

Meal Planning (what to eat)

Coming up with suggestions for daily menus is intimidating. *Whose* breakfast, lunch, and snacks are we talking about? Some of us like routine but others need variety. Some need snacks but some go snackless. Are they working away from home? Is there time to cook anything but the simplest meal? Are they single or attached? With or without children? Finally, what's in season? It is all very well to suggest asparagus and fresh peaches, but these aren't practical most of the year. Variables aside, a sample of what a day might look like is in the box on this page, with more suggestions following. Snack suggestions begin on page 144.

What about calories?

The goal is simply to make sure the food on our plate is whole food that is minimally processed and with plenty of vegetables. Low-calorie-density food (like vegetables) combined with good fat and high-quality protein (like meat or eggs) helps fill us up so we eat less without feeling deprived. Don't fall into the low-fat trap! Instead, eat less refined carbs, like added sugar, sweet drinks, and refined grains (pages 62–66).

Trying to lose weight or keep blood sugar under control?

Think unprocessed whole food and portions, not calorie counts. A side effect will be better numbers, whether standing on a scale or looking at lab results.

- Don't forget mealtime math: $\frac{2}{3}$ non-starchy vegetables/beans, $\frac{1}{3}$ meat/fish.
- Skip bread, dessert, and sweet drinks.
- If weight or blood sugar isn't dropping, restrict whole grains, potatoes, and corn.
- Have only 1 serving of alcohol daily (avoid mixed drinks – page 98).
- Exercise every day, if only for a few minutes at a time. (See page 100.)
- Minimize eating out and ordering in.

SAMPLE WHOLE FOOD MENU

(Also see *Recipes*, pages 152–153)

Breakfast

- ❑ Orange
- ❑ *Fast Frittata* (page 137)
-or-
- ❑ Hot or cold whole grain cereal: *Steel-cut Oatmeal* (page 215), *Dr. Hassell's Crackpot Cereal* (page 214), or *Muesli* (page 217)
- ❑ Coffee or tea

Mid-morning snack

- ❑ Sliced carrots with 2 ounces sharp cheddar cheese or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup *Hasty Tasty Hummus* (page 160)

Lunch

- ❑ *Tuna Salad* (page 168) or *Chicken Salad* (page 170) on a bed of mixed greens
-or-
- ❑ A serving of last night's dinner
- ❑ Apple or fruit in season
- ❑ Water, coffee or tea

Afternoon snack

- ❑ $\frac{1}{4}$ cup raw almonds with a banana or another fresh fruit

Evening meal

- ❑ *Roasted Chicken Thighs -or- Just Plain Old Roast Chicken* (pages 229–230) with *Roasted Vegetables* (pages 176–182)
-or-
- ❑ *Quick Little Black Bean Chili* (page 213) with *Basic Baked Brown Rice* (page 222) and *Avocado Salsa* or *Pico de Gallo* (page 183)
- ❑ Sparkling water, glass of wine

Dessert

- ❑ Banana or apple slices with 1 ounce of 70–90% dark chocolate
-or-
- ❑ Fresh berries topped with *Yogurt Dessert Cream* (page 118)

BREAKFAST

Mornings arrive at an uncivilized hour and leave too soon. If there are strong opinions about what is and what is not an acceptable food choice, this is not the time to argue. One effective way to avoid an argument with yourself or anyone else is to only have good options available. A whole food breakfast with protein, good fat, and fiber satisfies the appetite longer and reduces sugar cravings. A good breakfast also informs your metabolism that there is no threat of starvation so it is free to burn calories.

Two important reasons to eat breakfast:

- Breakfast-eaters tend to have less belly fat and obesity, lower blood pressure, and a lower risk of diabetes.¹
- A high-protein breakfast will help reduce daytime hunger, and is associated with less snacking in the evening.²

Got vegetables?

If your goal is nine servings a day (and it is!), get a head start at breakfast. Make a habit of eating a couple of vegetables with your eggs: they're natural partners with quick-cooking options like baby spinach and diced tomatoes, and mushrooms and bell peppers can be sautéed quickly if diced small. (See *Fast Frittata* on page 137.) A vegetable-rich simple and satisfying breakfast – even without toast.

Eat whole fruit, not juice

Or have a *very* small glass. Even if freshly squeezed, juice is low in nutrition and fiber and high in sugar. Few of us can afford extra calories – particularly calories in the form of sugar. Eat whole fruit instead. There is always *some* good fruit available year round. An orange peeled and cut into juicy chunks is a good start, especially if you have been used to starting the day with orange juice. Bananas with yogurt, fresh grated apple with muesli, frozen blueberries with hot cereal, and so on.

