

Delicious & Healthy Meal Prep within 40 Minutes or Less
Your Comprehensive Cookbook on 30 Time-Saving Yet Healthy Meal Prep Recipes
+ 4 Flexible Weekly Meal Plans

JULIANA LANDRUM

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Fast pace of modern life has paved way for a culture of fast foods and aerated drinks. We have arrived at a point in time where the very mention of food brings the thoughts of burgers and fried chickens. Mankind, in its quest for modernity, has ignored the healthy options for long, resulting in increased prevalence of obesity, diabetes, cardio vascular diseases, hypertension, depression and a lot of other diseases which were rarely heard of so far.

In addition to unhealthy food habits, the sedentary lifestyle of the urban professional has exacerbated the issue. This is especially true in the case of those who work from 9 to 5 sitting at their desks in the office. The lack of strenuous physical activity to burn out their calories in addition to the fatigue the person feels at the end of the day rarely leaves someone time to plan out a healthy meal. This presents a dilemma to the working parents who want to ensure the health and wellbeing of their family along with inculcating healthy food habits in their children.

This book aims to help you address these issues. We bring you the ultimate guide to cooking which will guide you in your path to a healthy life. The recipes we provide you will give you mouthwatering dishes prepared in a small-time period using healthy raw materials and cooking methods. If you were to follow this book, you and your family will have a more fulfilling life with good health and wellbeing without compromising on the quality and taste of the food.

Chapter 2: The Basics of Kitchen Etiquette

Every year more than 80 million people all over the world get food poisoning. A person who eats contaminated food can have health issues like stomach ache, diarrhea, fever and vomiting. Most of these can be treated and cured with immediate medical assistance. However sometimes, food poisoning can be fatal too. Some germs which can spread through food are even known to cause paralysis, blood infection and kidney failure. Hence, we should practice good kitchen etiquette to avoid contamination of food since germs cannot be detected by taste or smell right after infecting the food.

Some common preventive measures which are the basic practices to ensure a healthy kitchen are:

Wash your hands with soap and water before and after handling food. This is especially relevant while handling seafood, fish, poultry and meat. Any utensil or surface which has been exposed to raw meat should be thoroughly cleaned with soap and water to avoid easy growth of germs. Special attention should be paid to this when utensils and tools used for handling raw meat is used for preparing raw vegetable and fruit salads.

Eat the food soon after cooking it. Hot foods should be kept at 140-degree F/ 60 degree C or above. Cold foods should be kept at 40 degree F/ 4 degree C or below. If the food is to be consumed later, refrigerate the food right away.

The fridge should be set at a temperature of 4 degree Celsius or below. All leftovers should be refrigerated as soon as possible. This is especially true in the case of salads with creamy dressings, eggs, potatoes and cream filled pastries.

Whenever food is reheated for consumption, reheat it thoroughly to kill off any germs which might have grown in the stored food.

Kitchen should be kept very clean at all times. All dishes, utensils and the kitchen counters should be thoroughly cleaned, daily.

Do not store food in the open in the kitchen, since it can be contaminated by insects, pets, rodents etc. Always used closed containers to store food.

Ensure that the water being used in the kitchen meets the highest standards of purity. If the water available to you is not up to the mark then either install water purifiers in the kitchen or boil your water thoroughly before use.

Chapter 3: Healthy Cooking Techniques

We are all familiar with the various cooking methods that enable us to have mouthwatering food which take our taste buds on a trip to paradise. However, in our quest for tasty food we often unintentionally forget or ignore the impact cooking methods can have on the nutrition provided by the cooked food.

Excess heat can destroy many nutrients from food like potassium, folate and Vitamin C. Some studies have shown that some foods have increased nutritional value as a result of cooking. It has been proven that tomatoes, spinach and carrots tend to release more antioxidants when exposed to heat. Hence, it is best to know which cooking methods will ensure maximum physical wellbeing.

Microwaving is known to have the most minimal loss in nutrients due to cooking. As the food gets heated from the inside out, there is no need to add extra oils to cook it. Drying out can be avoided by sprinkling water on the food before microwaving or by placing a wet paper towel over the dish. It can be used on all food groups and is known to preserve the nutrients in vegetables. The only thing to be kept in mind is to use a microwave safe dish to do the cooking using this method.

Boiling is another easy and healthy way to cook food. Some water and a dash of salt can give us well cooked and healthy food. However, boiling food at very high temperatures or in a large amount of water can result in loss of nutrients up to 70%. Hence, care must be taken to ensure minimal loss of nutrients with the process.

Steaming any food item will help the food to get cooked in its own juices. The moisture of the food and the nutrients within it are protected. It is best to season the food with salt or lemon juice before steaming. Foods like broccoli provide best benefits when steamed as it helps to release the glucosinolates which inhibit the growth of cancer cells.

