

7 TIPS FOR LIGHTER COMFORT FOOD

These 7 tips will help you lighten up your go-to dishes without sacrificing flavor or banning your favorite comfort foods. Pass the mac & cheese, please!



1 Make creamy dishes without the cream.

You can make velvety sauces with low-fat milk that's thickened with flour for a lightened-up mac & cheese, Alfredo dish or anything using a cream sauce. Here's how: combine 1 cup low-fat milk with 4 teaspoons all-purpose flour; whisk over medium heat until bubbling and thick.



2 Try cooking with less oil.

Extra-virgin olive oil and canola oil are good go-to, heart-healthy options for many recipes. But they still pack about 120 calories per tablespoon, so use them sparingly in your favorite sauté, salad or soup recipe. When cooking on the stovetop, cast-iron, nonstick or enamel-coated skillets and pans let you use the least amount of oil with very little sticking.



3 Get crispy "fried" food without the grease.

Skip deep-frying and try this oven-frying technique: Dip chicken, fish or vegetables in milk, buttermilk or egg, dredge in seasoned flour or breadcrumbs, then coat with canola or olive oil cooking spray. Place on a wire rack set on a baking sheet and bake at 425° to 450°F until crispy and the internal temperature reaches 165°F.



Facts Up Front helps busy shoppers by summarizing important nutrition information in a clear, simple and easy-to-use format on the front of food and beverage packages. In this voluntary labeling program, the facts are straight from the FDA-regulated Nutrition Facts panel on the side or back of food packages.

4 Amp up flavor without the salt shaker.

The Dietary Guidelines recommend limiting sodium consumption to less than 2,300 mg (1 teaspoon salt) per day (and less than 1,500 mg for some people). Replace some of the added salt in a recipe with sodium-free flavor boosters like a squeeze of lemon or lime and/or chopped fresh herbs.



5 Use whole grains in baked goods.

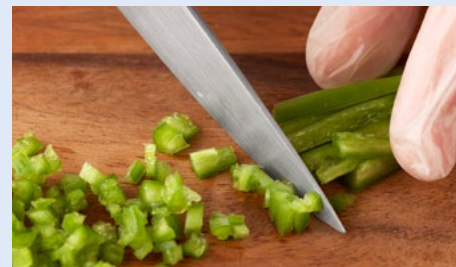
Replacing half the all-purpose flour in baked goods with whole-wheat flour adds fiber (10 more grams per cup) and boosts other nutrients, including vitamin E, zinc and magnesium.

Try using regular or white whole-wheat flour in muffins, breads and hearty cookies; use finer-textured whole-wheat pastry flour in cakes, pie crusts and delicate cookies.



6 Go for egg whites in place of whole eggs.

An egg white has only 16 calories and 0 grams of fat compared with 54 calories and 5 grams of fat in an egg yolk. Try using 2 egg whites in place of 1 whole egg in almost any recipe.



7 Add grains or vegetables to meaty dishes.

To keep ground meat dishes like meatloaf or burgers satisfying without tipping the calorie scale, add whole grains (like bulgur or brown rice) and/or diced vegetables (like mushrooms or peppers) to the meat to bulk up portion size. Try adding ¾ to 1 cup cooked whole grains or diced vegetables for each pound of meat.