¹ Odegaard, A. et al. *Diabetes Care* 2013;36:3100-6

² Leidy, H.J. et al. *AJCN* 2013;97:677-88

A whole grain continuum using oats

Deciding how to make the best use of whole grain health benefits (pages 39–40) is simple if you use a tool called a “continuum.” For example, a whole grain continuum starts with unprocessed grains on one end and continues through a series of transitions to highly processed grains on the opposite end. The objective is to choose grains from the least processed end. The following continuum features oats, listed here from best to worst. The first item, whole oat groats, is the least-processed and the best choice. The last item on the list – the crunchy little O-shaped things buried in the crannies of car seats across the nation – is highly processed and **not** a good choice, especially for children.

- ☺ **Whole oat groats:** *Completely intact grain with just the inedible husk removed – yay!*
- ↓ **Steel-cut oats:** *Oat groats chopped in thirds*
- ↓ **Scottish oats:** *Coarsely ground oat groats*
- ↓ **Old-fashioned rolled oats:** *Steamed and rolled oat groats*
- ↓ **Quick-cooking rolled oats:** *Steamed and rolled oats chopped finely*
- ↓ **Instant oatmeal:** *Finely-chopped pre-cooked “enriched” oat product, generally with added flavor, sugar, salt*
- ☹ **“Whole grain” (yeah, right!) breakfast O’s:** *Highly processed ready-to-eat oat cereal, “enriched,” added sugar, starches, and salt – boo!*

Avoid highly refined grain products

This includes anything made with white flour – which is called “wheat flour” on ingredient lists, with “organic,” “enriched,” or “unbleached” usually attached. Even products that claim to be whole grain may actually list “wheat” flour *before* whole wheat on the ingredient list. Read that list! You may be surprised at what goes into these seemingly simple foods. Bagels, scones, waffles, most bread, muffins, pastries, biscuits, pancake mixes...and so on

Avoid commercial breakfast cereals

We talk about this “early morning junk food” on page 66; these are mostly nutritionally-bankrupt, yet still somehow acceptable to otherwise health-conscious people because of labels like “whole grain,” “high fiber,” and “no added sugar.” Don’t fall for it!

Remember, highly processed grains are quickly turned into sugar in your body. Also avoid nutrient-poor calorie-rich foods like puffed rice, commercial granola, instant oatmeal, and cream-of-wheat, especially if you’re struggling with blood sugar or weight.

Eat good fat and protein with grains

Spend your breakfast calories on genuine whole grain options like the hot or cold whole grain cereal recipes listed on page 138. Top with a handful of raw nuts like walnuts or pecans – the good fat and protein slow the rise of blood sugar and delay the return of hunger. (See page 50.) Adding butter or whole milk may also achieve a similar effect. For hot cereal eaters, consider an intact whole grain option like *Dr. Hassell’s Crackpot Cereal* (page 214), millet (page 220), or toasted buckwheat groats (page 221). Moderately processed options are steel cut or Scottish oats and old-fashioned rolled oats (pages 215–216). If you like cold breakfast cereal, replace it with something like homemade muesli or granola (page 217). Commercially made granola is highly processed, often over-sweetened, contains low-quality fats, and has been stored for an unknown time – avoid it!

Other homemade grain options

Pancakes or waffles made from scratch (page 216), *Nutty Oatmeal Custard* (page 215), or custom-built fiber-packed nutrient-dense muffins like *Serious Muffins* or *Extreme Muffins* (pages 271 and 272) are examples of whole grains with protein, good fat, and fiber. We discuss why to avoid most commercial bread on page 40; the difference in quality of homemade whole grain bread is a powerful enough reason to take the time to make your own (pages 256-266).

Include (real) eggs

In *On Food and Cooking*, Harold McGee describes the egg as “one of the most nutritious foods we have [and is] unmatched as a balanced source of the amino acids necessary for animal life...The egg is a rich package.”¹ We agree with Mr. McGee. We love eggs, and eating an egg or two a day is a reasonable choice for most of us, as discussed on page 46. Eggs are rich in high-quality protein, store well, and cook quickly. You may even find (as I did) that you prefer your eggs cooked in extra-virgin olive oil instead of butter. (Butter is good food, but olive oil is optimal.) Eggs can be fried, scrambled, poached, hard or soft boiled (page 171), or turned into omelets, frittatas, or custards (pages 137, 215, and 196–200). Look for ways to sneak extra vegetables into your diet – even if it’s leftover roasted vegetables or just a chopped tomato tossed into a hot pan and scrambled with your egg. (Some prefer fresh salted and peppered chopped tomato on top.)

