

Healthy and quick meal ideas . . .



Shown above, fresh berries top a cooked millet/buckwheat mixture. When the grains are almost ready, four egg whites are “cooked” into the grain. After removing pan from stove, chopped spinach and flax seed are mixed in and are steam-cooked from the heat of the grain. Serve on a bed of spinach. Quick and easy for breakfast or any time.

Below is a bread-free chicken and avocado sweet potato “sandwich” shown closed (and shown open in the inset picture). The sweet potato was a left-over saved in the fridge. Add a cup of fresh veggies and perhaps a dessert of fruit, as shown.



How to cook Whole Grains

There are many varieties of grains to try! Experiment with quinoa, buckwheat, oat kernels, wheat kernels, or rye, barley, amaranth, millet, brown and wild rice, etc. Grains are easy to prepare: Bring one cup whole grain to boil in two cups water. Reduce heat, and let simmer until all the water is absorbed (about 15 to 20 minutes). Cook large batches to store in the refrigerator and use when you need it.

TIPS: Try to develop the habit of preparing food in advance . . .

Store a large container in the fridge, filled with cut up vegetables for quick salads (vegetables should be the foundation of all your meals!).

When you cook chicken or fish, cook lots and store in the fridge and/or freezer in individual serving sizes for quick use.

Cook large batches of whole grains to have handy in the refrigerator for instant use.



Pre-cook lots of potatoes, sweet potatoes, or squash. Store in the fridge. Re-heat or use cold, as a snack or added to meals.

Boil eggs and store in the fridge for quicker breakfasts or snacks.

Keep a fresh fruit basket on the kitchen counter. Store fresh, natural nuts in the fridge to accompany your fruit snack (or have a hard-boiled egg); a little protein helps to buffer the ‘sugar hit’ of the fruit!

“Whole Food” meals designed by Eve Lees, Nutrition Counsellor. For more direction and ideas: evelees@telus.net or visit www.artnews-healthnews.com

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Shown at left is a quick salad of pre-cooked, cubed butternut squash mixed with a variety of chopped vegetables (use your favourites). Add a serving of fresh fruit, like grapes (shown) or berries. Include an ounce of fresh, natural nuts for both protein and a healthy fat source. If you like, add a more complex protein source like left-over fish or chicken.

Another breakfast or other meal idea: Thinly sliced butternut squash toasted (twice) in toaster, used as “bread” for part of a scrambled egg mixture. Remaining scrambled eggs served on the side with fresh fruit (oranges shown here). Egg mixture: one whole egg and two egg whites with assorted chopped veggies cooked in non-stick pan.



Eve's comment: I never use seasonings (salt, pepper, etc.), as I love the natural taste of my foods. However, if you'd like to season your meals, feel free.



For breakfast or any meal . . . Various chopped veggies and fresh blueberries topped with a handful of legumes (in this case, chickpeas). And for even more protein, one soft-poached egg was mixed into the salad; a great idea for those who must have some sort of “dressing” on their salad!

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For any meal of the day . . . Start with various chopped veggies piled on your plate. Top with 1/2 cup cooked whole grain (buckwheat is shown here). Mix flax seeds into the grain after you've removed it from the stove, letting the heat from the grain "cook" the seeds. (You can also use pre-cooked grains, stored in your refrigerator.) Top with salmon and/or legumes for a protein source. Serve with a 1/2 cup fresh fruit for dessert.

Pictured is 3/4 cup buckwheat (or use any grain). After the grain is cooked, mix in lots of finely-chopped spinach and other veggies, some fresh berries and a protein source of your choice (leftover *plain* baked salmon shown here). Pre-cooked grain can also be used in any of these featured dishes, for faster meal preparation.

NOTE: For cheese lovers, unprocessed hard cheese is another option as a protein source in any of these meals. Mix in cheese cubes, or top it all with shredded cheese.



Instead of a cooked grain, baked sweet potato supplies the complex carbohydrate source in this meal. Serve with lots of chopped veggies. Top the "salad" with fish or chicken (tuna is shown) and garnish with thin avocado slices for a healthy source of fat. Fresh fruit is optional for dessert.

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This “spaghetti” dish uses spaghetti squash instead of highly-processed pasta. Cut the spaghetti squash in half, remove the seeds and place face down on a baking sheet. You can drop the seeds on the baking dish too, if you like, to have as a toasted snack later. Bake at 175 C (350 F) for about 45 minutes. Remove from oven and let it sit until cool enough to scoop out the inside strands (you can bake the squash ahead of time, and store it in the fridge for later use; reheated or cold). For the sauce: Stir fry sliced tomatoes, red onion, green or red pepper, and mushrooms in a non-stick pan (you can use a teaspoon or less or coconut oil, if you must). Use a visual guide of how much to cut up, depending on how many you are feeding.

Spread a one cup serving of squash on a plate, and top with a scoop of the vegetables.

As shown in the photograph, I’ve served a meat source on the side, but you could add cubed chicken or ground beef into the stir-fried vegetables instead. This meal is topped with a little unprocessed shredded cheese (the sauce’s heat melts the cheese). For a vegetarian meal, add fresh nuts and/or legumes like chickpeas or kidney beans to the vegetables, instead of serving this dish with cheese or animal protein.



More healthy and quick meals

Acorn Bowl is what I call this dish. I’m a fan of eating cold baked squash. When I make squash, I usually make extra to store in the refrigerator for another quick meal. It cuts down on the preparation time! Cut the acorn squash in half from stem to tip (as shown) and scoop out the seeds. Place the halves cut side down on a baking sheet. Place the seeds beside them to toast for a tasty snack later. Bake at 175 C (350 F) for about

35 to 40 minutes. For the filling: Dice up your favourite veggies. I’ve used tomatoes, zucchini, finely chopped spinach, leeks and I’ve also added fresh blueberries. I hold it all together with an avocado and lemon juice mixture (mash a half avocado with a small amount of fresh lemon juice (about a tablespoon) and blend with a fork until it is a smooth consistency). Stuff the halves of squash with the vegetable mix and serve any remaining mix on the side (as shown) on a small bed of spinach, chard or kale. Feel free to use whatever spices or other seasonings you desire (I sometimes use dried parsley as a garnish, to make a dish look “pretty”). However, the lemon juice adds a nice salty taste, so you may choose to take it easy on the salt shaker.



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