Poaching, which involves cooking a food in small quantity of hot water is another healthy method of cooking fruits, eggs and fish can be cooked well using this method. Some experts are of the view that the longer time it takes to cook using this method can result in loss of nutrients in vegetables.

Broiling is an effective way to cook soft meats, though it is not good for cooking vegetables which can dry out easily. The direct high heat which is directed at the food for a short amount of time can result in fast and efficient cooking of the meat.

Grilling requires use of a minimal amount of oil or fats and it can be used to cook both vegetable and meats. It also imparts a smoky flavour to the dish thereby increasing the desirability of the cooking method. However, it should not be a regular method of cooking as research shows that regular consumption of charred food can increase chances

of breast cancer and pancreatic cancer. It is best to use this method for cooking lean cut of meat which requires less cooking time.

Stir frying involves use of very small amount of oil to cook the food. It is best suited for cooking thinly cut vegetables and meat and grains like quinoa and rice.

Eating food raw, without any cooking can also provide food with no nutrient loss. However, it becomes possible only for plant-based food. Moreover, it has been proven that nutrients of some vegetables get enhanced while cooking.

Chapter 4: Calculating your Nutritional intake

Most of us do not give a second thought into what we are eating and how that impacts our live. There are more than twenty essential nutrients required for proper functioning of the human body. There is mounting evidence on the importance of micronutrients which is vital to have good immunity, aid cognitive development in children and help retain high energy levels throughout the day.

Eating more proteins has been proven to reduce appetite as well as reduce the number of calories the person can potentially consume. It will increase metabolism rate as it takes more energy to break down protein. They are also known to cut cravings. Hence, it is good to have a protein rich diet.

It is best to reduce intake of sugars and refined carbs as they keep a person away from fiber-rich carbohydrates which are good for the body.

An average man needs to consume 2500 calories per day to maintain his weight, and the average woman needs 2000 calories per day. This is further dependent on factors like activity, age, height, metabolism levels etc. when someone consumes more calories than what they actually require, they gain weight. Contrary to popular belief, eating right and leading a healthy lifestyle will help maintain an appropriate weight and ensure good health.

To calculate how much calories intake our body requires per day, simply multiply your current weight in kilograms by 29 to see how many calories you need to eat daily to lose weight, or multiply the current weight by 40 to see how many calories you need to consume per day to gain muscles.

Chapter 5: 30 Simple Recipes for a Healthy Life

Chicken Recipes

Homemade Frozen Chicken Fingers with Red Pepper-Basil Dipping Sauce

Time: 40 mins

Servings: 6

Calories per serving:
264



Ingredients:

For Chicken Fingers:

Chicken Tenders- 2 pounds

Egg Whites- of 2 large eggs

Corn flakes – 2 cups

Whole wheat Melba toast – 2 ounces

Parmesan, finely grated – 1/3 cup

Parsley, finely chopped- 1 tbsp

Sweet Paprika- ½ tsp

Salt to taste

For Red Pepper –Basil Dipping Sauce:

2% Greek Yogurt- ½ cup

Fresh Basil, chopped- 2 tbsps

Roasted Red Pepper, chopped- 2 tbsps

White Wine Vinegar- ½ tsp

Garlic clove, grated- 1

Salt to taste

Directions:

1. Take a large re-sealable bag and add the corn flakes, the Melba toast, parmesan, paprika, half a teaspoon of salt and parsley to it. Crush the contents into a coarse meal using a rolling pin or the bottom of a skillet. Transfer the crushed contents into a shallow dish.
2. Take a shallow dish and add the egg whites and 2 tablespoons of water to it. Whisk it well.
3. Dip the chicken tenders in the whisked egg whites. Shake off the pieces to remove the excess liquid. Coat the pieces with crushed mixture thoroughly and bake immediately or refrigerate it for an hour before baking.
4. If you want to cook it at a later point, arrange the coated chicken tenders in a baking sheet and freeze it for 1 or 2 hours till it turns hard. Then transfer it into a re-sealable bag and freeze it for maximum 1 month.
5. To bake the coated chicken tenders, preheat the oven to 425 degree F. Place the baking sheet on a baking rack and liberally spray it with cooking spray. Use the cooking spray over the fresh or frozen coated chicken tenders. Arrange them on the baking rack and bake them for 15-20 minutes, flipping them halfway, until the outer coating turns golden and gets a crispy texture.
6. To prepare the sauce, mix all the ingredients well in a bowl. Add one tablespoon water to it and mix well. Wrap it and refrigerate until it is ready to be served.