Avoid preserved (processed) meat

Limit bacon, ham, and cured sausages to special occasions. They contain added sugar, salt, and preservatives, which are wise to avoid on a daily basis. Exactly what it is about processed meat that seems to lead to diseases like cancer, diabetes and heart disease is not clear, but the risk is very real. (See page 68.) Many butcher departments make their own sausage from fresh meat and seasoning – but ask for a list of ingredients! (See page 68.)

Use real butter

Real butter is a whole food (page 41) but like any fat, it’s calorie-dense – use it sparingly. Avoid butter substitutes or partially hydrogenated products like margarine (see page 48). If you would like a spreadable butter in your refrigerator, combine 75% soft butter and 25% extra-virgin olive oil and stir together until smoothly blended. It will be spreadable even when cold.

¹ On Food and Cooking (© 2004) Harold McGee (page 78)

Use cultured dairy and real milk

Where possible, use cultured dairy like plain unsweetened yogurt (page 118) and kefir, which will add high-quality protein and calcium as well as probiotics (page 49) to your breakfast. Read the ingredient list to avoid additives, and make sure there are active cultures listed to maximize the probiotic content. Look for 2% or whole milk options rather than non-fat. (“Fat-free” often means “lots of added sweetening” in the world of non-fat yogurt and kefir.)

▪ **Cottage cheese** is another form of cultured dairy – but it can be harder to find a natural version that has been traditionally cultured. Look for cottage cheese with only milk, live cultures, and salt as ingredients.

▪ Add whole fruit or berries and a little honey to yogurt, kefir, and cottage cheese.

▪ As for milk, avoid non-dairy creamers and commercial substitutes like soy and almond milk – they are highly refined and the tastiest ones have additives. (See page 61.) Read those ingredient lists!

SOME BREAKFAST IDEAS

Favorite egg and vegetable combinations:

- ❑ 1–2 eggs scrambled, sunny-side up, over-easy, poached, or boiled, with:
 - ❑ sautéed fresh spinach and/or chopped tomato, diced mushrooms, bell pepper, salt, pepper, and shredded sharp cheddar or Parmesan cheese.
 - ❑ black beans, diced tomato, fresh or canned chopped green chilies, and shredded sharp cheddar cheese.
- ❑ 1–2 eggs cracked into ½ cup simmering *Tomato Sauce* (page 175) sprinkled with crumbled feta cheese, then covered and cooked until whites are set, 6–8 minutes.
- ❑ *Fast Frittata* (this page), *Zucchini Frittata* and *Spinach Timbale* (page 197), *Spinach Frittata* with fresh sausage (page 198), *Sweet Onion Custard* (page 199), or *Green Eggs and Quinoa* (page 253).

Fast Frittata

Okay, it’s certainly fast, but it *does* break with official frittata protocol in that there is some illicit scrambling involved. This is my breakfast most mornings – except when I treat myself to the banana pancakes on the next page.

(Serves 1–2)

about 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

¼ – ½ cup diced mushrooms

1 big handful baby spinach (3 cups), chopped

1–2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan

1–2 eggs

¼ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Optional: 1 tomato, diced (Roma works well)

1. Heat a 6–8-inch skillet over medium heat and add oil. Sauté mushrooms until softened and beginning to sizzle.
2. Roughly chop the spinach and add it on top of the mushrooms. Cover pan for 1 minute while the spinach collapses. (That is why you need at least 3 cups.) You only want to wilt the spinach, not cook it. Remove lid and sprinkle Parmesan and optional diced tomato over the spinach.
3. Shove everything to the sides and crack the egg(s) into the center. Add the salt and pepper. As the eggs begin to cook, begin to slowly scramble them, pulling the vegetables in from the side. Scramble more briskly at this point to blend it all while the egg is still soft and mixable. There you have it.

Note:

- ▶ I buy large mushrooms with smooth white caps that completely cover the gills, and dice them within a day while they’re still fresh looking. I store them in 2-cup screw-top plastic containers, which last about 1½ weeks – and the diced mushrooms still look fresh!
- ▶ This recipe expands any way you like – just adjust the size of your pan.

