

# *New Low-fat* FAVORITES

*Fabulous Recipes  
from the  
World's Healthiest  
Cuisines*

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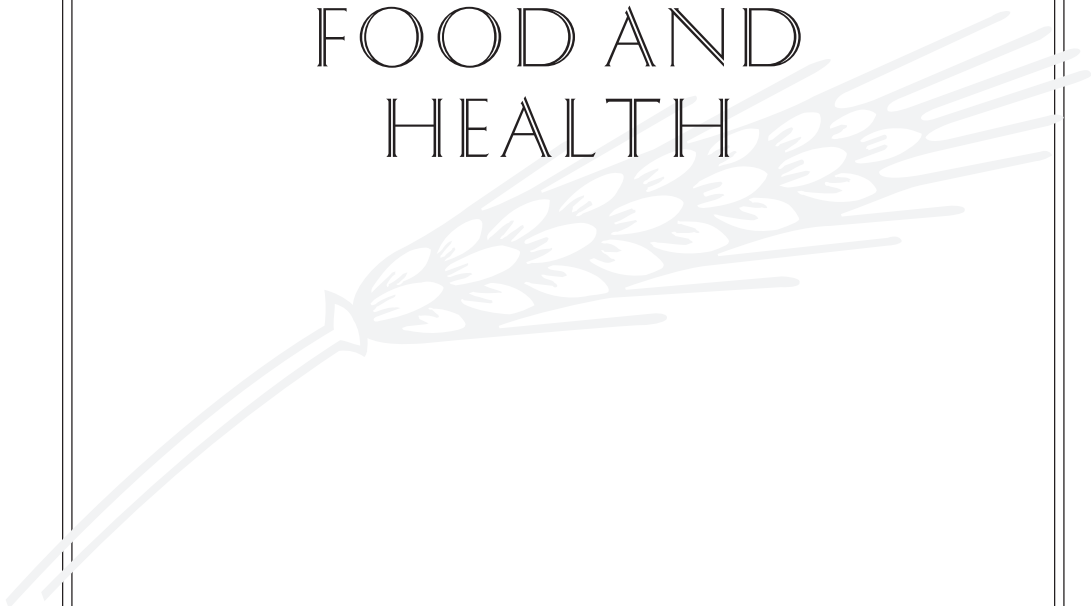
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*Part One*  
FOOD AND  
HEALTH







## 2

# *Preventing Illness Starts in the Kitchen*

**A** GROWING body of evidence indicates that eating fruits and vegetables may help prevent certain degenerative disorders like cancer and heart disease. It is no secret that those people who eat largely vegetarian diet are not only long-lived, but do not suffer from many of the diseases that are major killer in this country. Only recently, however, has it been possible to gather laboratory data to help understand exactly how plant foods work in protecting against chronic diseases.

Studies have shown that a higher consumption of vegetables and fruits can curb strokes in men and that many plant foods contain substance” that may inhibit cancer. At least half a dozen studies in several countries have indicated that vegetables and fruits might protect specifically against breast cancer. No wonder then that leading government agencies have been recommending that we include ample amounts of these foods in our diet.

The reason is going to sound like old news to you: we need plant foods for the vitamins they contain. Vitamins are necessary as chemical partners for the enzymes involved in metabolism, cell repair and other vital body processes. Specifically, vitamins E, C, and A, along with beta-carotene, the plant form of Vitamin E, and selenium, have been under intense scientific scrutiny for their role as antioxidants, a class of chemicals that may play a key role in fighting heart disease and cancer.

### **Antioxidants**

Antioxidants are scavengers of particles known as free radicals, highly reactive molecules in search of a partner. These unstable molecules can damage

## SOURCES OF BETA-CAROTENE

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*While the amount of the antioxidant beta-carotene one needs to consume for the maximum protective effect against heart disease has not yet been established, experts generally recommend you consume 5 to 6 milligrams a day. This recommendation is for food sources, not supplements. All values are for 3 1/2 ounces, uncooked, unless otherwise indicated.*

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Carrots, 1 1/2 carrots	17 mg	Watercress, 2 cups	3 mg
Sweet potato, 3/4 potato	12 mg	Hubbard squash, 1 cup	3 mg
Pumpkin, 1 cup	8 mg	Peppers, red bell, 1 cup	3 mg
Dandelion greens, 2-3 cups	8 mg	Apricots, 3 fresh	2 mg
Peppers, hot, red, 2 peppers	6 mg	Cantaloupe, 2/3 cup	2 mg
Turnip greens, 2-3 cups	5 mg	Swiss chard, 2-3 cups	2 mg
Kale, 2-3 cups	5 mg	Romaine lettuce, 2 cups	2 mg
Butternut squash, 1 cup	5 mg	Chicory, 2 cups	2 mg

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cell integrity and, by causing injury to genes, lead to cancer. Because they are missing an electron, free radicals tend to bind with other molecules in the body. An excess of free radicals can set off a chemical chain reaction that damages cells and even interferes with their DNA. While you can't see what free radicals do in your body, you can imagine it by observing what these rogue molecules do elsewhere, as in the rapid browning of an apple.

