Chef Instructor, Keiser University Center for Culinary Arts**

Serves 6: Approximately 150 calories per serving; 5 g fat; 26 g total carbohydrates; 7 g protein; 10 mg cholesterol

Ingredients

1 Tbsp. olive oil
½ cup diced onion
¼ cup diced bell pepper
1 cup sliced mushrooms
¼ cup diced tomatoes
½ cup julienne or diced ham
6 eggs
1 Tbsp. cold water
6 8-inch whole wheat tortillas
Salt and white pepper to taste

Heat a sauté pan over medium heat and lightly coat pan with olive oil. Add diced onion and peppers and sauté, stirring as needed until just tender. Add mushrooms and sauté with the mixture until tender. Add tomatoes and ham to heat through and season the mixture with salt and white pepper to taste. Keep the mixture warm until the eggs are cooked and you are ready to assemble the wraps. Whisk eggs and cold water until fully incorporated. Heat a large sauté pan over medium heat and add eggs; scramble using a rubber spatula. Add the vegetable mixture and incorporate evenly into the egg mixture until the eggs are fully cooked, seasoning with salt and white pepper as needed. Set aside and keep warm while heating the tortillas. Tortillas may be heated in the oven

and turned half way through to heat thoroughly or heated individually in a hot sauté pan on the stove.

To make the wraps: Fill each warm tortilla with an equal amount of the filling (approximately one inch from the edge of the tortilla) and roll the tortilla into a breakfast wrap. Cut each wrap into two equal halves and serve.

Pasta e Fagioli (Pasta and Beans)

“Pasta e Fagioli is a personal favorite of mine and a true comfort food. It is a great vegan option with good protein and low fat. With the addition of some good crusty, whole grain bread and olive oil for dipping, it makes for a delicious and filling lunch or dinner. —Valerie Martin, Chef Instructor, Keiser University Center for Culinary Arts

Serves 6.

Ingredients

½ cup diced onion
½ lb. Ditalini or elbow macaroni
3 cloves garlic, chopped
1 Tbsp. olive oil
¾ lb. dry white beans (soak overnight in cool water and leave at room temperature)
¼ cup tomato paste
3 cups vegetable stock
1 ¼ cups peeled, seeded and diced (cooked) tomatoes
1 Tbsp. each chopped fresh oregano and thyme
Salt and white pepper to taste
½ bay leaf

Soak the beans overnight. Sauté the onion and garlic in olive oil in a stock pot until the onion is soft and almost clear. Drain the beans and add to the pot along with the tomato paste. Add the vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally. Add the chopped tomatoes and bay leaf. Simmer for approximately 1 ½ hours or until the beans are tender. Add the herbs during the last 30 minutes or so of cooking. Remove the bay leaf. Remove approximately ¼ of the beans and puree with a blender or food processor, and then return the puree to the pot. Season the soup to taste with salt and pepper. Cook pasta and keep warm, add to soup when done.