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Favorite vegetable and meat options:

- ❑ Sautéed fresh vegetables (like spinach or greens of any kind, mushrooms, bell pepper, sweet onions, etc.) with leftover cooked meat (like chicken or steak) chopped and added with salt and pepper.
- ❑ Leftover cooked vegetables (like *Roasted Vegetables* on page 176 or *Sautéed Sturdy Greens* on page 194) with sautéed ground meat/fresh sausage or feta cheese.

Cooked whole grain cereal:

Served with whole milk or cream, cinnamon, nuts (chopped walnuts, almonds, or pecans), and fresh fruit or berries. Sweeten with a small amount of honey or brown sugar. Some like hot cereal with just butter and salt.

- ❑ *Dr. Hassell's Crackpot Cereal* (page 214)
- ❑ *Steel-cut* or *Scottish Oatmeal* (page 215)
- ❑ *Rolled Oats as Hot Cereal* (page 216)
- ❑ Buckwheat (kasha) (page 221)
- ❑ Millet (page 220)

Whole grain cold cereal:

- ❑ Homemade *Muesli*, *Granola*, or *Grainless Granola* (pages 217, 163) with whole milk, plain yogurt, or kefir, and berries (fresh or frozen), sliced banana, or other fresh fruit.
- ❑ *Rolled Oats as Cold Cereal* (page 216) with whole milk, nuts, and chopped banana or berries.

Egg custards with whole grain:

- ❑ *Millet (or Brown Rice) Pudding* (page 220)
- ❑ *Nutty Oatmeal Custard* (page 215)

Yogurt, kefir, or cottage cheese:

- ❑ 6-8 ounces plain yogurt or kefir (whole milk or low-fat, but not non-fat) with chopped fresh fruit (like banana or blueberries). If needed, sweeten with a bit of honey or sprinkle with *Granola* or *Grainless Granola* (pages 217 and 163).
- ❑ 6-8 ounces cultured cottage cheese (whole milk or low-fat, but not non-fat) with a whole chopped fresh pear or banana; or a chopped tomato with salt and pepper.

Breakfast treats for special occasions:

- ❑ Bacon! (page 68)
- ❑ *Oatmeal Pancakes* or waffles (page 216)
- ❑ *Extreme Muffins* (page 272)
- ❑ *Serious Muffins* (page 271)

No time for breakfast:

- ❑ Pack a slice of frittata (page 197 or 198) or *Spinach Timbale* (page 197), or one of the cold cereal options.
- ❑ 1-2 *Boiled Eggs* (page 171) with chopped fresh fruit like an apple, pear, or orange.
- ❑ Toasted *Breadzilla* (page 261) with homemade *Nut Butter* (page 162).
- ❑ 8-ounces plain whole milk yogurt (a bit of honey), a banana, and some raw nuts.

Beverages:

- ❑ Tea or coffee (see page 56)
- ❑ Homemade kefir (page 165)

Easy Banana Egg Pancakes

These are delicate, sweet, and rich, and they *definitely* don't need butter or syrup. The first time you make them they can be tricky to flip, but after a few times, they're easy to handle.

(Makes about 6 x 3-inch pancakes, to serve 1)

1 ripe banana

1-2 eggs

¼ teaspoon salt

extra-virgin olive oil for pan (Believe me, you don't want these pancakes to stick!)

1. Mash a peeled banana into a smooth puree with a fork. (Easiest if very ripe.)
2. Beat egg(s) in a 1-cup Pyrex jug or similar. Add banana and salt, and blend well. (Depending on size of banana and egg, you'll have ⅔ - 1 cup of batter.)
3. Heat about 2 teaspoons of extra-virgin olive oil in a 10-inch skillet over medium heat, and use half the batter to pour 3 pancakes. (They're delicate; small ones are easier to flip.) Cook 3 minutes or until golden brown underneath. Flip and cook about 1 minute longer. Add more oil and repeat with remaining batter.

Meal Planning

LUNCH and DINNER

The prescription for maximum health and minimum risk calls for most of our daily intake to consist of whole foods – vegetables, fruit, beans, fish, eggs, extra-virgin olive oil, unrefined grains, cultured dairy, and unprocessed meat. However, reality may be a full schedule and an empty kitchen. Five of the most important steps to success are:

1. Clear the pantry of processed foods (page 59–68)
2. Stock up on whole foods (page 35)
3. Make some easy core recipes like vinaigrette and hummus
4. Pack a lunch
5. Limit eating out (and ordering in)

Our suggestions are naturally subjective; if our breakfast ideas look more like lunch to you, fine. Good food is flexible, but planning ahead is vital, and we all need to use common sense with regard to portions. Blood sugar and weight management isn't a one-size-fits-all science. If you need to lose weight but aren't making progress, reduce portions and increase low-starch vegetables and whole fruit – with an emphasis on vegetables.