Stir a tablespoon of miso paste into a pilaf.

Use cubed tofu to lend a meaty quality to vegetarian dishes.

Add tofu cubes to stir-fries.

Crumble tofu into a meat loaf mixture.

Mix tofu with peanut butter in a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Puree tofu in a blender and add to soups for a creamy texture.

Vitamins C and E are produced in plants, including edible ones, that need to protect themselves from the oxygen they produce during photosynthesis. In fact, many of the fruits and vegetables we eat are complex chemical "torehouses that contain a range of different antioxidants, one of the many compelling reasons to eat a balanced and varied diet.

Antioxidant levels in our bodies may relate to how many age-related diseases we get, like age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a condition responsible for the loss of central vision and the leading cause of blindness in people over age 65. In one study, those who ate the most carotenoids had a

43 percent lower risk of developing AMD than those who ate the least. Spinach and collard greens, which have high levels of the carotenoids *lutein* and *seaxanthin*, were the vegetables most strongly associated with a reduction in AMD risk.

### ***Beta-carotene***

Beta-carotene, one of four related compounds called carotenes and a key constituent in many fruits and vegetables, continues to be the focus of major scientific research, both because it is a precursor of the important vitamin A and because it acts as an antioxidant. Once in the body, beta-carotene is converted into highly active forms of vitamin A, which play an important role in vision. Vitamin A also helps build bone and teeth, maintain skin, hair and gums, mucuous membrane and nerve cell sheathing. Studies have shown that when this hard-working carotene turns into one vitamin A compound, it fights the free radical damage that causes cancer and heart disease.

Though preformed Vitamin A is available to us in animal foods like liver, cheese, butter and eggs, these foods are also high in cholesterol, saturated fats or both, and their consumption should be limited. Chalk up another reason to seek out plant foods.

Beta-carotene is found in cruciferous vegetables, deep orange, green and yellow vegetables and fruits. Carrots top the list (see Chart, P. 23) along with sweet potatoes. You'll see that pumpkin, also right up there at the top, deserves a more prominent place in our food pantheon than just that of a pie filling. Other good sources are spinach, kale, chard, peaches and cantaloupe, as well as dried apricots and the winter squashes, all of which also provide fiber and other important vitamins and minerals as well.

Yet with all these splendid choices, a USDA food intake survey shows that, on the average, the foods Americans eat only provide about 1.5 milligrams of beta-carotene a day — or 25 to 30% of the amount recommended.

#### SHOULD I TAKE BETA-CAROTENE SUPPLEMENTS?

Tofu, an undeniably bland food, has not become a part of our pan-Asian food scene the way, say, sushi has. Even the texture is off-putting to many Americans. It does, however, have the chameleon-like advantage of tasting like whatever it's cooked with, as in the Bean Curd with Watercress (P. 114) or the Maypo Tofu. (P. 213). (For types of tofu available, see Glossary). If you wish to add soy to your diet, tofu is probably the easiest way to do it.

#### HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

While no researcher has come up with an optimum amount of dietary soy, it is thought that even a relatively small amount One-half cup of tofu or the equivalent of a glass of soy milk a day seem to be enough to confer

## FISH AND SHELLFISH

*Chicken Soup*

*Chicken Cellophane Noodle Soup*

*Anne Rosenszweig's Shrimp, leek and  
Sweet Potato Chowder*

*Soupe au Pistou*

*Mushroom Barley Soup*

*Pasta e Fagioli with Chicken*

*Sweet Potato Soup*

*Kale and Potato Soup with Red Chili*

*Potato Watercress soup*

*Fresh Tomato Soup*

*Diane's Zucchini Soup*

*Cold Broccoli Soup*

*Broiled Bluefish*

*Bluefish with Red Pepper Relish*

*Cornmeal-Crusted Catfish on Mixed Greens*

*Pan-Grilled Sole*

**T**HE DUTCHESS OF WINDSOR didn't think much of soups. ("Why mire a meal in a swamp?" she is reported to have said). But I love soups and the sense of well being they engender — both substantial soups like "Soupe au Pistou" that can be the main course for family or close friends, and lighter, tasty ones like "Zucchini Soup" that start a meal pleasantly and, by filling you up a little, help make it easier not to overeat.

With the exception of reduced-sodium chicken broth, I have little use for canned soups. They are frequently lacking in depth of flavor and oversalted to compensate, and the ingredients all taste the same to me. That's why I always have something delicious and homemade in my freezer, for the Sunday evening when a bowl of steaming soup in front of the television seems like heaven, or the day when I've eaten more lunch than usual and want something light and restorative at dinner. I'm especially fond of chowders and I wouldn't hesitate to use an ounce or two of well-drained bacon to give the special smoky flavor that is so characteristic. A stock, either chicken or vegetable, can be invaluable in adding depth and richness. (See "Basics" section at the end of the book.)

The flavor of soups have a way of deepening and intensifying when their ingredients are allowed to marry which adds another advantage — they can be prepared a day or two ahead and just reheated when you need them.





