



Nutrition Nibbles

Lighten Up Your Favorite Bites

My husband recently launched a complaint against the head chef of the household (me!). He questioned why I never make my grandmother's buttermilk biscuits. After all, the famed recipe is framed and hanging in our kitchen. My reply was simple: "I don't cook with shortening, that's why!" This conversation got me thinking as well as salivating for those biscuits. I wondered if there was a way to make a tasty, flaky, healthier, trans-fat free biscuit. After much research and experimentation, I rediscovered the joy of recipe modification.

I encourage everyone to learn to lighten up their favorite bites. Why might someone want to tinker with a tried-and-true recipe? The top reasons include:

- Lowering the calories, fat, sodium (salt), sugar, or cholesterol in a recipe.
- Changing the type of fat in a recipe to a heart-healthier variety.
- Increasing the amount of fiber in your weeknight stand-bys.
- To enjoy your favorites without guilt!

Some forms of recipe modification are obvious, for example, using nonfat milk in place of whole milk or substituting low fat sour cream in place of regular sour cream. Other ways of lightening up your favorite bites are not as apparent. I suggest this step-by-step approach:

1. **Identify the fattening, sweet, salty, or high cholesterol ingredients you would like to change in your recipe.** Check out a few of my favorite tips on the next page for dealing with some of these troublesome ingredients.

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Just Like Nana's Buttermilk Biscuits

Favorite Food

Everyone always asks me "So, what does a dietitian eat?" Right now, I'm nuts over flaxseed! Flaxseed is high in fiber, lignans (nutritious plant-based antioxidants), and omega-3 fatty acids (important in heart health). For maximal health benefits, buy the ground flaxseed (the seeds are too small for your teeth to break open) or grind the seeds yourself. Personally, I like to top my morning cereal or yogurt with it. I even use it as a substitute for oil in some of my muffin recipes (see tips on the next page). Store flaxseed in the refrigerator to preserve freshness.

College Corner: Grilling 101



Summer is a great time to get together with friends and grill. Grilling, or cooking over a fire, is a wonderful way to enhance the flavors of your favorite foods. Some even consider it an art form! Read on for some ways to ensure your summer BBQ party is a grilling success:

- ⚙️ **Dress up your protein!** For intense flavor, marinate your lean meats (skinless chicken breast, pork tenderloin, fish, or lean beef) from 2 to 24 hours. If using a dry rub of spices, apply right before grilling. For sugar-based glazes, apply to meat midway through cooking to prevent charring.
- ⚙️ **Think outside the bun!** There is more to grilling than burgers and hot dogs. There is nothing better than grilled vegetables...except for grilled fruit! Just about any vegetable can be skewered or wrapped in foil and placed on the BBQ. Choose your favorites, apply a small amount of olive oil and some spices and you're ready to grill! What about fruit? When grilled, the natural juices in peaches, nectarines, apricots, and plums caramelize yielding a wonderfully tasty and healthy dessert. Cut the fruit in half, remove the pits, grill cut-side down, and serve with a scoop of frozen yogurt. Yummy!

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Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures

Poultry: 165°F

Burgers & Medium Done Steaks:

160°F

Pork: 160°F

Source: USDA

Lighten Up Your Favorite Bites continued...



2. **Make a healthy substitution to improve the nutrition of your meal.** Try using whole grains instead of the more processed variety. Whole wheat pasta, brown rice, and corn tortillas are fiber, vitamin, and protein-packed stand-ins. When baking, substitute half of the white flour with whole wheat flour. Use low fat dairy in place of whole milk or half and half. Choose leaner meats and low fat cheeses for your favorite dishes. Fiber up your favorite by using three times as many vegetables as the recipe calls for.
3. **Remove an ingredient if possible.** Sometimes you can opt not to use an ingredient at all. For instance, skip the frosting on already sweetened cookies, and the coconut or sugar dusting on bakery items. Omit condiments that may drive up the sugar, salt, or fat content of your recipe like soy sauce, pickles, olives, mayonnaise, syrup, and jelly.
4. **Change the method of preparation.** Try a healthier cooking technique to lighten up your favorites. Instead of deep-fat frying or pan-frying, try baking, broiling, grilling, boiling, poaching, or microwaving. Invest in nonstick cookware and some Pam oil spray to reduce the amount of butter and oil you use.
5. **Modify (or follow) the portion size.** Despite your best efforts, some recipes may still be higher in fat, calories, sugar, or salt. In these instances, enjoy a smaller amount or stick to the suggested portion size.

Health Boosting Alterations

Improve your recipes with these quick and easy tips:

- Instead of shortening, butter, margarine, or oil in baking:
 - Use applesauce or prune puree for half of the butter, shortening, or oil. Or use 3x the amount of ground flaxseed.
- Instead of regular eggs:
 - To boost the omega-3 fatty acids in your diet, use omega-3 eggs instead. To reduce cholesterol, substitute 2 egg whites or 1/4 cup egg substitute for every egg.
- To reduce sodium:
 - Omit salt or reduce salt by 1/2 in most recipes (except if your recipe uses yeast, then keep the recommended amount of salt). Use Mrs. Dash instead of a salt shaker at the table.
- To reduce sugar:
 - Use 1/4 to 1/3 less sugar in baked goods and desserts. To increase the sweetness, use extra vanilla, cinnamon, or almond extract.
- To increase fiber:
 - Add extra fruits and vegetables to your recipes and leave the peels on for extra fiber.



Grilling 101 continued...

- ⚙️ **Grill yourself options!** Veggie burgers, tofu, even portabella mushroom caps make tasty meat-alternatives. Barbecuing enhances their flavors too! With so many different veggie burgers on the market, you are sure to find one that satisfies. When grilling tofu, choose the extra firm variety. Wrap in a dishtowel and place on a plate under a heavy object to drain off excess water. Finish it off with your favorite marinade before throwing it on the grill. Grilled portabella mushrooms can be eaten between a bun or stuffed with goodies.
- ⚙️ **Practice summer food safety!** Always marinate meat, vegetables, even tofu in the refrigerator. Discard any extra marinade after placing your items on the BBQ. Never partially grill your meats and plan to finish cooking them later—this is an open invitation for bacteria growth. Keep your hands, cutting boards, serving platters, and grilling utensils clean. Always grill to the proper internal temperature to minimize the possibility of food-borne illness (minimum temperatures listed on other side). I suggest you invest in a basic meat thermometer to avoid any potential mishaps. Do not leave food out for more than 2 hours and if it is greater than 90°F outside, refrigerate any leftovers within one hour. For more information on Barbecuing and Food Safety, check out the seasonal food safety fact sheets available under the food and nutrition section of the USDA's website: www.usda.gov Happy grilling and bon appétit!

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