Make your own fast food!

When you're hungry and tired and running late, picking up something hot and ready-to-eat on the way home can be hard to resist, but don't give in. "Fast food" doesn't have to compromise eat-smarter-feel-better goals. An egg can be memorable when it's scrambled with a bit of cheese, salt, and Tabasco sauce. A simple bowl of beans and brown rice is transformed when it's dressed with extra-virgin olive oil, garlic, cumin, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and some finely diced sweet onion and cilantro. Toasted cheese and tomato sandwiches are treats any of us can make with the most basic skills and tools. *Breadzilla* (page 261) topped with sharp cheddar, salt, and pepper, and then grilled is a delicious and substantial meal. Whatever you put together, the value of preparing food from scratch can't be overstated.

Save eating out for special occasions

It's easy to find ourselves eating out on a regular basis because it's easy and fun, but it's also a sure way to gain extra waistline while reducing valuable high density lipoproteins (that's HDL – the cholesterol we want as high as possible). Consider meeting friends or colleagues for coffee or something instead. Fixing more of our own food takes some planning ahead, but the time spent in the kitchen is less than you might think, and the health benefits are immeasurable. (See page 150 for some useful eating-out strategies.)

Start cooking

If you're new to cooking it may be helpful to review *Pantry Basics* (page 130) and *Useful Cooking Tools* (page 132). A few practical recipes to start with would be *Quick Little Black Bean Chili* (page 213), *Lazy Lentils* (page 208), *Tuna and Broccoli Pasta* (page 240), and *Green Eggs and Quinoa* (page 253): they're easy and make great leftovers. If you have a hard time making vegetables exciting, check out the section on *Roasting Vegetables* (pages 176–182) and *Simple Salads* (pages 183–188).

Eat more leftovers

Build your next meal on the last. For example, make *Chili* (page 248) and *Basic Baked Brown Rice* (page 222) one night, and pack up some extra portions for lunch the next day. Whether you end up with leftovers deliberately or accidentally, they can save on planning and kitchen time. Turn leftover rice into a simple one-dish meal like *Kedgerie* (page 242) the next night. In any case, you should only have to cook from scratch every other day or two. Favorite leftovers for me are *Minestrone* (page 193), *Lazy Lentils* (page 208), *Roasted Chicken Thighs* (page 229), and barley or quinoa salads (pages 218 and 219). Cook enough chicken thighs for a few meals – *Chicken Salad* (page 170), *Chicken Pot Pie* (page 231), *Chicken Tetrazzini* (page 239), *Chicken Soup, Mexican-style* (page 233), and so on.

Cook up a pot of beans

Home cooked beans are easy, whether in the oven, on the stovetop, or in a slow cooker. (See page 207.) If I want to make hummus or chili the next day, I just put 1½ cups of dried beans in my crock-pot with 2 teaspoons of salt and 6 cups of water, turn it on high, and go to bed. I don't have to plan ahead! If I change my mind, I just cool the beans and freeze them in their cooking liquid. Once you do it a few times, you'll probably want to cook up a pot every week or two. Beans can be cooked ahead and frozen, reheated with no effect on their texture or flavor, and paired with grains, vegetables, and meat for simple, satisfying, unfussy one-pot meals, like *Lazy Lentils* or *Easy Beans* (page 208). Transformed into bean salads like *Black Bean Salad with corn and jicama* (page 212) makes them particularly heroic in last-minute meal scenarios.

Spontaneous bean options

It's unlikely any of us are too busy to drain a can of beans and toss them with vinaigrette. Even better, add some diced onion and red bell peppers or celery, and *yes!* – some cilantro and a bit of cumin. *Hasty Tasty Hummus* (page 160) is an easy dip made with a can of chickpeas (garbanzo beans), and is a great lunch when combined with raw vegetables or in pita pockets stuffed with cucumber and tomato slices. Commercially made hummus is sold almost everywhere, but even with a seemingly good ingredient list, it can't compare to the hummus you make yourself with good extra-virgin olive oil and fresh-squeezed lemons and garlic. *A Brisk Black Bean Thing* (page 159) is also an easy canned bean recipe. I should add that both of these recipes have a significant garlic presence that may affect the atmosphere in the workplace, so it might be a good idea to bring enough to go around. Hummus is surprisingly popular once people actually try it. Fresh frozen beans can be almost as spontaneous; baby lima beans cook in 7 minutes straight from the freezer. (*Luscious Limas*, page 209.)