Sheet Pan Chicken Fajitas

Time: 30 mins

Servings: 4

Calories per serving:
470



Ingredients:

Chicken breast, boneless and skinless- 1
½ pounds

Flour tortillas, fajita sized, warmed- 8

Extra virgin olive oil- 2 tbsps

Large yellow onion, halved, thinly
sliced- 1

Baby bell peppers, halved, stemmed,
seeded- 1 pound

Chili powder- 1 tbsp

Lime juice- of one lime

Lime wedges-3 or 4

Guacamole- for garnishing

Hot sauce-for garnishing

Sour cream- for garnishing

Monterey Jack Cheese, shredded- for
garnishing

Directions:

1. Preheat the broiler with settings at high. The rimmed baking sheet should then be lined with foil.
2. In a small bowl, mix two teaspoons of salt, one teaspoon of pepper and one tablespoon of chili powder. Lay out the onions and peppers on the lined baking sheet. Season this

half of the chili powder mixture and drizzle it with one tablespoon of oil. Broil this for about 10 minutes till they turn soft and start to char.

3. In the meanwhile cut the chicken into thick slices of about a quarter of an inch. Toss them in a large bowl with one tablespoon oil and the remaining chili powder mixture.

4. Scatter the chicken on top of the vegetables which have just started getting charred. Return the baking sheet to the broiler for approximately five minutes till the chicken gets properly cooked and starts turning brown. Drizzle lime juice on top of the cooked dish. Serve this with the tortillas, lime wedges, sour cream, hot sauce, guacamole and Monterey Jack Cheese.

Grilled Chicken with Avocado Pesto

Time: 30 mins

Servings: 6

Calories per serving:
370



Ingredients:

Chicken breasts, boneless and skinless,
cut into 1-inch pieces- 2 ¼ pounds

Fresh basil leaves- 1 cup

Fresh parsley leaves- 1 cup

Pine nuts- ¼ cup

Extra virgin olive oil- 5 tablespoons

Lemon juice- 2 tbsp

Lemon zest- of one lemon

Garlic clove, crushed and peeled- 1

Ripe avocado, large-1

Black pepper, freshly ground- to taste

Salt-to taste

Directions:

To make this dish one needs to have twelve 6-inch bamboo skewers or six 12-inch metal skewers.

1. Get the grill pan or outdoor grill in place, with medium flame. Take a large bowl and mix the lemon zest and one tablespoon of oil. Add the chicken to this and toss to coat all the pieces evenly. Season this with ground pepper and salt. Portion to chicken and thread them into skewers.

2. Over medium flame keep a small skillet and toast the pine nuts by tossing them frequently for about 3 to 4 minutes till it turns light golden in color. Let this cool.
3. Take a food processor. Add the parsley, half a teaspoon salt, garlic, pine nuts and some peppers and process to make them a rough paste. To this add the lemon juice, three tablespoons of oil and avocado and process it to turn it into a smooth paste.
4. Grill the chicken till it is just cooked through by turning it frequently for around 5 to 7 minutes. Serve the chicken along with the tasty pesto.

Chicken Thighs and Couscous with Dill

Time: 20 mins

Servings- 4

Calories per serving:
600



Ingredients:

Chicken thighs, boneless, skinless and trimmed- 8

Couscous- 1 ¼ cup

Dill fronds, chopped- 1 cup

Grape tomatoes, each pierced halfway with a paring knife- 1 cup

Persian cucumbers, diced into ½ inch pieces

2 percent Greek yogurt- ½ cup

Olive oil- 2 tbsp

Lemon zest- 2 lemons

Lemon juice- of 3 lemons

Medium lemon cut into 4 wedges- 1

Dried oregano-1/2 tsp

Unsalted butter- 1 tsp

Black pepper, freshly ground- to taste

Salt- to taste

Directions:

1. Keep the oven rack at least 4 inches away from the heat source of the broiler and preheat.
2. Place a medium sized sauce pan over medium high flame. Boil half a teaspoon of salt, a teaspoon of butter and one and a half cup of water to simmer after keeping it covered.

As soon as it is removed from the heat, add the couscous to it and stir well and keep it aside, covered, for 5 minutes. Fluff the contents with a fork and then mix in dill to the couscous mixture and set it aside, covered, again.

3. In the meanwhile take a rimmed baking sheet and toss half a teaspoon of pepper, oregano, a teaspoon of salt, olive oil, lemon juice and zest, tomatoes and the chicken. Ensure that the chicken thighs are well covered by the marinade. Lay them flat on the sheet and broil them for around 10 minutes till the chicken turns brown and gets cooked. Make sure that you flip the tomatoes and chicken and rotate the pan half way through the broiling.

4. Place 2 chicken thighs and a few tomatoes in each plate. Add the juices from the pan to the dilled couscous. Put 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of couscous on each plate. Add a dollop of yogurt, some chopped cucumbers or a lemon wedge to it before serving.

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