# Pesto Sauce

*Pesto is one of the stellar creations of the Italian kitchen and a relatively small amount adds a stunning depth of flavor to soups, sauces and foods of all sort.*

*Traditionally it is made with a lot of olive oil, pine nuts (or sometimes, walnuts), and cheese added at the end, which makes for a divine flavor but lots of fat. This recipe, while eliminating the butter and using less olive oil, is still high in fat. Use it as a condiment, indulge in it occasionally, and enjoy it heartily as a sauce for pasta or vegetables, thinning it with an equal amount of the pasta cooking water.*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 2 cups tightly packed basil leaves                           | 1/2 teaspoon salt                              |
| (1 small handful, about 1/4 cup) parsley sprigs, leaves only | 2 tablespoons freshly grated Parmesan cheese   |
| 3 large garlic cloves, chopped                               | Fresh black pepper                             |
| 2 tablespoons pine nuts                                      | 1 cup, approximately, cooking water from pasta |
| 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil                               |  |

Put the basil, parsley, garlic and nuts in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse two or three times. Add the olive oil and process until basil is pureed and sauce is smooth, scraping down sides as needed. Add and stir in the cheese with a spatula, season to taste with salt and pepper and transfer to a bowl or a container with a tight fitting lid and refrigerate. Makes about 1 cup. Just before using, blend in an equal amount of pasta cooking water.

**Yield:** 2 cups sauce, serving 6.

► *Pesto sauce base freezes very well and can be kept for up to a year. The parsley helps keep the color bright green. If you make it for the freezer, omit the cheese and pepper and add after defrosting.*

PER ONE-THIRD CUP:	
CALORIES	157
FAT	15 GM
SATURATED FAT	2 GM
CHOLESTEROL	2 MG
SODIUM	225 MG
PROTEIN	3 GM
CARBOHYDRATE	7 GM

## Pasta e Fagioli with Chicken

*This chicken soup is fast, easy, and has a lovely clean taste. It is also surprisingly elegant. It could be made with chicken breasts for a lower fat count, but I do like the silky dark meat here.*

4 ounces cellophane noodles*	1/2 teaspoon salt
8 cups water	fresh black pepper
2 chicken legs and thighs	1 tablespoon chopped scallion green
2 tablespoons finely chopped peeled gingerroot	2 tablespoons chopped fresh coriander leaves
3 tablespoons <i>nuac mam</i> (Vietnamese fish sauce)	

Soak the cellophane noodles in warm water for 10 minutes, and drain. Cut them into 3-inch lengths with a kitchen scissors and set aside.

Bring the water to a boil in a 4-quart pot and drop in the chicken legs and the ginger. Bring again to the boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 25 minutes. Let sit for 5 minutes.

Remove chicken legs and thighs, remove and discard the skin; shred the meat and set aside. Strain broth through a cheesecloth-lined sieve and either chill until fat can be removed by skimming or strain and remove fat with a Gravy-strainer.

Return broth to pot, add the fish sauce and salt and several grinds of black pepper. Just before serving, bring soup to a boil, add the reserved cellophane noodles and simmer for about 3 minutes.

To serve, remove noodles from soup with tongs and divide among 6 individual bowls so they are half full. Add the reserved shredded chicken; mix together the chopped scallion and coriander and sprinkle on. Pour broth over all, add more black pepper to taste, and serve immediately.

**Serves 6.**

► *This is best served with chopsticks to pick up the slippery noodles, as well as a soup spoon, and in deep bowls rather than the flatter Western-style soup plates.*

## Three Flavored Mayonnaise Spreads

*These spreads can turn ordinary ingredients into very special sandwiches. Each can be stored in the refrigerator, tightly covered for up to a week.*

### CHIPOTLE MAYONNAISE

3 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise      pinch salt  
2 tablespoons nonfat plain yoghurt      1/2 teaspoon lime juice (optional)  
1–2 teaspoons puree of chipotle chili in  
adobo (see page 000)

In a small bowl stir together the mayonnaise and yoghurt and chilli puree. Taste for seasoning and add the salt and lime juice if desired.

**Makes about 1/3 cup, enough for 3 sandwiches.**

### JALAPENO MAYONNAISE

3 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise      1 tablespoon fresh lime juice  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro      freshly ground black pepper  
1–2 teaspoons minced pickled seeded  
jalapeno pepper

Combine all the ingredients in a small bowl.

**Makes about 1/3 cup.**

### WASABI MAYONNAISE

2 tablespoons reduced-fat mayonnaise      1 teaspoon lime juice  
2 tablespoons nonfat sour cream      2 teaspoons wasabi paste (see Note)

Stir together the mayonnaise, sour cream, lime juice, and wasabi paste, and add enough wasabi paste to yield the degree of heat you like, starting with 1 teaspoon.

**Makes about 1/3 cup.**

Note: Wasabi is a parsnip-like root grown in Japan. It has both heat and flavor and is highly addictive. Outside Japan, where it is freshly grated as needed, it is available in powdered form. *To reconstitute dried wasabi:* make a paste by blending 1/2 teaspoon warm water with one heaping teaspoon wasabi powder. Let paste stand 10 to 15 minutes to develop flavor. Makes about 2 teaspoons paste.



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