Make whole grain salads

Salads made with whole grains like barley, quinoa, brown rice, or bulgur make it easy to combine protein, good fat, and vegetables – a good formula to remember with grain-based dishes – especially if blood sugar levels are a concern. (See page 95.) Whole grain salads can be made in advance, languish happily at room temperature, go with you to work, and hang around until lunch. There's no need to refrigerate a whole grain salad when you make it on the same day you eat it. Find a recipe you like – see pages 218–219, 221, and 226 (or create your own).

Switch to whole grain pasta

It's a no-brainer to switch from white to whole grain pasta, but like any product made with flour, even pasta varieties like quinoa, spelt, corn, whole wheat, and brown rice are rapidly-metabolized (page 40); eat them in moderation and apply the protein + good fat + lots-of-vegetables formula, especially if you have blood sugar or weight issues. My preference is brown rice pasta; it is a bit fragile, but with a milder flavor and softer texture than whole wheat. I use it in *Macaroni and Cheese* (page 255), *Tuna Tetrazzini* (page 239), and *Tuna and Broccoli Pasta* (page 240), a dish that is great the next day at any temperature. (Both tuna recipes also work well with chicken.)

Avoid the sandwich (bread) trap

Sandwiches tend to be a destination for most sliced lunch meats, plus they usually involve commercially baked bread. (See page 40.) For anyone working on waist control, it's a good idea to avoid the sandwich trap. A pita pocket stuffed with a crunchy tuna salad or chicken salad (pages 168 and 170) is one way to reduce bread consumption if you want a sandwich. (Sandwich postscript: although white bread isn't legitimized by any amount of lettuce or tomato, if you're caught eating a sardine and onion sandwich on white bread, a loophole clause may be found.)

Leave processed meat in the deli

We recommend avoiding preserved meats (or saving them for special occasions), and we discuss the reasons for this on page 68. These are the commercially processed deli meats that are so popular and convenient – turkey, ham, bacon, hot dogs, sausages, salami, and so on. It also includes commercial rotisserie chicken and other ready-to-eat meat. If you want meat, just cook it yourself or consider home-cooked sandwich alternatives like cheese, chicken, tuna, and egg. Leftover *Ono Oven Smoked Pig* on page 249 makes great pulled pork, and there are few recipes as easy as *Just Plain Old Roast Chicken* on page 230. With any of these options you will get the protein you need but in a far better form than deli meat.

Canned tuna or salmon: easy fishing

Once you find a source of canned fish you can enjoy, it's a convenient source of protein and good fat. We like solid light yellowfin tuna packed in olive oil and wild Alaskan sockeye salmon. (See page 117.) In our office a popular meal is a salad – baby spinach, mixed greens, chopped radicchio, shredded cabbage, whatever –with onion, tuna, vinegar, salt, and freshly ground pepper. (See recipe next page.) *Tuna Salad* (page 168) combines protein, good fat, and *great* fiber (lots of diced celery and onion), and makes an easy meal. Other favorite tuna and salmon recipes are *Tuna and Broccoli Pasta* (page 240), *Kedgerie* (page 242), *Salmon Cakes* (page 238), and *Tuna and White Bean Salad* (page 241). Tuna and salmon are also less likely to offend delicate workplace sensibilities than sardines.

Give sardines a chance

If you are new to sardines (see page 117) I suggest starting out with something like *King Oscar Extra-Small Sardines* “taken from the icy waters of Norway’s purest fjords” (according to the label) and packed in olive oil in little cans with rip-off lids. If the sight of a small tail hanging off your fork is disturbing, mash the sardines first. Try them on a thin slice of fresh whole wheat bread spread with butter or

mayonnaise and sprinkled with salt and pepper, or try the *Sardine Pâté* on page 169. A surprisingly good combination that doesn't involve bread is sardines mixed with chopped sharp green olives – they aren't the least bit intimidated by the sardines and their salty tartness cuts the fishy richness nicely. Kippered snacks are another option if you can't reconcile with sardines –they're tasty little smoked herring fillets ready to eat with a fork right out of the can. (Make sure they're packed in olive oil.)

SOME LUNCH IDEAS

Favorite heat-and-serve dishes that make great leftovers – pack in single servings for a week of lunches or dinners-on-the-go:

- ❑ *Roasted Chicken Thighs* (page 229) with vegetables (pages 176–182, 194–206) or one of the *Simple Salads* (pages 183–188)
- ❑ *Meat Loaf* (page 243) with *Tomato Sauce* (page 175) and one of the *Roasted Vegetables* (pages 176–182)
- ❑ *Lazy Lentils* (page 208) or *Quick Little Black Bean Chili* (page 213)
- ❑ *Sautéed Sturdy Greens* (page 194) with chickpeas and crumbled feta
- ❑ *Basic Baked Brown Rice* (page 222) with black beans and sharp cheddar cheese
- ❑ Leftover *Ono Oven Smoked Pig* (page 249) with *Succotash Salad* (page 211).
- ❑ A serving of *Zucchini Frittata* or *Spinach Timbale* (page 197), *Spinach Frittata* (page 198), or *Green Eggs and Quinoa* (page 253).

Robust room temperature salads with vegetables, beans, whole grains, or tuna:

- ❑ *Chopped Mediterranean Salad* (page 185)
- ❑ *Black Bean Salad* (page 212)
- ❑ *Succotash Salad* (page 211)
- ❑ *Barley Salad* (page 218)
- ❑ *Quinoa Salad* (page 219)
- ❑ *Tuscan Bean Salad* (page 211)
- ❑ *Warm Lentil Salad* (page 213)
- ❑ *Salade Niçoise* (page 186)
- ❑ *Tuna and White Bean Salad* (page 241)

Meal Planning

Sandwich alternatives:

- ❑ 1–2 slices of *Breadzilla* (page 261) grilled with sharp cheddar cheese, sliced tomato, tuna, onion, and avocado.
- ❑ Stuffed into whole wheat pita or served on mixed greens: *Tuna Salad* (page 168), *Chicken Salad* (page 170), *Egg Salad* (page 171), and *Tofu Pâté* (page 172).

Grab-and-go snack-type lunches:

- ❑ *Boiled Eggs* or *Deviled Eggs* (pages 171–172) with a handful of red, yellow and orange mini sweet peppers and fresh fruit.
- ❑ *Hasty Tasty Hummus* (page 160) or *Definitive Dip* (page 158) and vegetables (cucumber, carrots, celery, broccoli, bell peppers...) with a handful of olives and fresh fruit.
- ❑ Two *Brown Rice Power Patties* (page 225) or *Salmon Cakes* (page 238) and an apple.
- ❑ *Sardine Pâté* or *Chopped Liver* (page 169), buttered rye crispbread, and celery stalks.
- ❑ *Crazy Good Crackers* (page 164), sharp cheddar cheese, and an apple.

No-fuss Tuna and Greens

This is just one version of the salad we make for lunch a few days a week in our office.

(Serves 4)

1 cup sweet onion in 1/8 x 1/2-inch slices
8 ounces sliced mushrooms, if we have them
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
10–16 ounces baby spinach, arugula, spring greens, radicchio, Napa cabbage, etc.
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan (page 117)

1. Place onion, vinegar, oil, salt, pepper, and (optional) mushrooms in a medium bowl and let marinate 10 minutes or so.
2. Add greens and Parmesan, toss, and serve with a side of solid light tuna in olive oil (page 117) and/or chopped hard boiled eggs and/or sliced avocado, etc.
Delicious.

EATING at WORK

It's easy to eat well in our office because we always keep a selection of mix-and-match ingredients handy in the cupboard, fridge, and freezer. We generally make and share some version of the salad in the box on this page, or the *Mediterranean Chopped Salad* (page 185) or *Tuna and White Bean Salad* (page 241). Having the items below on hand allows us to fix instant and delicious meals, snacks, and drinks any time:

Office equipment, snacks, and supplies:

- ❑ Salt shaker and pepper grinder (page 132)
- ❑ Chef's knife and paring knife
- ❑ Chopping board, grater, mixing bowls, spatula, and cutlery
- ❑ Extra-virgin olive oil, apple cider vinegar, and honey
- ❑ Extra-sharp cheddar cheese
- ❑ Plain yogurt (page 118)
- ❑ Fresh fruit (apples, oranges, and bananas)
- ❑ Raw almonds (Most Popular Snack)
- ❑ Dark chocolate (85% cocoa content)
- ❑ Pitted prunes (Trader Joe's non-sorbate)
- ❑ Tea, coffee, and whole milk (for therapeutic espressos)
- ❑ Sparkling water

Impromptu mix-and-match salad items:

- ❑ *Vinaigrette* or *Caesar Dressing* (page 154)
- ❑ solid light tuna in olive oil, 5-ounce can
- ❑ chick peas, black beans, and small white beans, 15-ounce can
- ❑ *Boiled Eggs* (page 171)
- ❑ Grated Parmesan/crumbled feta cheese
- ❑ Baby spinach/salad greens (page 127)
- ❑ Radicchio/Napa and green cabbage
- ❑ Sweet onions (page 121)
- ❑ Sliced mushrooms
- ❑ English cucumber
- ❑ Red, yellow, or orange bell peppers
- ❑ Celery and carrots (page 123)
- ❑ Cherry tomatoes
- ❑ Sliced roasted beets (page 178)
- ❑ Avocado
- ❑ Olives

Meal Planning

SOME FAVORITE DINNER COMBINATIONS

- ❑ *Roasted Chicken Thighs* (page 229)
Roasted Vegetables (pages 176–182)

- ❑ *Chili (con Beans and con Carne)* (page 248)
or *Quick Little Black Bean Chili* (page 213)
Avocado Salsa or *Pico de Gallo* (page 183)

- ❑ *Green Eggs and Quinoa* (page 253)
Marinated Carrot Matchsticks (page 202) or
Quick Braised Carrots (page 123)

- ❑ *Tuna (or Chicken) Tetrazzini* (page 239)
Last-minute Green Beans (page 201)

- ❑ *Meat Loaf* (page 243) served with
Tomato Sauce (page 175)
Simple and Succulent Cabbage (page 124)

- ❑ *Salmon Cakes* (page 238)
with *Goop* or *Tartar Sauce* (page 156)
Roasted Asparagus (page 177)

- ❑ *Minestrone* (page 193)

- ❑ *Black Bean Polenta* (page 252)
Napa Cabbage Salad with Cilantro (page 185)

- ❑ *Crowded Chonder* (page 236)
Apple, Broccoli, and Celery Slaw (page 183)

- ❑ *Tuna and Broccoli Pasta* (page 240)

- ❑ *Lazy Lentils* (page 208)
Basic Baked Brown Rice (page 222)

- ❑ *Moussaka Mea* (page 205)
Tossed Green Salad (page 184)

- ❑ *Red Lentil Soup* (page 250)

- ❑ *Ono Oven Smoked Pig* (page 249)
Nutty Brown Rice (page 223)
Sautéed Sturdy Greens (page 194)

- ❑ *Spinach Frittata* (page 198)
Fresh Tomato Salad (page 184)

DESSERT and DRINKS

If our goal is optimal health and a healthy waistline, there's really no place for the conventional notion of dessert, like cookies, cake, pie, ice cream, or sweet drinks (page 65) ...except for special occasions and holidays, of course. If we see them as innocent indulgences to comfort us in times of stress or depression, we are only regressing from our goal – or, to use scientific lingo, preventing our inner child from growing up. If you are serious about minimizing your risk factors and maximizing your health, clear the cookies out of the cupboard and the ice cream out of the freezer. If you can't find time for a walk every day, throw out your television, too. You'll be smarter as well as leaner and healthier.

A FEW DESSERT IDEAS

- ❑ Fresh berries, bananas (fresh or sautéed in butter), or baked apples or pears with *Yogurt Dessert Cream* (page 118) or real whipping cream and a drizzle of honey.
- ❑ Fresh fruit – like apple/pear slices or cluster of grapes – with your favorite aged cheese (cheddar, gruyere, blue, and so on).
- ❑ Peeled oranges, halved stem to stem and sliced thinly crosswise, drizzled very lightly with honey and sprinkled with shredded unsweetened coconut.
- ❑ *Chocolate Almond Bites* (page 281) or an ounce or two of dark chocolate (at least 70% cocoa content) with raw almonds.
- ❑ *Almond Tea Cakes* (page 272), *Butternut Custard* (page 196) or *Macarons* (page 278).

A FEW BEVERAGE IDEAS

- ❑ Fresh brewed coffee or tea (herbal or caffeinated – see page 56) with cream or milk and minimal sweetening.
- ❑ Water with slices of fresh lemon or lime, or chilled sparkling water, unsweetened (we like *Talking Rain* lemon lime).
- ❑ One daily glass (5 ounces) of wine or 12 ounces of beer, preferably with dinner. (See page 58 for more about alcohol.)